

# **WEST HARTFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD MINUTES**

**Monday, May 22, 2023, 6:30pm**

## **VIRTUAL MEETING**

### **1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Eileen Daly called the Library Board to order at 6:40pm. Present, via Town of West Hartford Teams were Board members Kim Cohen, Eileen Daly, Dr. Natalia Menjivar and EJ Greenspan, Library Director Laura Irmscher, and Heidi Reagan, recorder. Member Gail Crockett was absent.

### **2. PUBLIC COMMENT - none**

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

MOTION: On a motion made by EJ Greenspan and seconded by Kimberly Cohen, the Board unanimously approved the Consent Agenda.

### **4. THE MEETING MINUTES of April 24, 2023 were approved as part of the consent agenda.**

### **5. CHAIR'S REPORT – Nothing new to report.**

### **6. OLD BUSINESS:**

#### **a. FY24 Budget Updates – Laura Irmscher**

FY24 Budget was approved. Highlights include the Town's approval to go Fine-Free, and fully funding the Librarian II position which has been posted and will close June 16.

#### **b. Policy Review: Circulation Policy – Laura Irmscher**

Updated Circulation Policy reflects the decision to go Fine-Free and has been simplified to provide greater flexibility for library staff and clarity for patrons. Kim Cohen suggested a disclaimer explaining check-outs from other libraries are subject to the owning library's policies.

MOTION: On a motion made by EJ Greenspan and seconded by Kimberly Cohen, the Board unanimously approved the changes to the Circulation policy that will include the disclaimer suggested by Kim.

### **7. NEW BUSINESS**

#### **a. Active Shooter Training, provided by the Town's Emergency Management Team has been tentatively scheduled for June 15 from 9-11am. In order to include as many employees as possible it will be necessary to open the libraries at 11:30am that day.**

MOTION: On a motion made by EJ Greenspan and seconded by Kimberly Cohen, the Board unanimously approved the late opening for June 15 or another date in the future if that date is not feasible.

### **8. DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Laura Irmscher**

#### **a. April's documents submitted:**

- i. Library Administrative Report
- ii. Budget Report
- iii. Quarterly Statistics

b. Current Month Briefing:

- WHPL was voted Best Library in Best of Hartford 2023 Reader's Poll
- Teen Librarian Kari Karp received the CLA's Young Adult Service Award at the May conference.
- Gertrude Blanks Storytelling Event will be held June 13
- Registration was held for Faxon Fun. Grade 1-3 session is full with a wait list and Grade 4-6 session has two slots remaining
- Custom shelving has been installed for Holds behind the Circulation Desk
- Puzzle Exchange is now offered at Bishop's Corner
- Mayor's Youth Council has had their final meeting and is accepting applications for the 23/24 session
- CPR Training, hosted by the WH Fire Department will be held June 6
- Vinni Bruno will be offering a virtual program on May 30 about Elton John

9. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: The Library Board Meeting was unanimously adjourned at 7:10pm. The next scheduled Board Meeting is June 26, 2023, at 6:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Cohen  
Board Secretary  
West Hartford Library Board

"This meeting was held remotely and the public had the ability to view the meeting in real-time live on West Hartford Community Television at [www.whctv.org](http://www.whctv.org) and [www.youtube.com/whctv5](http://www.youtube.com/whctv5)."

# May Administrative Report

## Library Statistics

- Total Circulation: 56,163 (10% increase from May 2022)
- Smart Locker: 224 locker retrievals
- Curbside appointments: 57
- New Cards: 240
- Study Space Reservations: 109
- Collection Items Added: 2,579
- Notary: 21 patrons served
- Tech Help: 17 patrons helped
- Studio 20 South visits: 20
- Local History: 44 reference transactions

## Library & Staff Recognition

### Awards

The West Hartford Public Library was voted Best Library in the Best of Hartford 2023 Readers' Poll!

<https://www.courant.com/best-of/>. Runner up libraries were Farmington and the Lucy Robbins Welles Library in Newington. We're so thrilled that readers recognize and appreciate our library!

