

From: **Anita Pomerance** <[anita.pomerance56@gmail.com](mailto:anita.pomerance56@gmail.com)>  
Date: Wed, Dec 6, 2023 at 10:42 AM  
Subject: dismissal of director  
To: Pawlet Library <[Pawletpub@gmail.com](mailto:Pawletpub@gmail.com)>

I am commenting on the current situation regarding the dismissal of the library director, based on what I heard at the November Select Board meeting and at the the December 5 Library Board meeting, as well as conversations with quite a few people, and my own experiences with the library as a volunteer sorter, and with Lydsi, mostly with requests for space and publicity for events, including poetry reading and climate change.

There is no question that Lydsi has been an exemplary librarian in many ways, and has gained the enthusiastic support of many members of the community. She has been helpful and friendly to me. The fact remains that something must have happened to cause the board members to unanimously take the drastic step of dismissing her. The problem for the community is that according to legal advice given to Harley, the Library Board president, no information on the dismissal may be given to the public. Lydsi states that she was given no reason for it, just an email. Some people call for her reinstatement, and others call for an explanation from the Board. Still others say we should trust the integrity of the Board members, and assume that there was a compelling reason.

At the meeting, I said (in less than 2 minutes) that I didn't know what to think, hearing that we weren't going to get an explanation, but that I didn't think the Board was "out to get Lydsi." I have to say now that as much as I admire what Lydsi has done for the library, I can't overlook the fact that we don't know what happened. I only know two of the board members personally, Hadley and Heather, but I'm willing to believe that they all are reasonable people who did what they felt was right.

It's sad to see the community torn apart with this situation, with strong emotions expressed, and important facts kept hidden. I'm hoping the Board will find a few facts that they could reveal, and Lydsi will ask the board to clarify the reasons for it.

Sincerely, Anita Pomerance  
r

December 6, 2023

1589 Warren Switch Road  
West Pawlet, VT 05775

Pawlet Public Library Board of Directors  
141 School Street  
Pawlet, VT 05761

Dear Board Members,

Having worked as an employee in organizations with Boards of Directors and Boards of Trustees I understand something about the laws that govern relations between employees and employers. This is why the facts of Lyndsi Barnes term as Library Director cannot be shared. These laws protect Lyndsi's privacy as much as the Library employer, in this case the Board of Directors. To demand otherwise countermands federal law.

I recognize the difficulty of having to replace a former librarian everyone liked and "the way things used to be done." I also recognize that Lyndsi made some good changes, got grants for special projects — she's also an amazing baker!

However I observed that she appeared to lack respect for library employees and volunteers, for community traditions, and, since she was so often not present at the library, for the regularity our community expects. I went one Saturday morning and found a sign on the library door that said "CLOSED," with no explanation. I found later that the reason was that the building had no heat. Simply stating a reason on the sign would have been a consideration to the community — whose members would have immediately understood. But not providing a reason on the sign left the community adrift.

As a community we elected the Library Board and trusted them with managing library affairs appropriately. To second guess the Board's decisions now reneges our own choice and that trust.

Sincerely,

Lucy Norman

1) I would like to share my experience with the Pawlet Library in the last year or so. I was part of a homeschool group, looking for a place to meet during the February-April time period. During that time, we inquired about using the basement room at the library for our meetings of 5-10 adults and 9-15 children. The director of the library made it sound like the space was not available for our use—at first, because we proposed our meeting time to be a half hour before the library opened. Then, there was some discussion of our group paying a fee to meet. Several of the members of our group disagreed with the fee on the grounds that we should be able to use a public space, within reason, and that taxes and other revenues were already providing that. On another occasion, I was a part of a Hand-Work Circle, which was looking for a place to meet. The assistant librarian suggested that we meet in the basement room, <sup>partially</sup> during the library's operating hours. When I came up to bid farewell to the librarian, and to thank her for allowing us the use of space, I was confronted by an uncomfortable scene—the director of the library glowering at the assistant librarian, who hotly told me she wouldn't be able to accommodate us again. When I pursued the availability of the space again, I was again told about a fee.

2) ~~at about~~ ~~we~~ Realizing we were unwelcome, we didn't  
pursue coming; and certainly  
~~the~~

It is astounding how a librarian — ~~and~~  
and especially a director — so invested in  
community outreach could be so non-inclusive  
and downright unwelcoming to our little homeschool  
and Hand-Work Circle Community.

