

West Hartford Public Library Board Agenda

Monday, February 23, 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 February 4, 2026 Special Meeting
 - b. Library Administrative report (January)
 - c. Budget report
4. Chair's Report
5. Business Items
 - a. ILS (catalog) Migration
 - b. Close at 3pm Friday, July 24, 2026 (day before BookWyrms Fest)
 - c. Legislative update, BorrowIT program – Laura Irmscher
6. Director's Report
7. Executive Session

Pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes Section 1-200(6)A) to discuss the annual performance and evaluation of the West Hartford Public Library Director.
8. Adjournment
 - a. Next Meeting is Monday, March 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 20, 2026, or by attending the meeting in person.

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 Irmscher, 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

January 2026 Administrative Report

Winter Madness Book Tournament

We are excited to launch the 2026 Winter Madness Book Tournament. Who will come out on top this year? Patrons have been looking at the show-stopping bracket board that Leslie created. All locations have Winter Madness brackets, ballots, bookmarks, pins, magnets, and keychains. Staff members can also fill out a bracket to partake in some friendly competition.

Recent Media

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

[Is American Democracy Dying? West Hartford Library Event To Take a Look](#) (Patch)

[West Hartford's 'Kindness Project' Seeks Community Help](#) (Patch)

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

Staff Updates

Departures

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

Roxanne Drolet – PT Office Assistant, Circulation

From Our Patrons

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

From a patron requesting holds via email:

I've been out of work since rotator cuff surgery last November. The West Hartford Library has been a blessing.

Adult Services & Programs

Demystifying Dyslexia

Carol and Maura co-hosted the Demystifying Dyslexia program with presenter Barb Golub, a West Hartford Literacy Consultant and Certified Dyslexia Therapist. Barb's topics included identifying signs of dyslexia by age, myths vs. facts and helping children with dyslexia at home. She identified key facts and explained how dyslexia is a neurobiological, often genetic, language-based difference that affects how the brain processes written and spoken language. The packed audience, which consisted of parents, grandparents,

teachers and others with an interest in the topic, had many questions for Barb after the discussion and expressed appreciation for the program.

Film & Discussion: *Join or Die*

We partnered with the Office of Employee Development and Community Engagement for another film followed by a discussion. The film *Join or Die* examines why community participation has weakened, why that matters for democracy, and how people across the country are working to rebuild connection and belonging. The discussion was led by UCONN professor Julie Choffel and Town Councilor Tiffani McGinniss.

Understanding Your Dog

Jack Cunniff from Planet Bark in West Hartford discussed how to read your dog's behavior, crate training, enrichment activities, basic first aid, and more.

New Season of Tabletop Game Club

After some changes at the beginning of the year, Tabletop Game Club kicked off their new season of games! Members can be an old lady solving crimes, a woodland critter on an adventure, a Star Wars hero, or a space marine fighting aliens. We also have an official board game table! This week, they played a raucous game of Pictionary (see picture).



Local History

Visitors: 19 in-person and 10 off-site requests

Patron interest areas: Housing history

January Highlights:

- The Principals of Aiken and Bugbee have also reached out with help in putting together history of their schools and those they are named for.

Studio 20 South

A Collage of Things to Come: Vision Boards for the New Year

Studio 20 hosted this yearly event in the Magazine Room. Participants used old magazines and other materials to create their vision boards and inspiration for 2026. One family reported that this program has become their annual tradition!

Additional 3D Printer

3D printing has become one of the most popular services offered by the Studio, which has also led to a big “to be printed” list. To address this issue, we are using the last of our Kilfoil grant to order an additional Bambu 3D printer! The new printer produces less waste and will greatly increase our 3D printing capabilities.



Branch Libraries

Bishops Corner parking and heat issues

Parking has been an issue at Bishops Corner due to the amount of snow still left in the library parking lot as well as all the piled snow in the public lot which is heavily used by our patrons. Everyone has been very understanding and patient about it – which is good because the snow won’t be melting soon!

The heat was off at Bishops Corner when staff arrived on 1/30 but thankfully it was fixed quickly and the opening was only delayed by 30 minutes.

Children’s Services & Programs

Programs

Recurring preschool programs held this month included Babytime, Preschool Circle Time, Family Storytime, Mini Movers, Fun with Favorites, Terrific Twos, Mother Goose on the Loose and Wonderful Ones.

Curated to support the Kindness Project, which begins January 12, is a book display by Kirsten of non-fiction and fiction books *Kindness is Contagious*.



Teen Services Programs

- Teen Tuesday @ Studio 20: DIY Earrings & Charms
- D&D Campaigns
- Crochet Club
- Teen English Café @ Starbucks Kane St



Updates

On January 15, approximately 200 library cards were created at Sedgwick Middle School. Students were registered for cards for History Day. Several teachers encouraged students to create Libby and Hoopla accounts in class after they got their cards for access to the library's digital content. Library staff and the school librarian are planning a similar registration event for Library Card Sign-Up Month in September 2026. Some teens have already come into the library to use their new cards and we're so excited to have them!



Library Financials - General Fund
February 2026

Rollup Code Description	YTD Actuals	Original Budget	Available Budget
GF-Library-Personal	\$ 1,904,031.16	\$ 3,188,238.00	\$ 1,284,206.84
GF-Library-NonPers	\$ 423,573.33	\$ 663,312.00	\$ 239,738.67
GF-Library-Sundry	\$ 132,267.58	\$ 238,725.00	\$ 106,457.42