

**WEST HARTFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD AGENDA
VIRTUAL MEETING**

Monday, January 24, 2022 - 6:30 p.m.

**This meeting can be viewed live on West Hartford Community Television at
www.whctv.org and www.youtube/whctv5**

1. CALL TO ORDER
2. PUBLIC COMMENT
3. APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA (Items 4, & 8ai, 8aii)
4. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES of the MEETING of November 22, 2021 and December 16, 2021 meetings.
5. PRESIDENT'S REPORT
 - a. New Library Director Welcome
 - b. Library Support
 - c. Gail Crockett appointed to Library Board for 2nd term
6. OLD BUSINESS
 - a. FY2023 Budget Update
 - b. New Community Culture Center and Library Branch Update
7. NEW BUSINESS
 - a. Staff Professional Development Update
 - b. Library Board Meeting for December 2022
8. DIRECTOR'S REPORTS
 - a. November and December submitted:
 - i. Library Administrative report
 - ii. Budget report
 - iii. Monthly statistics & trends
 - b. Current Monthly Briefing
9. ADJOURNMENT
 - a. Next Meeting is scheduled for February 28, 2022.

Individuals who wish to comment on an agenda item, may do so by sending an email to Board@westhartfordlibrary.org on or before January 20, 2022.

Any Individual With A Disability Who Needs Special Assistance To Participate In The Meeting Should Contact Suzanne Oslander, Department of Social Services 561-7580, Five Day Prior To The Meeting

Monday, November 22, 2021 6:30 p.m.
VIRTUAL MEETING

1. CALL TO ORDER

President Jill Spear called the Library Board to order at 6:33 p.m. Present, via Town of West Hartford WebEx, were Board members Kim Cohen, Eileen Daly, Gail Crockett and Jill Spear, Acting Library Director Carol Waxman, and Janet Valencis, recorder. Member Dr. Natalia Menjivar was absent.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT - none

3. APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA (Items 4 & 8a i, 8a ii,)

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

4. THE MEETING MINUTES of October 25, 2021 were approved as part of the consent agenda.

5. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

a. Director Search

The director search is ongoing and the board hopes to bring it to a resolution by the end of the year.

6. OLD BUSINESS:

a. New Community Culture Center and Library branch.

Carol Waxman briefed the board on the latest updates including upcoming site visits to other communities with similar cultural centers. The town has purchased the 8.5 acre site and a feasibility study will be upcoming.

7. NEW BUSINESS - none

8. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

a. October Report, submitted:

- i. Library Administrative Report
- ii. Budget Report
- iii. Circulation Statistics (issued quarterly)

b. Current Month Briefing.

- i. The Library is still following the West Hartford Public School mask mandate.
- ii. Children's programming has moved indoors with small groups only.
- iii. Adult programming is planning hybrid programming in the New Year.
- iv. FY23 Budget process begins in early December.

MOTION: On a motion made by Kim Cohen and seconded by Eileen Daly, the Board unanimously approved the move to an Executive Session.

Immediately following the executive session, the meeting will be adjourned.

9. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: The Library Board Meeting was unanimously adjourned at 7:22 pm. The next scheduled Board Meeting is December 27, 2021 at 6:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Eileen Daly
Board Secretary

"This meeting was held remotely in accordance with Governor Lamont's executive orders concerning the conduct of virtual meetings and proceedings and the public had the ability to view the meeting in real-time on West Hartford Community Interactive: Comcast Channel 96, Frontier TV Channel 6099, and streaming on the WHCI website."

WEST HARTFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD MINUTES

Thursday December 16, 2021 5:30 p.m.

SPECIAL VIRTUAL MEETING

1. CALL TO ORDER

President Jill Spear called the Library Board to order at 5:38 p.m. Present, via Town of West Hartford WebEx, were Board members Kim Cohen, Eileen Daly, Gail Crockett, and Jill Spear, Acting Library Director Carol Waxman, and Janet Valencis, recorder. Member Dr. Natalia Menjivar was absent.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT - none

3. NEW BUSINESS

- a. The Library Board is appointing Laura Imscher as the new director of the West Hartford Public Library.

MOTION: On a motion made by Kim Cohen and seconded by Eileen Daly, the Board unanimously approved the appointment of Laura Imscher as the new director of the West Hartford Public Library.

4. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: The Library Board Meeting was unanimously adjourned: 4:43 p.m. The next scheduled Board Meeting is January 24, 2022.

Respectfully submitted,

Eileen Daly
Board Secretary

"This meeting was held remotely in accordance with Governor Lamont's executive orders concerning the conduct of virtual meetings and proceedings and the public had the ability to view the meeting in real-time on West Hartford Community Interactive: Comcast Channel 96, Frontier TV Channel 6099, and streaming on the WHCI website."

