

West Hartford Public Library Board Agenda

Monday, September 23, 2024 - 6:30 p.m.

Noah Webster Library Meeting Room

1. Call to Order
2. Public Comment
3. Approval of the Consent Agenda (Items 3a, 3b, and 3c)
 - a. Approval of the Minutes of the June 24, 2024 Meeting
 - b. Library Administrative reports
 - c. Budget report
4. Chair's Report
5. Business Items
 - a. 2024 – 2025 Holiday Schedule
 - b. Staff Day: October 24, 2024 (Library closed 10am – 2pm)
 - c. Strategic Plan Update – Laura Irmscher
6. Director's Report – Laura Irmscher
7. Adjournment
 - a. Next Meeting is scheduled for Monday, October 28, 2024.

Anyone requiring auxiliary aid or service for effective communication or modification of policies or procedures to participate in a meeting, service, program or activity of the Town of West Hartford, should contact Suzanne Oslander, ADA Coordinator, at suzanneo@westhartfordct.gov or (860) 561-7580, as soon as possible, preferably seven days beforehand.

Public Comment Instructions: Individuals who wish to comment on an agenda item, may do so by sending an email with the subject “public comment” to Board@westhartfordlibrary.org on or before September 20, 2024.

WEST HARTFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD MINUTES

Monday, June 24, 2024, 6:30 p.m.

Noah Webster Library Board Room

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Gail Crockett called the Library Board to order at 6:35 p.m. Present were Board members Kim Cohen, Eileen Daly, Natalia Menjivar and E.J. Greenspan who attended virtually, Library Director Laura Irmscher, and Heidi Reagan, recorder.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT - none

3. APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA (Items 3a, 3b, 3c)

MOTION: On a motion made by Kim Cohen and seconded by Eileen Daly, the Board unanimously approved the Consent Agenda.

4. THE MEETING MINUTES of May 20, 2024, were approved as part of the consent agenda.

5. CHAIR'S REPORT

- a. The Gertrude Blanks Storytelling event was well attended and was very successful.

6. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Summer Board Meetings
 - i. Unless something comes up in the interim that the Board needs to consider or vote on, there will be no Library Board Meetings held during the months of July and August.

MOTION: On a motion made by Kim Cohen and seconded by E.J. Greenspan, the Board unanimously approved the cancellation of the summer meetings.

- b. Service Animal Policy Review – Laura
 - i. Our current policy is in line with current ADA guidelines.
 - ii. No change is recommended to the policy at this time.
 - iii. Terms and boundaries of the policy were discussed and clarified.
 - iv. Heidi and Laura will keep an ongoing list of policies that are reviewed so all are considered in a reasonable time frame.
- c. Strategic Plan Implementation – Laura
 - i. Staff committees have been established for each of the initiatives and meetings have already been held
 - ii. We are developing a procedure to track action items that are being worked on.

- iii. When issues that need to be addressed come up, we are finding ways to work their resolution into the Strategic Plan by referring these situations to the committee responsible for that initiative.
- iv. Laura will be giving a full report in September of the progress made over the summer by the committees.

7. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- a. May documents submitted:
 - i. Library Administrative Report
 - ii. Budget Report
- b. Current Month Briefing – Laura Irmscher
 - i. The Library hosted a booth at Celebrate West Hartford
 - ii. We held the 3rd Annual Gertrude Blanks Storytelling event
 - iii. Hidden History held a Juneteenth commemoration in the library's meeting room
 - iv. Bishop's Corner had their Annual Ice Cream Social
 - v. We hosted a Crafts and Fun booth in the Family Tent at the Pride Festival.
 - vi. We are all currently gearing up for the Bookwurm Festival in July
 - vii. Individual Summer Reading Programs for Adults, Teens, and Children have begun.

8. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: The Library Board Meeting was unanimously adjourned at 7:05 p.m. The next scheduled Board Meeting is September 23, 2024, at 6:30 p.m. in the Library Board Room.

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Cohen
Board Secretary

July and August 2024 Administrative Report

BookWorm Fest

Our 2nd Annual BookWorm Fest was a HUGE success! We estimate that we had about 1200 attendees! This was a Herculean effort, to say the least. It was also a team effort! Vendors and attendees were bowled away by the event, our staff, and the organization. Thank you to **everyone** who made it run so smoothly (there are a LOT of you), but particularly **Kari, Leah, Rachael, Annie, and Heidi**. West Hartford Life featured a wonderful two page spread of the event: https://view.publitas.com/p222-6222/whal_090124_p/page/22-23



Faxon Fun

Faxon Fun got off to a great start with 27-30 children attending each day for the first session. Paint Your Pet and Curious Creatures were the special visitors. Children met with their Book Buddies three days this week. Four interns/assistants and eight teen volunteers helped to support all the activities.

