

West Hartford Public Library Board Agenda

Monday, October 28, 2024 - 6:30 p.m.

Noah Webster Library Story 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 September 23, 2024 Meeting
 - b. Library Administrative report
 - c. Budget report
4. Chair's Report
5. Staff Spotlight: Teen Department
6. Business Items
 - a. 2024 Holiday Schedule and 2025 Sunday Schedule
 - b. 2025 Library Board Meeting Schedule
 - c. December optional meeting (scheduled for 12/23/24)
7. Director's Report – Laura Irmscher
8. Adjournment
 - a. Next Meeting is scheduled for Monday, November 18, 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 October 25, 2024.

WEST HARTFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD MINUTES
Monday, September 23, 2024, 6:30 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Vice -Chair EJ Greenspan called the Library Board to order at 6:35 p.m. Present were Board members Kim Cohen, Eileen Daly, and Natalia Menjivar, Library Director Laura Irmischer, and Heidi Reagan, recorder. Chair, Gail Crockett was absent.

2. APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA (Items 2a, 2b. and 2c)

- a. Approval of the Minutes of the June 24, 2024, Meeting.
- b. Library Administrative reports.
- c. Budget Report.

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

3. CHAIR’S REPORT - none

4. BUSINESS ITEMS

- a. 2024 – 2025 Holiday Schedule

MOTION: On a motion made by Natalia Menjivar and seconded by Eileen Daly, the Board unanimously approved the 2024 – 2025 Holiday Schedule.

- b. Staff Day: October 24, 2024 (Library will be closed from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.)

MOTION: On a motion made by Natalia Menjivar and seconded by Eileen Daly, the Board unanimously approved closing the Library from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. on October 24 for Staff Day.

- c. Strategic Plan Update – Laura Irmischer
 - i. Committee 1 – Expand Access to Library Resources
 - 1. Remote Printing capability has been installed in all libraries.
 - 2. Instant Language Assistant is available and being used with positive results.
 - ii. Committee 2 – Increase Awareness of Library Services and Reach New Users
 - 1. We are actively promoting awareness of free parking at Main.
 - 2. We are offering numerous activities promoting Library Card Sign-up Month.
 - iii. Committee 3 – Support All Employees
 - 1. W2W Group has been established and is looking into using W2W more effectively to track workflow.
 - iv. Committee 4 – Build More Responsive and Inclusive Collections and Programs
 - 1. We have added a language field to the purchase suggestion form.
 - 2. We have added classes that are more interactive and include movement activities.

3. We purchased Owlberta to enhance virtual meeting and program experiences.
- v. Committee 5 – Improve Building Experience
 1. Plans are in the works for upgrading the Meeting Room to better represent the West Hartford Library.
5. Director's Report – Laura Irmscher
 - a. Bookwyrms Fest was a tremendous success with increased attendance and programs and activities for all ages.
 - b. Book It! Fun Run featured races and fun for children of all ages.
 - c. Summer Reading Programs were offered for all ages and showed increased participation.
 - d. West Hartford Reads! will be featuring renowned author, Jacqueline Woodson.
 - e. The Mezzanine elevator will not be repaired until November and is providing numerous challenges to staff and the public.
 - f. The book thief was arrested, and the Town is seeking restitution for books that were stolen.
 - g. The new Library/Community Center project is underway

6. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: The Library Board Meeting was unanimously adjourned at 7:15 p.m. The next scheduled Board Meeting is October 28, 2024.

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Cohen
Board Secretary
West Hartford Library Board

September 2024 Administrative Report

League of Women Voters

Representatives from the League of Women Voters were at all three library locations on September 17th helping patrons register to vote and giving out information on early voting and absentee ballots.

Flipster

Flipster is our new digital magazine platform, in addition to Libby. Flipster has popular magazines like *People*, *The New Yorker*, *Real Simple*, *Vanity Fair*, and more. Patrons can access magazines through the Flipster app on their mobile device, or through any browser, with just their library card. More information is on the ebrary page of our website:

<https://www.westhartfordlibrary.org/books-more/elibrary/>

Strategic Plan Committee Reports

Committee #1 – Expand Access to Library Resources

Rebecca Nugent (chair), Gen Francis, Ellen Phillips-Willcutts, Karen Polmatier, Brenda Roggeveen

Topics the group is working on:

Expand public service hours

- This month the group continued to discuss hours. We are settled that we think more Sundays and Tuesday mornings at BC would have the most impact. Discussions are ongoing about the possible hours for Thursday evenings.