**Town of West Hartford
Library Expenditures
FY22 November 2021**

		<u>GENERAL FUND</u>				
		<u>BUDGET</u>	<u>ENCUMBERED</u>	<u>EXPENDITURE</u>	<u>BALANCE</u>	<u>% OF BUDGET SPENT</u>
<u>Expenditures</u>						
Library Personal Expenses		\$2,379,131.00		\$875,905.67	\$1,503,225.33	37%
Library Non Personal Expenses		\$652,637.00		\$305,759.95	\$346,877.05	47%
Social Security Expenses		\$ 179,342.00		\$ 57,153.86	\$122,188.14	32%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES FUND 1		\$3,211,110.00		\$1,238,819.48	\$1,972,290.52	39%

Town of West Hartford
Library Expenditures
FY22 December 2021

	<u>GENERAL FUND</u>				<u>% OF BUDGET SPENT</u>
	<u>BUDGET</u>	<u>ENCUMBERED</u>	<u>EXPENDITURE</u>	<u>BALANCE</u>	
<u>Expenditures</u>					
Library Personal Expenses	\$2,379,131.00		\$1,051,644.95	\$1,327,486.05	44%
Library Non Personal Expenses	\$652,637.00		\$351,610.70	\$301,026.30	54%
Social Security Expenses	\$ 179,342.00		\$ 69,582.43	\$109,759.57	39%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES FUND 1	\$3,211,110.00		\$1,472,838.08	\$1,738,271.92	46%

November 2021 Administrative Report

Statistics

Circulation (all branches) 37,772 (Decrease of 1558 from the previous month.)

New Cards (Noah Webster) 181

Curbside 130 (Noah Webster 129 and Faxon 1)

Study Pod Reservations: 30

Continued Reopening

Children's programming has moved indoors with a limited number of participants, for now. In determining the status of our winter children's indoor programs, we will be studying the positivity rate of Covid-19 and determine what is safe to offer for children too young to wear a mask. Adult programs continue as virtual but will offer a hybrid model of in person as well as virtual starting in January. All library visitors over the age of 2 years must wear a mask inside our three library buildings.

Budget Process – FY 22/23

The budget process for the next fiscal year begins on December 8, 2021.

Bishops Corner Smart Lockers

The first locker usage was on October 21. Since then (through November 30th) we have had:

42 unique locker users

82 total locker deliveries (with 75 retrievals, meaning that only 7 people did not pick up their holds during the allotted time frame)

The average storage time for a locker item is 1 day and 13 hours (well below the 3-day threshold that we set).

We have not run out of lockers yet but anticipate that that may happen in the near future as the popularity grows. We will either look at shortening the pick-up window to 2 days or perhaps holding some items back one day until there is open locker space.

About 55% of locker items are picked up during hours that the library is closed.

Several of the people are new patrons to Bishops Corner (all are West Hartford residents though).

We have had many in person and phone inquiries about the lockers over the past weeks. It is anticipated that these numbers will continue to rise.

We know that at least one frequent locker user is a patron who does not want to come into the building to get her holds.

Patrons do receive an initial account set-up email from Package Concierge when we first enter them into the locker software and they do need to click through that email and create a 4-digit PIN for themselves. So far only one patron has been confused by this process (she thought she should be using the 4-digit PIN that she uses to access her Encore account from home).

Meredith was able to explain to her over the phone what she needed to do and this patron picked up her locker items the next day. That has really been the only challenge we've had so far. Other than that, it's been seamless!

The lockers were funded by a West Hartford Public Library Foundation Thomas F. Kilfoil bequest.

Tech Lab

Progress is being made. Additional staff have been hired. We are still awaiting some equipment to arrive and hope to open after the first of the year.

Interior painting has been completed and a portable soundproof recording booth has been received. Most of the equipment is now on site. We are awaiting new furniture, which includes a media table for small group collaboration, as well as several tables on locking casters that can be moved and reconfigured to accommodate a variety of activities.

The Lab will be open a minimum of 21 hours per week, staffed by our computer technicians who have a particular interest in audio-visual technologies.

The Tech Lab committee has begun working out details for how the Lab will operate (e.g., making reservations) and discussing ideas for programming and collaboration. Jen Evans, Executive Director of WHCi has declared interest in collaborative programming and having her staff help patrons in our Tech Lab. Some members of the new West Hartford Mayor's Youth Council are experienced YouTubers and podcasters, and have expressed great excitement over using and promoting the Tech Lab. When the Tech Lab is not being used for these projects it will provide an excellent space for instructional classes, private or group study and meetings. The Tech Lab was funded by a West Hartford Public Library Foundation Thomas F. Kilfoil bequest.

Study Pod Update – Now in USE!

Patrons are booking appointments daily to use the study pod. The Study Pod at Noah Webster Library offers a quiet place for individuals or small groups to study, meet, or work together with limited distractions. The Study Pod is located in the gallery on the main level of the library and it contains one table, four chairs and three power outlets. The Study Pod was funded by the American Rescue Plan Acts for Libraries and a West Hartford Library Foundation Thomas F.

Kilfoil best. To ensure the Study Pod remains accessible and functional, WHPL sets forth the following rules and procedures.

Reservations

Make a reservation to use the Study Pod using the guidelines set forth below. Please wait until your reservation begins to enter the Study Pod and remain conscientious of the time. If you have any questions during your visit, you may refer to staff at the Reference Desk.

