



Board of Trustees Meeting Materials for March 11th, 2025

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¹ Committee minutes are only included if particularly relevant to the meeting's agenda. Other committee minutes are available at <https://brookslibraryvt.org/about-us/board-of-trustees/board-agendas-and-minutes/>

Brooks Memorial Library Board of Trustees

March 11, 2025, 4:45 PM

Meeting to be held on site or via Zoom:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83917781481?pwd=TGtGVHZlSoJ2OEErWGLYN3N4MkQ5UT09>

Meeting ID: 839 1778 1481 Passcode: 359655

AGENDA

Call to Order / **4:45 PM**

Agenda/Changes or additions

Public Comments

President's Comments

Minutes of Tuesday, February 11, 2025

COMMITTEE UPDATES/ DEPARTMENT REPORTS

A. Friends of the Library

- February Meeting cancelled. Next meeting: March--Margaret

B. Finance/Asset Development Committee—Sirkka Kauffman, Chair

- Update

C. Technology Committee – Leo Schiff, Chair

- Update

D. Buildings and Grounds—Karen Tyler, Chair

- Update

E. Strategic Planning Committee—Ann Varilly, Chair

- No Update

F. Department Reports: Director, Youth Services, Information Services

CONTINUING BUSINESS

- Social work and safety assistance update.
- Unsung Heroes award
- Collection Development and Behavior policies
- Words Trail Mural agreement

NEW BUSINESS

- National Library Week – April 6th to 12th
- Act 171 (H. 875), an Act establishing a municipal ethics framework in Vermont, went into effect on June 10th, 2024. The Act establishes a statewide municipal code of ethics and allows the State Ethics Commission to provide municipalities with free training and advisory services. Municipal Ethics Training is recommended and available at <https://vt.accessgov.com/municipal-ethics-training/Forms/Page/municipal-ethics-training/02f27a14-bf31-4612-8ecd-75f2261d8df1/85804964-6bd4-40c1-ab53-714f91fb5f4e/0>

BROOKS MEMORIAL LIBRARY
Board of Trustees Regular Meeting
Tuesday, February 11, 2025

Present: Margaret Atkinson, Ann Varilly, Starr LaTronica, Joyce Sullivan, Kate O'Connor, Leo Schiff, Sirkka Kauffman, Nikki Holland, Kodrin Guerrero, Karen Tyler
Absent: John Woodward

* Ann called the meeting to order at 4:48pm

*Additions/Changes to the Agenda: Starr made an addition to the Continuing Business

*Changes to last month's minutes: Accepted as written

*No public present

Committee Updates and Department Reports:

A. Friends of the Library: Ann Varilly

- Sum of Annual Book Sale, Annual Appeal Letter and Raffles was more than \$18,000.
- The Friends' website is now being managed by a new member of the Friends.

B. Finance/ Asset Committee: Sirkka Kauffman

- Annual financial report was reported to the Town
- The Fine Arts Policy is in process of being drafted, the committee will bring it to the Trustees upon completion.

C. Technology Committee: Leo Schiff

- No Update

D. Building and Grounds Committee: Karen Tyler

- ARPa grant is currently precarious, as it is uncertain of whether or not it will be affected by the new federal administration. It is certain that to move ahead a Project Manager will be hired. An estimated salary of \$50-70K may be needed, and a request that the Finance Committee review the possible impact on BML's budget.

E. Strategic Planning Committee: Ann Varilly

- Committee decided to extend the existing Strategic Plan until 2027.
- Requests that any recommendation to the Plan will be considered and additions and changes can be made.
- A name for the Buildings and Grounds Project has been adopted..."Expand Access for All: Inside and Out", EAA:IO
- Conflict of Interest Policy distributed for signatures by the Trustees.
- BML's By-Laws will be updated over the next few months.

F. Department Reports: Kodrin Guerrero

- Collections of Graphic Novels is being reviewed

Continuing Business: Starr Latronica

- Kodrin Guerrero was recognized for how very helpful he was with recent difficult episodes.
- The Nominating Committee interviewed 7 candidates, and offered the on year position to Jenny Rowe.
- Upon the advice of the Town Attorney, BML will distribute sleeping bags to patrons upon request, when available.

