

West Hartford Public Library Board Agenda
Special Meeting

Wednesday, February 4, 2026 - 6:30 p.m.
Noah Webster Board 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 December 1, 2025 Special Meeting
 - b. Library Administrative report (November and December)
 - c. Budget report
4. Chair's Report
 - a. Election of Officers
5. Business Items
 - a. Security at Library Programs and Events
 - b. FY27 Budget
 - c. Policy Review – Vulnerable Child Policy
6. Director's Report
7. Adjournment
 - a. Next Meeting is Monday, February 23, 2026

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 February 3, 2026, or by attending the meeting in person.

WEST HARTFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD MINUTES
Monday, December 1, 2025, 6:30 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Vice-Chair EJ Greenspan called the Library Board to order at 6:32 p.m. Present were Board members Kim Cohen, Eileen Daly, Natalia Menjivar, Library Director Laura Irscher, and Heidi Reagan, recorder. Member Gail Crockett attended via Zoom link. Present from the public was Kathryn McWilliams.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT – Kathryn McWilliams

- a. Ms. McWilliams told the Board how important the Sunday hours were to her in particular, and the community in general.

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

- a. Minutes of the October 27, 2025 Meeting
- b. October 2025 Library Administrative Report
- c. Budget Report

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

4. CHAIR’S REPORT – None

5. BUSINESS ITEMS – Laura Irscher

- a. Security at Library Programs and Events
 - i. Consider creating a Library Policy that addresses whether and in what form security measures are included when planning programs and events
 - 1. Concerns that a police presence might be reassuring to some, but a source of challenge and anxiety to others
 - 2. Involve community members, the police department, and Corporation Counsel in these discussions going forward
 - 3. Examine what other libraries are doing in similar circumstances
 - 4. Are we sending a message to the public that controversial programs will be sent to other venues, as has happened in the past?
 - 5. The policy should detail what criteria is being considered when determining whether or not to have a security presence.
- b. Sunday Hours
 - i. The budget currently allows for ten Sundays in FY 2026
 - ii. We have been hearing from the public more often about how important having the Library open on Sunday is for them.
 - iii. We will continue to ask the Town for the budget to fund more Sunday hours.
 - iv. Prior to Covid, the Library was open on Sundays from October through May.

MOTION: On a motion made by Eileen Daly and seconded by Natalia Menjivar, the Board unanimously approved the Sunday hours as presented.

- c. Annual Meeting Preparation
 - i. Elect New Officers
 - 1. Chair
 - 2. Vice-Chair
 - 3. Eileen Daly may stay in the Secretary's position since she has been holding it for only one year
 - ii. Laura Imscher's Performance Review is due in January
6. DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Laura Imscher
- a. CEN Community Wifi Grant
 - i. We received \$75,000 to upgrade equipment and expand internet services
 - ii. Credit goes to Gen Francis for securing this funding
 - b. Human and Community Services has new Town Councilors so the committees are being reworked
 - i. Laura will be meeting with Jason Wang this week
 - c. We participated in West Hartford's 2nd Annual Community Block Party
 - d. Nutcracker Program
 - i. 300 people attended
 - e. Teen English Café
 - i. New program developed by the Immigrant Youth Advocates (formerly West Hartford Immigrant Teens)
7. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: The Library Board Meeting was unanimously adjourned 7:15 p.m.. The next scheduled Board Meeting is scheduled for January 26, 2026, at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Eileen Daly, Secretary
West Hartford Library Board

November and December 2025 Administrative Report

Community Block Party

Carol, Laura, and Janelle represented the library at the Town's second annual Block Party. Visitors to our table could color a bookmark or decorate a swag bag. Kari joined the Mayor's Youth Council at their own table to talk about West Hartford historical trivia and introduce people to the upcoming "WeHa the People" teen essay contest that is part of the Town's America 250 celebration.



Recent Media

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

[Better Organize Your Meds Via Special West Hartford Event](#) (Patch)

[West Hartford Library Hosting Unique Revolutionary War Program](#) (Patch)

[West Hartford Public Library Seeks Donations for 9th Annual Kindness Project](#) (we-ha.com)

Staff Updates

Recruitment

We are currently looking for a part time library assistant in our Collection Services department.

December GOAT – Brigid Fox



Brigid has been a member of the TPD team for almost 26 years and is an instrumental part of getting books on the shelves at all three locations! Brigid unpacks boxes, labels books, and gets them on their way to eager patrons! Brigid is also a sometimes unseen, but very important, part of any shifting or weeding project because she sorts, withdraws, and packs up books we are ready to say goodbye to, making way for new books. But that's not all! Brigid is a one-person repair department, gluing spines, re-covering with mylar, and removing the dreaded sand from popular beach reads. Brigid has also helped with countless odd jobs over the years, painting, moving, and generally

being awesome. Brigid's reach is also felt outside of the library as she is a big part of the annual Kindness Project, where she helps sort and package donations made to West Hartford Food Pantry and the Fern Street Backpack Program. Thanks for all you do Brigid!