1. Individuals may [reserve the Study Pod by booking online here](#), visiting the reference desk, or calling 860.561.6990.
2. Individuals must reserve the Study Pod before using it. Advance or walk-in reservations are acceptable.
3. Reservations cannot be made more than 14 days in advance.
4. The Study Pod is available in fifteen-minute intervals on a first-come, first-served basis.
5. The Study Pod may not be reserved for more than two hours in a 14-day period (looking forward).
6. Groups may not obtain additional reservations by having different members of the group make a reservation for the same or similar groups.
7. Study rooms are available during library hours of operation. Individuals or groups must be out of the rooms 5 minutes prior to closing time.
8. Unwanted reservations must be cancelled as early as possible. Three cancellations or no-shows within a calendar year will result in the forfeiture of Study Pod privileges.
9. Patrons are expected to leave the Study Pod upon completion of their reservation.

Rules of Use

Patrons must adhere to our [Patron Rules of Conduct policy](#).

Capacity is limited to 6 people.

Patrons must be at least 14 years of age to reserve the Study Pod.

Individuals under the age of 12 must be accompanied by a person at least 18 years of age.

Responsibility for the Study Pod lies with the patron who reserves the room.

Please close the door to avoid disturbing others. Although the Study Pod allows for talking and collaborative work, it is not 100% soundproof. Please keep conversations at a respectful volume. Use of the Study Pod for activities which require complete privacy is discouraged, including interviews, depositions and other legal activities.

Furniture may not be brought into or removed without approval from library staff.

Signs and decorations may not be taped or stapled to walls, doors or glass windows. Use of glue, paint, glitter, and other craft supplies is prohibited.

Patrons who use the Study Pod are expected to leave the room clean and in its original condition.

The Study Pod doors do not lock. Personal belongings should not be left unattended. The Library is not responsible for lost, damaged, or stolen items.

Failure to abide by the procedures and rules established here will result in suspension or termination of an individual's Study Pod privileges.

Comment from patron about the Study Pod:

The study pod is great. I know some other libraries have made this accommodation. I've seen people taking exams for certifications and it is hard to concentrate. Also, I've seen people leave, and told me it was too noisy to be able to study.

So this is very thoughtful and it makes me happy that people who have a critical need to be able to study esp for important tests, etc., will have that edge that can make an appreciable difference for their results and career goals. Many people don't have a good place to do that kind of studying, esp with Covid era.

I haven't needed it myself, but I have felt concerned for the people who expressed their concerns to me and even puzzlement at how boisterous it can be esp when busy.

Thank you!!!! WHPL is the best!!!

Rose



Community Center Update

The Community Center committee is reaching out to libraries across the state of Connecticut to determine which are located in community centers which may offer senior, teen, daycare and other centers, plus recreational facilities, cultural opportunities and classes for residents, plus a public library. Ellen Phillips and Pramod Pradhan from the Faxon Branch Library as well as Carol Waxman have visited libraries in the communities of Niantic and Shelton that are located in community center settings. We have prepared a site list questionnaire and information page to record our findings and report these to the Community Center planning committee

On Wednesday, November 10, 2021, at 1:00 p.m., Governor Ned Lamont, members of the West Hartford Legislative Delegation, including Senator Derek Slap (D – West Hartford, Farmington, Burlington, Bloomfield), State Representatives Kate Farrar (D – West Hartford), Jillian Gilchrest (D – West Hartford), Tammy Exum (D – West Hartford, Avon, Farmington), West Hartford leaders including Mayor Shari Cantor and more (Carol and Pramod represented the West Hartford Public Library) held a press conference announcing the town's purchase of the 8.5-acre former St. Brigid School site. The property will be converted into a community and cultural

center, replacing the current Elmwood Community Center. The new facility will allow the town to enhance and expand the services and programs it offers to teens, seniors, and its diverse community.

The town finalized the purchase in September following a vote of the West Hartford Town Council in July that authorized the purchase. The town has included \$6 million in its Capital Improvement Program over the next two fiscal years for the project. The State of Connecticut will reimburse the town for the project at a rate of 75 percent. The town will contribute a total of \$810,000 in municipal general obligation bonds. Of the \$810,000, the town committed \$500,000 for the acquisition. The Connecticut State Bond Commission met on July 23 and approved \$2.5 million for the acquisition and for planning, architectural, demolition, renovation, and other work that will enable the site to be converted into a community center.

A Request for Proposals (RFP) is being prepared for a functional program development and facility feasibility study for the new Elmwood Community Center. The submission date for this request is December 15, 2021. A request has been sent to the Library Board, Park and Recreation Advisory Board, Pedestrian & Bicycle Safety Commission, Senior Citizens Advisory Board, Clean Energy Commission, Elmwood Business Association and Mayor's Youth Council for one representative and one alternate to serve on the advisory committee to allow Town staff, leadership, stakeholders and residents to work together to ensure that design and planned functions of the new facility align with the strategic vision of the Town and leads to solutions that address the specific needs of the community.

Business Services

One entrepreneur met with a SCORE mentor at Noah Webster Library to get feedback, advice, and support to grow their business. November offerings were limited, but a return to offering two meeting days per month is slated for December.

Photography Contest

The contest is over! There were 87b entries. Here is a link to the winners:

<https://www.westhartfordlibrary.org/photography-winners/>

Stay tuned for copies of the winning photos to be displayed both inside of the Noah Webster Library building as well as on street posts in West Hartford Center.

The Kindness Project

Donations continue to come in for the project. We have received a donation of 200 "Dignity Grows Tote Bags", packages of hygiene supplies for men or women to supply those in need enough items for one month from the Dignity Grows Tote Bags Foundation.