Teen Librarian Kari Karp received the Connecticut Library Association's Young Adult Service Award at the annual conference in May. This award is selected by the YA Section of CLA and honors an outstanding librarian serving the Young Adult community. Congratulations, Kari!



### Donation

The Children's Department received a memorial gift from the family of Josephine Rovaldi, a former library employee who passed away in 2019 at the age of 101. Jo worked in TPD for 30 years purchasing books and processing invoices. Jo's family was appreciative of the kindness and love shown to Jo during her years working here and wanted to give a gift to the Children's Department. Jo and her family lived in a home directly across from the police station on Raymond Road. She was a great friend of every police officer and could often be seen standing in front of the station talking to her officer friends. Carol visited Jo when she was at an assisted living facility a year or so before her passing and she was sharp and witty as ever and remembered everything about all of her colleagues and her library career. We are grateful to the Rovaldi family for their thoughtful and generous gift.

### Faxon Fun

Faxon Fun Registration took place on Wednesday May 17, starting at 6:00 pm. Karen P covered reference at Faxon so Pramod and Ellen could manage the crowd who began lining up an hour before start time! Most slots were filled on registration night and registration is now completely full with a few people on the waiting list. Faxon fun made possible by a grant from the Stanley D. and Hinda N. Fisher Fund at the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving

### Goldfarb Grants

For the 25<sup>th</sup> year, the West Hartford Public Library is the proud recipient of grants from the Ellen Jeanne Goldfarb Memorial Charitable Trust. Each year, Carol Waxman writes to the Trustees to request a renewal of the grant in the amount of \$3,000 for Music and \$1,500 for Dance. The Ellen Jeanne Goldfarb Memorial Charitable Trust, located in Farmington, CT is a private foundation.

Ellen Jeanne Goldfarb of West Hartford, died suddenly in 1992, in Brussels, Belgium. She was a senior at Hall High School and was a flutist traveling in Europe with the Hall High Jazz Band at the time of her death. In addition to her great love of music, she was actively involved with numerous other school and community activities and was the top-ranking student academically in the senior class. Her parents, Robert and Francine Goldfarb, established the trust to honor Ellen's love of music and to fund educational programs that encourage the growth and development of the youth in our community.

The West Hartford Public Library has offered many quality programs of music and dance paid for by the grant over the course of the years, featuring live concerts and music classes, as well as dance performances and dance lessons for children ranging in age from preschool through tween. Families attending have exclaimed their appreciation for the opportunity to attend outstanding programs and classes without charge at the West Hartford Public Library. Of particular note, the library has hosted performances of the Nutcracker Ballet every holiday season and live music concerts in Blue Back Square.

The West Hartford Public Library is proud to be recipients of these grants and to extend the appreciation of music and dance to our library patrons.

### Book It! Fun Run



Plans are moving along for the Book It! fun run, thanks to the efforts of Bailey, Karen, Kirsten, and Carol. The event will be held on July 15 at 10:30 am at Sterling Field (adjacent to Charter Oak International Academy). Races are planned for children of all ages, including a 100 meter toddler dash, and ¼ and 1 mile untimed races. The first 200 registered runners get a race day cape. EMTs and CERT volunteers will be on hand to assist with the event, Fleet Feet will be providing a balloon arch for the finish line, and plans are in the works for a bounce house. Funding for this event is provided by the West Hartford Library Foundation.

### Branch Updates

#### **Locker record!**

Bishops Corner smashed the record for most locker pickups in May! We had 224 deliveries to the lockers during the month, beating the previous record of

172 from August 2022.

## New puzzle exchange at Bishops Corner



### Program highlights

Faxon Library facilitated Youth Oratorical Contest on May 27, 2023. This program was organized by Hartford County Everest Centennial Lions Club and West Hartford Lumbini Lions Club. The topic participants talked about is *Community Service: Making a Difference in Your Community and Beyond*. Fifty-five people attended this

program, and there were nine contestants.

Pramod will be planning for One-on-One Citizenship test preparation sessions at Faxon Library. Andrea Levy will be volunteering to conduct these sessions. Andrea was a volunteer at CT Legal Services for 13 years. She also volunteered at The American Place at Hartford Public Library.