Community Engagement & Outreach

Ellen and Bailey attended Webster Hill Elementary School's Reading Night on Wednesday 12/3. They made library cards, and gave out plenty of information and goodies as kids spun the wheel to win stickers, pens, bookmarks etc.

The Fern Street Backpack program, led by the Fern Street Universalist Church, began in 2015. At the present time, the program feeds 206 students who pick up food in 14 schools and all three West Hartford Public Libraries. There are no requirements for students who pick up a bag of food weekly. The Fern Street Food Ministry has remained committed to offering all who are food insecure, a compassionate and dignified experience. There are 25 students receiving food bags each week at the Faxon Branch Library, 6 students registered at the Bishops Corner Branch and 2 at the Noah Webster Library.

From Our Patrons

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

- We received this really nice email from a patron:

Hello!

I'm a Cheshire patron who visited Noah Webster's stacks for the first time recently, and am writing to express how moved and impressed I was by your Russian-language collection. The sheer size of it alone would communicate a remarkable effort to serve the reading needs of Russian speakers in the community.

But I was even more profoundly moved by the remarkably tight selection of books. It's not just a stack of Russian lit classics in the original - it's a cut across the genres spectrum, from popular page turners to Tolkien in translation; from the best of late-Soviet satirical SF to challenging memoirs of the horrors of early-Soviet history. Did I see multiple biographies of Georgiy Daneliya, or was that my imagination playing tricks?

There isn't a single member of my family who would walk away from Noah Webster with nothing to read. There's Dontsova, Marinina and Nora Roberts for the grandma who'd never be caught without a mass market paperback in her hand. Then there's Zhvanetsky, my grandpa's favorite comedian. Several novellas by my Dad's favorite SFF duo, the Strugatskys. Some Rubina and Coelho for my mom. And Petkevich's two-part memoirs for my interest in the history of the Stalinist purges; talk about a deep cut pick. (I was surprised you had Petkevich's memoirs and not Ginzburg's Journey into the Whirlwind, which is more well-known).

I'm so curious about how you went about curating this marvel, because it feels like it was put together by the owner of a Russian-language bookstore; someone who is deeply plugged into the reading interests of the diaspora. Did you interview Russian-language speakers in the community? Was this all an accident because of patrons donating their Russian-language books?

Thanks again for such a thoughtful collection and creating a library environment I'd love to bring my children to one day.

Building Updates

Meeting Room AV System

The AV system in the Meeting Room has been fixed, and we are looking into upgrading the system to avoid future issues. We did have to cancel or postpone several programs, so thank you everyone for your flexibility and patience while we sorted this out!

Adult Services & Programs

Opening the Book on Recovery

Maura partnered with the Opioid Response Network for this timely virtual program. Attendees were highly engaged and asked the presenter great questions!

Book Lover Ornaments

Sara and Leah partnered on this program again this year! Attendees could make mini versions of their favorite 2026 reads to put inside a keepsake ornament.



Studio 20 South

Community Maker Series: How to Be a Great Podcast Host

This was the first workshop of a new series of lectures and workshops featuring local creatives, makers, artists, and experts. The aim is to continue to expand and enrich the creative community that is growing around the Studio!

RETURN OF The Horror Movie Pause & Draw

Our resident illustrator Samuel Ferri hosted this popular spooky drawing program again! In the workshop, we pause scenes from iconic horror movies, and the participants sketch their interpretation of the scene.

Training Day

For this month's training, Studio 20 staff went on a field trip! We visited our friends at West Hartford Community Interactive (WHCi), The Hartford Artisans Weaving Center, and Hartford Public Library's YOUmedia Center. We forged some new partnerships and collected a ton of new ideas for improving the Studio!



Machine Embroidery 101

Leah hosted our first workshop for beginners on how to use our embroidery machine. Attendees took home custom monogrammed handkerchiefs.

Cardboard Ornaments

Frankie and Kate partnered up to host this all-ages upcycling workshop.



Local History

Highlights:

- A gentleman was looking into the visit of Sitting Bear that occurred in the 1930s when he was courting Korczak to sculpt the Crazy Horse monument in South Dakota. Sitting Bear apparently visited Hall to give a talk, but there is very little coverage of the visit.

- The two interns from Simmons, Max Spicer and Z Stevens, continued their work on processing collections. The first week of December will be there last week and from there Brett will finish processing the Library Institutional Collection.
- Major highlight was hearing back from a patron that Brett helped a few times, most recently with an obscure photo from WH News, and her response was "Thank you and bless you from the bottom of my black little heart!" She received the email on her 89th birthday, so she was rather jazzed.

Branch Libraries

Bishops Corner

Bishops Corner had 190 deliveries to the Smart Lockers in November and now have 429 registered locker users.

Meredith has worked her magic again and came up with a fabulous design for the cold winter months!