I tried to make a connection with <sup>the director</sup> and not  
take it personally, however, during one of our somewhat  
rare (due to summer!) visits to the library, I found it to  
be seemingly closed, although the <sup>hours</sup> <sub>posted on</sub> <sub>the door</sub> said otherwise.  
After waiting around for a half hour with disappointed  
children, Adele came and opened the library doors  
for us, and helped us get some books.

I come to the library for many reasons —  
we live in a small space with no Internet — and I  
expect the community library to work with me and  
provide a welcoming, open space. Several of the  
(former) ~~director's~~ director's actions were to the contrary of  
my expectations. The library should serve us all.

- Kat Zemmel

~~Kat Zemmel~~

katzemmel@gmail.com

①  
I spoke at the board meeting the evening of 12/5 but wasn't totally prepared and wanted to take a moment to add more of my experience with the former director.

On two occasions, while visiting the library there have been loud arguments among staff instigated by the director that elevated beyond any acceptable form of communication. Both times all patrons were incredibly uncomfortable.

I can also share copies of emails between myself and Lyndri regarding the use of the basement room for our local homeschoolers. We were

told the timing wouldn't work when the library was closed, so we ~~werent~~ were flexible to an alternate time. We were told it wasn't inclusive to all the children of the community so I offered to also do an afterschool program. We were told there wasn't a budget. We don't need a budget, just a space to meet. The board worked really hard to help us get approval finally and Lyndsi refused to meet with me for months. In June, she told me she would meet me in September pending library policies being rewritten. Due to feeling incredibly unwelcome, at this point, I did not feel comfortable bringing children into this space. They deserve to walk into the library

With open arms. A library is <sup>②</sup>  
the heart of a community and  
Pawlet library was feeling  
incredibly cold this last year.

I trust that the board has the  
best interest of the community  
in mind and has good reason for  
the decision that was made.

Sincerely

Sara Rodich

rodich.sara@  
gmail.com

214-242-1619



## Lyndsi Barnes letter

1 message

Rhonda Schlangen <rhondaschlangen@gmail.com>

Tue, Nov 21, 2023 at 7:5

Al

To: s145vt@gmail.com

Dear Sue,

I am so sorry that I misread the deadline for this letter. I'm sharing just in case it can still be helpful.

Dear Pawlet Selectboard,

I am writing to request a review of the dismissal of our Library Director, Lyndsi Barnes. I am among the community members who were surprised by this decision by the elected Pawlet Library Board. From my perspective as a Pawlet voter and library user, Ms. Barnes has been an exceptional librarian who has helped expand the use of the library as a community gathering space.

While I understand personnel matters must be confidential, I expect Ms. Barnes to be treated with equity and fairness.

Sincerely,

Rhonda Schlangen  
150 New Street  
West Pawlet, Vermont

—  
Rhonda Schlangen | Learning and Evaluation Consultant

Cell: +1 802 345-2535

[www.rhondaschlangen.com](http://www.rhondaschlangen.com)

pronouns: she/her





# In support of our librarian

1 message

**Susan LaPorte** <s145vt@gmail.com>  
To: Susan LaPorte <s145vt@gmail.com>

Mon, Nov 20, 2023 at 10:45 A

Monday November 20, 2023

To the Town of Pawlet Selectboard,

I am writing this letter to inform you of my concern over the abrupt firing of our librarian Lyndsi Barnes.

The library has become a more active and vibrant town gathering place since she became our librarian.

The library is very important to me since I have retired and been unable to travel to visit family. The classes given there and the books and movies give me joy. Lyndsi is always, and I mean always pleasant, helpful and welcoming. When I see her with other patrons she is the same.

The library board has over stepped their authority and treated our faith in them with disdain.

The library board needs to reinstate her to her former position immediately and support her in the exemplary job that she is doing.

She is an experienced professional and should not be micromanaged by the board.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sue LaPorte

Pawlet Resident and Library Patron.