Bailey, Carol and Pramod are working on a video about the Kindness Project to be part of a group of videos to be shown to librarians across the country who are interested in starting their own projects to serve their communities.

This project, now in its 5th year, will end on December 15 with a delivery planned to the Food Pantry on December 17.

The Bear Fair

Our bear friends have left their temporary homes in Blue Back Square and are being refurbished inside an area in the Westfarms Mall before they are placed for auction and located to their forever homes.

New Art Committee

A committee has been established, with Circulation Services Supervisor Ann Marie Salerno as chair, to manage the grant to hire an art curator to lead us in offering up to six art shows per year in the library system, to determine the acquisition of any new pieces, to determine the location of new pieces and to offer ideas for art initiatives.

New Professional Development Committee

Chaired by Andrew Piro and Carol Waxman, this committee's mission is to determine what the library staff would like to have made available to them in terms of learning sessions through in-person programming, webinars, site visits, etc. An \$8000 funding request for professional development will make it possible to hire professionals in areas such as customer service, personal and building security and other issues identified by staff in a survey. This fund will make it possible for us to hire Staff Day speakers and others throughout the year. All programs will be made available to the entire library staff.

Meetings, Staff Development, Outreach

All full-time staff attended the first part in a 2 part series of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion training. The second three hour session will be held in December.

Sara Bartelmo attended a Nutmeg Book Award meeting for the 2024 Selection Committee chairs.

Carol visited the East Lyme Public Library in Niantic and the Huntington Branch Library in Shelton with Ellen and Pramod to view a public library in a building which included other town departments, as part of a site visit plan to determine the course of the new Community Center project. Carol attended a press event at the site of the new Community Center on Mayflower Street at the former St. Brigid School building as well as a meeting of the Storytelling Committee (future project to honor storyteller Gertrude Blanks), an Employee Recognition meeting, LCI meeting and a Mayor's Youth Council meeting.

Kari Karp attended several PD opportunities, including the CT State Library's "The Ferenghi Mindset: Library Leadership Under the Rules of Acquisition", CivicClerk training (new agenda management systems for boards and commissions, "Growing Equitable Library Services: Girls Who Code and "Lead Your Library: Core Competencies - Project Management: Success or Failure?

Kari Karp's article "In Your Neighborhood - HistoryPin" was published in American Libraries magazine on November 1. <https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/2021/11/01/local-history-in-your-neighborhood/>

Lauren organized and hosted the November Fiber Arts Book Club meeting.

Rebecca attended "Moving Digital Lending Forward" - a presentation about digital content licensing and platforms and controlled digital lending.

Rebecca attended the WebJunction webinar, "Virtual is Here to Stay: Making Online Sessions Fun and Focused." This webinar presented strategies and advice for more engaging digital meetings.

Rebecca attended the presentation "Best Practices to Transform Your OverDrive Consortium." This was a webinar discussing best practices managing an Overdrive Consortium Collection.

Rebecca created two physical displays in the library, one for Native American Heritage Month, one highlighting historical mysteries. Two more digital displays were created for Native American Heritage Month,

Andrew coordinated with members of *The Atlantic* group to run their November meeting.

Andrew managed the Night Owls book group who met this month to discuss *The Vanishing Half* by Brit Bennett.

Carol and Andrew visited The Next Chapter bookstore to welcome them to the neighborhood and open up the lines of communication for potential collaborations. The bookstore functions as a vocational training site where students enrolled in the district's post-secondary program will develop important work skills. Carol and Andrew met with Nancy Pereau, the store manager who formerly worked in the Pupil Services department for West Hartford Public Schools. The library donated bookends and they are being put to good use - the store looks great!

West Hartford Human Rights Commission

WH Human Rights Commission met virtually, Wednesday, Nov 3rd 2021. Various upcoming projects were discussed in the meeting, including the statewide HR commission meeting, 2022 HRC meetings, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights celebration. Commissioners had invited members of the newly formed West Hartford Mayor's Youth Council. Board member Kris Rimal and Board Liaison Kari Karp joined the meeting and updated commissioners about the council's upcoming projects. MYC members will be filming a video for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights Celebration, reading articles from the declaration. WHHRC expressed its interest in collaborating with MYC on upcoming projects whenever possible.

Golden Door, Center for Immigrants

Pramod continued meeting with Ellen Salzman-Fiske, founder president of GDCL, and Elizabeth Hanlon, who will be teaching and leading the discussion for *Building Connections: Book Club for Immigrant*. The classes started Thursday, September 16th, 2021 in the Faxon Community room. Author Okey Ndibe visited the group at Faxon and gave a talk on his experience writing his book – *Never Look an American in the Eye: A Memoir*. There will be three sessions of three months each. This ongoing session is the first of the sessions and will end on December 9nd 2021. This program is funded by Greater Hartford Community Fund. WHPL will be partnering with Golden Door for the project. Michael Walsh from West Hartford News also visited the class and did an article about the book club in this news magazine.

Integrated Refugee and Immigration Services

Pramod met with IRIS case worker Aite Rai at Faxon to discuss the possibility of using library resources for new refugees coming from Afghanistan and settling in West Hartford.

Pramod will be meeting with the Community Outreach Specialist from IRIS, Sarah Jessup, on Dec 7th to talk more about their program and possible partnership with Library, local non-profit organizations and West Hartford Social Services.

