

**Bennington City Council Meeting
March 9, 2026
Library Report**

**Bennington Public Library Board of Trustees Meeting
February 24, 2026
Library Report: Lisa Flaxbeard**

The mission of the Bennington Public Library is to inspire lifelong learning, advance knowledge, and strengthen community. To deliver on this promise we rely on three great resources: our staff, our collection, and our physical space.

Library Programs and Services

Please see the January statistical report for detailed program attendance and circulation data.

General Interest/All Ages

- **Winter Reading Challenge** had amazing results with engagement across all age categories. Here is the breakdown: Adults-49, Teens-48, Elementary (k-5)-140, Early Literacy (birth-5)-140.
- **Blind Date with a Book** has been another success with over 100 books checked out. We have had off the chart numbers for adults and middle elementary readers. Teen/YA reader participation is down this year.
- Staff created a **Black History Month** display and updated our Black History browser category in Aspen (OPAC/online catalog).
- We are looking forward to our second annual **Cat Café** with Felius this Saturday, February 28, 9:30 – 1:30 AM.
- We are at the 2-week countdown for the **Finding Gobi** event on Tuesday, March 10 at 6:00 PM.
- We are continuing with our collaboration with the Bennington Woman's Club by advertising, collecting, and displaying art for the **Nebraska GFWC District II Art Contest**. Natalie spearheaded all the promotions including the article by Marisa Dawson in the Bennington Buzz. Johnna has been tasked with the collection, organization and display of art entries.

Early literacy

- Johnna will be visiting Stratford Elementary, Yellow Brick Road Early Childhood Development Center, and Legacy School next week for their *Read Across America* celebrations.

Teen/Young Adult

- **Teen Tuesday** in March will feature book bag decorating-**Library Bag Bling-out**.
- The teens will be treated to a **Glow-in-the-Dark Easter Egg Hunt** on Friday March 27 at 6:00 PM.

Adult

- February's **Second Saturday Craft Circle** with Third Space Omaha featured an **Intro to Garment Constructing** class. Participants were provided with everything needed to create their own circle skirt. March Craft Circle will feature an **Intro to Quilting** class.
- The **Planning Your Garden for Seed Saving** and **Composting 101** adult classes presented by The Big Garden were a huge hit with 19 adults in attendance.

- **Community Book Chat**, a new book club, will be introduced on March 9 at 6:00 PM, This adult program will meet on the second Monday of each month. The discussions aim to introduce new books and excite readers to explore genres outside of their normal reading patterns, as well as provide feedback for library staff collection development.
- Heather is finalizing summer programs for adults. She is coordinating with Gordon Mueller for a presentation on **Bennington history** and with Sue Schlichting from Pursuing Your Past for a **multi-generational genealogy workshop**.
- Using feedback collected from the Winter Reading Challenge survey, Heather is working ahead to schedule presenters for adult programs in the fall. She hopes to have a sourdough class on the calendar soon.

Summer Reading 2026

- Natalie has drafted the promotional material (yard signs, tri-fold brochure, reading tracker, bookmarks, etc.).
- Johnna has booked all the presenters that will be featured on our **Dino-Mite Wednesdays** (aka community partners).
- Summer planning from preliteracy to teen and adult programs, decorations, purchasing supplies, promotions, sponsorship solicitation, Bennington Daze outreach activity planning, etc. is ongoing.
- Johnna and Heather are collaborating on plans for the teen volunteers, aka **volunteens**, including recruiting, training, and scheduling.
- Heather is finalizing the summer staff schedule for optimal coverage of the circ desk.

The library's **February digital newsletter** was delivered to 3,705 emails on February 2 and had a 68.4% open rate. It featured news about Blind Date with A Book, Woman's Club District II Art Contest, Teen events, Cat Café, Community Book Chat, and Finding Gobi.

Collection Development

Heather and Johnna finished up a weed of children's books and are close to completing a weed of adult fiction and non-fiction. Weeding is essential to maintain an accurate, safe, and engaging collection, while maximizing limited space for new, high-demand, and relevant materials.

The **Washington County Community Foundation** has informed us that we will be the recipient of a \$4,000 grant for expansion of the Yoto Audiobook Collection, Penworthy Early Learning Kits, Gaming Equipment for Teen Programming, and Cooking Equipment for Adult and Intergenerational Library Programs. The presentation of the check will take place at a reception on Thursday, March 26 at 6:00 PM in the Rybin Community Building at the Washington County Fairgrounds in Arlington.

Technology/Building Maintenance

The process to investigate a solution to improve the library's website design continues. We will be meeting via Zoom on Friday regarding a proposal from JM Online

Library staff have spent time observing recorded demos of communication services that will give libraries in the Pioneer Consortium the ability to send circulation notifications by text and targeted email marketing communications through the Koha ILS. The cost of a product like this was built into the library's current year electronic access/technology budget.

CCS Presentation Systems was here last week to begin the **conference room AV** project to restore full functionality and control capabilities to our current system. Unfortunately,

the Extron control system needed to be sent to a third party for repairs at an additional cost of \$800--much better than a \$15K replacement cost.

E-rate Form 470 for internet and special project fiber construction funding was submitted last week.

Public Works is installing acoustic panels above the public computers. The panels were purchased last September with the hope that the panels will absorb the noise that comes with this very active library space.

Personnel/Staff Development

Johnna and Lisa attended the Summer Reading Workshop that was held at our library on February 13. Summer Reading ideas, free books and stuff were great, but the best part was getting to network with and learning from other librarian professionals.