### Potential Faxon partnership

Ellen met with Carolina Landesberg, who is working on a Parent Leadership Training Institute (PLTI) project to make books in other languages more accessible. Carolina used to work at a school in NYC that had an excellent collection. She aims to touch base with them for recommendations. She can recommend a combination of popular translated titles as well as native authors we will not find in Spanish. She also wants to connect with ESOL teachers and promote the library to school families, as well as spread the word about the library's multilingual online resources for children.

### Staff Updates

#### Recruitment

We're excited to welcome these new staff to our team:

Samuel Campbell – PT Office Assistant, Teen

Kellie O'Donnell-Bobadilla – PT Librarian, Reference

The Programs and Outreach Librarian position is posted and applications are due by June 16. We are also recruiting for a Studio 20 South assistant.

#### Departures

We said goodbye to these staff members and wish them all the best:

Andy Droney – PT Office Assistant, Teen

Victoria Kiszka – PT Librarian, Reference

Sarah Simard – PT Page, Children's

Janet Valencis – FT Office Operations Specialist, Admin

Amal Zubeidy – PT Office Assistant, IT

## June GOAT – Pramod Pradhan

I would like to pass the GOAT to Pramod Pradhan aka The Flower Guy. Pramod is the community services librarian, and he certainly lives up to that title. He is engaged with so many different community groups in town, giving his time and talents to all.

He is patient and kind with every patron who walks through the Faxon door. He has made the Faxon library a warm and inviting place for all new arrivals to our country. Pramod is also the go-to techie at the Faxon branch. Patrons know that whatever roadblock they stumble on Pramod will be there to help them.

I pass on the GOAT to Pramod knowing that he makes the West Hartford Public Library a better place.

-Ann Marie

## Community Engagement & Outreach

*Friday Practice English* sessions continue at Faxon from 10 am – 12 noon. Registration is not required for this program. Jedda La Rue did a workshop with the group on the basics of storytelling. There were 18 students in the class for this workshop. This workshop was a part of the Celebrate All of Us initiative. The Thomas F. Kilfoil Memorial Bequest, West Hartford Library Foundation, funded both Practice English class and Celebrate All of Us.

Faxon Library will hosted Youth Oratorical Contest on May 27, 2023. This program is organized by Hartford County Everest Centennial Lions Club and West Hartford Lumbini Lions Club. The topic was *Community Service: Making a Difference in Your Community and Beyond*.

The *Building Connections book club for immigrants* received funding from the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving Community Grant for 2023-2024 – fall, winter, and spring sessions.

## From Our Patrons

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

- A patron came to the desk looking for a recording of a specific waltz by Johann Strauss. The waltz is his wedding song and he wanted to play it for his wife on their upcoming 60<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. Fortunately, we had a copy in the consortium at a neighboring library, so Andrew arranged for him to pick it up there. He was very appreciative and even hummed the melody for Andrew.
- Ann Marie was helping a patron obtain a new card. She said if everyone was as efficient as the library the world would be in much better shape.
- This week a patron approached the desk enquiring about one of our computer desks. She shared that she has a disability and the desk worked out well so she wanted to purchase one. We helped her research desks and showed her our adjustable desk which was perfect for her needs. We shared the link to purchase the desk and she was very grateful.





- Two patrons came to the desk this week to praise our Spanish collection. They said they were impressed by how current and relevant the titles are.

### Studio 20 South

The Studio hosted it's first 3D printing workshop with 12 attendees. As this was our first workshop in this arena and it was very introductory level, we experimented with making this an all-ages event and did run the gamut of having folks across the spectrum in attendance. The workshop was received very well, with a number of attendees staying after to set up appointments, ask further questions or register for our followup-workshop in TinkerCAD, a 3D design program, later in the month.

Studio staff toured four different library makerspaces in the CT area, Westport, Wilton, Stratford, and New Haven. Each was unique from the others in terms of scale, funding, equipment, staffing, and even overall philosophical strategies driven by what each believes the role of a makerspace to be in a library setting. The trip yielded a number of interesting insights that might be folded back into our own studio.

