

West Hartford Public Library Board Agenda

Monday, May 18, 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 April 27, 2026 Meeting
 - b. Library Administrative report (April)
 - c. Budget reports
4. Chair's Report
5. Business Items
 - a. Safe Child Policy – Draft review
 - b. Catalog Migration update
 - c. Future Board Meeting Locations
6. Director's Report
7. Adjournment
 - a. Next Meeting is Monday, June 22, 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 May 15, 2026, or by attending the meeting in person.

WEST HARTFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD MINUTES
Monday, April 27, 2026, 6:30 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair EJ Greenspan called the Library Board to order at 6:29 p.m. Present were Board members, Eileen Daly and Bret Boudreaux, Library Director Laura Irmscher, and Heidi Reagan, recorder. Members Kim Cohen and Gail Crockett were absent. Also present were Library staff members Andrew Piro, Katie Kottas, and Leah Farrell.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT - none

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

- a. Minutes of the March 23, 2026, meeting.
- b. March Library Administrative Report.
- c. Budget Report.

MOTION: On a motion made by Bret Boudreaux and seconded by Eileen Daly, the Board unanimously approved the Consent Agenda.

4. CHAIR'S REPORT - none

5. BUSINESS ITEMS:

- a. FY27 Budget Update
 - i. The budget was approved by the Town as submitted.
 - ii. No additional Sunday hours were approved.
 - 1. We will be actively looking for other ways to fund Sundays which we expect to cost \$140,000.
- b. Spring Staff Day
 - i. Thursday, May 28, 2026

MOTION: On a motion made by Eileen Daly and seconded by Bret Boudreaux the Board unanimously approved closing the Library on May, 28, 2026 for Spring Staff Day.

- c. Staff Spotlight: Public Library Association (PLA) Conference Reports
 - i. Andrew Piro – Adult Services/Reference
 - 1. Focused on sessions covering Leadership, Emerging Technology/AI, and Day to Day Operations.
 - ii. Katie Kottas – Circulation
 - 1. Focused on sessions covering Community Building
 - iii. Leah Farrell – Programs, Publicity, Studio 20.
 - 1. Focused on sessions covering Equity, Inclusion, Diversity, Outreach, and Investing in the Library as a Third Space.

6. DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Laura Irmscher

- a. Although our last Sunday was scheduled to be May 3, we will be closing the Library that day for much needed HVAC repairs.

- b. Passport to Libraries Program
 - i. Statewide program running during the month of April.
 - ii. Passports are stamped at participating Libraries.
 - iii. Raffle prizes are available for participants visiting five Libraries, 25 Libraries, and the most Libraries
- c. Migration Update
 - i. A Public Information page is now available on our website.
 - ii. All due dates for hard-copy materials are now extended to June 8
- d. Craft and Hobby Supply Swap Shop
 - i. Item drop-off on May 1, Shop for supplies on May 2
- e. Faxon Fun Grant
 - i. \$5000 has been received from the Greater Hartford Gives Foundation
 - ii. Registration is May 13, 2026 for both sessions of Faxon Fun.
- f. America250 Program
 - i. Transitions: What We Gained, What It Cost.
 - ii. Program covers how zoning laws, industrialization, and immigration shaped West Hartford.
 - iii. What we can learn from the past as we move into the future.
 - iv. Online program Thursday, April 30, 2026, at 7 p.m.

7. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: The Library Board Meeting was unanimously adjourned 7:14 p.m. The next scheduled Board Meeting is Monday, May 18, 2026, at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Eileen Daly
Board Secretary

April 2025 Administrative Report

New Library Catalog

We started sharing public messaging about the new library catalog coming in June. The new catalog will be a large improvement for the public and staff with better, more relevant searching and a much more user-friendly interface. We are targeting a tentative launch on June 3 and will be posting regular updates to the library's website so that everyone can stay informed of our progress and be aware of changes to access.

Senior Citizens Advisory Commission (SCAC)

Leah was invited to speak at SCAC's April meeting about how the library can serve seniors. Those in attendance asked great questions, shared important feedback, and connected with Leah about speaking to other groups in the future.

Messages From the Fern Street Food Pantry and Backpack Program

"We're fortunate to belong to such a caring community. Thank you to the West Hartford Public Libraries – truly a community treasure – for sharing hundreds of pounds of donations received through their Kindness Project initiative. Hygiene items make an enormous difference in quality of life but can be prohibitively expensive to purchase. Thank you to all who contributed for your kindness. Your gifts have gone directly to the hundreds of families we serve every week."

