

**WEST HARTFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD AGENDA
VIRTUAL MEETING**

Monday, February 28 2022 - 6:30 p.m.

**This meeting can be viewed live on West Hartford Community Television at
www.whctv.org and www.youtube.com/whctv5**

1. CALL TO ORDER
2. PUBLIC COMMENT
3. APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA (Items 4, & 8ai, 8aii)
4. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES of the MEETING of January 24, 202 meeting.
5. PRESIDENT'S REPORT
 - a. Election of Officers
6. OLD BUSINESS
 - a. FY2023 Budget Update
 - b. New Community Center and Library Branch
 - c. Community Outreach
 - d. Staff Professional Development Update
7. NEW BUSINESS
 - a. Staff Spotlight
 - b. Library Issues and Trends
8. DIRECTOR'S REPORTS
 - a. January submitted:
 - i. Library Administrative report
 - ii. Budget report
 - iii. Monthly statistics & trends
 - b. Current Monthly Briefing
9. ADJOURNMENT
 - a. Next Meeting is scheduled for February 28, 2022.

Individuals who wish to comment on an agenda item, may do so by sending an email to Board@westhartfordlibrary.org on or before February 25, 2022.

Any Individual With A Disability Who Needs Special Assistance To Participate In The Meeting Should Contact Suzanne Oslander, Department of Social Services 561-7580, Five Day Prior To The Meeting

WEST HARTFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD MINUTES Draft
Monday, January 24, 2022 6:30 p.m.
VIRTUAL MEETING

1. CALL TO ORDER

President Jill Spear called the Library Board to order at 6:33 p.m. Present, via Town of West Hartford WebEx, were Board members Kim Cohen, Eileen Daly, Gail Crockett, Dr. Natalia Menjivar and Jill Spear, Library Director Laura Imscher, Former Acting Library Director Carol Waxman, and Janet Valencis, recorder.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT - none

3. APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA (Items 4 & 8a i, 8a ii, 8a iii.)

MOTION: On a motion made by Gail Crockett and seconded by Natalia Menjivar, the Board unanimously approved the Consent Agenda.

4. THE MEETING MINUTES of November 22, 2021 were approved as part of the consent agenda.

5. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

a. New Library Director Welcome

Jill warmly welcomed Laura Imscher as the new library director.

b. Library Support

Jill thanked all the town staff, members of the search committee and staff members for their efforts in this long process.

c. Gail Crockett appointed to Library Board for second term.

6. OLD BUSINESS:

a. FY23 Budget update

The budget was submitted on January 3, 2022 and will be reviewed at a January 31, 2022 meeting with town officials. The submittal was in accordance with the town request. All non-personnel lines remained constant. Personnel increases were due to the hiring of the library director, the reinstatement of the Library II position that was put on hold for FY22 and any wage increases due to contractual agreements.

b. New Community Culture Center and Library Branch update

An advisory board will be formed with representation from town boards and commissions and private boards that support town constituencies.

7. NEW BUSINESS

a. Staff Professional Development Update

Staff will be participating in a webinar this week on customer service. The library has asked the board to consider closing the library for several staff training events in the next year.

b. Library Board Meeting for December 2022

The scheduled meeting for December falls on a town holiday. The December meeting is optional so we will wait till the fall the either change the date or cancel the meeting.

8. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

a. November and December Report, submitted:

- i. Library Administrative Report
- ii. Budget Report
- iii. Circulation Statistics (issued quarterly)

b. Current Month Briefing.

We will be open for 10 Sundays this year, starting on January 9, from 12 noon until 4:00 PM.

We are responding to the latest pandemic protocol reflective of the rise in positivity rates in West Hartford by communicating frequently with the West Hartford/Bloomfield Health District and following all protocol. All library programming for children, teens and adults, has once again become virtual. Library patrons have a wide variety of engaging virtual programs to attend. Library visitors over the age of 2 years continue to wear a mask inside our three library buildings.

Curbside service, at the Noah Webster main library, which had slowed considerably is expected rise due to the rise in COVID positivity rates. At the Bishops Corner Branch, the use of a smart locker system has replaced curbside service. The smart locker service has proven to be very successful in terms of the number of library patrons using it and their appreciation of being able to pick up materials during closed library hours.

Studio 20 South, our new makerspace tech lab, will have a soft opening in February, opening a total of 22 hours per week and offering morning, afternoon and evening hours with full days on Saturday, staffed by technicians who are excited to introduce or instruct patrons on the devices offered.

Mayor's Youth Council is finalizing plans for its 2022 impact projects. Three subcommittees (mental health action & awareness, diversity/international night, and social media) have been meeting virtually and are in the planning stages.

A new Faxon Branch book drop is in place after the previous book drop was demolished by a car in the parking lot. It has been placed in the same location but the slot where materials are placed has been turned to the other side, after Town Engineers inspected it and determined the change needed to be made to avoid future damages

9. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: The Library Board Meeting was unanimously adjourned at 7:17 pm. The next scheduled Board Meeting is February 28, 2022 at 6:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Eileen Daly
Board Secretary
West Hartford Library Board

"This meeting was held remotely in accordance with Governor Lamont's executive orders concerning the conduct of virtual meetings and proceedings and the public had the ability to view the meeting in real-time on West Hartford Community Interactive: Comcast Channel 96, Frontier TV Channel 6099, and streaming on the WHCI website."

January 2022 Administrative Report

Statistics

Curbside appointments: 225 NWL Faxon 2)

Total Circulation: (all 3 branches) 40,870

New Cards: 278

Study Pod Reservations: 51

Circulation was up 2,815 from December.

Curbside appointments were also up 89 appointments.

This rise could be attributed to the weather or the Omicron variant. Either way we have noticed many of our regular patrons using curbside once again.

Continued Reopening

We are now open for 10 Sundays this year, having starting on January 9, from 12 noon until 4:00 PM.

We are responding to the latest pandemic protocol reflective of the rise in positivity rates in West Hartford by communicating frequently with the West Hartford/Bloomfield Health District and following all protocol. All library programming for children, teens and adults, has once again become virtual. Library patrons have a wide variety of engaging virtual programs to attend. Library visitors over the age of 2 years continue to wear a mask inside our three library buildings.

Curbside service slowed considerably but is still being offered at the Noah Webster Library as more and more patrons have entered the building to retrieve their materials and browse. However, with the rise in positivity rates, we expect to see a rise in curbside service. The service has been discontinued at the Faxon Branch Library. At the Bishops Corner Branch, the use of a smart locker system has replaced curbside service. The smart locker service has proven to be very successful in terms of the number of library patrons using it and their appreciation of being able to pick up materials during closed library hours.

Unfortunately, due to staff outbreaks of Covid, we had to close the Faxon Branch Library for the day on January 3, 2022, due to a staff shortage. We are in close contact with the West Hartford/Bloomfield Health District on a daily basis to determine quarantine protocol for staff members who are exposed and those returning to work after Covid.

Collections and Statistics

For the last two months (November and December) physical books were our biggest circulating format, comprising about 60% of total circulation, up from about 45% November and December of 2020. Ecirc is 20% of circulation, down from 30% in November and December of 2020. This data shows patrons are gradually returning to the

library in person, checking out physical items, at least before the worst of the latest Covid surge.

Budget Process

The Department of Library Services Budget FY23 was submitted on January 3, 2022. A budget review process will take place for all Town Departments on February 1, presented by Laura and Carol. We have submitted a budget that is similar to FY22 with increases only in staff lines for cost of living and merit increases and the activation of the Program and Publicity Librarian II position that was formerly held by Joe Cadieux and defunded for FY22. We believe that the budget is compliant with what was requested by the Town Manager.

Bishops Corner Smart Lockers

There are now 80 unique smart locker users (up from 62 at the end of December).

In January, there were 120 total locker retrievals (the highest monthly total so far).

On 1/18, there were the most lockers in use so far since the inception of the service, with 18 of the 21 lockers in use.

Pickup time has dropped to an average of 27 hours (well under the 72 hour threshold)

Bishops Corner staff have received calls from patrons who were home “quarantining” with Covid and needed to switch their inside the building holds to the lockers.

Studio 20 South (formerly known as the Tech Lab)

Studio 20 South will have a soft opening the week of February 7, opening a total of 22 hours per week and offering morning, afternoon and evening hours with full days on Saturday, staffed by technicians who are very interested in introducing or instructing patrons on our devices. The lab will be publicized on our website as a start and our newsletter a bit later in order not to overwhelm the staff and to give individual attention to all who register to use the space. Library visitors will register on a google form and identify the services they wish to use. One visitor will be allowed at a time and must have a library card.

Jae and Jennifer worked on organizing and labeling equipment in the Maker Studio and Jae worked with Andrew and Gen to develop procedures and rules of use for the Maker Studio.

Study Pod

The study pod was used 51 times in the month of January for sessions of up to two hours per day, by reservation.

Community Center Update

A letter is being sent to the following stakeholder groups to determine a representative from each group to serve on an advisory committee for the New Community Center.

- West Hartford Public Library Board
- Parks & Recreation Advisory Board
- Pedestrian & Bicycle Safety Commission
- Senior Citizens Advisory Board
- Clean Energy Commission
- Elmwood Business Association
- Mayor's Youth Council
- Resident At Large
- Resident At Large
- Advisory Commission for Persons with Disabilities
- Commission on the Arts
- West Hartford Chamber of Commerce
- Human Rights Commission
- Board member from The Bridge Family Center
- West Hartford-Bloomfield Health District
- West Hartford Public Schools

The New Community Center Advisory Committee would meet monthly, or on an as needed basis, with the chosen Architect firm and appropriate Town staff through the feasibility and design stages of the project. The committee would assist in facilitating community outreach and participation.

An advisory committee for the new community center would allow Town staff, leadership, stakeholders and residents to work together to ensure that design and planned functions of the new facility aligns with the strategic vision of the Town and leads to solutions that address the specific needs of the community. The creation of a thoughtful and supportive committee to assist the Architecture firm would be valuable.

Amazon Smile Update

As of 1/18, the West Hartford Public Library has 21 customers supporting our charity. There have been 13 purchases in the last 7 days and 57 purchases in December 2021.

At the present time, there are no funds within the account. They are posted on a quarterly basis. The next donation will be sent in February 2022.

Professional Development Committee

Given that we work so closely with the public, it's no surprise that customer service was the topic of interest ranked #1 by staff. A video **Customer Service Tune-Up: Tips to Help You Care for Yourself as You Care for Others** was offered to all staff for viewing on January 25th and 26th.

Art Committee

The art curators hired to curate six art shows for the West Hartford libraries this year have proposed the following themes:

April - May A Way with Words - Art inspired by the written word.

Jun - July Juneteeth and Pride

Aug - Sept Circles - Representational or abstract work featuring a circle, or circles in the compositions.

Oct - Nov Color Theme: Orange

Dec- Jan Peace

Feb-March Creatures of West Hartford

The Art subcommittee did a walk through Noah Webster Library to assess the art that is currently hanging in the building. We will discuss at our next meeting what to keep, where we could add art and the Curated art shows for the upcoming year.

Community Outreach

West Hartford Human Rights Commission

WH Human Rights Commission met virtually Wednesday, Jan 5th 2022. Since Pramod was out sick, Kari Karp hosted this meeting for the Commission.

Golden Door, Center for Immigrants

Pramod continued meeting with Ellen Salzman-Fiske, founder president of GDCI, and Elizabeth Hanlon, who will be teaching and leading the discussion for *Building Connections: Book Club for Immigrant*. There will be three sessions of three months each. Classes for the first session started Thursday, September 16th, 2021 at Faxon Community room. The last class for the first session was Dec 9th, 2021. These classes were held in person.

Due to the rising number of Covid cases, the second session of this series of book discussions will be held virtually. Each session will have twelve students. The second session of this book club started Thursday, January 13th, 2022. Book club students started this session by discussing *Humans of New York* by Brandon Stanton.

This program is funded by Greater Hartford Community Fund. WHPL partnered with Golden door for the project.

The Fern Street Backpack program continued with families of middle and high school students coming to the Faxon Branch Library to pick up food bags during the school year. There are 12 families registered for this program to date.

Faxon continued English classes through zoom. There are three individuals taking advantage of these online one-on-one English classes.

Faxon had to pause ESOL in-person classes which were held at the Community Room every Friday from 10 – 11:30 am. There were seven students signed up for this program. Pramod has asked the volunteer teacher if they would like to have a virtual class over Zoom.

Meetings, Staff Development, Outreach

Kari met virtually with performers and librarians who would like to assist with upcoming YA programs: Let's Talk College, LLC, Team DIG USA and the Bloomfield Public Library re: an All CT Reads book discussion of *One of the Good Ones* by Maika and Maritza Moulite.

For professional development, Kari took part in the CT State Library webinar "WeVideo for Instructional and Informational Videos" All CT Reads Virtual Author Launch, both on 1/13.

Carol attended meetings of the Employee Recognition Committee, the Collaborative Summer Library Programs Committee, the Human Services Commission and the Elmwood Community Center Planning Committee.

Sara is serving on the Nutmeg Book Award Committee 2024.

Andrew and Carol attended a preliminary meeting to explore ways we can recognize Native American Heritage Month.

Lauren viewed the webinar Trauma-Informed Librarianship: Building Communities of Care from the Network of the National Library of Medicine.

Jae attended an OCLC Cataloging Community meeting.

Children's Services

With the extreme rise in virus positivity rates, especially in pediatric cases, all in-person programming for Winter 2022 was postponed or switched to virtual.

Baby Sign Language for ages infant -3 was offered through Zoom on the mornings of January 24, 31 and February 7. Children learned basic ASL vocabulary with instructor Colleen Brunetti. Nineteen children attended the first session. A list of simple supplies of household items to use as learning aids was sent to participants before the first session.

A Grab and Go glitter jar craft was offered.

The Children's librarians met to discuss and plan summer reading for 2022 using the national iRead program *Read Beyond the Beaten Path*, featuring an outdoor activities/camping theme. Discussions were held with Ashley Callan, Townwide Curriculum Specialist and David St. Germain, Department Supervisor for Library Media Specialists to determine the course of events for this year keeping in mind pandemic protocol. The plan will be to provide a two sided single sheet featuring a path with steps to color in for each book read on one side and a game board with challenges for children to complete on the other. There will be slightly different formats for children in Pre-K – Grade 1 and Grades 2-5. Children can also enter their books in a Google form. Children who turn in their forms the last two weeks in August at the libraries will receive a paperback book. A

video will be developed with the librarians greeting students from various locations in West Hartford and talking about summer reading that will be shown in school classrooms or media centers before the end of school.

Programming will be held outdoors as much as possible this summer and will include both storytimes, clubs such as Lego, craft activities and other events as well as large scale family events to be held in Blue Back Square or other outdoor settings.

Teen Services

January teen programs included Teen Advisory Board, Mayor's Youth Council and Dungeons & Dragons Candlekeep Mysteries.

Kari Karp and Gen Francis started the application process to create a Girls Who Code club for the library. Risk Management is reviewing the GWC participation agreement, and once it is submitted, the Teen Department will begin planning a summer series. Kari also contacted the Hall High School Technology Education staff to ask for volunteers for a summer tween/teen Vex-IQ program utilizing robotics kits that were previously purchased by the library for a 2016 grant.

Mayor's Youth Council has been meeting in subcommittees to discuss their action projects. Kari moderated the Mental Health Action & Awareness subcommittee Google Meet on 1/12 - 5. On January 11, 3 MYC members met with Dr. Tracey Wilson to assist with the Witness Stones Project. They will be helping by (1) giving feedback on a field trip video being produced for the Noah Webster House & West Hartford Historical Society entitled "Lamentation of an Old Female Slave," (2) petitioning Town Council to rename New Street in honor of an enslaved person from West Hartford, and (3) helping with a QR code project using audio files to tell the stories of slaves depicted on the mural outside the Noah Webster Library. Lastly, one Mayor's Youth Council member, Maya Palanki, was asked to speak at the student rally "Vigil for Democracy" at Town Hall on January 6.

Mayor's Youth Council also created a new town email address for correspondence and publicity (myc@westhartfordCT.gov) and a new Instagram account @mycwesthartford, which will be maintained by the Social Media subcommittee. Lastly, Kari is working with Corporation Counsel to finalize an MYC Logo Design Contest, which will be used to promote the group and attract new members.

Teen Room Staff completed several projects, including installing LED strip lights, designing flyers and social media posts for programs, and creating a "Blind Date with a Book" display that will launch in February.

Adult Services

This month WHPL made two new digital resources available to patrons: ArtistWorks and Skillshare. ArtistWorks is available in the Libby app and provides access to self-paced online music lessons. The lessons are taught by established musicians and the library of content includes lessons for a wide variety of instruments and skill-levels. To date, 50

patrons have used AristWorks. The other resource now available to our patrons is Skillshare, an online learning community that features thousands of classes for the creative and the curious. Topics include web development, computer programming, art, design, marketing, leadership, photography, video, and so much more. Requests to use Skillshare are processed by reference desk staff and in January, 18 patrons "checked out" a SkillShare seat.

Two business leaders met with a SCORE mentor to get feedback, advice, and support to grow their business.

The Reference Department compiled 2021 year-end staff picks and created a virtual display of book carousels on our website to share on social media and in the newsletter. Lauren completed 22 notary signatures for 18 West Hartford patrons.

Rebecca created two physical displays in the library, "New Year's Resolutions", and "Set Outside the U.S.". Books set outside the U.S. is a bingo categories for the Adult Winter Reading Challenge.

Andrew worked with the Office of Emergency Management to develop a phoneline for the public to call for assistance in signing up for a Covid test kit. Demand was high and the town's supply was exhausted quickly. In the days that followed, the Reference Department continued to answer questions about town test kit and mask distribution on the regular reference line.

Andrew collaborated with Gen, Jae, and other members of the Tech Lab Committee to develop rules and procedures for Studio 20 South, which will be available for patrons to use after our soft launch slated for February 7.

Andrew compiled staff name tag preferences which P&P then used to create brand new staff name tags that feature our new logo.

In January, a total of 124 patrons participated in the Adult Winter Reading Challenge.

Lauren held the Fiber Arts Book Club meeting on 1/11, with 4 attendees.

Lauren advertised, packaged, and distributed the January Winter Reading Challenge Take & Make craft to 23 participants. The registration list was completely full less than 12 hours after the craft was announced in the newsletter. Given the positive response, talks are underway to possibly continue offering adult take and make crafts throughout the year.

Andrew coordinated with members of *The Atlantic* group to run their January meeting.

Andrew managed the Night Owls book group who met this month to discuss *The Four Winds* by Kristin Hannah.

Adult Programming

Programs & Publicity Division

Featured Programs

- **By Her Hand: Artemisia Gentileschi and Women Artists in Italy, 1500 – 1800:**

Wadsworth Museum

- **The Mindset & Management of Stress**
- **Film and Discussion: Funny Ladies**
- **Eat This, Not That!**
- **One-Pot Meals with Chef Chris**

Regular Programs – New Yorker Magazine Group, WH Fiction Writers, Faxon Poets, Night Owls, the Atlantic Group

Collection Services

Items Added in January: 2508 (includes 1028 downloadable records)

Items Deleted in January: 2026

For the last two months (November and December) physical books were our biggest circulating format, comprising about 60% of total circulation, up from about 45% November and December of 2020. Ecirc is 20% of circulation, down from 30% in November and December of 2020. This data shows patrons are gradually returning to the library in person, checking out physical items, at least before the worst of the latest Covid surge.

Buildings

Noah Webster Library Reading Room Furniture Request

We have applied for and been granted a Thomas F. Kilfoil funding request in the amount of \$14,000 to purchase new chairs, tables and benches for the Noah Webster Library Reading Room. We will be purchasing 4 chairs, (2 in wider size to accommodate all body types), 3 side tables and two benches, all in vinyl fabrics.

Grant Request

The Noah Webster Library Reading Room is frequently used by patrons seeking a quiet and peaceful space to read, work, use their own computer and sit in a comfortable chair to relax. Many people spend hours at a time on a daily basis in the room. We are requesting funds to purchase new easy-to-clean chairs and side tables as well as two benches for the Reading Room to replace the worn older furniture that is not able to be thoroughly cleaned and sanitized. The pandemic has shown us that

all surfaces, especially seating, need to be cleaned on a daily basis.

During the pandemic, upholstered furniture was removed from the Reading Room as it was impossible to clean and disinfect the fabrics. This action severely impacted the seating space in the Reading Room, one of the most popular places in the library for patrons to use. We intend to recreate a comfortable space, with furniture that can easily be kept clean and disinfected both during the pandemic and well into the future and that is also suitable for all body types such as bariatric furniture as well as chairs with arms for those for whom mobility is an issue. Unfortunately, furniture cleaning is rarely performed by town or professional cleaning staff. The new furniture purchased will be constructed of newer vinyl fabrics that can be quickly cleaned with a bleach wipe on a daily basis to allow for complete disinfecting and sanitizing.

The town recently paid to have several key spaces within the Noah Webster Library re-painted. After 14 years of wear, many walls and other areas were looking extremely shabby. One space that was refreshed with new paint was the Reading Room. This room, with its striking palladium windows, is one of the most important spaces in the library both in terms of its architecture as well as its function. Newly painted, it is clean and bright. We would like to spread this ambiance with new furniture so that the entire space is consistent. We have identified furniture that is functional, practical, chosen for its ability to be easily and thoroughly cleaned and is comfortable and attractive.

Faxon Branch Book Drop

A new parking lot book drop was installed at the Faxon Branch. The new book drop window was installed facing southwest. The old book drop had a window facing northwest. Pramod spoke with Catherine Rose when she visited Faxon and requested that the top be rotated so that the opening slot for the book drop will be facing northwest like the old book drop and add an additional bollard be installed so that it can be protected from cars backing up from the parking area. The top was rotated the same day. The additional bollard will be installed in the spring to wait for the ground to soften.

Due to the power outage on Jan 24th, 2022, at Faxon, the WiFi access points went down. It was found that the network switch connected to the access points were brought down by the power surge. A new temporary network switch was installed

Library Painting Project

The painting project at the Noah Webster Library is now complete. The stairwell railings and walls have been painted and base molding added to the stairwells to prevent wear. Some hallways and the staff restrooms are repainted and window repairs and painting touch-ups have been done to the Library Director's office.

Library Staff

Three part-time reference librarians have taken long term leaves due to their concern about working during Covid. Other staff are filling in for their shifts. We are hoping for their return when they are able to do so.

Message from Carol

Dear friends,

This will be the last Administrative Report that I will write and send to you before turning over that responsibility to Library Director Laura Irmischer. I want you to know that I am honored to have been given the opportunity to serve the organization as Interim Director since September 11, 2020. It has been a journey that we have traveled together, all while making decisions and navigating through the complexities and challenges of Covid. However, we managed to accomplish many projects these over the past two years. You have all been infinitely supportive and helpful to me and I will always appreciate that and treasure your friendship. Thank you for showering me with gifts and kind words. I know that you join me in welcoming Laura to our library family. Always, Carol

Town of West Hartford
Library Expenditures
FY22 January 2022

Expenditures	GENERAL FUND				BALANCE	% OF BUDGET SPENT
	BUDGET	ENCUMBERED	EXPENDITURE			
Library Personal Expenses	\$2,379,131.00		\$1,229,349.11		\$1,149,781.89	52%
Library Non Personal Expenses	\$652,637.00		\$388,636.11		\$264,000.89	60%
Social Security Expenses	\$ 179,342.00		\$ 82,118.14		\$97,223.86	46%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES FUND 1	\$3,211,110.00		\$1,700,103.36		\$1,511,006.64	53%