

West Hartford Public Library Board Agenda

Monday, March 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 & February)
 - c. Budget reports
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, April 27, 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 March 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!



February 2026 Administrative Report

Kindness Project

The 9th annual Kindness Project wrapped up on February 14. Each year's project ends with the Big Fill, when we sort, box, and prep all the donations for delivery to the West Hartford Food Pantry, Fern Street Backpack program, and nurses' offices at the high schools. This year's Big Fill was made possible by families from the Parent Leadership Training Institute. The children attending also enjoyed an opportunity to create valentines when they were finished with the job at hand.

The total number of boxes and bags filled and delivered this year is 179. We are so appreciative of the generous donations from the West Hartford community!



Take Your Child to the Library Day

Take Your Child to the Library Day – 15th anniversary – on Saturday, February 7, was an extremely busy day in Children's with families enjoying storytime, crafts, scavenger hunts, new library cards, charging out materials and so much more.

Recent Media

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

[Get Writing: West Hartford Youth Essay Contest Focuses On Local History](#)

[Students Invited To Tell The Story Of West Hartford](#) (we-ha.com)

[West Hartford Library Hosting Screening Of Film On Disabled Summer Campers](#)
(Patch)

[West Hartford Public Library embraces Black History Month education](#) (Fox61)

Staff Updates

Recruitment

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

Kira Edic – PT Library Assistant, Collection Services

Departures

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

Karen Thomson – FT Library Assistant, Faxon

From Our Patrons

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

- A father visiting the Children's Room last week with his two sons, commented that he was happy to see a display of Muslim American Heritage Month books.
- A mother visiting with her baby commented that "The Infant Room is so sweet. Thank you for having a special place just for babies."
- "The program [Bishops Corner Family Storytime] was so much fun, love the music and interactive nature and it really brings my child out of their shell. We love Ms. Bailey".
- "Family Storytime is very age appropriate, the kids are very interactive and Ms. Bailey is the best!"

Laura received a lovely email from a Studio 20 user:

I am reaching out to share how deeply appreciative we are of Studio 20 South at the Noah Webster Library — and to let you know how it's going to play a meaningful role in our growing West Hartford-based media project.

"Geezers, Gadgets and Gizmos" is a YouTube channel and podcast co-created by cinematographer Alyson Grisham and me. The platform showcases products, ideas, and innovations that enhance independence, mobility, connection, and quality of life as we age. We blend thoughtful interviews, product reviews, humor, and storytelling — with the explicit goal of empowering older adults while reframing aging as a creative, capable, and engaged stage of life.

We are proudly planning to produce our podcast at Studio 20 South. The fact that this innovative digital maker studio exists — generously funded by the West Hartford

Library Foundation and the Thomas F. Kilfoil bequest — speaks volumes about the town's commitment to creativity, collaboration, and lifelong learning. Access to professional-grade equipment, software, and thoughtfully designed co-working space will elevate our production quality and expand what we're able to do for our audience.

Adult Services & Programs

Narcan Training

The West Hartford-Bloomfield Health District offered another public Narcan (naloxone) training. They will be offering trainings throughout the year at both Faxon and Noah Webster going forward.

Who Was James W. Pine? Rediscovering a West Hartford Figure

Brett gave a fascinating presentation where he discussed the life of James W. Pine, a free Black American who lived in (and loved) West Hartford, even after he was pushed out of the town due to his race.

ADULT PROGRAMS BY THE NUMBERS (NWL, FAX, BC)	
STANDALONE Programs	7
Attendance	248
Avg. Attendance	35
RECURRING Programs	15
Attendance	288
Avg. Attendance	19
TOTAL Programs	22
Attendance	536
Avg. Attendance	24

Let's Talk about Recycling and Reducing Waste

The Town's Recycling Coordinator gave an informative presentation on proper recycling and the town's efforts towards becoming more eco-friendly. The session was recorded by WHCi and will be available on their YouTube account.

Local History

Visitors: 19 in-person and 11 off-site requests

Patron interest areas: general interest, historic houses, and aviation history of CT

February Highlights:

- Brett began working on a biography of Mary Louise Aiken for her namesake elementary school and in the course of this found out that she wrote 3 books about aviation during WW II. Two of these books we have procured for the Local History Room. The Aiken principal said that they are planning an event in April for Mary Louise's birthday. The Chamber of Commerce has also asked for a brief write-up and any images of their building on Farmington.
- Two Simmons University interns joined us and began working with their collections. Lianna Johnson will be in on Mondays, working on the Institutional Photographic Collection and Meghan Sassi will be here Weds. Bringing order to the

Faxon and Bishop's branches portion of our Institutional Collection. They will be here through mid-April.

Studio 20 South

Staff Training Day

During this month's training day, Studio 20 staff shared their recent roses (positive experiences) and thorns (challenging experiences), discussed closing procedures, welcomed the new Library Board member, and built cardboard creations for our upcoming display.

Saturday Night Sketching at Junk Pot Studio

Sam and Cherokee hosted another off-site sketching program for all ages, this time at Junk Pot Studio, a pottery studio on New Park Road.



Branch Libraries

Registration for the spring session of Babies Love Books took place at 6:00 PM on February 25. Twelve families immediately registered. A wait list is available.



Children's Services & Programs

Programs

The extreme cold weather has brought many families to our drop-in family storytime programs.

At last Friday's Babytime program, Ruth Cohen, a pediatric occupational therapist, spent time with families answering questions about developmental milestones and discussing best practices to support baby's overall development.

Students in Grades 3-6 celebrated the Lunar New Year on February 17 with award-winning polymer clay artist Deb Jaffee, creating a Zodiac Fire Horse.



Teen Services

Programs

- Bath Bombs Crafternoon @ BC
- D&D Campaigns
- Teen Crochet Club: Valentine's Granny Squares

Updates

- IYA & Human Rights Club raised money for Cyclone Ditwah survivors at a bake sale at Hall High



- 3 members of TAB were guest judges at Hearts & Smarts Trivia for the Foundation for West Hartford Public Schools

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

Library Financials - General Fund
March 2026

Description	YTD Actuals	Original Budget	Available Budget
Library-Personal	\$ 2,021,919.90	\$ 3,188,238.00	\$ 1,166,318.10
Library-NonPers	\$ 453,379.14	\$ 663,312.00	\$ 209,932.86
Library-Sundry	\$ 140,519.90	\$ 238,725.00	\$ 98,205.10