Develop programming on the use of e-materials

- Request LCI's Olivia Blake to offer some Libby classes directly to patrons.
- Develop some up-to-date detailed directions for individual devices that can be printed at the information desk at any branch and handed to a patron after walking them through the process. Rebecca has some of these on the U drive and especially finds them helpful for patrons with Kindle Paperwhites, as these are often less tech savvy patrons and these ereaders take a few more steps than the tablets.
- Feature Kids ematerials on our various resources. We could do this with the help of P&P in newsletter and on various social media platforms, and we can create curated lists on Libby and on the website.

Improve patron experience when using library technology

- BC is in the process of getting new kids computers

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

Carol Waxman (chair), Marie Callahan, Leah Farrell, Amy Gallent, Desiree Meyer, Lisa Tanen-La Fontaine, Janelle Walsh

Committee #2 met to discuss and plan reaching new users and offering opportunities to apply for a library card through a Google form offered in partnership with the West Hartford Public Schools.

A Google form has been created that will allow families to apply for library cards through West Hartford Public School newsletters. Leah will send the form next week (created by our committee and approved by the Library Director) to Carolyn Perkins in the Office of the Assistant Superintendent for Administration for the West Hartford Public Schools. Library card applications will be sent to the library building chosen by the family for library card pick-up and prepared in that location. Families will then be notified that their cards are ready for pick up.

The next step in the process of offering library cards to families whose children attend educational institutions in West Hartford includes reaching out by phone or email to all preschools, daycare centers, private and parochial schools to determine if they would be willing to include this form in any communication they have with parents (newsletter, website, etc.), and if so, in what format. Calls will also be made to local colleges to determine if they want to join in the library card application offer.

The committee's next action steps will be to fulfill the plan to offer a re-engagement opportunity for inactive and expired card holders and to create welcome kits and events.

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

Heidi Reagan (chair), Sara Bartelmo, Meredith Ericksen, Rachael Graves, Jennifer Pfeifer, Karen Thomson

Developed staff survey to distribute at Staff Day.

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

Lauren Yarnall (chair), Maura Beaudreault, Beth Cunningham, Tabbi Heavner, Kari Karp, Pramod Pradhan, Ann Marie Salerno

Our next meeting is Thursday, October 10.

The yoga class will be in the evening on Wednesday, October 2.

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

Andrew Piro (chair), Bailey Berardino, Jae Douglas, Hannah Hokanson, Katie Kottas

- Katie and Hannah submitted a signage request to direct patrons toward designated eating areas at NWL. Once those are ready, they will send out info to all staff so everyone is on the same page.
- The lactation station project went to Operations Team for review. Hannah provided clarification on a few questions that the group had, and the project is moving forward. The tentative plan is to get dividers that are tri-fold or quad-fold so that they can be closed when not in use. The cozy corner seems to be the best spot because we could leave a chair there easily and the dividers could be closed up against the wall when not in use. Hannah and Sara discussed what kind of chair would be best for these stations (easy to clean, durable, and comfortable – wide seats and armrests).
- Andrew and Jae organized a Meeting Room upgrade meeting with Leah, Carol, Kari, and Gen. Leah has taken the lead on this project. We brainstormed and categorized requests into three categories: demolition, renovation, and furniture/equipment. Currently, staff are reaching out to vendors to gather quotes. As costs come into focus the group will make recommendations for next steps.
- Our committee meets next on 10/9.

Recent Media

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

[West Hartford Author Of 'The Days I Loved You Most' To Hold Talk At Library](#) (we-ha.com)

[West Hartford Library Unveils Club for English Learners](#) (Patch, MSN)

['West Hartford Reads!' To Feature Bestselling Author Jacqueline Woodson](#) (we-ha.com)

Staff Updates

Recruitment

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

Abigail Simard – PT Librarian, Teen

Tracy Snow – PT Librarian, Reference

October GOAT – Brett Freiburger

This month's GOAT is Brett Freiburger, our Local History Librarian. Brett's passion for history comes through in everything he does (which is a lot!). Here's just a small sample of the kinds of interesting things he's been up to since joining us:

- Procured recordings from the Hall High Jazz Band from the 1950s and 60s on vinyl
- Assisted countless patrons in researching various topics – which reminds me – did you know that Sinclair Lewis briefly lived in town!?
- Created oral history recordings of a 99-year-old lifelong West Hartford resident