NCompass Live webinars staff have attended or viewed a recording: '*Communicating Your Library's Value and Getting Your Board "On Board" to Help!*', and '*Navigating New Building Projects, Empowering Families Through Literacy: Tools and Strategies from Nebraska's Statewide Initiative.*'

Staff development opportunities for the remainder of the fiscal year are being discussed and planned by library staff. A tour of a handful of Nebraska libraries is part of the plan to begin determining the best way to utilize our current and future physical space.

Lisa will attend the Marketech Conference in Kearney March 24 and 25. Hosted by GROW Nebraska, the digital marketing-focused conference features national-level speakers, practical strategy sessions, and powerful networking for rural businesses and organizations.

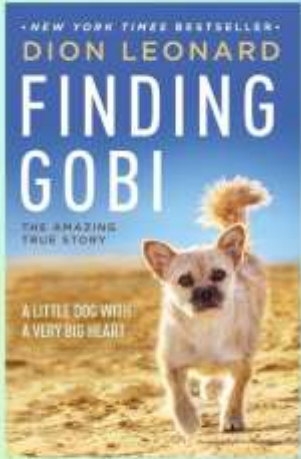
As an intentional effort to make the library's presence known in the community, Lisa has been representing the city/library by attending Bennington Chamber of Commerce events and activities. Networking and public awareness supports the library's strategic goal to "Improve community awareness of library programs and services by cultivating connections with area schools and partnerships with local and regional organizations."

Staff quote of the month:

"So many great chances to connect with new families and help them get familiar with our library and all the things we offer. Lots of opportunities to connect with current patrons and help them meet needs. Been a busy but beautiful month at the circ desk." -- Heather Luth

Bennington Public Library				
January 2026 Statistics				
	2026	2025	Collection Code	Checkouts/Renewals
Circulation-physical collection	9843	8916	Adult DVDs	39
Overdrive All formats	3489	2637	Adult Fiction	1286
*OD Audio	*1394	*1154	Adult Large Print Fiction	2
*OD eBook	*976	*1048	Adult Magazines	13
*OD Digital Magazines	*304	*135	Adult Nonfiction	218
*OD BPS	*815	*300	Cake Pans	7
Book Club Kits	30	30	Interlibrary Loan	22
Total Circulation	13362	11583	Childrens Boardbooks	299
New Items Processed/Cataloged	81		Childrens Chapter Books	928
Items withdrawn from collection	122		Childrens Comic Books	5
Newsbank searches/views/sessions	647/2705/245	511/2913/144	Childrens Books on CD	8
NYT (16 libs) codes/sessions	120/841	81/363	Childrens DVDs	178
Partnership Passes	71	11	Childrens Easy Readers	1757
Computer Use	173	114	Childrens Graphic Novels	810
Study Room Use	26	23	Childrens Magazines	35
Conference Room Use	15	15	Childrens Nonfiction	860
Library Cards:			Childrens Picture Books	2575
City	12	6	Childrens Playaways	258
Douglas County	41	56	Childrens Readalongs	149
Omaha	16	2	Childrens YOTO Audiobook	82
Washington/Other County	2		Kits	34
Total Library Cards Issued	71	64	Young Adult Fiction	253
Presch STEAM (3)	123	102	Young Adult Graphic Novels	19
Storytime Koala-T (3)	62	94	Young Adult Nonfiction	6
Storytime-Thurs (4)	250	205	Total Physical Item Circulation	9843
Weekend Storytime (2)	81	44		
Tea Party (1)	45	75	Social Media/Online Engagement Stats	
Total Early Literacy Programs (13)	561	520	Platform	Views
Open Art Studio-Wed (4)	60	92	Facebook	222794
LEGO (4)	78	60	Instagram	4884
Read to a Dog (1)	53	35	TikTok	18111
Total Elementary Programs (9)	191	187	Website	4765
Teen Time (1)	3	26	Google	1210
Teen BLAB (1)	5	5		
Book Club -Middle Schools (2)	10	21		
Video Game Night	3	10	Partnership Pass	Bookings
Total YA/Teen (5)	21	62	Fontenelle Forest	4
Book Club-1st Wed	16	11	Kiewit Luminarium	14
Book Club-3rd Tues	9	8	Lauritzen Gardens	0
Book Club-RW	6	6	Omaha Children's Museum	15
Craft Circle	16	17	Strategic Air Command	21
Total Adult (4)	47	42	The Durham Museum	17
Total Program attendance (31)	820	811	Total Bookings	71
Library Visits	3137	2852		
Volunteers/Hours	20/105	21/90		
Copier/Printer 12/13-1/12	3045	2338		

 **JOIN NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING
AUTHOR DION LEONARD FOR AN
UNFORGETTABLE EVENT!**



Hear the true story of a chance meeting between an ultramarathon runner and a stray dog in the Gobi Desert that became a life-changing bond, and a nationwide search to bring Gobi home.

Meet Dion and Gobi, hear their incredible journey firsthand, and grab an autographed (and pawtographed!) book.

TUESDAY, MARCH 10 @ 6:00 PM
BENNINGTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

www.benningtonlibrary.org

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**ADULT
SECOND SATURDAY
CRAFT CIRCLE**

SECOND SATURDAY OF THE MONTH

9AM-10AM GROUP LEAD CRAFT PROJECT

10AM-NOON SOCIAL CRAFTING

**BENNINGTON PUBLIC LIBRARY
CONFERENCE ROOM**

**March Skill Share:
Intro to Quilting** 

This program is intended for ages 16+ only.

Materials will be provided, and you can leave with something you made!
Bring your own project for social crafting time.