

WEST HARTFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD MINUTES

Monday, September 27, 2021 6:30 p.m.

VIRTUAL MEETING

1. CALL TO ORDER

President Jill Spear called the Library Board to order at 6:40 p.m. Present, via Town of West Hartford WebEx, were Board members Kim Cohen, Eileen Daly, Gail Crockett, Dr. Natalia Menjivar and Jill Spear, Acting Library Director Carol Waxman, and Janet Valencis, recorder.

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 Gail Crockett, the Board unanimously approved the Consent Agenda.

4. THE MEETING MINUTES of June 28, 2021 were approved as part of the consent agenda.

5. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

a. West Hartford Board Training – Public Meeting Refresh

In the last year and a half, we have been conducting our meetings remotely and we are all getting pretty adept at using our mute buttons and announcing our names before we speak. Fortunately, we have folks working behind the scenes to make these virtual meetings possible, including library administrative staff, WHCTV staff, the Town Clerk's office and the Office of the Corporation Counsel.

The Office of the Corporation Counsel and the Office of the Town Clerk is further helping us by conducting a "refresher" course on the requirements of conducting a public meeting in person and remotely. I want to thank the Library Board members and Library Administrative staff for taking the time to attend these training sessions.

b. Director Search

With the rollout of the Covid-19 vaccination program and associated opening of the job market, the Library Board has reopened the search for a new Library Director. Applications are currently being reviewed.

c. Library Operations

Recently the Library has received questions about and instances involving the use of the internet services available at the library. The staff and Library Board has addressed these according to the related policies and procedures. As always, we view such as an opportunity to review and address the operations and policies for possible improvements and clarity.

6. OLD BUSINESS:

Community Center Update -

The purchase of the property at 100 Mayflower Street will be a new, multi-use municipal community center. A “Request for Proposal” is being drafted to solicit architectural firms to examine options for use and help define uses of the building.

An Advisory Committee will be formed comprised of interested West Hartford community members to work with architects and Town staff to evaluate issues and opportunities for the Mayflower facility and help to prioritize various potential functions of the site.

7. NEW BUSINESS - none

8. DIRECTOR’S REPORT

- a. July and August Report, submitted:
 - i. Library Administrative Report
 - ii. Budget Report
- b. Current Month Briefing.

Continued Reopening - Library hours were expanded on September 7, to include full Saturdays until 5:00 PM at the Noah Webster Library and evening hours and Saturday hours at the branch libraries. Sunday hours will be offered starting January 9, 2022. We will be open for 10 Sundays, not including the Martin Luther King and Presidents’ Day weekends. Sunday hours will be noon – 4:00 PM.

Tech Lab - We are moving forward and hope to open the Lab to the public by the end of November.

Smart Locker Update - The Smart Locker system was delivered to the Bishops Corner Branch on September 14. They are fully installed and awaiting the software to make them accessible to the public. Patrons wishing to pick up their materials from the lockers will have a choice, when placing materials on hold, of where they wish to pick them up, the lockers being one of the choices. Library staff will fill the lockers with materials. Patrons will be sent a code to use when they arrive to pick up their materials at the lockers. The code will pop the locker open for retrieval. Once emptied, staff will fill the locker again for the next patron. The lockers will offer pick up service at all hours, seven days a week. Training for staff with Package Concierge will take place this week, the lockers will undergo a testing period and will then be available to the public as soon as possible.

Study Pod Update - The study pod is expected to be delivered to our building and installed on site in the next month.

Absentee Ballots - Town of West Hartford absentee ballot applications will now be available in each West Hartford Public library building.

Homebound Services - Homebound services are fully back in place as pre-Covid.

Food Backpacks - The Faxon Branch Library will continue to offer backpacks of food on weekends to middle and high school student families. The service will be expanded to the Bishops Corner Branch.

Mayor's Youth Council - Eleven teens from ninth to twelfth grade have now been chosen for the Council and have had their first meeting. At the next meeting they will choose officers and determine action projects to begin this year.

The Bear Fair - The Bear Fair continues to attract many visitors of all ages to the front and rear of the Noah Webster Library. The bears will remain on display until October 29, at which time they will be relocated to their forever homes. Proceeds from the auction of the bears will be sent to the recipients. The bear in the front of the library near the sidewalk painted by artist Corey Paine will have its donations directed to the Faxon Branch Library to be used at the Library's discretion.

Park Road Parade - The West Hartford Public Library will take an active role in the Park Road Parade, on the morning of October 2. A small group of staff will promote our Celebrate All of Us initiatives by riding on a truck that showcases two giant blow up globes and flags from other countries, as well as music.

Photography Contest - The photography competition started on August 14, 2021 and lasted one month, until September 14, 2021. There were three categories for the submissions: Landmark, Landscape, and People. There were a total of 74 submissions across all categories. The winners will be announced on November 1, 2021 and photos virtually displayed between November 14, 2021 and January 31, 2022. Winning submissions will also be enlarged in print and on view in the Noah Webster gallery.

The Kindness Project - The 5th year of the Kindness Project will begin shortly, to benefit the Town of West Hartford Food Pantry as well as the Universalist Church Backpack program for students. Personal hygiene items, paper goods, diapers, laundry detergent and more are collected from our patrons in large bins both inside and outside of the library buildings, sorted, packed into cartons and delivered to their destinations to be placed on the shelves of the pantries for residents to self-select, or placed in backpacks picked up by families at the Faxon and Bishops Corner branches. Families using the services of the Food Pantry as well as receiving the backpacks are extremely appreciative. The Kindness Project is a national model for the Collaborative Summer Library Programs initiative, in which libraries promote projects to help families with basic needs.

Notary Services - A notary service is now in place at the Noah Webster Library and soon at the Faxon Branch Library. The service is free of charge and available Monday – Friday by appointment only.

Programming - Adult programs continue to be virtual and are definitely well attended with upwards of 100 people attending some of the programs. Teen programs remain virtual. Children's programs are being held mostly outdoors on the patio area in the rear of the building at the Children's floor level as well as on the front lawn space. When the weather is inclement the program is moved inside. Children's programs are limited to ten children in each. In late fall we will assess how children's programs will be held during the winter months. Adult library programs in September included an author event "Lead Like a Pro", an opportunity to learn the Nepali language, a poetry talk, a program about civil war ancestry and an examination of the book Huckleberry Finn.

Buildings - Unfortunately, the Faxon Branch Library suffered from flooding during the recent rainstorms. The Town was very quick to respond to all of the problems at Faxon. Neither the Noah Webster nor the Bishops Corner Branch Libraries suffered any flooding damage. Leakage from the ceiling at the Bishops Corner Branch Library has ended. Ceiling tiles will now be replaced in the areas damaged by the leakage. Repairs to the roof and consultations about possible leaks from the air conditioner and subsequent remediation has hopefully solved this problem.

Library Staff - A second recruitment for the position of part-time Program and Publicity Specialist is in place and will close on September 30. This is a 15 hour per week position.

9. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: The Library Board Meeting was unanimously adjourned at 7:05 pm. The next scheduled Board Meeting is October 25, 2021.

Respectfully submitted,

Eileen Daly
Board Secretary

This meeting was held remotely in accordance with Public Act No. 21-2 regarding Public Meetings Held Using Electronic Equipment. The public had the ability to view the meeting in real-time at www.whctv.org and www.youtube/whctv5 .