Session Two saw about 21-22 children per day in grades 4-6, and they enjoyed programs with art, animation, animals, and dance. A HUGE thanks to Ellen, her assistants, and all the volunteers for their hard work on making this program successful every year.

Faxon Fun was made possible by a grant from the Stanley D. and Hinda N. Fisher Fund at the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving.



West Hartford Reads!

We are very excited to announce this year's author for West Hartford Reads! is Jacqueline Woodson. Bestselling author of books like *Another Brooklyn*, *Red at the Bone*, and *Brown Girl Dreaming*, Woodson has written more than two dozen award-winning books for adults, children, and adolescents. She will join us on Thursday, October 17 at Sedgwick Middle School for a free author talk and book signing. Tickets will be available at all library locations starting on September 17. We've already received some press coverage and look forward to spreading the word more this fall.

[West Hartford Library bringing award-winning author Jacqueline Woodson to town this fall](#) (CT Insider, and picked up by [Darien Times](#))

Book It!

Year two of the Book It! fun run brought beautiful weather and a perfect day filled with lots of smiles and fast feet! This year's event was held on Saturday, July 27 at Sterling Field. The event was sponsored by the West Hartford Library Foundation and included races for children of all ages, plus a bounce house. We had about 200 people (runners, parents and grandparents included!) and were assisted by the Community Emergency Response Team, EMTs from the West Hartford Fire Department and West Hartford facilities personnel. Thanks to Bailey, Carol, Karen, and Pramod for all their hard work putting this together.



Adult Summer Reading Challenge

We closed out this year's summer reading challenge with 161 participants who read 1,450 books and completed 63 activities! Participation was up 9% from last year. The most read books were *James* by Percival Everett and *The Women* by Kristin Hannah. You can find out more about what people read here:

<https://www.westhartfordlibrary.org/programs/summer-reading-challenge-for-adults/>

We received this heartfelt message about this year's program:

Thank you so much for the Adult summer reading challenge. Three and a half years ago, when my husband died, I found that I couldn't enjoy reading anymore. He had been a librarian, I was an archivist, we had a private library of 10,000 books, I sold antiquarian books, we wrote books, we conserved books, we printed books, etc. And I just couldn't make myself read at that point. Somehow, your reading challenge came at just the right time. I started reading again because of the challenge, and now I just can't stop. Day and night, I'm reading again. Thank you!

Noah Webster Library Elevator

In mid-July, the elevator that connects the Mezzanine level to the rest of the library went out of order. Unfortunately, there is a significant issue with the elevator requiring a part to be fabricated to fix it. We anticipate the part will be fabricated and shipped by mid-November.

This has significantly affected both the public and staff using the Noah Webster Library. We have moved programs to other rooms when needed and put up messaging on our website, social media, and events calendar to let people know about the issue. We greatly appreciate the hard work of our pages and circulation staff who have been carrying the books up and down the stairs to make sure collections are still well organized and available to our patrons.

Strategic Plan Accomplishments – Summer 2024

Initiative #1 – Expand Access to Library Resources

Goal: Improve patron experience when using library technology

Accomplishments:

- Implement wireless printing option in all library locations

Goal: Expand library services in languages other than English

Accomplishments:

- Implement Instant Language Assistant devices to aid in serving patrons who speak languages other than English.

Initiative #2 – Increase Awareness of Library Services and Reach New Users

Goal: Improve communication about existing resources

Accomplishments:

- Increase promotion and explanation of parking validation for NWL

Goal: Expand outreach efforts to draw in new patrons

Accomplishments:

- Campaign for Library Card Sign-up Month

Initiative #3 – Support All Employees, Encouraging Them to Thrive Professionally and Personally, to Better Serve Our Community

Goal: Create and improve staff structures to cultivate a unified, cohesive staff and provide opportunities for professional growth

Accomplishments:

- Create standard guidelines for using scheduling software for all departments in order to analyze staff time

Initiative #4 – Build More Responsive and Inclusive Collections and Programs

Goal: Increase World Language Collections and Services

Accomplishments:

- Add language field to purchase suggestion form & track requests

Goal: Expand in-person and virtual programming that responds to the access needs and preferences of our users

Accomplishments:

- Provide classes that involve more physical movement (ex: yoga)
- Purchased meeting owl to allow for virtual or hybrid meetings in more library spaces

Initiative #5 – Improve Building Experience for All Types of Users

Goal: Create spaces that are welcoming, functional, and centered around the user experience

Accomplishments:

- Develop plan to upgrade meeting room with furniture that is more comfortable and easier to set up; optimize space and improve appearance.

Recent Media

Follow the links below for recent media coverage about the library's programs and services.

