

Hall Memorial Library
Board of Trustees Meeting
September 9, 2025 7:00pm
93 Main Street, Ellington, CT

RECEIVED
25 SEP 16 AM 10:36
ELLINGTON
TOWN CLERK

1. Call To Order

The meeting was called to order at 7pm by Acting Chair Peg Busse. In attendance: Board members Peg Busse, John Halloran, Deanna Wambolt-Gulick, Library Director Susan Phillips, citizen Christine Keune; on Zoom: Mary Blanchette, Mary Cone, Assistant Director Ashley Dabbondanza. Judy Stomberg was absent.

2. Citizen's Forum

No citizens spoke.

3. Chairman's Report

Chair Mary Blanchette has appointed Secretary Peg Busse as acting Chair. Peg shared the activity about a special revenue fund created at the recent BOS meeting, and that the library funds were mentioned as examples.

4. Approval of Minutes

a. June 3, 2025

Approved with amendments: add info designating as a Special Meeting and that purpose of meeting was Library Director review. (Halloran/Wambolt-Gulick)

b. June 17, 2025

Approved with amendments: correction to name of Deanna Wambolt-Gulick; purpose of Executive Session was Library Director review. (Halloran/Wambolt-Gulick)

c. August 12, 2025

Approved (Halloran/Wambolt-Gulick)

5. Treasurer's Report

Income amounts for June, July and August were reviewed, as well as totals for FY2024-25. Income reporting procedures are being tweaked following installation of the cash registers and adjusted bookkeeping procedures.

6. Current Year Budget Report

Current year budget expenditures were reviewed, with note of expenditure of longevity payments, post office box rental and computer purchases.

7. Library Director's Report

Library Director Susan Phillips reported on the very successful summer programming. Many events and activities were held for all ages, with something nearly every day, and 250 children, 40 young adults and 45 adults participated in the organized reading program.

Susan reported on the promotion of existing and onboarding of new staff members, sharing that documents and processes have been updated. Upon the retirement of Cheryl Chamberlin and Lisa Kuraska, their positions were filled by existing staff members Heather Nosack and Lauren Desrochers respectively. New people were hired to fill the created vacancies. Victoria Sierra and Jordan DeFreitas started in August and are working out well. Susan thanked all staff members for their flexibility and enthusiasm during the transition, and Amanda Duhamel and Trish Brudz for helping with the scheduling.

Susan thanked the Board for supporting the closure of the library to allow staff members to attend the funeral of former long-time member Gay Szumyk.

Upcoming building projects will include HVAC upgrades, basement waterproofing, door replacements, elevator upgrade, cameras and panic button installation, and, at long last, the design and installation of an outdoor seating area. Sue noted that a stand-alone air conditioner was purchased to help with cooling in the Upstairs Meeting Room. This room gets very warm on hot summer days when filled with people attending a program.

Library participation in Winterfest was discussed.

As previously discussed, the painting of the iris donated when the new library was opened, and the frame, was offered to and returned to artist Lynette Goric.

Susan reported that the State Legislature passed new legislation to protect libraries, collections and staff members from book banning and abuse. Libraries

are required by this legislation to update their collection, programming and displays policies to include language specified in the statute. She presented for review the updated Collection Development and Management Policy, and the newly created Programming Policy and Display Policy. Once completed, these policies will be reviewed by State Library staff before formal submittal, due by November 1.

8. Friends of the Library Report

As FOL President, Peg Busse reported that a large book sale will be held October 24-26, and will include the Book Cellar inventory as well as the items arranged in the upstairs room. Following the sale, the Book Cellar and surrounding areas will be vacated to prepare for the basement waterproofing project and Book Cellar renovation, planned to begin in November.

The FOL annual meeting will be held on Thursday, September 18.

9. New Business

a. Board of Trustees Orientation Manual

The development of a new Board members orientation manual was discussed. Items to include were identified. Board members Peg and Mary will develop a Table Contents. Library Director Sue will gather the documents and resources.

b. Vision for library programs

c. Explore new budget process for library payback

Discussion about the Library's contribution to the library budget, and historical background was held. The library currently pledges up to \$30,000 to supplement the funds supplied by the Town to fund library operations. This amount includes some funds from library trust funds in addition to income from fees. Peg Busse expressed concern about the visibility in the public-facing budget documents of the \$57,000 the Board contributed towards the library basement waterproofing project. More discussion to follow.

d. Updated credit card policy

The credit card acceptance policy was updated to reflect the addition of the cash register and accompanying software, and the elimination of the stand-alone credit card terminal. All approved (Blanchette/ Halloran)

e. Approve new hires

Two new staff members were hired, to replace those who were promoted. Victoria Sierra was hired as Library Assistant II, will work an average of 29 hours per week including alternating Sundays. Hiring approved (Halloran/Cone). Jordan DeFreitas was hired as Library Assistant I and will work an average of 19 hours per week, including alternating Saturdays.

Hiring approved (Halloran/Cone).

10. Old Business

a. Saturday additional staff

The additional staff hours approved for Saturdays are in the process of being filled.

b. Sunday hours

Peg Busse opened a debate on the viability of and need for continued Sunday hours. She has suggested collecting measurable data of activity, including material circulation, computer usage and patron attendance.

c. Cleanup progress on basement

Sorting and removal of excess items from the basement continues.

11. Trustees Concerns

1. John Halloran requested a visit from the Finance Officer to explain the reports about trust funds. It was agreed that this could wait until the new board members are seated in December.

12. Adjournment

Adjourned at 8:25pm (Blanchette/Halloran)

Respectfully submitted,



Peg Busse

Secretary/Acting Chair