**Lyndsi Barnes**

1 message

**Joanne Van Meter** <joannevm@hotmail.com>  
To: s145vt@gmail.com <s145vt@gmail.com>  
Cc: Joanne Van Meter <joannevm@hotmail.com>

Sun, Nov 19, 2023 at 7:38 P

11/19/2023

To the Pawlet Selectboard

I, Joanne Van Meter, a retired Librarian, am writing this letter to express my disappointment in the Pawlet Library Boards recent action. The abrupt firing of our Librarian, Lyndsi Barnes was unprofessional. I had been so pleased for the Pawlet Community when Lyndsi, a Professional Librarian, had been hired. Her employment at the prominent N.Y. Public Library on 42nd Street only attests to the caliber of service and expertise that this Librarian has brought to our community.

During the past year, Lyndsi has received for the library, Libraries Transforming Communities, a Special Grant for small and rural communities; the Vermont Humanities Reading and Discussion Series (A Series of Four Lectures); Seed programs; Summer Concerts and established Tech Time at the Library for adults. She has collaborated with Merck Forest for a children's program, Nature Club After School this past fall. In addition she has coordinated Summer Reading Club, Summer Music Club, Guitar Lessons, story time, as well as a special program, Butterflies and Pollinators, all for the children of our community. The favorite Halloween program and parade was also held. Lyndsi has made the Library a true community center for all. I found her Collection Development skills to be excellent. She has purchased and developed a very good selection of fiction and nonfiction books for both adults and children. In my experience, this is not an easy task with a very limited budget. Lyndsi has successfully coordinated the very popular Book Sale, an auction and fund raising campaign to bring in extra funds for the library. And, her manner in working with the public is both professional and warm.

I'm making the request that the Pawlet Library Board revisit their decision to terminate Lyndsi Barnes. She is the best and only Professional Librarian our town has ever had working for us. I hope to see her back working in her Professional capacity as our Librarian.

Sincerely,

Joanne Van Meter, MLS

Pawlet Public Library  
Board of Trustees  
141 School St  
Pawlet, VT 05761

To the Pawlet Library Board of Trustees,

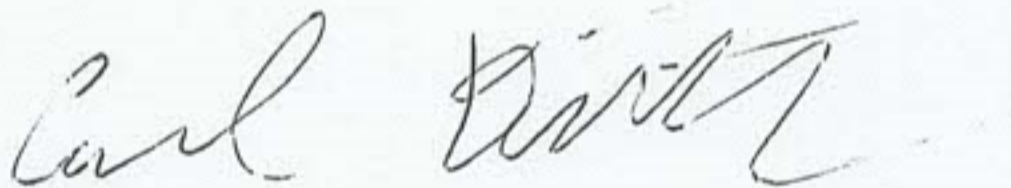
I operate On Tone Music, providing music lessons, an afterschool guitar program, and a summer program at the Pawlet Library. Lyndsi Barnes has been a friendly, active director at the library since I first walked in over a year ago to discuss collaboration. I urge you to re-employ Lyndsi as the Director at the Pawlet Public Library.

Every time I walk in to talk with Lyndsi, I am greeted with a smile and appreciation. It was her idea to host an afterschool guitar program at the library, which has benefitted over two dozen young students with exposure to music that they wouldn't have otherwise. A library offering guitars for people to check out is a novel idea and has been crucial in offering this program.

Why try to "fix" what is not broken? I have noticed only effective implementation of this idea and other projects that Lyndsi has spearheaded at the library. Lyndsi has ensured that these programs operate at capacity through continued planning and support. Especially in this uncertain job market where it is difficult to find qualified personnel available and willing to work, we need a director at the library who will continue to manage the big picture. We need Lyndsi to continue to be a positive face at the Pawlet Public Library.

Sincerely,

Carl Diethelm  
On Tone Music  
75 School St  
Pawlet, VT 05761  
802-747-8579  
carl@ontonemusic.com

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Carl Diethelm". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Carl" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Diethelm".



## : Lyndsi Barnes' wrongful dismissal

1 message

**Steve Williams** <voorburg00@comcast.net>

Fri, Nov 17, 2023 at 6:35 PM

To: Susan LaPorte <s145vt@gmail.com>

To whom it may concern.

I have been a resident of Pawlet for twenty three years and am shocked and dismayed by the recent abrupt dismissal of Lyndsi Barnes as Library Director, including the callous way it was carried out, by e-mail.

In my contacts with Lyndsi both over book matters, or over one of the many town events for which the Library is the home, Lyndsi has behaved in a professional and helpful manner, as confirmed by her commendation letter from the Vermont Library Association; by a superb piece of irony received by letter on the same day as her dismissal.