Pramod conducted a basic technology class at Elmwood Senior Center. This is a three-part series. Pramod has been asked to offer similar classes at the Bishops Corner Senior Center. Faxon continued English classes through zoom and in-person.

The Fern Street Backpack program continued for families whose children attend middle and high school to receive food bags during the school year. There are 11 families registered.

Children's Services

Children's programs moved inside all library buildings, still in smaller classes. Preschool children enjoyed an All Things Pete the Cat Storytime in all buildings and a Cookie Storytime, crafted with fuse beads and started a four week music series for families "Music Together". The Toy Library at the Noah Webster Library has become very popular. Families preview toy selections in a spiral bound book, choose what toys they wish to take home and keep these for three weeks.

Teen Services

Mayor's Youth Council September - November 2021

Since September, Mayor's Youth Council has met three times, twice in special virtual meetings and once for an in-person election, which took place at the Town Council Chambers. Teens have heard from guest speakers Mayor Shari Cantor, Donald Reder (president of the original West Hartford Youth Council) as well as Judy Wyman Kelly, Tracey Wilson, and Liz Devine from the Witness Stones Project.

Members have represented the group in a we-ha.com interview with Tracey Weiss (10/26) and at the Human Rights Commission meeting on November 3. The HRC has asked Mayor's Youth Council to shoot a video for their annual Celebration of the Universal Declaration of Human

Rights. Teens will come to the Noah Webster Library Tech Lab and the Faxon Library to record readings of articles 1-14 and Community Services Librarian Pramod Pradhan will edit them into a compilation to be shared on West Hartford Community Interactive in December.

In the coming months, the MYC subcommittees (1- Mental Health Action and Awareness, 2- Social Events, and 3 - International / Diversity Night) will meet in Google Meet and Discord to brainstorm their impact projects (activities, initiatives and/or services that address these issues). Committees have begun reaching out to individuals and organizations who might assist with their plans. At future meetings, they will report on the progress of their projects and call for a group vote whenever consensus is needed to move forward.

Aside from developing their own student-led initiatives, Mayor's Youth Council has been tapped by several local groups to provide their feedback or lend support. The Witness Stones Project requested assistance with petitioning Town Council to rename New Street. The Chamber of Commerce inquired about help with their Job and Resource Fair. Additionally, the new community center advisory group asked for a MYC representative. And just this week, a student from Hall approached the MYC Chair about discussing the West Hartford Climates Project and its proposed Climate Emergency Resolution. Members are encouraged to pursue these ideas when they interest them to learn more about how town governance works.

Mayor's Youth Council have also discussed starting a social media account in order to show the public what they are working and to recruit new members in the spring.

MYC has been off to a busy start, and it is exciting to work with this first cohort that is so invested in developing the group for future years. In the span of two short months, they have built a strong rapport, made important community connections, and advocated for Mayor's Youth Council in the media and at other town meetings. Thanks to their enthusiasm, this program has the potential to grow and be a meaningful volunteer opportunity for civic-minded teens in West Hartford.

The Teen Department hosted 2 TAB meetings, Anime Club and Zentangle Birds. Karp also led a virtual National Novel Writing Month Contest for 2021. As of 11/30, 9 writers submitted 15 Google form responses and wrote 163,673 words. On December 1, all participants who complete at least 50% of their word count goal will be entered to win a prize from the NaNoWriMo Store.

Kari Karp and Kris Rimal were invited to speak about Mayor's Youth Council at the Human Rights Commission's monthly meeting. MYC was asked to record clips of members reading articles 1-14 of the UN's Declaration of Human Rights for a virtual celebration on December 10. Teens came to the library's Tech Lab and Faxon Library on to record their segments, which will be edited by Community Services Librarian Pramod Pradhan. Kris Rimal was nominated to be MYC's representative on the new West Hartford Community Center Advisory Group. Kari Karp was staff liaison for the virtual Mayor's Youth Council meeting on November 23. The group discussed subcommittee work, 2022-2023 dates, and social media. Additionally, a student from

West Hartford Climate Projects introduced the idea of collaborating on a Climate Emergency Resolution for the town.

Kari Karp's article "In Your Neighborhood - HistoryPin" was published in American Libraries magazine on November 1. <https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/2021/11/01/local-history-in-your-neighborhood/>

Adult Services

Lauren and Rebecca designed and organized the Winter Reading Challenge, a program of challenges and prizes to encourage the use of library resources and materials starting December 1st. Rebecca and Lauren also enlisted the expertise of Kirsten Kilbourn and Maura Beaudreault to assist with the graphics and promotion for this event. Additionally they designed the sign-up prize (a mug featuring the library logo), prepared take-and-make crafts, created the Winter Reading Challenge webpage on our site, and developed directions for staff to ensure the program runs smoothly.

Lauren completed 14 notary signatures for 7 West Hartford patrons.

Lauren viewed ALA's Winter Book Club Picks webinar.

Andrew worked with the Tech Lab Committee to unbox and test new technology. Additionally, he began working on the Tech Lab webpage and room sign-ups.

