

West Hartford Public Library Board Agenda

Monday, April 27, 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 March 23, 2026 Meeting
 - b. Library Administrative report (March)
 - c. Budget reports
4. Chair's Report
5. Business Items
 - a. FY27 Budget update
 - b. Staff Day – Close library on Thursday, May 28, 2026
 - c. Staff Spotlight: PLA Conference reports
6. Director's Report
7. Adjournment
 - a. Next Meeting is Monday, May 18, 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 April 24, 2026, or by attending the meeting in person.

WEST HARTFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD MINUTES
Monday, March 23, 2026, 6:30 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair EJ Greenspan called the Library Board to order at 6:32 p.m. Present were Board members Kim Cohen, Eileen Daly, Gail Crockett, and Breton Boudreaux, Library Director Laura Irmscher, and Heidi Reagan, recorder.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT - none

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

- a. Minutes of the February 4, 2026, Special Meeting
- b. Library Administrative Reports (January and February)
- c. Budget Reports

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

4. CHAIR'S REPORT - None

5. BUSINESS ITEMS:

- a. ILS (Catalog) Migration
 - i. The Library Catalog will be moving from Sierra to Polaris, and the public catalog will be moving from Encore to Vega.
 - ii. The LCI consortium is managing the migration for the 31 member libraries.
 - iii. Pop-up messages are alerting patrons that the mobile app will expire on April 7, 2026.
 - iv. Services will start shutting down in May, during that time patrons will be given extended check out periods.
 - v. The system will be completely shut down for eight days, starting June 3.
 - vi. The hold function will not be operating during the shutdown period, but patrons will keep their place in line for holds already placed.
- b. Request to close at 3pm on Friday, July 24 to help staff prepare for the BookWorm Festival the following day.

MOTION: On a motion made by Eileen Daly and seconded by Brett Boudreaux, the Board unanimously approved the request to close the library at 3 p.m. on July 24, 2026.

- c. Legislative Update – BorrowIT program
 - i. The Governor's budget includes a 20% cut to the State Library's BorrowIT program.
 - ii. Laura contacted the West Hartford delegation to express our concern that this cut would result in a reduction in vital services.

6. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- a. FY27 Budget Update
 - i. Community conversations are being held (as we speak).
 - ii. The Town budget includes maintenance budget for the Library.
 - iii. The Human and Community Services committee meeting will be on March 26 when Laura will be presenting the Library's budget.

- b. Staffing Update
 - i. We are currently recruiting for a full-time Library Specialist position for Faxon.
 - ii. The Town approved a position upgrade from Library Assistant.
 - iii. We are looking ahead to the needs of the new Community Center and Library building.

- c. Annual Storytelling Celebration Honoring Gertrude Blanks
 - i. Information is available on our website
 - ii. There will be an exhibition in the NWL Gallery in April – Gertrude Blanks' Life and Legacy.
 - iii. This year's event will celebrate the "Nations of West Hartford".
 - 1. There will be a poster exhibition from now through April 30 at Faxon.
 - 2. This is a result of an initiative by local teen, Linnea Knox who has been sharing stories of people from all over the world who call West Hartford home.
 - 3. Once Upon a Story: Storytime will be held in honor of Gertrude Blanks for children ages three and up at Faxon.
 - 4. A link is available to the video of last year's celebration

7. EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION: On a motion made by Gail Crockett and seconded by Kim Cohen, the Board went into Executive Session to discuss Laura Irmscher's annual review at 7:12 p.m.

Board members EJ Greenspan, Kim Cohen, Eileen Daly, Gail Crockett, Breton Boudreaux and Library Director Laura Irmscher attended the executive session.

The board returned to the regular meeting at 7:23 p.m.

8. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: The Library Board Meeting was unanimously adjourned at 7:24 p.m. The next scheduled Board Meeting is April 27, 2026.

Respectfully submitted,

Eileen Daly
Board Secretary

March 2026 Administrative Report

2025 Year-in-Review

Check out our latest year-in-review, celebrating everyone's hard work and the progress we've made on our Strategic Plan. [Read it here!](#)

Gertrude Blanks Storytelling Celebration

Starting on World Storytelling Day (March 20), we will be honoring Gertrude Blanks with a series of events, exhibits, and even her [very own page on our website](#). As part of this year's Gertrude Blanks Celebration, we helped local student Linnea Knox launch her [Nations of West Hartford](#) project, featuring stories of new Americans who now call West Hartford home!

Recent Media

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

[Film On ADHD To Screen At West Hartford Library](#) (Patch)

[Residents' Photos Sought for West Hartford Spring Banner Contest](#) (Patch)

[Screening Of 'The Disruptors,' An Immersive Look at ADHD, Coming To West Hartford](#) (we-ha.com)

[West Hartford teen creates project to highlight immigrant experiences](#) (NBC CT)

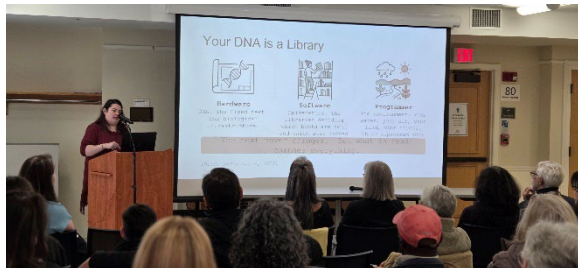
[West Hartford Library To Host Screening Of Film On Civil Rights Icon](#) (Patch)

[Young Volunteers Lead The Way At 'Big Fill' Kindness Project Event](#)

Adult Services & Programs

Ancestral Echoes: Epigenetics, Indigenous Resilience, and Environmental Justice

As part of West Hartford's America 250 celebration, we hosted this incredible panel with three local indigenous activists about the challenges faced by indigenous peoples of the Americas and what the future holds. [Watch the recording](#).



Seed Library Kickoff

Over 200 patrons attended the 4th annual Seed Library Kickoff! There are still plenty of flower, herb, vegetable, and fruit seeds available at all locations.

Banner Contest: Aging and Growing Well in West Hartford

We are partnering with the Senior Centers and Municipal Parking for another banner contest! [Click here to learn more.](#)

Film & Discussion: Fannie Lou Hamer's America

In honor of Women's History Month, we again partnered with the Office of Employee Development and Community Engagement to screen a film about the incredible Fannie Lou Hamer, labor leader and oft-forgotten civil rights activist. We were also joined by the film's cinematographer Pablo Correa, who just happens to teach at University of St. Joseph!



Studio 20 South

Community Maker Series: Intro to Origami

Local artisan Yaerin Wallenberger hosted this all-ages workshop to teach the basics of origami. Folks were so excited that even after the workshop was over, they stayed and made their own creations!

Branch Libraries

Bishops Corner

Bailey had her St. Patrick's Day craft on the 17th and kids had lot of fun making leprechaun hats and golden slime!

Faxon

Ellen hosted West Hartford Methodist Nursery School for a PJ Storytime for families on March 18.

Tween chess, run by teen volunteers, has really taken off. It filled its 12 slots plus 5 on the waitlist for Saturday, March 21. Mother Goose is also off to a great start for this session, with 16 toddlers and their caregivers.

Children's Services & Programs Programs

All About Axolotls was presented by staff from the Amphibian and Reptile Center of Clinton, CT for children in grades K-5. The axolotl has taken popular culture by storm, thanks to its cute permanent smile and feathery gills. The endearing animal's popularity seems to be rising just as it has become critically endangered in the wild.

A spring session of Babies Love Books, a grant supported program for immigrant families with children ages infant through 4, began a 6-week session this week. Families read, painted and sang songs about cars, trucks and other things that go.



Updates

On Sunday, March 22, a youth group from St. John's Church hosted their own Dignity Totes packing party at the church and then delivered 120 totes to the Noah Webster Library, to be distributed among the three library buildings. These totes are usually picked up by Brigid and Pramod each month and have proven to be very popular for library visitors.



The Bruce Museum in Greenwich has been added to the Museum Pass Program. It specializes in art (historical and contemporary), natural history, and science. Originally a private home built in 1853, it was bought by Robert Moffat Bruce and deeded to the town of Greenwich in 1908 to be used as a museum, with its first exhibition in 1912. A recent \$60 million renovation doubled the size to 70,000 square feet, adding state-of-the-art exhibition spaces for both art and science. The Bruce features permanent collections on local Native American history, geology, and wildlife of Connecticut, alongside changing art exhibitions as well as extensive programming for children and adults, including "Science Sunday" and "Museum Movers". The museum pass allows 2 adults and children under the age of 18 free admission.

Teen Services

Programs

- D&D Campaigns
- Crochet Club
- Crafternoons – Spring Mushrooms

Updates

- The Mayor's Youth Council Food Insecurity Subcommittee organized a bake sale at Lox, Stock & Bagels and collected \$935.36 for the Conard and Hall student food pantries



TAB and MYC had a great time at the Teen Wellness Fair 3/7 signing up people for library cards and telling them about the "WeHa the People" Student Essay Contest



Library Financials - General Fund
April 2026

Rollup Code Description	Period Actuals	YTD Actuals	Original Budget	Available Budget
GF-Library-Personal	121,936.60	2,415,941.02	3,188,238.00	772,296.98
GF-Library-NonPers	59,793.64	553,957.09	663,312.00	109,354.91
GF-Library-Sundry	8,434.64	166,056.75	238,725.00	72,668.25