I understand that during her two years employment as Library Director, Lyndsi never received a performance review. How on earth could this not happen?

There must have been some item of dissatisfaction by the Library Board. Why on earth did they not sit down with Lyndsi to review the issue and seek a mutually acceptable resolution?

I urge the Library Board to give every consideration to Lyndsi's rehiring.

Yours truly

Stephen T Williams

PS How does the Library Board expect to hire another director with anywhere near the same skills as Lyndsi if and when they learn of Lyndsi's fate in the Pawlet Library?



## Lyndsi - my words

1 message

**Freddi Shehadi** <freddishehadi@gmail.com>

Fri, Nov 17, 2023 at 6:29 PM

To: s145vt@gmail.com

To whom it may concern,

I've had the pleasure of working with Lyndsi for the last few years doing benefit concerts at the Townhall in conjunction with the PAWLET LIBRARY ~ Lyndsi has been an absolute pleasure to work with. She's very responsive, very organized highly creative and a real nice person. All the things that one would ask for when collaborating on Concert Promotion's. - my vote is to keep her right there in PAWLET ~ there's nothing broken here - there's no need for change - actually, this is quite annoying - and I want to know what led to this and why "

Freddi Shehadi

Sent from my iPhone

I am writing this in Support of Lyndsi Barnes and to express my concern at the manner in which she was let go. I would at least like to know the reason for her dismissal.

Lyndsi is warm and welcoming. She has kept the community informed of the goings on at the library. She has also helped to develop interesting programming at our library.

I ask the board to please reconsider their position and rehire Lyndsi as soon as possible.

Respectfully,

Carol Schoenwetter  
Pawlet resident  
Justice of the Peace

*To Whom It May Concern;*

*Most are aware that our volunteer elected Library Board Members recently upset many townspeople by voting to dismiss Lyndsi Barnes, the Library Director. Personally, since I don't have all the facts that the Board members have, I don't feel I can determine that this was the best course of action or if it might have been handled differently.*

*I am of the mind that these volunteers have the best interest of the town at heart, and if a mistake has been made, civil conversation can help reveal and correct that. If, on the other hand, the Board has information that others do not, they may choose to stand by their decision.*

*My hope is that we work together as a community to resolve this—there is too much dissension in every facet of life right now. I'll hope that Pawle can address this issue calmly.*

*Thank you, Jacki Becker*

To The Pawlet Library Board,

I have just heard  
that our librarian Lyndsi  
has been fired from her  
position.

I hope that this  
decision will be re-considered.  
Lyndsi has been a very  
positive addition to our  
town & Library,

Sincerely,

Judy Lake

WWW.LAKESLAMP SHADES.COM  
JUDY SAWYER LAKE  
116 SOLAR PARK ROAD  
PAWLET, VERMONT 05761  
802.325.6308



November 27, 2023

Dear members of the Pawlet Public Library Board,

I am writing this letter in support of Lyndsi Barnes. I believe that there should be transparency regarding her dismissal from the library. At the previous meeting on 10/27/23 the minutes show that there was a request to increase the Director's salary by 10%, which was approved by all board members. The following meeting on 11/7/23 was a reversal of that support, with a vote of no confidence, followed by immediate dismissal. I believe that this action has done the library a disservice. Ms. Barnes was a welcome addition to our town and to our library. She has acted in the best interest of our community, implementing library programming and being a focal point for the library.

Sincerely,  
Laura Mach-Cornwall

26 November 2023

To Whom it May Concern:

I have been a Pawlet resident since 2007, and I've seen several librarians come and go in that time. Each of them brought their own strengths and abilities to the job and I've treasured their contribution to our community. Our library is the heart of the town, and it is critical that we have a librarian who understands that.

I met our most recent librarian, Lyndsi Barnes, in a roundabout way – she had posted to the Vermont Extension Master Gardeners in 2022 asking for help setting up a seed library and looking for people to give gardening talks to the community. I'm always looking for volunteer hours through the emails we get, and I was extremely excited to finally see one that was local to me.