### Building Updates

Red Thread delivered and installed custom hold shelving at Noah Webster and it looks fantastic! Our attention now turns to the old hold shelving area. We'll be relocating that shelving shortly, creating an exciting opportunity to reimagine a bustling area of the library.



### Adult Services & Programs

#### Featured Programs

- Boost Your Brain Health With Lifestyle and Nutrition Choices You Can Make Today (in-person)
  - Attendance: 35
  - Liz Cornish and her business partner gave a great presentation on healthy living, specifically for your brain.
- Film and Discussion: Winter on Fire: Ukraine's Fight For Freedom (virtual)
  - Attendance: 12
  - Professor Olena Lennon, of the University of New Haven, chose the movie and led the discussion surrounding an uprising in Ukraine in 2014. This was the second movie in the series.
- Money Talk for Couples (in-person)

- Attendance: 12
- Brian Sullivan, from Fiscal Dynamics in Farmington, broke patrons into separate groups to talk about a couple's finances. This is the first time Fiscal Dynamics has presented here.
- Author Talk With Lucy Ferriss and Ethan Rutherford (in-person)
  - Attendance: 40
  - This program was a make-up from February, when the program was cancelled due to the snow. Trinity professors and short story novelists, Lucy Ferriss and Ethan Rutherford, read from their books and answered questions. The library also had Riverbend Bookshop in to sell the books.
- Elton John: Your Songs (The Golden Years 1970-1976) (virtual)
  - Attendance: 40
  - This is the second time we've had Vinnie Bruno in (Beatles scholar, mostly). He gave tidbits about Elton's life and we listened to quite a few Elton John hits, through the years.
- The Classics of Modern Short Fiction (in-person)
  - Attendance: 15
  - Professor Reynolds led the group, with a discussion of *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button* by F. Scott Fitzgerald. This was the last class of the series. Lots of compliments on the quality of the instructor and the titles chosen to read. We plan to do this series again in the fall.

Total Attendance for Featured Programs: 154

### **Regular Programs**

- *The New Yorker* magazine discussion group (virtual)
- West Hartford Fiction Writers (virtual)
- Connecticut Screenwriters (hybrid)
- Faxon Poets (hybrid)
- *The Atlantic* magazine discussion group (hybrid)
- Fiber Arts Book Club (hybrid)
- Night Owls Book Group (virtual)
- Cookbook Club (in-person)
- Shakespeare Book Club (in-person)

Total Attendance for Series Programs: 177

### **Updates**

- 10 library staff members and 1 guest from the community attended Naloxone training provided by the West Hartford Bloomfield Health District. Each library location now has a box of Narcan readily available and trained staff.
- The library publicized Gnomes for All Seasons – the latest Take & Make Craft Kit for Adults – on Wednesday evening in the newsletter and within three hours, all the kits were spoken for!
- The Garden Club dropped off additional seed packets with seeds that are able to be planted right now in the growing season. Once the new batch of seeds are gone, the focus will shift to planning for the fall, when our efforts will shift to seed harvesting and saving.

### **Local History**

The Local History Room had 37 visitors and researchers, with 7 virtual/phone reference requests in April. Houses and architecture continued to be the main interest of patrons, as well as general browsing. Many patrons are happy to see the lights on and activity. Here are some snapshots of activity from May:

- The John P. Webster Library asked Brett to see if there were any of Noah Webster's original books that helped start the West Hartford Library Association in 1837 were in the collection. We have one left! *Values*



*of the Bible...* by Noah is still in the Collection after nearly 200 years. A note from Ruth Giddings contains important advice: "Guard it."

- A retired physician continues to scan his historic family photo collection. He is around 250 images completed and thinks it's about half of what he has. The oldest one he has is an albumen print from c. 1875.
- Recently returned West Hartford native made a request about his home and about the black history of the Town. He learned about what we have in the collection and our current initiatives to represent the history of West Hartford more equitably.
- The award for Most Interesting Request centers around a patron from Hartford looking to find discussions and documentation about West Hartford becoming its own municipality in 1854. The reason being that apparently, he and his lawyer friends have a regular meeting to drink beer and discuss ways that Hartford can reclaim the West Division and make it whole again. He said it started as a joke during the Pandemic but morphed into a semi-sincere venture. We shall see what happens...