Adult Programming

Adult programs offered in November included:

Second Innings Data Analytics Course

Reducing Stress

Comprehensive Retirement Planning

Building Connections Book Club

Fiber Arts Book Club

Connecticut Trust Laws

Film: Without a Whisper

Buildings

Unfortunately, a car hit the book drop in the Faxon parking lot and did considerable damage. The book drop cannot be repaired and will be replaced by a new book drop to be paid for by Town insurance. We have identified a book drop to order and will await shipment.



The 5 parking spaces for patrons to use for curbside service at the Noah Webster Library are now replaced with 3 signs that indicate that 10 minute parking is available for patrons to use the library.

Library Staff

We have hired Leslie Sano, a professional graphic artist and West Hartford resident, as a part-time Program and Publicity Library Specialist as well as additional Teen Monitors who will also begin working shifts in the Noah Webster Library Tech Lab later this winter. Several new computer technicians have also been hired.

December 2021 Administrative Report

New Library Director

The Library Board is pleased to announce the appointment of Laura Irmscher as the next Director of Library Services for the West Hartford Public Library. Laura is a seasoned librarian who has spent over 15 years serving the public, with extensive experience with many different facets of library operations. Laura holds a MLIS from Simmons College and a BA in History from Alma College.

Laura will be joining us from the Boston Public Library where she began her career as a reference librarian and most recently held the position of Chief of Collections. As a member of the Boston Public Library leadership team, she headed a variety of internal and external initiatives and special projects, including complex operational and financial analysis, building renovations and new construction for the Central Library in Copley Square and several of the twenty-six branches. During our search process, Laura stood out with her communication and leadership skills and we are excited to see what can be accomplished when she collaborates with our outstanding library staff and the West Hartford community.

The Library Board and extended Search Committee thanks the entire library staff and, especially, Interim Director Carol Waxman, for their hard work leading the library operations as the Committee conducted a comprehensive national search to find an individual with the experience and vision necessary to lead our exceptional library forward. Ms. Irmscher is expected to start in her new role at the end of January 2022.



IMPORTANT NEWS FROM TOWN HALL:

Good afternoon Town of West Hartford Staff:

I want to make you aware that tomorrow morning, it will be announced that Town Manager Matt Hart has accepted a position as the Executive Director of the Capitol Region Council of Governments, and he will be leaving his current role as Town Manager sometime after the New Year.

On behalf of the Town Council, I want to express our deep appreciation to Matt for his service to West Hartford, in particular for his leadership during one of the most serious and prolonged

public emergencies in the history of our community. Matt has lead the Town with great care, skill and compassion. I am fortunate to consider him a friend, and I wish him the best in his new role.

All of us on the Town Council realize how critical it is for the Town to have strong leadership and direction during this transition, and I am very pleased to share with you that I intend to nominate Executive Director of Human Resources Rick Ledwith to serve as Acting Town Manager while the Town Council considers the process for a permanent replacement for Matt.

Rick is an experienced and professional leader who cares deeply about West Hartford. He has worked extensively with every municipal department as well as the school district since he joined the Town in 2001, and I am confident that he will capably lead West Hartford.

And now, as 2021 draws to a close, I wanted to take a moment to express the gratitude of myself and the Town Council to all of you for the dedication, professionalism and customer service that you provide to our businesses and residents each and every day.

We recognize the many challenges the global pandemic has created in your work environment, and I continue to be in awe of how you continuously overcome the many obstacles placed in your path and find new ways of providing superior service without missing a beat.

I hear from our residents every day about how thankful they are to live in a town like West Hartford. It is not by coincidence that West Hartford remains one of the top communities in the nation for best quality of life. You make that happen!

This holiday season I wish you and your family safe, fulfilling, healthy and happy 2022.

Peace and happiness to all of you, Shari G. Cantor

Statistics

Curbside appointments: 138 (137 at NWL and 1 at Faxon)

Total Circulation: 38,055

New Cards: 135

Study Pod Reservations: 35

Continued Reopening

We are responding to the latest pandemic protocol reflective of the rise in positivity rates in West Hartford by communicating frequently with the West Hartford/Bloomfield Health District, especially about children's programming. Children's programming has moved indoors with a very limited number of participants. We have paused programming for children under the age of 2 who cannot wear a mask. Adult programs will continue as virtual but will offer a hybrid model of in person as well as virtual when the positivity rate has decreased. All library visitors over the age of 2 years must wear a mask inside our three library buildings.

Curbside service has slowed considerably but is still being offered at the Noah Webster Library as more and more patrons enter the building to retrieve their materials and browse. This service has been discontinued at the Faxon Branch Library. At the Bishops Corner Branch, the use of a

smart locker system has replaced curbside service. This new service has proven to be very successful in terms of the number of library patrons using it and their appreciation of being able to pick up materials during closed library hours.

Unfortunately, due to staff outbreaks of Covid, we had to close the Faxon Branch Library for the day on January 3, 2022, due to a staff shortage. We are in close contact with the West Hartford/Bloomfield Health District on a daily basis to determine quarantine protocol for staff members who are exposed or those returning to work after Covid.

Budget Process

Library staff are preparing the 2022-2023 budget, due on January 5, 2022.

Bishops Corner - Smart Lockers

62 unique locker users

117 total locker retrievals in the month of December (up from 79 in November)

Average storage time for a locker item is 27 hours (well below the 3-day threshold that we set)



Tech Lab

We plan to open the new library tech lab in January to offer new services to our patrons.