New Business:

- Collection Development Policy is under revision with the guidance from the State Library along with a procedural form to file a complaint regarding present collection/material for any VT citizen.
- Upcoming review of the Behavior Policy
- Brattle Words Trail will be managed by the Friends of the Library and Sunrise Rotary. They will hold 10K in escrow for maintenance. The Director of The Words Project will be invited to next month's Trustees meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 5:53 pm

Respectfully Submitted,
Joyce Sullivan

Director's Report for February 2025

Announcement: Assistance from the BRAT and our outreach partners from HCRS and Groundworks has been invaluable in managing difficult incidents involving challenging patrons.

Activities that support our Strategic Plan

Engage the community through a wide range of educational, recreational, and cultural opportunities that support diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Collect materials in a variety of formats (print, nonprint and electronic) to reflect the world at large.

- Recent book orders that coincide with the spring publishing season will bring an influx of exciting new titles.
- Efforts are underway to expand the large print collection with contemporary titles beyond genre fiction.
- Graphic novels are being re-cataloged to better reflect content and increase reader accessibility and discovery.
- We have circulated 3 times as many pairs of snowshoes this year as this time last year.

Offer programs that introduce and illuminate a wide range of interests and opinions.

- Djeli presented an entrancing evening of storytelling in celebration of Black History Week.
- BEEC is providing Mud Season programs to celebrate nature in our local surroundings.
- Vermont Humanities presented a virtual program on *Finding a Voice in the Arts*
- SEVEDS is conducting free sessions to help with tax preparation.
- The State legislators conducted a large community information/listening session in the Main Reading Room.
- The Financial Empowerment series with SEVEDS continues, with a program on Fresh Starts to support New Year's resolutions.
- Regular programming of the Science Fiction Reading Club and the Stitchers continue. Independently organized reading clubs (Green Carnation, Great Books, Silent Reading and Veterans) supplement BML offerings.

Respond to the information needs of all members of the community by providing accessible, respectful and reliable reference sources.

- Special attention was given to evaluating and curating reliable news sources for News Literacy Week.
- Requests are being submitted and materials supplied spanning the spectrum of political discourse.
- Information on local elections was promoted and highlighted on our website.
- Fascinating, esoteric individual requests were satisfied by the expert response of our reference librarian in between negotiating difficulties with problem patrons.

Review and introduce new technology and develop related instruction.

- Our survey on the tech needs of the community have established priorities of service, which we hope to meet through partnerships and volunteer tutors.

Support young children and their caregivers by providing developmentally responsive learning opportunities through materials and programming.

- Dino-Man literally filled the main reading room with people and dinosaurs!!! One of the inflatable creatures was as tall as our two-story space.
- Sing and Dance with Robin brings early literacy skills to preschoolers through music and movement.
- Special sessions of Legopalooza during winter carnival stimulated language and small motor skills.
- St. Michaels classes visit the library on a regular basis for story presentations and to select books.

Empower teens by providing them with resources for education, entertainment and engagement.

- Teen movie night provided free, safe fun for teens on a Friday evening.

Recruit, cultivate and retain a diverse, exemplary staff.

- New staff has been researching de-escalation strategies to navigate difficult interactions.
- Select staff members watched a webinar on "Immigration & ICE: Rights, Responsibilities & Support for Vermont Employers" and "Color Our World with Citizen Science: From Space to Sea," which integrates community science projects into summer reading programs.
- Guidance around updating our Collection Development Policy was gleaned from a webinar conducted by the Vermont Department of Libraries.

Empower and support staff well-being

- We are revising our Code of Conduct to establish clarity around consequences for violations.

Provide welcoming and accessible spaces for all members of the community.

Revamp and improve exterior space for increased accessibility and public usage.

- Progress continues on the major capital project grant, with help from the Planning Department, the Buildings and Grounds Committee and consultant Steve Horton. We have bids from engineers and designers and a company to replace the roof.

Establish, strengthen, and sustain community connections to promote a culture that is accessible and welcoming to all, making a concerted effort to reach out to groups that have been historically marginalized.

Increase relationships with local partners to promote initiatives and programs.

- Three staff members conducted an orientation of library resources and services to refugees at SIT and registered 60 people for library cards.
- We hosted the first of monthly planning sessions for America 250.

Establish diverse and inclusive connections to support underserved and vulnerable sectors.

- Director participated in Situation Table sessions re: vulnerable patrons.
- Our delivery program for housebound patrons continues to grow, thanks to volunteers and the efforts of our circulation manager.

Increase awareness of library services, resources, and impact.

Clarify and prioritize marketing roles and activities to increase internal cohesion and external impact.