## Children's Services & Programs

### Programs

Star Wars Day (a little early) was celebrated on May 3. Miss Sara celebrated with students in grades 2-5 with a toilet paper roll Yoda craft.



Family Storytime at Bishops Corner is the place to be! Bailey had about 30 people show up to her first session last Thursday, overflowing the storytime room! She moved the program out onto the children's floor to accommodate the crowd.

One of the final programs in the year-long **Celebrate All of Us** initiative took place on the evening of May 18<sup>th</sup> in the First Church Auditorium. Performance artist Jedda LaRue of Family-N-Motion presented a performance of storytelling, music, dance, theatrical connections and original songs. Jedda makes a positive impact on her community by teaching in the Hartford Public and private schools and offering programming to local organizations.

The Summer 2023 Preschool Storytime schedule has been published. There will be a number of new programs offered, including Summer Story Adventures featuring the themes of Summer Treats, Ocean Friends, Around the Campfire and Dirt, Sand and Mud. Babytime will be offered outdoors and renamed *Babies in the Wild* for the summer. *Come Learn With Me* will be a program exploring different themes where the families will take home a backpack filled with books, toys and learning games based on the theme.

Other new summer programs featured at all three libraries include a Teddy Bear Picnic, Sensory Explorers, a Pirate and Princess Party, a T-Rex Tea Party, Stuffy Sleepover, Lego Engineers, an ice cream social, a Painting Party and It's Me, Mario (Super Mario).

After a very successful run, May 24<sup>th</sup> was the last day of Tween Den until the program resumes in the fall.

### **Updates**

Pramod completed filming and editing library 2023 Summer Programs promotional videos for children. These promotional videos will be sent to West Hartford Elementary schools for students to view and learn about programs happening at West Hartford Library during the summer. Filming was done at Bishops Corner Library, Noah Webster Library, and Faxon Library. Click this link to view this video. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=abckwk-VhLM>

Furniture for the Tween Room, a two-seat sofa, bench and chair with charging outlet, all in washable vinyl and purchased through a grant from the West Hartford Library Foundation, is now in place. This installation completes our mission of offering ample seating for tweens to sit at task tables to use Minecraft computers, work at other tables configured to be used individually or in groups, and to sit comfortably in the furniture. The next step in the project will be to purchase a new selection of games for tweens.

Switch games are here! All Children's departments as well as the Teen Room are now offering these games to our patrons. NWL Children's has 28 games now on display.

### **Teen Services**

### **Programs**

Mayor's Youth Council held their final meeting of 2022-2023 on May 16.



### **Programs**

West Hartford Immigrant Teens hosted a "College?!?! A Discussion for Immigrant Students" at the Community Exchange on 5/31. There were 30+ attendees.



## Updates

- West Hartford, Immigrant Teen Club members continued meeting at Faxon on Wednesdays from 5 – 6:30 pm. Pramod met with Ellen Salzman-Fiske from Golden Door: A Center for Immigrants, Kari Karp, and Jensun Yonjan, who will be doing Digital Storytelling workshops with the West Hartford Immigrant Teens Club members during the summer.
- Teen Poetry Contest winners announced 5/30 and Julie posted winners to the webpage - <https://www.westhartfordlibrary.org/teens/writing-contest-winners/>
- Mayor's Youth Council received 21 applications for the 2023-2024 school year.

Town of West Hartford  
Library Expenditures  
FY23 May 2023

	<b>GENERAL FUND</b>				
<u>Expenditures</u>	<u>BUDGET</u>	<u>ENCUMBERED</u>	<u>EXPENDITURE</u>	<u>BALANCE</u>	<u>% OF BUDGET SPENT</u>
Library Personal Expenses	\$2,640,978.00		2,375,081.25	\$265,896.75	90%
Library Non Personal Expenses	\$652,637.00		553,322.48	\$99,314.52	85%
Social Security Expenses	\$ 198,319.00		165,091.80	\$33,227.20	83%
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES FUND 1</b>	<b>\$3,491,934.00</b>		<b>\$3,093,495.53</b>	<b>\$398,438.47</b>	<b>89%</b>