[Can Urine Be Recycled? WeHa Library Program To Explore That Idea](#) (Patch)

[Enjoy A Movie Under The Stars In West Hartford](#) (Patch)

[‘Pets of West Hartford’ Appear On New Banners Along South Main Street](#) (we-ha.com)

[West Hartford ‘Grandfriends’ Bridge The Generation Gap](#) (Patch)

[Major Fantasy/Role-Playing Festival Coming To West Hartford](#) (Patch)

[Tranquility The Goal of West Hartford Summer Reading Program](#) (Patch)

Staff Updates

Recruitment

We're excited to welcome these new staff to our team:

Laura Pudvah – PT Librarian, Reference

Departures

We said goodbye to these staff members and wish them all the best:

Julie Garrett – PT Teen Assistant and Children's Page

August GOAT – Hannah Hokanson

I'd like to thank Marie and all the library staff for the wonderful opportunity and your appreciation. All of you make a great team, and I appreciate that. With a lot of love I decided to give the goat to Hannah, a wonderful friend and worker, and a very funny, smart, and hardworking person.

-Shoshana



September GOAT – Hannah Hokanson

I have spent the month of August with our good friend Billy the Goat and he requested I share some pictures from our time together. Billy spent some time at my home where he helped me finish a very difficult puzzle. Then he came back to work with me where he

helped start sorting through the new Tonie Figures that are going to be catalogued and added to the collection. He went on a quick safari trip to look at some Lions, Tigers, and Bears (Oh My!) And finally, Billy had to get ready for back to school and said goodbye to his friend Big Bird one last time.



For the next leg of Billy's journey, he will be joining our very own Andrew Piro up at adult reference. Andrew has overseen relaying information about Billy's travels for as long as Billy has been employed by the library. As well as chairing the Strategic Planning Committee #5 (for Building Improvement), Andrew has also been attending meetings with the other chairs to start getting the implementation of the strategic plan firmly under way. So, without further ado, the goat keeper has become The Goat for the month of September!

-Hannah

From Our Patrons

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

Hi Carol!

I met you in the children's department weeks ago. We talked about how I take out puzzles for my elderly friend to complete. The puzzles in the adult section are much too difficult

I have greatly appreciated you allowing me to borrow puzzles for us to work on. They have been a lifesaver on rainy and very hot days recently

I was happy to finally have a new puzzle to add to your assortment, I brought it last week

I hope these help show that sometimes an unforeseen use of library materials occurs simply because they are available

Thank you so much again!

Ann M.

Loyal patron of my beloved NW library for over 50 years



Adult Services & Programs

Banner Contest

In partnership with the Municipal Parking Office, we once again hosted a contest to create banners for display in West Hartford Center. The theme of the contest was Pets of West Hartford in the Great Outdoors. We received so many amazing submissions of West

Hartford pets that the Parking Authority has agreed to create TWO sets of banners for Main Street!

Studio 20

Pramod assisted in recording the fourth episode of the Trout Brook Tales podcast, featuring an engaging discussion about the history of the Hamilton Heights/West Hill Neighborhood, dating back to before the American Revolution, with host Chuck Corsey and former West Hartford Mayor Scott Slifka. Looking ahead, episode five will feature a conversation with a survivor of the Hartford Circus Fire. You can listen to this podcast free on Podomatic - <https://www.podomatic.com/podcasts/chuck85898>

Branch Libraries

Bishops Corner

Bailey had a PACKED story time room with kids of all ages during her drop-in craft program!



Grandfriends intergenerational programming returned this summer with no bake cooking and music and movement. Everyone had a blast, singing, dancing and making music.



Bishops Bouncin' Babies

Lots of happy babies on the first day of the new storytime session at Bishops Corner!



Faxon

Faxon was once again a location on the River Bend bookshop's Where's Waldo Passport. Passports can be picked up at Riverbend or at Faxon and detailed instructions about the program are included with the passport.

On July 26, Practice English students hosted a Potluck program at the Faxon Library from 11 am – 1 pm. There will be no classes in August. The classes will resume Friday, September 6, 2024.

We had around 120 people and 1200 mosquitoes attend the Faxon out movie in late August! We showed Kung Fu Panda 4 and served lots of popcorn on a beautiful summer night.



Children's Services & Programs

Programs

Simply Enchanted, a program for children ages 3-8, was held on the afternoon of July 23. Special guests Little Mermaid and the Wayfinder visited for an Under the Sea themed storytime with songs, games and opportunities to learn the hula. A photo op for parents was held after the event.



Miss Sara led a Tie Dye program. Participants were asked to bring a white t-shirt, pillowcase, or other item and to create something groovy.

Children ages 4-6 attended 5,4,3,2,1 Blast Off! with Miss Emily, a program offering a space-themed storytime with games, songs, and crafts.

