

**WEST HARTFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD MINUTES**  
**Monday, February, 2022 6:30 p.m.**  
**VIRTUAL MEETING**

1. CALL TO ORDER

President Jill Spear called the Library Board to order at 6:44 p.m. Present, via Town of West Hartford WebEx, were Board members Kim Cohen, Eileen Daly, Gail Crockett, Dr. Natalia Menjivar and Jill Spear, Library Director Laura Irscher, 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 Gail Crockett and seconded by Kim Cohen, the Board unanimously approved the Consent Agenda.

4. THE MEETING MINUTES of January 24, 2022 were approved as part of the consent agenda.

5. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

a. Election of Officers

MOTION: On a motion made by Gail Crockett and seconded by Natalia Menjivar, the board unanimously elected Eileen Daly as the Board Chair.

MOTION: On a motion made by Natalia Menjivar and seconded by Kim Cohen, the board unanimously elected Gail Crockett as the Board Vice Chair.

MOTION: On a motion made by Natalia Menjivar and seconded by Gail Crockett, the board unanimously elected Kim Cohen as the Board Secretary.

Chair: Eileen Daly  
Vice Chair: Gail Crockett  
Secretary: Kim Cohen

Jill Spear was thanked for her leadership as Chair in this very busy time for the Library Board.

6. OLD BUSINESS:

a. FY2023 Budget Update

Laura provided an update on the budget process. The town manager gave positive feedback on the submitted budget. The budgets will be presented to the Town Council on March 8<sup>th</sup> and there will be a public hearing on March 16<sup>th</sup>.

b. New Community Center and Library Branch

Laura updated the board on the progress of the new community center.

c. Community Outreach

A Juneteenth curated Art Show will be held. The Storytelling Committee is planning three events to honor Gertrude Blanks, a local storyteller.

d. Staff Professional Development Update

The staff professional development committee recently offered staff a webinar on customer service. They are looking into On-Demand training for staff and a staff day is planned for May.

7. NEW BUSINESS

a. Staff Spotlight

This is a new agenda item. Each month a staff member will be invited to attend the Board meeting and provide information to the board about what their department does. This will begin in March.

b. Library Issues and Trends

Laura updated the Board on a recently drafted bill that was introduced in the Connecticut General Assembly to address e-book and e-audiobook prices for libraries. The bill is named S.B. No. 131 – An Act Concerning Electronic Book Licensing. If passed into law, the bill would require publishers of electronic books to license such books to public libraries on reasonable terms. Libraries have faced challenges over the last several years with regard to digital content. Publishers have been changing the licensing terms, raising prices for libraries, and in some cases refusing to sell to libraries. Many in the library community have been advocating their state governments to take action, and the Connecticut bill comes as 7 other states are either voting on or considering bills of their own.

8. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

a. January Report, submitted:

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

b. Current Month Briefing.

Laura thanked Carol Waxman for her efforts as interim director. Laura commended the staff on their welcoming attitude when she arrived and the high esteem that town employees and patrons have for them.

Laura has been meeting with staff and shadowing staff members to learn about the organization. She has placed her first order for the Collection and is looking forward to her first shift on the Reference Desk in the near future. Laura is becoming familiar with other library directors in the area, LCI, our library consortium and the CT Library Consortium.

Patron attendance in January has increased 11% from last January. As of February 28, 2022 masks will no longer be required except or in person children's programming for ages 5 and under. In person programming will resume but we will continue the use of virtual and hybrid programming.

9. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: The Library Board Meeting was unanimously adjourned at 7:36 pm. The next scheduled Board Meeting is March 28, 2022.

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Cohen  
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."