- Attention to and expansion of social media posts have increased awareness of library programs and services.
- Senior staff is engaged in the process of determining the monetary value of the services we provide and evaluating the percentage of time spent on different duties per a request from the Town Manager.

Leverage municipal resources & community partners for opportunities to convey the value of libraries.

- Coverage in the Town newsletter has increased the community's awareness of our efforts.

Year	2025	2024	2023	2022
Total circulation	10,028	10,878	9301	7947
Visits	8262	9083	7030	4388

February 2025

Circulation Staffing

- Our two new circulation clerks **Imani Namutebi** and **Kate Larrabee** are wonderful additions to the staff. They are quick learners who provide excellent service to our patrons while bringing a sense of creativity and fresh perspectives to the library.
- Unfortunately, all circulation staff continue to endure unacceptable behavior from patrons on a daily basis, as well as regular serious incidents.
- The circulation desk downstairs is now fully staffed for the first time since November.

Museum Passes

- Museum passes hit a record high last year of **667 reservations** and **448 check-outs**, which exceeds pre-pandemic numbers for the first time.
- There are about **28 active passes** now after adding **7 new passes** in the last year.
- Our collaboration with Brattleboro Recreation & Parks has allowed us to provide **103 free ice skating vouchers** this winter.
- Our new museum pass reservation system is easier for patrons and staff to use.
- We have developed a marketing strategy to promote museum passes this year.
- At the board's request, I have compiled museum pass statistics since 2011.

Delivery Program

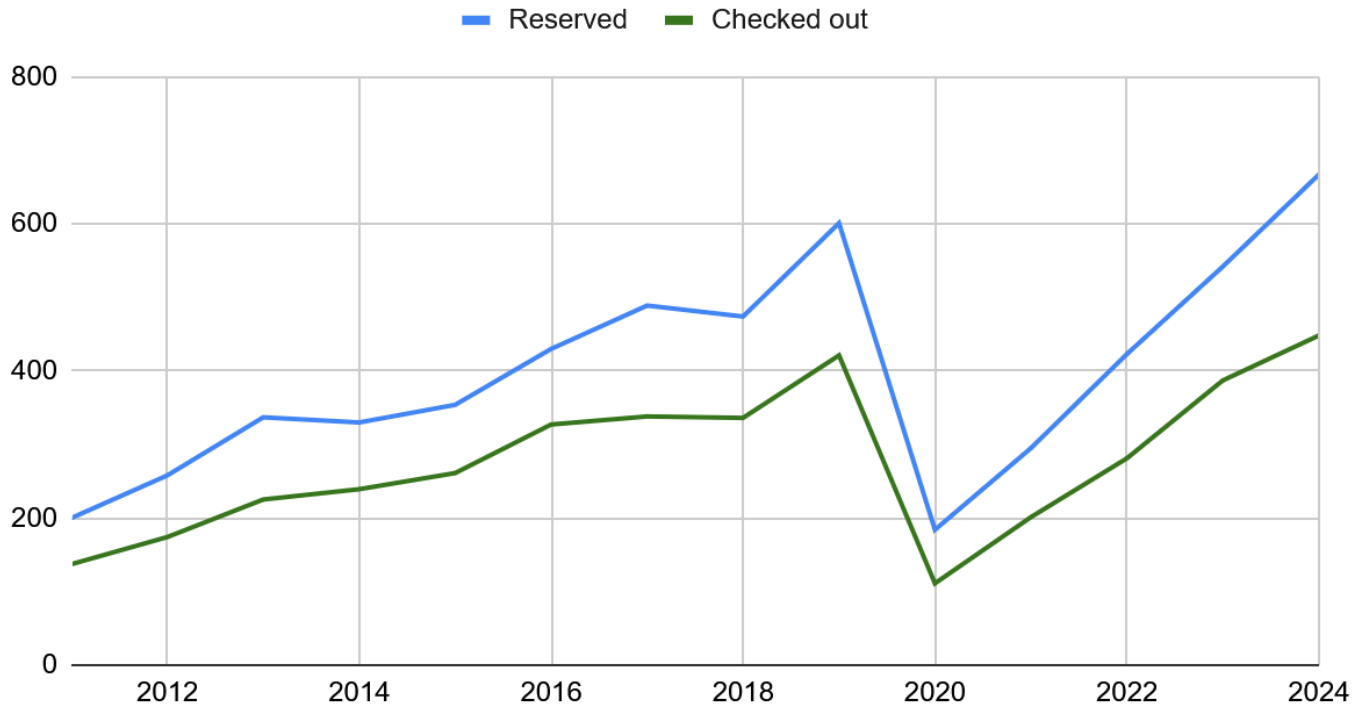
- The home delivery program is growing steadily with **10 delivery patrons** on the list.
- Our volunteer driver has already made **16 deliveries** this year of books, dvds, and audiobooks to and from the doorsteps of patrons, expanding access to library resources.

Highlights

- We have had excellent feedback on the five new **Memory Kits** launched at the beginning of February. The kits have engaged patrons aged 55 to 101 and their caregivers!
- **60 refugees** registered for library cards and learned about library resources during an outreach event at SIT with Starr, Jeanne, and Tara.
- Vibrant displays like Black History Month attracted patron interest and highlighted our collection. Patrons enjoyed making paper snowflakes and using heart-shaped notes to create a colorful exhibit of what they love about the library.
- Patrons borrowed **46 pairs of snowshoes** so far this year, compared to only 18 in 2024.

Submitted by Amanda Whiting, Circulation Manager.

Museum Pass Reservations & Check Outs by Year



- “I love all the fun books”
- “The patient and brilliant staff”
- “The quiet space to focus”
- “I ♥ free museum passes”
- “Opportunities to learn”
- “I love Interlibrary Loans”
- “Peace + Learning”
- “A quiet and clean place to breathe”
- “The fact you can use a computer at any time”
- “Beauty of growth from knowledge”
- “On a rainy day, I can’t stay away, rain or shine”
- “The magic of all the surprisingly unique collections of books”
- “Everything”

Department Inquiry

Fund: 101 General Fund --- Department: 201 Library --- Period Ending: 02/28/2025

Account Number	Description	Total Budget	YTD Actual	Balance
101-50000-201	Department Head Salary	91,545.00	59,724.23	31,820.77
101-50001-201	Staff Salaries	583,773.00	367,955.35	215,817.65
101-50002-201	Vacation BB - Retire Pay	5,000.00	0.00	5,000.00
101-51000-201	Equipment expense	4,500.00	3,230.19	1,269.81
101-51003-201	Postage Expense	7,500.00	5,295.12	2,204.88
101-51004-201	Office Supplies	4,000.00	2,645.40	1,354.60
101-51007-201	Computer Supplies	4,000.00	2,713.07	1,286.93
101-51011-201	Reimbursable Expense	3,500.00	3,717.00	(217.00)
101-51023-201	Equipment Maintenance	2,000.00	2,000.00	0.00
101-51024-201	Professional Services	200.00	0.00	200.00
101-51027-201	Telephone	4,000.00	3,583.28	416.72
101-51031-201	Lost Book Refund Pmt Fees	200.00	303.89	(103.89)
101-51032-201	Book & Non-Print Supplies	6,000.00	2,915.14	3,084.86
101-51034-201	Fuel Expense	10,790.00	4,651.73	6,138.27
101-51035-201	Electric	20,730.00	16,942.49	3,787.51
101-51036-201	Utilities	1,490.00	1,324.88	165.12
101-51037-201	Building Repairs	20,000.00	6,410.15	13,589.85
101-51038-201	Maintenance Supplies	4,000.00	2,841.41	1,158.59
101-51039-201	Books - General	8,000.00	8,161.20	(161.20)
101-51040-201	Reference Sources	18,000.00	17,900.17	99.83
101-51041-201	Juvenile Books	8,500.00	7,009.88	1,490.12
101-51042-201	Young Adult Sources	3,000.00	1,713.37	1,286.63
101-51043-201	Replacement Books	3,000.00	1,209.78	1,790.22
101-51044-201	Periodicals & Newspapers	7,500.00	7,500.00	0.00
101-51045-201	Digital Subscriptions	13,000.00	9,499.43	3,500.57
101-51046-201	Non-Print Materials Adult	6,000.00	5,835.38	164.62
101-51047-201	Non-Print Materials Children	4,500.00	322.10	4,177.90
101-54004-201	Computer Equipment Maint	6,000.00	2,345.52	3,654.48
101-45007-201	Miscellaneous Revenue	(1,000.00)	(55.00)	(945.00)
101-45012-201	Reimbursements Revenue	(3,000.00)	(3,717.00)	717.00
101-45019-201	Library Copier Revenue	(4,500.00)	(5,235.75)	735.75
101-45020-201	Library Fines	0.00	(102.00)	102.00
101-45021-201	Non-Resident Fees	(15,000.00)	(11,293.00)	(3,707.00)
101-45022-201	Replacement Books	(1,500.00)	(1,893.17)	393.17