Miss Emily held a Stuffed Animal Sleepunder Party for children ages 3-6. Participants were asked to bring their favorite stuffed animal for a Sleepunder Party filled with games, stories, songs, and a snack.



Children celebrated the Olympics with Miss Sara in her Olympic Torch Cupcakes program for tweens and an afternoon of Lego Olympic Rings for children in grades 1-3

Didgeridoo Down Under, an energetic fusion of Australian music, culture, and storytelling, was held for families on the afternoon of August 12. Participants experienced an epic adventure from the Land Down Under by hearing the sounds of the Didgeridoo, a wind instrument developed in Northern Australia 1000 years ago and learning about kangaroos, koalas and many more Australian animals.

Responding to a Strategic Plan Survey response for programs the week before school starts, Sara held three programs in late August: STEAM Lab, Kawaii Polymer Magnets and a story time and craft for ages 3 & up. Programs were well attended on Monday and Tuesday but by Thursday's story and craft interest seemed to wane.

Children entering kindergarten and first grade joined Sara for stories and an experiment. This session's STEAM Lab focused on engineering. After reading *Three Little Pigs: Architectural Tale*, participants were challenged to create their own structures using a range of popsicle sticks, Q-tips, straws, blocks and more! Buildings were then tested to see how well they would hold to the wolf's efforts using fans.

Kawaii inspired magnets were created by children in grades 2-5 using polymer clay.



Updates

Carol met with Amy Yarbrough, Family Liaison from the Bridge Family Center about distributing flyers to patrons for their survey developed by the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood. The Sparkler program is an initiative to encourage healthy early development for children ages 0-5 and their families in Connecticut. Through a QR code, parents can enter information about their child's development and receive a library of over 1000 play activities customized for their child's age. They are also able to access regular coaching and advice. This program is in English and Spanish. This flyer, along with other information sheets that offer lists of preschools in West Hartford as well as licensed daycare centers, will be offered to parents attending classes in all three West Hartford libraries.

We have added another attraction to the Museum Pass Program, the American Museum of Tort Law located in Winsted, Connecticut. The pass allows free admission for 2 adults.

Visitors to the Museum will enjoy learning about tort law and trial by jury, and see how both have improved the lives, not only of those injured, but all of us. The Museum has one gallery of important precedent-setting cases; another gallery exhibiting dangerous toys; and a third with interactive panels, which let visitors learn about seven cases in detail. In addition, our theater runs a brief (11 minute) movie which traces the evolution (and importance) of trial by jury and tort law. The main gallery features cases which made a difference not only to the injured victims, but to everyone: Cases like the Ford Pinto, *Liebeck v. McDonalds*, and the tobacco and asbestos litigation, among others.

Teen Services

Programs

- The Teen's Gambit chess program
- Wilderness Paint Night
- Modern Dream Catchers w/ Tabbi
- D&D Dragonlance & Curse of Strahd campaigns



Updates

- Sustainable CT meeting with Catherine Diviney: Kari contributed content to West Hartford's application for Sustainable CT by providing information on teen groups and their impact on the community.
- Kari and Leah were interviewed for an "On the Scene" podcast regarding BookWorm Fest
- West Hartford Immigrant Teens Meeting:
 - Teens created a video to explain their brand
 - Members postponed the South Asian Dance Workshop until International Dance Day (April)

Library Financials - September 2024
General Fund

Year	Period	Rollup Code Code	Rollup Code Description	YTD Actuals	Original Budget	Available Budget
2025	3	01411	GF-Library-Personal	589,679.38	2,821,945.00	2,232,265.62
2025	3	01412	GF-Library-NonPers	207,741.51	671,637.00	463,895.49
2025	3	01414	GF-Library-Sundry	40,971.40	211,667.00	170,695.60

West Hartford Public Library

2024 – 2025 Holiday Schedule

2024

November 27, 2024 – all locations close at 4:30pm

November 29, 2024 – regular hours at all locations

December 24, 2024 – all locations close at 4:30pm

December 31, 2024 – all locations close at 4:30pm

Town Holiday – Library Closed

Observed On

New Year's Day

Wednesday, January 1, 2025

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

Monday, January 20, 2025

Presidents Day

Monday, February 17, 2025

Good Friday

Friday, April 18, 2025

Memorial Day

Monday, May 26, 2025

Juneteenth Independence Day

Thursday, June 19, 2025

Independence Day

Friday, July 4, 2025

Labor Day

Monday, September 1, 2025

Columbus Day

Monday, October 13, 2025

Veterans Day

Tuesday, November 11, 2025

Thanksgiving Day

Thursday, November 27, 2025

Christmas Day

Thursday, December 25, 2025