Most of the equipment is now on site including a sound booth. Reconfigurable furniture is in place for collaborative projects. The Lab will be open a minimum of 15-21 hours per week, staffed by our computer technicians who have a particular interest and experience in audio-visual technologies. Services to the public will offer opportunities for patrons to experience and use podcasting/sound equipment, a Cricut fabrication device, AutoCAD for drafting to make devices, video production and studio equipment as well as editing tools and software and a station for digitizing analog content.

Pramod Pradhan trained teen monitors showing them how to use the soundboard, video camera, TASCAM recorder, and video conversion device. Kari Karp and Gen Francis created a 21-hour / week tech lab schedule for Studio 20 South that includes 6 teen room and computer lab staff members. Their shifts will tentatively start January 31.

The Tech Lab committee is discussing programming and collaboration. Jen Evans, Executive Director of WHCi has declared interest in collaborative programming and having her staff help patrons in our Tech Lab. Some members of the new West Hartford Mayor's Youth Council are experienced YouTubers and podcasters, and have expressed great excitement over using and promoting the Tech Lab. When the Tech Lab is not being used for these projects it will provide an excellent space for instructional classes, private or group study and meetings. The Tech Lab was funded by a West Hartford Public Library Foundation Thomas F. Kilfoil bequest.

Study Pod

Patrons are booking at least 2-3 two hour appointments daily so far to use the new study pod, an Air3 Square structure with an open roof that is ADA compliant and provides a private space for an individual or small groups to work and study together in a space that provides physical and acoustic privacy, yet allows visitors to still feel part of the vibrancy of the library. The project was funded by the American Rescue Plan Acts for Libraries and a West Hartford Library Foundation Thomas F. Kilfoil bequest.

Note received about the study pod:

The study pod is great. I know some other libraries have made this accommodation. I've seen people taking exams for certifications and it is hard to concentrate. Also, I've seen people leave, and told me it was too noisy to be able to study.

So this is very thoughtful and it makes me happy that people who have a critical need to be able to study esp for important tests, etc., will have that edge that can make an appreciable difference for their results and career goals. Many people don't have a good place to do that kind of studying, esp with Covid era.

I haven't needed it myself, but I have felt concerned for the people who expressed their concerns to me and even puzzlement at how boisterous it can be esp when busy.

Thank you!!!! WHPL is the best!!! Rose

Community Center Update

The Community Center committee is reaching out to community centers across the state of Connecticut and other areas to visit and complete site study questionnaires to give us information on planning our own Community Center. These centers may offer senior, teen, daycare and other centers, plus recreational facilities, cultural opportunities and classes for residents, plus a public library. Some offer a post office or the office of the Registrar of Voters. Ellen Phillips and Pramod Pradhan from the Faxon Branch Library as well as Carol Waxman have visited community centers with libraries in the communities of Niantic and Shelton so far. We have recorded our findings on a site list questionnaire and taken photos and videos to report back to the Community Center committees.

Amazon Smile

The West Hartford Public Library now has an affiliation with Amazon Smile, an option for Amazon shoppers to designate a charity to receive a portion of their shopping expense. Patrons who wish to do so can change their charitable donation status to the Library Foundation. There is a "Donate" button on the library website and publicity postings in the library newsletter and Facebook page, Instagram and Twitter and other news outlets.

Photographs from Photography Contest Now in the Center

Twenty-four photographs from the Photography Contest held by the West Hartford Library this fall will be on display on decorative light poles on South Main Street in West Hartford Center until spring of 2022. This is a partnership project between the West Hartford Parking Authority and the West Hartford Public Library.



Kindness Project

The Kindness Project celebrated its fifth successful year, stocking the West Hartford Food Pantry, the Fern Street Backpack program and the nurses' offices at Hall and Conard High Schools with much needed hygiene products. Bailey and Carol have produced a video with Pramod's filming expertise, to send to the Collaborative Summer Library Program – Child & Community Well-Being Committee to be included in a video with three other programs that deal with helping challenged families and shown nationally to libraries interested in offering their own versions of these projects. Included in our video were interviews from others involved in the project: Katherine Wilson from the Fern Street Backpack Program, Community Partner Fran Maltz, Food Pantry Director Nancy Stockman and West Hartford Parking Authority Manager Brooke Nelson, whose 91 year old mother knitted over 100 wool scarves to be given away at the Food Pantry.

Here is a link to the video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vcTTIuuUYXQ>

This project is an ideal partnership project between town agencies to relieve the challenge of families purchasing essential personal products for their families.

Art Committee

The inaugural meeting of the newly formed Art Committee met on Dec. 8th. We discussed touring all three buildings to see what existing art is in place and what areas could use some sprucing up. We also talked about themes for the six art shows that will be in the gallery this year. Two curators were hired to oversee the art shows, Stefanie Marco Lantz and Julie Philips.

Meetings, Staff Development, Outreach

Ann Marie Salerno, Carol Waxman and Janet Valencis hosted a Holiday Breakfast for the staff on Dec. 16th.

Carol attended meetings of the Human Services Committee, Elmwood Community Center Committee, Employee Recognition Committee and Mayor's Youth Council.

Andrew attended the December Connecticut Digital Library Advisory Board meeting

Andrew and Rebecca attended a CollectionHQ demo organized by LCI to assess the product as a potential purchase to support diversity audits and analyze data to support collection development.

