

MEETING MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF LIBRARY DIRECTORS

MONDAY, MARCH 2, 2026

Bristol Public Library, 5 High Street, Bristol, CT 06010

ATTENDEES: Eric Frenette, Nicholas Jakubowski, Andrea Kapchensky, Danielle Rivard (arrived at 6:37 p.m.), Pina Salvatore, Betty Talmadge (via Zoom), and City Council Liaison Steve Seymour. Library Director Deborah Prozzo and Assistant Library Director Scott Stanton.

Absent: Valina Carpenter, Elizabeth Kanachovski, and Kimberly Ploszaj.

Item 1- Call to Order

Chairperson Salvatore called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Item 2- Public Participation

Erik Madsen of 70 Oak Hill Drive, Bristol, CT spoke regarding an email he sent to the Bristol Public Library requesting that the Bristol Library System become the primary nexus for gathering and storing important, valuable records, such as consultant's reports, so that people can view them in hard copy format, not just electronically. He stated that the public is looking to put information together pertaining to a matter before the city with a very short timeline and it's been very difficult getting a copy of a well-known report that is 10 or 20 years old. He's concerned about the loss of historical records and government transparency, especially with reorganizations, mergers, and changeovers. He'd like to see consistent, coordinated record retention policies across the city and its departments.

Library Director Prozzo will review Mr. Madsen's email.

Item 3- Approval of Minutes

Director Frenette MOVED to approve the minutes of the February 2, 2026 Regular Meeting. