

BML Strategic Planning Minutes, January 26, 2026

Corrected and re-posted on 2/2/2026 - JW

Convened at 4:38 p.m. in Meeting Room B and online

Present: Ann Varilly (Chair), Sirkka Kauffman, Bob Ferrante, Starr LaTronica, Jeanne Walsh, Lindsay Bellville

- Agenda changes: none
- Public participation: none
- Minutes of Oct. 20, 2025 approved as read

CONTINUING BUSINESS

Marketing

- Communication Plan Update – collaborating with Seth, no new developments at this moment.
- Other:
 - Starr is working with Tara on outreach & programming/marketing
 - Adult services staff has been creating Facebook posts
 - Can we have more links to e-services? “Did you know...?”

Review of Open House on November 19

Ann heard happy, positive feedback about this event. Bob agreed and thought it was well-run. Sirkka: “Going behind the scenes myself was really interesting. The other people who were there seemed to enjoy it also.”

Possibilities for improvement of open house?

- Would a Saturday work better? Starr: there are so many determinations. After we planned our event, three others appeared in town on the same night.

- Maybe low attendance was just because it was the first one? We could do some follow-up marketing to remind people we'll try it again.
- Offering some kind of swag or...? Something really cool, like when the Friends had tarot card readings!

Any negatives for open house?

Ann noted that staff felt a bit overwhelmed by the originally-planned date. It helped when we gave staff extra time.

More ideas for open house:

- It would be nice to have a staff event in-house where we go to each other's departments.
- Have it in the spring, when the light is coming back?
- Tie in with the America 250? Jill Lepore has spoken of the founders having a broad vision of lifting people up. Use that?

Strategic Plan update

Ann: Current one goes through 2027. We would need to start the process in 2026 and get serious about it in 2027. It's a lot of work. Maybe send a more general survey out to the public?

Starr: Staff members would like to be more involved in the process and developing the plan. Maybe the new director would benefit from a staff-centered process this way. In the past, we followed up the staff meeting with convening big input sessions from the public. Some were general public, and others were invitation—e.g., community leaders/Town department heads.

Ann: was it useful to have an outside consultant? Starr: though outside consultants and interns helped us with that earlier plan, our connections to community groups are much stronger right now, as we're launching the Access Brattleboro Community directory. So, maybe there is *not* a need for outside consultants or interns for this next plan.

Bob: agrees that it would be best to work with people who are already close to the library rather than bringing in a management consultant.

Amended by-laws on hold

NEW BUSINESS

Library Director search process

Ann is meeting with Sally Nix in HR/Town of Brattleboro to plan the search process and get it in motion. She will, however, remove herself from the interview process as Margaret becomes the new president of the Brooks Board of Trustees.

Starr recommends that we think about what we want and what questions we would want to ask. If possible, it's helpful to have an initial interview and a follow-up interview with candidates. Starr recommends we post the job at ALA, VLA, NELA, and NYLA. At this moment, we're waiting for an ad so we can post it.

Bob: maybe open a document where we can put some of the questions we want to ask. Bob would be willing to do that. It can include management-style questions, day-to-day, face of the library, etc. There can be organizational sections for grouping the questions. Sirkka agrees: we all come from different sectors, so it's good to get a lot of input. Can staff contribute as well? Yes!

Signage collaboration with Building and Grounds Committee

We'll keep holding that in place at this time.

Adjourned at 5:19 pm