Faxon

Gingerbread houses at Faxon were a messy success, as 15 children in grades 1-3 created sugary shelters with Oreo, Minecraft, Barbie, Hershey, or Sour Patch themes.

Janelle had the great idea to start a staff picks section at Faxon! We were able to shift the blu-ray and DVDs down to create this new section.



Children's Services & Programs

Programs

In Light-up Greeting Cards, children created greetings cards that light up using copper tape, LED lights and coin batteries. Participants made 2 cards: one to take home and the other to be given to one of the library's homebound patrons.

DJ Red Supreme (aka Austin Daily) visited on December 30 for a dance like crazy event for children ages 6-10. All were asked to wear bright colors or white clothing to make the clothes pop during the black light and laser show. This annual event is held to celebrate winter break and the new year.



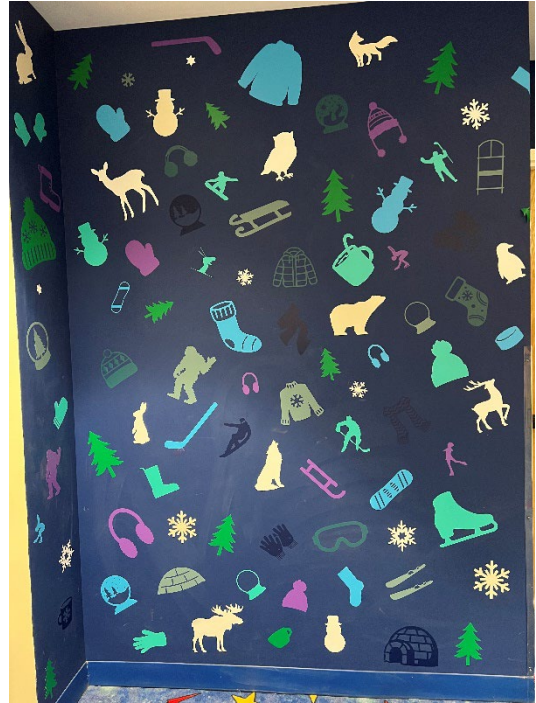
Disco lighting led to dark photographs!

Updates

Two classes of Kingswood Oxford middle school students visited the Noah Webster Library to attend a program in which they were given instruction on how to choose picture books to read to preschool age children as well as senior citizens and how to conduct a storytime session. Carol used examples of the best books to choose as well as which books might not be suitable for storytime sessions.

A final count of the diapers and wipes collected for the Diaper Bank of Connecticut by all three libraries in October 2025 was over 6,000!

A new wall display carefully curated by Miss Sara features all things winter! Children enjoy finding objects on the walls.



Teen Services

Programs

- Mario Kart Tournament
- D&D Campaigns
- Teen Crafternoon @ the branches: Wreath Making and Wooden Bangles
- Teen Chess Nights
- College Applications Timeline
- Teen English Cafe
 - A teacher and 6 students from Conard's ESOL program attended!
- Teen Crochet Club



Library Financials - General Fund
January, 2026

Rollup Code Description	YTD Actuals	Original Budget	Available Budget
GF-Library-Personal	\$ 1,663,818.00	\$ 3,188,238.00	\$ 1,524,420.00
GF-Library-NonPers	\$ 379,187.44	\$ 663,312.00	\$ 284,124.56
GF-Library-Sundry	\$ 115,473.51	\$ 238,725.00	\$ 123,251.49

West Hartford Public Library POLICY MANUAL

Title: Vulnerable Child Policy

Revised by the West Hartford Library Board, April 25, 2016.

The West Hartford Public Library encourages children of all ages to enjoy the facilities, programs and collections offered at the Noah Webster, Faxon Branch and Bishops Corner Branch Libraries.

The Library is dedicated to providing a safe and comfortable environment for users of all ages. For the safety and comfort of children, a responsible caregiver must accompany children while they are using the Library.

Caregivers must provide appropriate supervision based upon the ages, abilities and levels of responsibility of their children.

Children under the age of twelve must not be left unattended by a caregiver in any part of the Library building at any time. The assigned caregiver must be responsible for, in the immediate vicinity of and in visual contact with the child. The responsibility for the safety and behavior of children in the library rests with the parent/caregiver and not with the library staff.

The safety of children left alone in a library building is a serious concern. If children are found to be unattended by a caregiver, the Library staff will attempt to locate that person within the building. If this is unsuccessful, the police department will be contacted.

- If, at closing time, children under the age of twelve are found to be without a caregiver present, library staff will attempt to locate the person responsible for the child. If no one is located, the police department will be contacted.
- During story time or other programs when the child attends a program with a library staff member, caregivers must remain on the same floor of the building during that program and be responsible for reuniting with the child at the conclusion of the program.

Caregivers should be aware of the content of the Connecticut General Statute 939, section 53- 21a. regarding "leaving a child unsupervised in a place of public accommodation," upon which this policy is based.