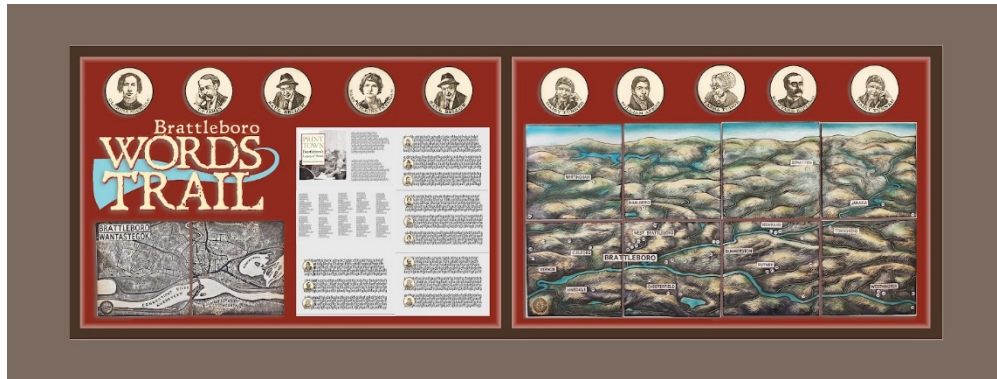
Department Inquiry

Fund: 401 Grants Fund --- Department: 202 Library Trust --- Period Ending: 02/28/2025

Account Number	Description	Total Budget	YTD Actual	Balance
401-51121-202	BR01 Buffer Account	10000.00	0.00	10000.00
401-51122-202	BR03 Conferences & Worksh	7495.39	3,105.30	4390.09
401-51137-202	BR04 Contract Srvs Adult	1824.83	0.00	1824.83
401-51127-202	BR05 Books Adults	25891.06	8,510.79	17380.27
401-51139-202	BR06 Juvenile Programs	4498.81	1,821.40	2677.41
401-51129-202	BR07 Reference Sources	7685.56	4,681.61	3003.95
401-51128-202	BR08 Local History Source	5549.43	0.00	5549.43
401-51132-202	BR09 Young Adult Sources	3376.66	0.00	3376.66
401-51135-202	BR10 Non-Print	22373.27	1,000.00	21373.27
401-51134-202	BR11 Periodicals & Newspa	2267.47	1,214.11	1053.36
401-51124-202	BR12 Trustees Conferences	1912.34	0.00	1912.34
401-51138-202	BR13 Adult Programs	5993.45	1,550.95	4442.50
401-51130-202	BR14 Fine Arts	2404.30	290.88	2113.42
401-51140-202	BR15 Board Approved Proje*	25302.68	4,347.28	20955.40
401-51131-202	BR16 Books Children	5838.98	26.20	5812.78
401-51141-202	BR17 Outreach	11691.73	787.12	10904.61
401-51126-202	BR18 Conservation	1000.00	426.79	573.21
401-51142-202	BR19 Gifts	5093.57	2,742.75	2350.82
401-51143-202	BR20 Projects	32889.84	4,216.94	28672.90
401-51144-202	BR21 Legacy	29360.97	0.00	29360.97
401-51123-202	BR22 Staff Leave	5377.73	5,110.50	267.23
401-51136-202	BR23 Downloadable Media	10000.00	6,876.22	3123.78

* BR15 Board Approved Projects also includes subaccount Fine Arts Auction Revenue, not reflected in these numbers.

**SUNRISE ROTARY & FRIENDS OF BROOKS MEMORIAL LIBRARY (FBML)
FRIENDS OF BRATTLEBORO WORDS TRAIL EXHIBIT
MAINTENANCE AGREEMENT**



The Friends of Brooks Memorial Library (FBML) and the Sunrise Rotary club in Brattleboro, after discussion and review, have agreed to mutually maintain the Brattleboro Words Trail exhibit on the new Brattleboro Amtrak station, expected to open in March 2026, as per the conditions outlined below and signed by representatives of both groups, to be referred to as 'Friends of the Brattleboro Words Trail Exhibit Partnership or 'the Partnership' and Brooks Memorial Library, which will own the exhibit as per an agreement with Amtrak.