Lyndsi and I started communicating via email. She was very appreciative and respectful of my time. We then met in person to talk out some ideas for the seed library and to hear her ideas about what people were interested in learning about. We met a couple more times in person, and she was warm and thoughtful. I gave my lecture when she was out of town (on a trip she had booked prior to these events being scheduled), but I received a thank you note from her almost immediately after my talk. She made me feel so appreciated, and I was very impressed with her follow up. I did another presentation in August, and she was present for that. For both talks, her focus was on how they would help members of our community, and I could tell that she cared greatly about our community members.

She reached out to me again this year, and we spent time together brainstorming ideas for another garden talk. Lyndsi is so creative and thoughtful, and I feel lucky to have her in our community. This talk was well attended, and I heard from many people over the weeks following who were happy to have our seed library and appreciated our library's Second Saturday garden lectures.

I hope this gives you some insight into Lyndsi's character. I cannot speak highly enough of her – she is a treasure.

Respectfully,

Cori Rail



## LOS for Lyndsi Barnes

1 message

**Laughing Child Farm** <farmer@laughingchildfarm.com>

Tue, Nov 21, 2023  
3:03 P

To: s145vt@gmail.com

To whom it may concern:

I would like to take a moment to express my dissatisfaction at the way the firing of Lyndsi Barnes was handled. From a purely community perspective, one day Lyndsi was a thriving librarian bringing funding and amazing programming to our small library and the next she was ousted by an email letting her know she was fired. I'd love to hear why this happened, especially as our library board is made up of elected officials and at the very least owe transparency to the voters and Lyndsi. No matter the reasoning behind the firing, due process is still required.

In the meantime, I am in support of reinstating Lyndsi until due process has occurred, as well as reinstating a general air of community respect surrounding this matter.

Brooke Hughes-Muse  
Community member and business owner

# Why Was the Pawlet Librarian Fired?

19 Sunday Nov 2023

POSTED BY EVE OGDEN SCHAUB IN UNCATEGORIZED

≈ 2 COMMENTS

*Tags*

pawlet librarian, pawlet public library

So here's something weird: I was perusing the most recent Pawlet Library Board minutes only to read in the last two lines that the Pawlet Library Director, Lyndsi Barnes has been dismissed "effective immediately."

Wait- what?

Annual Appeal:

- This is coming up soon, Harley will ensure the letter is written and printed, and look at the DonorSnap list by November 27, 2023 and there will be an envelope stuffing party at the library on December 2, 2023.

Annual Report to Town of Pawlet:

- Harley will bring a letter to the December meeting to approve.

7:01 Kathryn motions to move to Executive Session to discuss personnel matters. Joni seconds, all agree.

8:05 Executive Session ends.

Joni motions to offer a vote of no confidence in the current Director. Kathryn seconds, all agree.

Kathryn motions to vote for dismissal of the Director, effective immediately. Grace seconds, all agree.

8:15 Meeting is adjourned.

Dated November 7, 2023. Grace Larson, Secretary.

Next regularly scheduled meeting: December 5, 2023

It was only last month that the library board voted to recommend a *raise* for Lyndsi Barnes. She's been in the position of Library Director for the last two years, and although I've not interacted with her very much in that time, I've heard from many people who feel that she is a terrific addition to our historic library, instituting exciting new programming (Seed Savers, guitar sharing programs) and making a concerted effort towards community outreach. (I attended and was impressed by a free Fred Shehadi concert sponsored by the library in the Town Hall auditorium.)

But appreciation of our librarian is not limited to the town of Pawlet. One week prior to her dismissal, Lyndsi Barnes received a letter from the Vermont Library Association President informing her that she had been selected as "one of the remarkable librarians... who have made a significant impact within their local communities."

2

Dear Lyndsi,

In my capacity as President of the Vermont Library Association and on behalf of the VLA Executive Board, I am excited to inform you that we have chosen to recognize and celebrate your outstanding contributions to our community. It is with great pleasure that we extend an offer of a one-year complimentary membership to the Vermont Library Association, along with free registration to the 2024 VLA Conference.

You have been selected as one of the remarkable librarians from smaller Vermont libraries who have made a significant impact within their local communities. We were particularly impressed with the creativity and community focus of your seed library, Tech Time sessions, after school nature club and listing of Community Connections on your website.

We believe that individuals like you, who sustain and grow libraries with creativity and vision, can greatly enrich the Vermont Library Association. We hope that this one-year ...

So... this *definitely* begs the question: why?

