

WEST HARTFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
Monday, February 4, 2026, 6:30 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Gail Crockett called the Library Board to order at 6:31pm. Present, Board members Kim Cohen, Eileen Daly, Breton Boudreaux, EJ Greenspan, Library Director Laura Irmischer, and Heidi Reagan, recorder. Vernon Riddick, West Hartford Chief of Police, was in attendance at Laura's invitation.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT – none

3. CHAIR'S REPORT

- a. Gail expressed surprise and disappointment that she was not consulted about the appointment of the new Library Board member.
- b. She announced that she will not continue on the Board after her term has ended this year.
- c. She emphasized the importance of keeping a diverse membership.
- d. The Agenda items will be taken out of order since Eileen Daly will be a few minutes late.

4. APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA (Items 4a, b, & c)

- a. Approval of the minutes of the December 1, 2025, Special Meeting
- b. Library Administrative Report (November and December 2025)
- c. Budget Report

MOTION: On a motion made by Kim Cohen and seconded by EJ Greenspan the Board unanimously approved the Consent Agenda.

5. BUSINESS ITEMS

- a. The Board discussed security and the possibility of a police presence at library programs.
 1. Chief Riddick answered questions and provided context about police presence at town events.
 2. Board members asked about the practices of other libraries, evaluating threats and concerns, and peoples' perceptions of risk.
 3. Board members and Laura noted the need to balance different perspectives and perceptions of the police while making everyone feel safe and welcome at the Library.
 4. The Board concluded a policy would be appropriate and would allow the Library Director or staff to consult with the police when warranted.
 5. More work will be done on this matter in upcoming meetings.

6. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

- a. Proposed Slate of Officers
 - i. EJ Greenspan – Chair
 - ii. Gail Crockett – Vice-Chair
 - iii. Eileen Daly – Secretary

MOTION: On a motion made by Gail Crockett and seconded by Kim Cohen, the Board unanimously approved the slate of officers as presented.

7. BUSINESS ITEMS (resumed)

- a. FY 27 Budget
 - i. Town Departments submitted their budgets requests to the Town Manager.
 - ii. Library Budget Requests include:
 - 1. Increase in FT and PT wages to cover merit increases and contractual obligations
 - 2. An additional \$5300 for software costs.
 - 3. All other costs are level funded from FY26
 - iii. Proposal for consideration – Sunday Hours
 - 1. Cost will be approximately \$107,000 to cover:
 - a. Staff wages
 - b. An additional FT position
 - iv. Town Manager and Finance team will meet with the individual departments
 - v. Town Manager will submit the total Town budget to Town Council
 - vi. Town Council will hold meetings and public hearings prior to approving the final budget
- b. Policy Review – Vulnerable Child Policy
 - i. Requires children under the age of 12 to be accompanied by a caregiver while at the Library.
 - ii. At the January Human and Community Services meeting, Councilor Jason Wang expressed concern with the language in the current policy.
 - iii. Laura has asked the Children’s Librarians to review it and recommend changes.
 - iv. When that is done it will be brought to the Board for review and approval.

8. DIRECTOR’S REPORT

- a. Winter Madness Book Tournament
 - i. The Bracket contains 32 books in eight categories.
 - ii. The Sweet Sixteen opened this week
 - iii. Last year’s winner was God of the Woods, written by Liz Moore, the author chosen for West Hartford Reads! last year.
- b. America 250 Essay Contest
 - i. Hosted by the Library and Mayor’s Youth Council in coordination with the Town’s America 250 Task Force Civics and Humanities Subcommittee
 - ii. Open to West Hartford students, grades 6-12.
 - iii. “Which local historical figure has had an important impact on shaping the West Hartford we know today?”
 - iv. There will be winners from each age group with monetary prizes available for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd places, provided by the West Hartford Library Foundation and Siena Private Wealth, LLC.
 - v. Prizes will be awarded in June and winning and honorable mention essays will be published in a commemorative booklet.
 - vi. Information is available on the Town’s American 250 website.
- c. Ninth Annual Kindness Project

- i. Donations can be dropped off at all three libraries.
 - ii. Carol Waxman is working with a local Girl Scout group to sort the donations.
- d. Building Updates
 - i. Faxon closed for 2 ½ days due to issues with the boiler.
 - ii. Bishop's Corner opened late last week for an ongoing heating issue.
- e. 15th Annual Take Your Child to the Library Day
 - i. Saturday, February 7.
 - ii. Families are encouraged to come in for a day of fun and library magic

9. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: The Library Board Meeting was unanimously adjourned at 7:42pm. The next scheduled Board meeting is February 23, 2026, at 6:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Eileen Daly
Board Secretary