- Researched and developed a program on Frank Lloyd Wright and his failed attempts to build a theater in West Hartford (check out the Trout Brook Tales podcast to hear him discuss it)
- Created reference guides to illuminate Black History in town
- Helped the town research and develop content for the 100th anniversary of the Rockledge Golf Course
- Connected with a patron in the UK who was doing genealogy research on her great grandfather, who was born in town
- Shared selections from our postcard collection with PBS for a documentary on Wallace Stevens
- Researched and presented on the history of breweries in town and the Greater Hartford area
- Researched notable residents like Inez Temple, a female playwright, teacher, artist, and poet that lived in town in the early 20th century
- Reassured countless patrons that their yearbook photos are not as bad as they think they are
- And, of course, answered lots of questions about people's homes

And he did all this while battling a leaky air conditioner! Brett is affable, enthusiastic, knowledgeable, and hard-working – perfect attributes for bringing the story of West Hartford and its people to life.

Community Engagement & Outreach

Bailey attended Norfeldt School's Welcome Back picnic on the evening of September 12th and made 15 cards and handed out countless stickers!

The Fern Street Church Food Bag Distribution at Faxon Library commenced its School-year distribution of food bags on 9/12/2024. During the summer food bag distribution, which started on 6/13/2024 and continued until 8/28/2024, 248 food bags were picked up from

Faxon. There are 17 WHPS students registered to pick up food bags from Faxon during this school year so far.

Pramod attended and facilitated the West Hartford Human Rights Commission Special meeting at the Elmwood Community Center. Celebration of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was discussed in this meeting. Pramod will be coordinating the Celebration as in previous years for the Commission.

Adult Services & Programs

Featured Programs

[Author Talk: Juliet Grames and The Lost Boy of Santa Chionia](#)

- 17 attended in-person

[An Evening with Heather Macadam, Author of Star-Crossed: A True Romeo and Juliet Story in Hitler's Paris](#)

- 24 attended in-person

[Discover the Top Five Tips For Organizing Your Printed Photo Collections](#)

- 73 attended in-person

[Identity Theft](#)

- 80 attended in-person

[Author Talk: Alycia Jenkins and the Laughing Elephant in the Room](#)

- 11 attended in-person

PROGRAMS BY THE NUMBERS (NWL, FAX, BC)	
STANDALONE Programs	6
Attendance	210
Avg. Attendance	35
RECURRING Programs	15
Attendance	236
Avg. Attendance	16
TOTAL Programs	21
Attendance	446
Avg. Attendance	21

September was **Library Card Signup Month**! Kirsten and Katie worked together to create a marketing campaign called “Your Library Card Is...” which highlights everything a library card gives access to. This initiative was proposed by the Programming Committee and the Increase Awareness and New Users Subcommittee as part of our 2024-2028 Strategic Plan. Through indoor and outdoor signage, email blasts, and social media, we encouraged the public to come in and get their free library card. We offered stickers and keychains as giveaways to encourage members of the public to get a new card or renew their expired card.

Local History

Just in time for the final stretch of election season, Brett set up a display on political satire in the display cases outside of the magazine room. The cases have been vacant for a while now so it's great to see them in use again. Items on display feature satirical works from our

collection, images from the Digital Commonwealth, and materials graciously lent to the library by a patron.



September Highlights:

- The land deeds found amongst the Hodgdon Collection that relate to Simsbury will be going to Simsbury Historical Society on October 11.
- Brett did another research visit to the Stowe Center to learn more about Inez Temple and her relationship with Katherine Seymour Day, who led the historic preservation movement around here in the 1920s-1950s
- Genealogical research has been the main request for patrons in September
- A patron was here researching historic plants to replant their property with native species
- Volunteer Andy Tran is working on a research guide on Vietnamese history in the area.
- There was a very tender moment between a Grandpa and Granddaughter where he was showing her all of her family in the yearbooks we have for Hall and Conard. The little girl was loving the old pictures and seeing what her parents and grandparents looked like in their youth. The family has been here over 100 years and we were only missing 1 year that they needed.
- Processed the Judith Resnick Collection, a resident and Conard 1962 grad that moved to NYC to record and act on the stage. We have 3 albums and a ¼ inch reel that Brett plans to digitize with Kilfoil preservation funds

Studio 20 South

We now have a sublimation printer! Schedule and appointment to learn how to use it and all the cool things you can create.