From a participant in the Fern Street Backpack Program:

I would like to take some time to say thank you to all of the hard workers and volunteers who put together bags for families like ours. It has made our transition into town so much easier. Fortunately, our situation has changed and we are no longer in as much of a need. After this week, we will no longer need bags from the Fern Street Backpacks program (Picking up at Noah Webster). Thank you from the bottom of my heart for everything you've done for us the last 9 months. I tell everyone I can about the beauty of this program and the help that we received. My hope is that a new family will be able to benefit from your generosity and compassion. Thank you again.

Recent Media

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

[Seniors Invited To Special Program About West Hartford Public Library](#) (we-ha.com)

[West Hartford Hosting America 250 Panel Discussion 'Transitions: What We Gained, What It Cost'](#) (we-ha.com)

[West Hartford Events Aim to Help Adults 50+ Re-enter Workforce](#) (Patch)

[West Hartford Teen Launches Storytelling Project Celebrating Town's Global Reach](#) (Patch)

From Our Patrons

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

From a Teen Advisory Board member:

I just wanted to share with you that I've committed to Simmons University for their 3+1 accelerated program for a bachelor's in Information Technology and a masters in Library and Information Science. Being a part of the Teen Advisory Board has definitely made me more interested in working in libraries.

A regular Faxon patron, who has needed assistance filling out job applications for several months, came in last week to report that he had been hired as a security guard!

Adult Services & Programs

Spring Take & Make Craft Kits

We recently distributed 47 Take & Make Craft kits at all three locations! Once again all the slots were reserved and we had a waitlist. The craft was a spring-inspired flower mason jar.

Next Chapter Success: Essential Skills for Mature Workers

We partnered with CT Seniors Job Bank for a series of career readiness workshops geared towards adults 50+. This was their first time offering the series, and they said it was a huge success!

West Hartford Public Library: Past, Present, and Future

Brett gave a fascinating presentation about the history of WHPL and how we've changed over the years. The audience was very engaged and excited about the forthcoming new Elmwood Community Center/Faxon Library.

Spring Banner Contest

Winners have been selected! We hope to have the banners printed and mounted along Main Street later this spring.



Opening Doors: Navigating Fair Housing & Disability Rights

We partnered with the West Hartford's Advisory Commission for Persons with Disabilities to host this presentation by the state's [Commission on Human Rights & Opportunities](#) (CHRO). It was geared towards renters and landlords, and the folks who attended left with actionable advice and guidance!

America 250 - Transitions: What We Gained, What It Cost

We partnered with West Hartford's America 250 Committee and WHCi to host this fascinating presentation about West Hartford's history and where we might be going. Watch the recording [here](#).

Studio 20 South

Paper Kintsugi

Kate taught this cool program using paper to recreate the Japanese art of kintsugi, a traditional method of repairing pottery with gold and celebrating imperfection by turning cracks into luminous design elements.

Local History

Visitors: 24 in-person and 10 off-site requests

April Highlights:

- Brett helped a class from St. Joe's learning more about Nook Farm, West Hartford, and the relationship with our town and Hartford.
- Our two interns from Simmons, Meghan Sassi and Liana Johnson, finished up their. Meghan processed and described the Library Collections relating to Faxon and Bishops, while Lianna put a good dent into the photographs from the Library Collection. This is a fantastic Town and Institution resource that Brett hopes to have completed by the end of the year.

Branch Libraries

The final session of Babies Love Books was held on April 28. The families made self-portraits on giant puzzle pieces and fit them together to create a class quilt. What a fitting way to end the spring session!



Children's Services & Programs Programs

A *Roller Coaster Physics Lab with Cool-ology®* was presented to children in Grades 3-6. Participants learned how roller coasters work, then designed and created their own mini roller coaster.



The Children's Department hosted a visit from New England Ballet Theatre of Avon, a professional ballet organization serving the Greater Hartford Region. Children attending experienced meeting a ballerina in costume, a storytime, short performance and a movement class.



Teen Services

Summer & Fall College Applications Planning

Priyanka Shingala of Let's Talk College, LLC gave a dynamic presentation on Summer & Fall College Applications Planning in the Story Room. Students and parents lingered after the program to ask questions about the admissions process.