The Partnership agrees to maintain the exhibit for the benefit of townspeople, visitors to the Amtrak station and a revitalized riverfront area in the following ways under the following conditions:

The partnership will assign a person to check the exhibit once a month, splitting the year from January through June for FBML and July through December for Sunrise Rotary, or on dates to be mutually agreed upon by partners.

A Partnership designee will visit the exhibit as close as possible to the first of each month (or other agreed upon date each month) to assess its condition, mainly assuring the plexi is clean and that maps are available.

The visiting designee will bring maps with them in case more are needed. Maps will be stored at Brooks Memorial Library.

The designee will record the visit and actions taken (30 maps refilled, plexi cleaned, for example) in a google document to be shared with the Partnership, Brooks Library and Brattleboro Words Project Advisory Team (see below).

The Partnership will give the Amtrak station master, who will be present at the station on a daily basis, a phone number and/or email for them to call to report any issues they may observe at other times.

A \$10,000 initial escrow account will be held in a restricted account by FBML to fund maintenance of the exhibit for the foreseeable future as outlined below.

Decisions for maintenance expenditures over \$100 will be approved by the Brooks Library director. Expenditures below \$100 will be decided by the partnership and accounted for with expense receipts retained by FBML and reviewed by the library on an annual basis.

In the unlikely event plexiglass must be replaced, a replacement piece (5' x 7') would be ordered by the director of the Words Project Advisory Team with a reimbursement request / receipt made to the fund. A person familiar with the box design at HatchSpace would be hired to replace the plexiglass on the case, or volunteers could elect to do it. The case is being designed for easy access for such repair and also potentially to add new ceramic buttons as new stories are added to the Trail.

The Stqry software platform for the Brattleboro Words Trail app has been paid through 2031. After that time, funds remaining in the escrow account can be applied to pay another 4500 to power the app for a subsequent 5 year period or pay approximately \$850/year.

An initial supply of 4000 maps will be provided at the exhibit opening. The exhibit does not require maps to deliver the information contained therein.

This maintenance partnership will be referenced on the exhibit as: **This exhibit is owned by Brooks Memorial Library and maintained by Friends of Brooks Memorial Library and the Sunrise Rotary Club.**

Brooks Memorial Library can decide to remove or replace the exhibit at will at which point it would be reverted to a space the library deems appropriate, or be returned to the artist.

EXHIBIT BACKGROUND

The 14' x 5' Brattleboro Words Trail exhibit will be mounted on the outside, track-facing wall of what will be the first ADA accessible station in Vermont. The exhibit features the Words Trail ceramic landscape art designed by Cynthia Houghton Parker, lead designer at internationally renowned Natalie Blake Studios in Brattleboro. The murals mark more than 100 sites downtown (60) and regionally (40) that link to community-created audio stories related to the rich cultural history of writing, publishing and all things 'words' within the Brattleboro hub.

The stories are freely available through the Brattleboro Words Trail app and the Brattleboro Words Trail Podcast. The project website is: www.brattleborowords.org The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) provided initial funding for [the project](#) in the form of a 1:1 match over three and a half years which was successfully completed. Since then many area foundations, individuals and businesses have continued to build upon its success.

The exhibit will be encased in a plexi-glass faced, white oak framed case custom designed and built at Hatch Space under the supervision of a local Exhibit Team comprised of: Master Carpenter Claude Blazej; HatchSpace's Tom Bodett; Cynthia Houghton Parke, the ceramics artist; Jim Williams, architect; Chris Grotke, exhibit and digital designer and Lissa Weinmann, producer and project director. A small metal holder aside the exhibit will contain printed maps available to the public.

The Brattleboro Words Project Advisory Team (William Edelglass PhD; Starr LaTronica; Shanta Lee; Rolf Parker; Sally Seymour and Lissa Weinmann) oversee the Project under the fiscal management of the Vermont Folklife Center. The [ceramic landscape murals debuted](#) at the Brattleboro Museum & Art Center in 2020/21 (see BMAC page: <https://www.eazel.net/vr-exhibitions/762>) and have since been on public view at 118 Elliot in the historic Downtown. See a short film about making the landscape murals: <https://www.brattleborotv.org/brattleboro-words-project/brattleboro-words-trail-cynthia-parker-houghton/>

AGREEMENT SIGNED:

Kevin O'Keefe, Friends of Brooks Memorial Library / Date:

Will Shakespeare, Sunrise Rotary / Date:

Starr LaTronica, Brooks Memorial Library / Date: