

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

Monday, September 19, 2022 - 6:30 p.m.

This meeting can be viewed live on West Hartford Community Television at
www.whctv.org and www.youtube.com/watch?v=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 July 25, 2022
5. CHAIR'S REPORT
6. OLD BUSINESS
 - a. Library Issues and Trends – Book Bans
 - b. Staff Professional Development Update
 - c. New Community Center & Library Project
7. NEW BUSINESS
 - a. Strategic Plan
8. DIRECTOR'S REPORTS
 - a. September documents submitted:
 - i. Library Administrative report (July and August)
 - ii. Budget report
 - b. Current Monthly Briefing
9. ADJOURNMENT
 - a. Next Meeting is scheduled for October 24, 2022

Individuals who wish to comment on an agenda item, may do so by sending an email to Board@westhartfordlibrary.org on or before September 16, 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 Days Prior To The Meeting

WEST HARTFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD MINUTES
Monday, July 25, 2022, 6:30 p.m.
VIRTUAL MEETING

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Eileen Daly called the Library Board to order at 6:40 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 Irmscher, and Janet Valencis, recorder. No one was present from the public.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT - none

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

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

4. THE MEETING MINUTES of June 27, 2022 were approved as part of the consent agenda.

5. CHAIR'S REPORT

- a. If a member of the public would like to have their comments read at a meeting, they need to be submitted in advance. The meeting agenda notes the submission deadline.
- b. Jill attended an advisory board meeting for the new community center. She outlined the discussion points and stated that the library's initial list of requirements was included in the advisory board meeting notes.

6. OLD BUSINESS: none

7. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Adding an item to the agenda

MOTION: On a motion made by Kim Cohen and seconded by Gail Crockett, the Board unanimously approved the addition of an agenda item about modifying the library schedule for a staff development event.

- b. Staff Professional Development

Laura stated that the staff professional development plan includes 1 full day and two half days of training. On September 8, 2022, the library would like to have a half day of professional development for staff. All three branches of the library would be closed from 10 am to 2 pm. All three branches would open at from 2 pm to 5 pm that day.

MOTION: On a motion made by Jill Spear and seconded by Gail Crockett, the Board unanimously approved the schedule change for staff professional development.

8. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- a. June Report, submitted:
 - i. Library Administrative Report
 - ii. Budget Report
 - iii. Circulation Statistics
- b. Current Month Briefing.
 - The library website will be the host for the new Community Center's webpage. The library will also provide information to residents via the library newsletter and physical copies of information at library sites.
 - Two new part time children's reference librarians have been hired as well as a part time technical assistant.
 - The children and teen librarians have been working with the schools to have students sign up for library cards.
 - The library met with the Adult Education Program to discuss how the library and the Adult Education Program can collaborate to better serve the adult education population.

9. EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION: On a motion made by Jill Spear and seconded by Gail Crockett, the Board went into Executive Session to discuss a personnel matter at 7:05 pm.

Board members Kim Cohen, Eileen Daly, Gail Crockett, Dr. Natalia Menjivar and Jill Spear as well as Library Director Laura Imscher attended the executive session.

The board returned to the regular meeting at 8:23 pm.

10. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: The Library Board Meeting was unanimously adjourned at 8:24pm. The next scheduled Board Meeting is September 26, 2022

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Cohen
Board Secretary

"This meeting was held remotely and the public had the ability to view the meeting in real-time live on West Hartford Community Television at www.whctv.org and www.youtube.com/whctv5.

Town of West Hartford
Library Expenditures
FY22 June 2022

	GENERAL FUND				
	BUDGET	ENCUMBERED	EXPENDITURE	BALANCE	% OF BUDGET SPENT
Expenditures					
Library Personal Expenses	\$2,379,131.00		\$2,364,393.33	\$14,737.67	99%
Library Non Personal Expenses	\$652,637.00		\$621,970.84	\$30,666.16	95%
Social Security Expenses	\$ 179,342.00		\$ 155,499.97	\$23,842.03	87%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES FUND 1	\$3,211,110.00		\$3,141,864.14	\$69,245.86	98%

Town of West Hartford
Library Expenditures
FY23 July 2022

GENERAL FUND					
	BUDGET	ENCUMBERED	EXPENDITURE	BALANCE	% OF BUDGET SPENT
Expenditures					
Library Personal Expenses	\$2,640,978.00		\$104,077.97	\$2,536,900.03	4%
Library Non Personal Expenses	\$652,637.00		\$156,659.34	\$495,977.66	24%
Social Security Expenses	\$ 198,319.00		\$ 7,338.17	\$190,980.83	4%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES FUND 1	\$3,491,934.00		\$268,075.48	\$3,223,858.52	8%

Town of West Hartford
Library Expenditures
FY23 August 2022

<u>GENERAL FUND</u>				
	<u>BUDGET</u>	<u>ENCUMBERED</u>	<u>EXPENDITURE</u>	<u>BALANCE</u>
<u>Expenditures</u>				<u>% OF BUDGET SPENT</u>
Library Personal Expenses	\$2,640,978.00		\$293,877.73	\$2,347,100.27 11%
Library Non Personal Expenses	\$652,637.00		\$200,644.67	\$451,992.33 31%
Social Security Expenses	\$ 198,319.00		\$ 20,644.60	\$177,674.40 10%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES FUND 1	\$3,491,934.00		\$515,167.00	\$2,976,767.00 15%

July Administrative Report

Library Statistics

- Total Circulation: 65,621 (14% increase from July 2021)
- Smart Locker: 136 locker retrievals; 146 unique users total
- Curbside appointments: 67
- New Cards: 436
- Study Pod Reservations: 57
- Collection Items Added: 2,257
- ILL: 27 requests to borrow; 26 items supplied to other libraries
- Notary: 14 patrons served
- Tech Help: 10 appointments, 3 drop-ins

New Community Center & Library Project

The library's website has been designated as the hub of information for the new Community Center Feasibility Study. Tecton Architects have provided information about the project to date, including next steps, a timeline of upcoming activities, and pictures of the work they have done so far. The site can be accessed through the Library's homepage or by following this link: <https://www.westhartfordlibrary.org/the-library/feasibility-study/>

Faxon Fun

The return of Faxon Fun was a huge success! Over 20 children attended and their enthusiasm was wonderful to see. Special presentations included a cooking class, cartooning instruction with the famous cartoonist Joe Young, a visit from the ambassador zoo animals from the Zoo in Forest Park and science classes led by Mad Science of Western New England. Children in Session One as well as 4th graders in Session Two were matched with a teen Book Buddy on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Several of those children returned after their session was over to continue meeting their Book Buddy.

All of the staff at the Faxon Branch Library were enormously helpful in preparing the space, guiding parents through the registration process and welcoming the children daily.

Children's Art Banner Contest

Twenty-four submissions for the Art Banner Contest are now being photographed by our Program and Publicity Department to be assigned to the light poles in West Hartford Center in August. There are 25 poles and we're pleased to report that every banner submitted was a winner! Some of the subjects of the banners included the happy place being the library, school, nature, bodies of water, etc. All participants were contacted to tell them that their child would have their banner depicting their "Happy Place" on a pole and responses were received back to let us know that the children were very excited. This was a great community partnership program between the Library and West Hartford Municipal Parking.

Community Engagement

Pramod coordinated a meeting and met with Okey Ndibe and Chuck Coursey, Library Foundation President, on July 5th, 2022, at Noah Webster Library. Pramod gave them a tour of Studio 20 South and planned for possible video podcasting projects from Studio 20.

Pramod also facilitated the West Hartford Human Rights Commissions Special virtual meeting on July 6th, 2022. This particular meeting was held to discuss the issue of the statement by the commission in response to the U.S. Supreme Court decision on Dobbs vs. Jackson

Laura and Andrew met with Andrew Tyskiewicz and Caren Dickman from the West Hartford Adult Education Program to discuss opportunities for future collaboration. They are planning to invite library staff to attend a class in the fall to give an orientation to the library and sign up students for library cards.

Pramod and Karen met with Carol Blauvelt, who is coordinating a book discussion group at the Elmwood Community Center. The group will have their first informational session in July and Faxon staff will coordinate with them to place holds each month for their book selection. Members will pick up and return the books to Faxon each month but the group will meet at Elmwood.

Fern Street Food bag Summer program continues. There are 28 food bags for distribution at Faxon. Starting June 16th through August 24th, Faxon will have these bags for West Hartford School students to pick up during the week when the schools are closed. Since June 16th, Faxon has distributed 165 food bags.

From Our Patrons

Here are some stories and interactions our staff recently had with patrons at the library:

- A Faxon patron came to the reference desk to thank the staff for all the job hunting and resume help she's received on the computers over the last few months. She was happy to report that she has found a job and starts on Monday!
- Lauren has notarized eight documents for a patron who moved to West Hartford from another state and was working on gaining admission to the Connecticut bar. The patron was able to complete the process, and Lauren swore her in to the state bar.

Adult Services & Programs

Featured Programs

- Medicare and More (virtual)
- Film and Discussion: The Unimaginable Journey of Peter Ertel (in-person)

Total Attendance for Featured Programs: 46

More winners were chosen for the bi-weekly summer reading drawings. The winners received gift certificates to various West Hartford eateries. As of Thursday, 7/28, 118 patrons have read and submitted 629 books to the Summer Reading Challenge.

Regular Programs

- *The New Yorker* magazine discussion group (virtual)
- West Hartford Fiction Writers (virtual)
- Connecticut Screenwriters (virtual)
- Faxon Poets (virtual)
- *The Atlantic* magazine discussion group (virtual)
- Fiber Arts Book Club (hybrid)
- Night Owls Book Group (virtual)

Total Attendance for Series Programs: 145

Updates

In mid-July we launched our Tech Help service called Tech Help @ WHPL. Patrons can drop in for a quick question about how to use their device, or sign up for an appointment for more involved requests. Drop in and appointment times are available at Noah Webster and Faxon. So far several patrons have dropped in or signed up to get tech assistance from library volunteers.

Children's Services & Programs

Programs

A variety of summer programs for ages infant through middle school have been offered this summer. Wonderful Ones, Steam Storytime, Babytime, Mother Goose on the Loose and Friday Afternoon Flicks were held indoors with a very large crowd of families with preschool children attending Sunny Stories outdoors on a perfect weather morning.

Bishops Corner story time session started off great! Lots of new faces for all the programs. Bouncing Babies returned for the first time since the pandemic and it was wonderful to see all those little faces. The teddy bear camp out was also a big success with children (and parents) loving the live updates on Facebook.



Children are exploring science, technology, engineering, art, and math in a program called Summer STEAM Storytime in which favorite characters from author Andrea Beaty are presented, with Miss Emily on Tuesday mornings. Each week a new book and STEAM concept is explored through songs, games and hands-on activities.

The Brooklyn based band Rolie Polie Guacamole performed a concert for families on the evening of July 20 in Blue Back Square. Despite the extreme heat, we had 75 children and adults attending who sang, danced, pretended they were riding a train and enjoyed the concert immensely.

The Elizabeth Park 125th storytime took place on the afternoon of Saturday, July 16 with about 40 children and adults attending. Children listened to garden and flower themed stories and danced to music waving scarves through the rose garden. Booklists featuring nature themed books from the West Hartford Public Library were distributed.

Oh, what a night on July 27! John Boyer and the Big Bubble Bonanza was held in Blue Back Square with at least 250 people in attendance. Families very much enjoyed the show and wanted to know when the next outdoor event would happen. Popsicles were served.



Teen Services Programs

- Society of Women Coders kicked off its first Future Coders Without Barriers meeting on Zoom on July 2. There were 21 attendees and 3 engaging guest speakers. 4 more sessions followed on Saturday afternoons in July.
- Pokémon Terrariums
- Summer Anime Club
- Dungeons & Dragons
- Meetup with Golden Door Hartford – the Mayor's Youth Council and Golden Door held a meetup to hear ideas for a new group to help welcome and support immigrant middle and high school students in the area.

- Create a Dream Board – interactive program for teens to map out their future and create a dream board. By creating a dream board, teens can experience less anxiety, set goals, and increase self-awareness, while still having fun. This program was a partnership with the Bloomfield Public Library.

Updates

Mayor Shari Cantor and Councilwoman Adrienne Billings-Smith have committed to representing the Town Council at 2022-2023 Mayor's Youth Council meetings. New Mayor's Youth Council members were notified of their selection and the group will start meeting in September.

August Administrative Report

Library Statistics

- Total Circulation: 67,598 (18% increase from August 2021)
- Smart Locker: 172 locker retrievals (largest total so far); 154 unique users total
- Curbside appointments: 76
- New Cards: 378
- Study Pod Reservations: 78
- Collection Items Added: 2,326
- ILL: 22 requests to borrow; 21 items supplied to other libraries
- Notary: 9 patrons served
- Tech Help: 14
- Studio 20 South appointments: 10

Faxon Fun

This four-week program held at the Faxon Branch Library was a summer program designed to provide a positive, enriching, and structured experience for children who did not have access to other summer activities due to financial and/or logistical considerations. This program was sponsored by the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving. After a two-year disappointing hiatus from this cherished program for the Faxon Branch neighborhood community, summer 2022 absolutely did not disappoint! A total of fifty children participated in two sessions (Grades 1-3 for the first session and Grades 4-6 for the second session). Children's Librarian Ellen Phillips designed and facilitated the program with precision and was assisted by neighborhood older teens who earned a stipend, as well as younger teen volunteers. An itinerary was planned to educate and delight each attendee, plus offer each an opportunity to socialize with their peers and connect with teen role models, all in a cool and comfortable neighborhood space using Faxon's indoor and outdoor facilities.

Special presentations to the group included a cooking class, cartooning instruction with the famous cartoonist Joe Young, a visit from the ambassador zoo animals from the Zoo in Forest Park and science classes led by Mad Science of Western New England. Children in Session One as well as 4th graders in Session Two were matched with a teen Book Buddy on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Several of those children returned after their session was over to continue meeting their Book Buddy.

Thank you to all the Faxon staff who worked so very hard to make this program happen!

New Community Center & Library Project

Tecton Architects presented on the new Community Center & Library project to the Town Council's standing committees on Community Planning and Economic Development and Human and Community Services. The architects gave updates on the feasibility work to date and community feedback gathered so far. The group also had their second meeting with the

community Advisory Committee where they reviewed the prioritization feedback and previewed some initial ideas and precedent images.

Fern Street Backpack Program

The summer version of the Fern Street backpack program came to a close. The library and Fern Street distributed over 4,000 pounds of food this summer. The Fern Street program distributed another 4,000 pounds in fresh produce, lunch meals and household supplies to families.

The first summer of using Bishops Corner as a pickup location wasn't as successful as we had hoped but we will try to recruit some more families for next year. The school year backpack distribution will begin at Faxon. Elementary aged students now pick up their backpacks at school but middle and high school families will be picking up at Faxon. As of now, we have 14 families signed up and Katherine Wilson is working on identifying more.

Adult Summer Reading

Our summer reading challenge was a great success! 126 participants read 997 books and completed 35 activities. There were 3 grand prize winners and 28 bi-weekly prize winners; the winners received gift cards to West Hartford eateries.

The top 5 most-read books:

- *The Hotel Nantucket* by Elin Hilderbrand
- *The Summer Place* by Jennifer Weiner
- *Book Lovers* by Emily Henry
- *Lessons in Chemistry* by Bonnie Garmus
- *The Maid* by Nita Prose

Visit the [summer reading challenge page](#) to see the summer's most-read books, authors, and categories.

Art Banner Project

The 24 art banners drawn by children with the theme "My Happy Place" and installed by Municipal Parking are now on display along South Main Street. All families have been notified and are excited to view their children's work. We are already confirmed for a partnership project for spring 2023 when teens will have an opportunity to display their work on the banners.

Recruitment

We're happy to welcome aboard two new part-time specialists. Brett Freiburger is our new Local History Librarian and Samuel Ferri is our new Studio Coordinator for Studio 20 South. We look forward to expanding public access to these spaces and services. We also welcome Lillian Fletcher, our new Saturday page. We're so glad you are joining the WHPL team!

From our Patrons

Here are some stories and interactions our staff recently had with patrons at the library:

- A patron called to express gratitude for Tech Help. He stated that Tech Help is “one of the best services the library offers” and he was really happy to hear that we’re offering it again.
- Staff at the branches (especially Bishops Corner) noticed that the library was being used as a cooling center during this latest heat wave. Lots of new faces and many familiar faces staying with us all day!

Emergency Response Working Group

The library formed a new Emergency Response Working group to review and create emergency procedures and guidelines for all three buildings. The group members are Laura Irmscher, Karen Polmatier, Andrew Piro, Carol Waxman, Ann Marie Salerno, Bailey Berardino, and Ellen Phillips.

Adult Services & Programs

Featured Programs

- How to Keep Long-Term Care From Becoming a Long-Term Financial Crisis (virtual)
- Photography: Memories in Hine Sight (in-person)
- New Home Buyer Workshop (in-person)
- To Walk About in Freedom: The Long Emancipation of Priscilla Joyner (virtual)
- Planning for Postwar: What Everyone Needs to Know About Yemen (in-person)

Total Attendance for Featured Programs: 129

Regular Programs

- *The New Yorker* magazine discussion group (virtual)
- West Hartford Fiction Writers (virtual)
- Connecticut Screenwriters (hybrid)
- Faxon Poets (hybrid)
- *The Atlantic* magazine discussion group (virtual)
- Fiber Arts Book Club (hybrid)
- Night Owls Book Group (virtual)

Total Attendance for Series Programs: 130

Updates

Ann Marie and Pramod visited The Court of St. James, an assisted living facility in West Hartford to give a short presentation on what the library has to offer. The crowd of about 25 people was very enthusiastic. Most of the residents have a library card. Ann Marie issued four new cards for residents who did not. They will be starting a book club, and Ann Marie offered to help them with obtaining books and reader’s advisory. Pramod answered many questions dealing

with technology. Two of the residents came to the library that afternoon to check out our DVD and book sale.

ILL fees are no more! This is a much-welcome improvement to the service that provides patrons with a seamless experience getting the materials they need.

A new art exhibit entitled Circle was hung in the gallery this week. The feedback has been very good so far with several people commenting that it's their favorite exhibit we've had.

Lauren's book group, the Fiber Arts Book Club (fondly called the FAB Club by its members), turned one-year-old this week!

The Summer Take & Make Craft Kits for adults was announced in the weekly newsletter. Within 12 hours, over 30 people registered to pick up a kit.

[Branch Libraries](#)

The return of the ice cream social at Bishops Corner was on August 25! We weren't sure what to expect for our first year back since 2019 and it exceeded all expectations. We had just under 300 people in for ice cream and books, with lots of new families and several library cards made too!

The Thomas F. Kilfoil Memorial Bequest will fund this fall's Building Connections Book Club for Immigrants. The program starts September 21st, 2022, and will continue every Wednesday for ten weeks at Faxon from 6 pm-7.30 pm. There will be 12 students in this program.

Children's Book Buddies continued at Faxon. This program is held every Tuesday and Thursday at Faxon.

[Children's Services & Programs](#)

Programs

Oh, SNAP!, a program for students in Grades 1-4 in which fundamental physical principals such as current, polarity, contact and series vs. parallel were discussed and the Library's SNAP Circuit Kits used, was held on the afternoon of August 2 offering opportunities to make a fan spin, an alarm buzz and much more.

Children ages 5-7 joined dancers from [Ballet Hartford](#) for a fun, guided movement class. Newcomers to dance were welcome. Tutus and dance outfits were not required but encouraged. Ballet Hartford, Hartford's professional ballet company, is committed to artistic excellence through the classical and contemporary genres while honoring Hartford's unique role in the development of ballet in America. The company offers free programming during the year to our library patrons.

Our version of the Olympics ... *the Chocolate Olympics!* was held for children in grades 2-5 on August 9. Competitive events included sorting, stacking and relays to see who would take home the bronze, silver, and gold medals.

Families had Ukulele Fun with Julie Stepanek at Bishops Corner in the morning and Noah Webster in the afternoon of August 17. She demonstrated the fundamentals of ukulele playing and children learned to tune, strum and read chords. After the short lesson they were able to play songs themselves.

The Yo-Yo People visited the West Hartford Public Library to excite the audience with a high energy show featuring yo-yos and tricks. Blue Back Square courtyard, Webster Walk and Isham Road near the Cheesecake Factory were filled with families who exclaimed that the performers were fantastic and requested a repeat performance next summer.



Teen Services

Programs

- 8 teens attended Maker Monday - Intro to TinkerCAD. They designed their own dream house or keychain and their projects were printed on the 3D printer after the program. It was the first class taught in Studio 20.
- Seven teens attended Inkscape for Teens and created vinyl stickers
- The Teen Department hosted a Paint Party Night with Pam's Picasso's. There was a full house (15 out of 15 registrants arrived) plus 1 wait-listed teen who was also allowed to participate. The students had a great time.
- Monday and Wednesday night Dungeons & Dragons sessions were at full capacity. The new all female / nonbinary group also filled after a message was posted to the West Hartford Neighbors and Friends Facebook group.

Updates

- The second West Hartford Immigrant Teens (WHIT) meetup happened at Faxon Library on 8/23. There were approximately 12 students in attendance. For the September meetup, members will be voting on a logo, creating a mission statement, and planning their first project of the year. Meetings will be held twice a month starting in September.
- Kari Karp met with Dr. Tracey Wilson and 3 MYC members on 8/24 to talk about a new subcommittee project for 2022-2023: a historical walking tour of the Center focused on slavery (created by the Noah Webster House). Tours will be conducted by high school students.