I reached out to Lyndsi who said she's been given no explanation for her abrupt dismissal. I think she deserves one, but more importantly I think the people of Pawlet do, too.

If you'd like to know why our Library Director has been dismissed, here are two great opportunities to ask that question: the **next Library Board meeting** is to be held at the library on Tuesday December 5th at 5:30 PM. The **next Select Board meeting** is to be held at the Town Hall on Tuesday, November 28th at 7PM. Both of these meetings are open to the public.



## About Eve Ogden Schaub

Serial memoirist Eve O. Schaub lives with her family in Vermont and enjoys performing experiments on them so she can write about it. Author of Year of No Sugar (2014) and Year of No Clutter (2017) and most recently Year of No GARBAGE (2023). Find her on Twitter @Eveschaub IG or eveschaub.com.

[View all posts by Eve Ogden Schaub »](#)

## thoughts on "Why Was the Pawlet Librarian Fired?"

1. *said:* Molly Beverage

November 20, 2023 at 1:16 pm

There are always two sides to a story and there has been a lot of misinformation about why Lyndsi was let go. However, the reasons were very serious and she refused to meet with the Pawlet Library Board before they reached their unanimous decision.

This is a personnel matter so while the one side may be public, the other, legally, cannot be at this time. Responding to misinformation and jumping to conclusions will not bring resolution.

**REPLY**

◦ ***said:*** **Eve Ogden Schaub**

November 20, 2023 at 2:57 pm

No misinformation here! Just the facts that are public. I think the town deserves to know what happened and why. That's not taking a side, that's just asking for transparency. After all it is a taxpayer funded position.

**REPLY**

[Blog at WordPress.com.](#)



## Lyndsi Barnes

1 message

**Elizabeth Torak** <torak@vermontel.net>  
Reply-to: Elizabeth Torak <torak@vermontel.net>  
To: s145vt@gmail.com

Tue, Nov 21, 2023 at 10:10 AM

To the Library Board,

I was shocked and dismayed to hear of our excellent librarian Lyndsi Barnes being summarily dismissed. In the time that Lyndsi has been librarian I have been stunned by the energy, warmth, imagination and sheer competence she has brought to her position. Some examples are the seed saving program - I took seeds out of the library! - and the pay what you can yoga classes.

The library is one of the treasures of our community and the library board needs to be answerable to the community in how it handles and manages this precious resource.

Sincerely,  
Elizabeth Torak

torak@vermontel.net  
www.elizabethtorak.com  
cell: 607.386.9360



Elizabeth Gibson  
128 Solar Park  
Pawlet, VT 05761  
802-325-3619; [egib@vermontel.net](mailto:egib@vermontel.net)

Town of Pawlet Select Board and Library Board  
School Street  
Pawlet, VT 05761

November 28, 2023

Re: Dismissal of Pawlet Librarian

To the Select Board and Library Board:

I am writing to express my concern about the recent dismissal of the Library Director Lyndsi Barnes. I am concerned for two reasons: (1) the lack of an explanation for her dismissal and (2) the manner in which she was dismissed.

As a user of the Pawlet Library, I have always found Lyndsi very courteous and helpful, so I was quite surprised to learn that she had suddenly lost her job there. I was further concerned about the unprofessional way in which she had been dismissed, without any due process.

The Pawlet Library is a municipal library, which is why I am expressing these concerns to both the Select Board and the Library Board. If the Library Board has no policies in place for fair personnel management, then the Select Board should be aware of the need to help the Board develop such policies and should also help Lyndsi (or any Library employee) receive fair treatment from the Board.

Thanks for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

*Elizabeth Gibson*

Elizabeth Gibson, former Pawlet Library Board Member



November 27, 2023  
Pawlet, Vermont

Board of Trustees  
Pawlet Public Library  
141 School St.  
Pawlet, VT 05761

Dear members of the Pawlet Library Board of Trustees,

I write to express my concern and bewilderment at the recent decision of the Library board to dismiss Lyndsi Barnes as Library Director. Although I have not yet seen the minutes documenting that decision posted on the Town website, I understand that you made that decision at your meeting of November 7, 2023. I am struck by its suddenness and apparently total reversal of the board's unanimous support for Ms. Barnes at its meeting of October 24 (just two weeks earlier), in which you agreed to request the Select Board to raise her salary by 10 percent.