Featured Programs

[It's in the Bag! Customizing Handbags, Backpacks, and More](#)

[Tee Time: Customizing T-Shirts](#)

[Laser Cut Wood Puzzles](#)

Branch Libraries

Babies Love Books is a grant funded storytime for immigrant parents/caregivers that begins



on September 24th and will run for 6 weeks at Faxon. Each 45-minute class will include a theme based storytime, techniques for sharing books at home, and related craft activities.

The Building Connection Book Club commenced its Fall Session on 9/18/2024, and will continue through 11/20/2024. The group meets every Wednesday at the Faxon library from 6:15 to 7:45 pm. Fourteen students have registered for the session. Prior to the first meeting, Pramod addressed the students and provided them with a tour of the library. This program is a partnership between the West Hartford Public Library and Golden Door for Immigrants, and is funded by a grant from the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving Community Grant.

STUDIO 20 BY THE NUMBERS	
In-Depth Appointments	34
Short Interactions (Walk-ins)	30
Total Interactions	64

Children's Services & Programs

Programs

Registration for fall Pre-School Programs opened on Tuesday, September 3rd at 7:00pm. Registration went smoothly. This session we will be offering a drop-in story time at Noah Webster on Tuesdays in addition to the one offered at Bishops Corner.

The first Tween Tuesday of the school year was a success. New 4th graders were able to join for the first time and many of the now 5th and 6th graders from last year returned. 12 tweens competed as teams of 3 in trivia. Prizes were leftover from other programs including summer reading books.



Updates

Diapers are being collected for the 2nd year in a row at all three branches. Diapers will be collected through September 30th to benefit the Connecticut Diaper Bank.

Teen Services

Chris and Julie from RiseUp for Arts installed the teen mural. An unveiling ceremony is being planned for later this year.



- West Hartford Immigrant Teens
 - Met new members

- Discussed old programs
- Brainstormed new projects
- There were lots of new members due to marketing in the high schools' Community periods, posting on Neighbors & Friends, and contacting ESL teachers
- Yimin Wu is the Chair or WHiT and did a great job leading the meeting



- West Hartford Youth Leadership Academy (a.k.a. Teen Leadership Conference) at Town Hall
 - Most participants are members of Mayor's Youth Council, Teen Advisory Board, West Hartford Immigrant Teens, and Peer Health Awareness Concerns Teen Taskforce
 - Talked with town and state leaders
 - Student Navigator training (National Alliance on Mental Illness)
 - Naloxone training
 - Able Table with RiseUp for Arts
 - Social media safety training
 - Workshops on creating effective information campaigns (PHACTT & CT Clearinghouse)

Library Financials - October 2024**General Fund**

Year	Period	Rollup Code Code	Rollup Code Description	YTD Actuals	Original Budget	Available Budget
2025	4	01411	GF-Library-Personal	\$828,147.05	\$2,821,945.00	\$1,993,797.95
2025	4	01412	GF-Library-NonPers	\$275,099.34	\$671,637.00	\$396,537.66
2025	4	01414	GF-Library-Sundry	\$57,431.56	\$211,667.00	\$154,235.44

2025 Sunday Hours at Noah Webster Library

1:00pm – 5:00pm

February 23, 2025

March 2, 2025

March 9, 2025

March 16, 2025

March 23, 2025

March 30, 2025

April 6, 2025

April 13, 2025

Closed April 20, 2025 (Easter)

April 27, 2025

May 4, 2025

Library Board Meeting Dates

Draft 2025 Calendar

The Library Board meets the 4th Monday of the month unless otherwise indicated
Meetings are held in the Library Board Room or virtually

Monday, January 27, 2025 6:30pm
Library Board Annual Meeting

Monday, February 24, 2025 6:30pm

Monday, March 24, 2025 6:30pm

Monday, April 28, 2025 6:30pm

Monday, May 19, 2025 6:30pm

Monday, June 23, 2025 6:30pm

Monday, July 28, 2025 6:30pm (optional)

Monday, August 25, 2025 6:30pm (optional)

Monday, September 29, 2025 6:30pm

Monday, October 27, 2025 6:30pm

Monday, November 24, 2025 6:30pm

Monday, December 22, 2025 6:30pm (optional)

Monday, January 26, 2026 6:30pm
Library Board Annual Meeting