Rebecca led a discussion of E-Book and E-Audio purchasing strategies for the CLA Reader's Advisory Roundtable North of which she is co-chair.

Bailey and Karen met with Marianne Esposito on December 7 to discuss the possibility of creating a children's fun run/fundraiser for the library. We will meet back up with Marianne in early 2022 to move further along with the plans.

Children's Services

Families with preschool children enjoyed a Cookie Storytime, PJ Storytime, Thumbprint Snowflake Ornament and a Winter Wonderland Storytime. Older children created gingerbread houses and Winter Tree Art.

Music Together of West Hartford Farmington Valley conducted a session of music classes for children age birth – kindergarten. The four week session was reduced to 3 out of health and safety concerns. A February session slated for the Faxon Branch Library will be pending and dependent upon local Covid rates.

Abakadoodle art classes will be held during a short winter break in February for grades K-2 and 3-5, depending upon health conditions.

With the health and safety of our staff and the families who visit us at the forefront, we may plan and pivot, holding or canceling classes accordingly.

Sara created a Bitmoji of the Children's Librarians' Top Picks for 2021 that appeared in a newsletter and is on our website. A carousel of new books also appears on our website and is frequently updated.

This has been the second challenging year for Children's. Our collections are robust and we have plenty to offer our patrons. Programming as we knew it, has been a challenge. We have adjusted, pivoted at the last minute and done everything we can to keep patrons and staff safe in a climate that has changed almost daily. We will maintain our vigilance in only gathering inside in small groups and only for those children who can wear masks unless it is determined that that protocol is not safe. We are all looking forward to a return to a safe environment for all.

Teen Services

The Teen Room hosted several programs in December, including Teen Advisory Board, Mayor's Youth Council, Take-and-Make Gingerbread House Kits, Dungeons & Dragons Character Creation Workshop, and Dungeons & Dragons Candlekeep Mysteries. Additionally, Kari Karp was invited to a library card sign up event at Hall High School on 12/23 and created or renewed 25 student and teacher cards.

A NaNoWriMo grand prize was awarded to Dan O'Dea on 12/17.

New teen room monitors began working on projects in the Teen Room, including assisting with booklists, decorations, displays, weeding, Canva flyers and social media posts, and Dungeons & Dragons and take-and-make programming.

Adult Services

The Town Parking Department provided more permanent signage for three curbside pickup parking spots on South Main Street.

The local American Legion has several posters on display in the gallery of Noah Webster Library commemorating their 100th anniversary.

Two business leaders met with a SCORE mentor at Noah Webster Library to get feedback, advice, and support to grow their business.

Over 100 patrons have signed up so far for the Adult Winter Reading Challenge. Led by Rebecca and Lauren, the program encourages patrons to use library resources and materials December 1 - March 1. To participate, patrons participate in various reading challenges and library-related tasks for a chance to win various prizes. Patrons can still sign up and get a free WHPL coffee mug (while supplies last).

Lauren advertised, packaged, and distributed the December Take & Make crafts to Winter Reading Challenge participants. The registration list was completely full less than 24 hours after the craft was announced in the newsletter. In addition, Lauren selected items and made buttons for raffle ticket prizes for the Winter Reading Challenge participants.

Rebecca researched options for e-learning resources to add to the adult digital electronic collection. Rebecca obtained trials and quotes of Udemy and SkillShare for the Reference Department to review, and corresponded with other libraries that use these products.

Rebecca created two physical displays in the library, "Winter Stories", and "First in a Series". Both were bingo categories for the Adult Winter Reading Challenge.

Lauren completed 13 notary signatures for 11 West Hartford patrons and 2 non-West Hartford patrons.

Lauren viewed a JobNow webinar from December 2021.

Andrew created a virtual display highlighting Grammy-nominated songs, albums, and artists available to listen to on Hoopla.

Adult Programming

- Healthy Cooking for the Holidays
- Film and Discussion: Madan Sara
- Author Talk: "No Dead Air" with Larry Rifkin
- Inner Peace This Holiday Season Through Meditation
- *THE NEW YORKER* MAGAZINE GROUP
- WH FICTION WRITERS
- Connecticut Screenwriters
- Faxon Poets

Total Number of Programs

Total Number of One-Off Programs: 4

Total Attendance for One-Off Programs: 92

Total Number of Series Programs: 4

Total Attendance for Series Programs: 139

Collection Services

Items Added in December: 2353 (includes 907 downloadable records)

Items Deleted in December: 1589

Internal procedure change: All newly catalogued materials will be discharged at NWL (rather than branch copies placed directly in bins) in order to trap holds and change status to "in transit."

Buildings

Unfortunately, a car hit the book drop in the Faxon parking lot and did considerable damage. The book drop cannot be repaired and will be replaced by a new book drop to be paid for by Town insurance. A new book drop has been installed.

Library Staff

We have filled vacancies in the library staff by hiring a professional graphic artist as well as several teen monitors and tech lab assistants.

Library staff celebrating milestone anniversaries were honored at an event at Town Hall.



Staff members Pramod Pradhan, Janet Valencis, Judy Krzyzek, Rebecca Nugent and Kari Karp (not pictured here) were honored by the Town of West Hartford for their milestone years of service at an Employee Recognition Breakfast in December.