Although the board oversees the Director, her salary is paid by the Town. As both a contributor to the Library and a taxpayer of the Town of Pawlet, I believe that the Library board should make every effort for our townspeople to continue to benefit from Lyndsi's service as Director of our Library.

If Ms. Barnes performance was in some way deficient, it is in the best interest of the Library and the Town for the board to communicate that to her and to give her the opportunity to remedy whatever deficiency there may have been. As several of our fellow townspeople noted during the Select Board meeting of November 14, 2023, Ms. Barnes' strengths are significant. (These include the Vermont Library Association's recognition of her outstanding work at the Pawlet Public Library.) We should not be deprived of those strengths at our Library due to mere weaknesses that can be remedied.

**Hence, please reconsider your decision of November 7, 2023.** If you have observed directly that Ms. Barnes has performed poorly or behaved improperly, please communicate that to her clearly, along with your guidance on any changes needed in her performance or behavior, and **please reinstate her as Director** so that she may continue to serve us as Library Director while making those changes. If, on the other hand, you have received complaints about performance or behavior so egregious as to require immediate dismissal, I believe you owe it to Ms. Barnes and to our fellow townspeople to carry out an appropriate investigation of those complaints and to share the results of that investigation.

I am disturbed, too, by the comment at the above-mentioned Select Board meeting that Ms. Barnes was dismissed immediately, by e-mail, and without explanation. As trustees of the Library, you owe both Library staff and your fellow townspeople clearer and more respectful communication.

Respectfully yours,



Allen Turner  
Former Justice of the Peace  
Pawlet, Vermont

Cc: Town of Pawlet Select Board



## Pawlet Library Director

1 message

Barbara O'Connor <barbaraoc24@gmail.com>

Fri, Nov 17, 2023 at 5:04 P

To: Sue LaPorte <s145vt@gmail.com>

To whom it may concern:

As a resident of Pawlet for 37 years, I would like to voice my distress and shock about the abrupt dismissal of Lyndsi Barnes as Director of our Pawlet Library.

I am at a loss to understand why!

Lyndsi has an impeccable background in library science, left her job at The New York Public Library, moved to Pawlet with her family and was chosen to become our librarian from among seven candidates. How lucky can we all be, here in Pawlet.

I can only say that my interactions with Lyndsi have been courteous and friendly, fun and knowledgeable and above all so welcoming to the library. She has brought different programs to the library, some of which I attended, some I still attend, some I couldn't. Obviously something for everyone.

So what happened? I don't know, nobody knows it seems. Why was she let go via email? Why has she never had a review? Why did she not have a single meeting with the library board regarding any possible issues they might have had?

My interactions with Lyndsi have been nothing but the best. I ask that Lyndsi be reinstated to her previous job at the Pawlet Public Library.

Sincerely,  
Barbara O'Connor

Sent from my iPad



## Letter

1 message

**John Malcolm** <jmmmfarm@yahoo.com>

Fri, Nov 17, 2023 at 12:13 P

To: Susan LaPorte <s145vt@gmail.com>

To whom it may concern:

I am presenting this letter in support of Pawlet resident Ms. Lyndsi Barnes who was recently terminated as Library director of the Pawlet VT Public Library abruptly by the Library board without due process and reason.

My experience with Ms. Barnes's direction of the Library is complimentary and very positive. I joined the Library's Yoga class to help my recovery from a blood cancer and a subsequent fall when both my legs were broken. The class is wonderfully instructed by another Pawlet resident Lisa May and has been beneficial for me.

I've found the class well organized by Ms. Barnes and Ms. May and easy to participate with my ability and close to home and flexible in schedule and reasonable in cost. The class has also introduced me to the Library's other programs that Ms/ Barnes has established as well as to the other participants in the class.

The Pawlet Library's mission as a gathering center for the Town as well as an exchange of knowledge and enjoyment for people of all ages is well realized through the direction of Ms. Barnes's skill and good cheer. I am also a Trustee of the Pawlett Historical Society and appreciate the ability to have our monthly meetings in the Library.

Sincerely yours, John Malcolm, Pawlet VT

*Elayne Clift, M.A.*  
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14 November 23

Board of Directors, Pawlet Library  
Select Board, Pawlet, Vt.