Multilingual Storytime

Joanna Zheng from Teen Advisory Board organized a Multilingual Storytime with the Conard Translation Club in the NWL Story Room. Members translated popular children's books into Chinese, Japanese, and Spanish and created corresponding crafts for children ages 4-6. This is the third year that the high school translation clubs have hosted this event.



Updates

Immigrant Youth Advocates completed their final community service project of the year, a Fresh Food Drive at Stop n Shop for Hartford Deportation Defense on Saturday, April 18. They set up a table at the store from 9-12pm, had pizza lunch, and then from 1-3pm delivered food directly to HDD's drop-off location for families to come and pick up the

Teen Advisory Board met for its final meeting of 2025-2026 on 4/29. They celebrated the 5 graduating seniors and looked back on the group's accomplishments. Several members gave presentations that they prepared for the PowerPoint Party on 3/25 (which was cancelled due to low registration). The slideshows were so engaging that TAB would like to reschedule the program to next fall/winter and want PowerPoints to be a traditional TAB Graduation activity going forward. At the end of the meeting, teens received shirts with the new TAB logo that they designed with Leslie and Leah.

Library Financials - General Fund
May 2026

Year	Rollup Code Description	YTD Actuals	Original Budget	Available Budget
2026	GF-Library-Personal	\$ 2,661,973.52	\$ 3,188,238.00	\$ 526,264.48
2026	GF-Library-NonPers	\$ 595,762.68	\$ 663,312.00	\$ 67,549.32
2026	GF-Library-Sundry	\$ 183,125.77	\$ 238,725.00	\$ 55,599.23

West Hartford Public Library

Safe Child Policy

Purpose

The West Hartford Public Library ("Library") is dedicated to providing a safe and welcoming environment for users of all ages, and encourages children of all ages to enjoy the facilities, programs, and collections offered at all Library locations. While the Library is committed to creating spaces that support learning and exploration, responsibility for a child's safety and behavior while visiting the Library rests with the parent, guardian, or caregiver.

Definitions

Caregiver¹ - A parent, guardian, or person having custody or control, or providing supervision, of a child under the age of twelve years while visiting the Library.

Child - Any person under eighteen (18) years of age.

Unattended Child is defined as follows:

- A child who is under the age of twelve (12) years old, not accompanied by a caregiver;
- A child between the ages of twelve (12) and sixteen (16) who is using the Library independently, but is not picked up by closing time and needs assistance procuring transportation;
- A child under the age of eighteen (18) who appears to need staff help beyond assistance with standard Library service, and is not accompanied by a caregiver.

Policy

Parents, guardians, or caregivers must provide appropriate supervision based on their children's ages, abilities, and levels of responsibility. Library staff is not responsible for the safety, behavior, or supervision of children visiting the Library or on Library premises.

Behavior Expectations

Children, like all Library users, are required to follow all Library policies, including the Patron Rules of Conduct policy. Children who require excessive staff intervention, are disruptive, or engage in unsafe behavior towards themselves, others, or Library property may be asked to leave Library premises.

¹ In accordance with Connecticut General Statutes §53-21a, as may be amended from time to time.

Program Participation

All information regarding Library programs will specify whether the program is intended for children only or for children and caregivers together. For programs designated for children only, caregivers remain responsible for their child throughout the duration of the program and must ensure prompt pickup at the conclusion of the program.

For preschool-aged children attending a child-only program, a caregiver must remain in the immediate vicinity of the program space within the Library building for the duration of the program. For school-aged children attending a child-only program, a caregiver must remain within the Library building for the duration of the program.

In all cases, children must be picked up promptly at the conclusion of the program.

Hours of Operation and Closing Time

Parents and caregivers are expected to be aware of the Library's opening and closing times, as these hours are subject to change. If any child is left at the Library at closing time and a parent or caregiver cannot be reached or found, the West Hartford Police Department will be notified. The Library is not responsible for children outside the building who are awaiting transportation or who are socializing.

Applicable State Law

This policy is in accordance with Connecticut state law governing unaccompanied minors in places of public accommodation, as may be amended. Connecticut General Statute § 53-21a states that: "Any parent, guardian, or person having custody or control or providing supervision of any child under the age of 12 years who knowingly leaves that child unsupervised in a place of public accommodation or a motor vehicle for a period of time that presents risk to the child's health or safety, shall be guilty of a Class A Misdemeanor."

Originally adopted by the West Hartford Library Board, May 24, 2010.

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

Reviewed and Updated by the West Hartford Library Board _____