Dear Boards:

I am writing this letter because I was shocked to learn that Lyndsi Barnes has been summarily dismissed without cause from her position as Director of the Pawlet Library.

I met Lyndsi and had the pleasure of working with her as a consultant facilitator of the Reading and Discussion program sponsored by the Vermont Humanities Council. I was immediately struck by her organizational and collaborative skills, her PR savvy, and her overall professionalism. I also had the opportunity to observe her interacting with library patrons. She couldn't have been more impressive.

Having served on a library board in Vermont for some time in the past and having experienced a similar objectionable dismissal of an excellent library director, who was reinstated with damages when the community took action, I am appalled by Lyndsi's dismissal. There can be no justifiable reason for this action on the part of the Board and I expect you will hear from others who are also disturbed by this action.

Lyndsi is recognized in her community for her fine work as Library Director, which has been recognized by the Vermont Library Association, representing the state level of the national organization. She was cited for her "outstanding contributions to the community," and for the "significant impact" she has made" because of her "creativity and community focus."

It is incumbent on the Board therefore to explain this action and to remedy it, and I am among the many people who will work hard to see that this decision is reversed.

Sincerely,

Elayne Clift

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Oceana Wilson** <[owilson@bennington.edu](mailto:owilson@bennington.edu)>  
Date: Fri, Nov 3, 2023 at 1:27 PM  
Subject: Honoring your work at Pawlet Public Library  
To: <[director.pawletpub@gmail.com](mailto:director.pawletpub@gmail.com)>

Dear Lyndsi,

In my capacity as President of the Vermont Library Association and on behalf of the VLA Executive Board, I am excited to inform you that we have chosen to recognize and celebrate your outstanding contributions to our community. It is with great pleasure that we extend an offer of a one-year complimentary membership to the Vermont Library Association, along with free registration to the 2024 VLA Conference.

You have been selected as one of the remarkable librarians from smaller Vermont libraries who have made a significant impact within their local communities. We were particularly impressed with the creativity and community focus of your seed library, Tech Time sessions, after school nature club and listing of Community Connections on your website.

We believe that individuals like you, who sustain and grow libraries with creativity and vision, can greatly enrich the Vermont Library Association. We hope that this one-year complimentary membership and the opportunity to attend our upcoming conference will not only provide you with valuable connections among your colleagues and facilitate the establishment of new connections across libraries in our state.

If you would like to participate, please let me know at your earliest convenience. However, if this is not an opportunity you would like at this time, please rest assured that we remain incredibly appreciative of the remarkable work you continue to do and the contributions you make to the Vermont library ecosystem.

Thank you for your dedication and commitment to our shared mission. We look forward to your response and, hopefully, to the prospect of working with you in the near future.

Sincerely,

**Oceana Wilson**  
Vermont Library Association President

--  
Oceana Wilson (she, her)  
Dean of the Library  
Bennington College

To Whom it May Concern,

11/14/2023

I am writing in support of Lyndsi Barnes to lend some insight into how positively Lyndsi has assisted me this past year. I reached out to Lyndsi and The Pawlet Library last November (2022), with the interest of starting a Chair Yoga class. Lyndsi brainstormed some ideas and asked if I was open to teaching a Mat Yoga class in addition to the Chair Yoga - to be held in the evenings. Her knowledge in programming and creativity in finding new ways to make things happen, have led to us hosting two successful Yoga classes for the past year.

She quickly worked up flyers and digital postings and started spreading the word. I was overjoyed to arrive for classes and find the room set up in not only a space efficient way, but she had arranged creative lighting and set a mood for class. She devised a system for individuals to check in, as well as a way for them to track payments easily. Having worked in many fitness clubs and yoga centers, I can speak first hand on how important this organization is. I am so grateful for Lyndsi for her knowledge and skills, as well as her ability to think creatively.

One of the aspects of these classes that Lyndsi and I discussed is creating a sense of welcoming community. It is a phrase I use often in classes, based on the priorities that Lyndsi and I discussed. It has been a privilege to witness participants' growth in these classes, not only in their increasing love for

movement, but in getting to know and support one another. I am grateful to Lyndsi for helping to create this opportunity for growth in my classes at The Pawlet Library.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Lisa May

AFAA Certified Personal Fitness Trainer  
AFAA Certified Fitness Practitioner  
NASM Certified Nutrition Coach

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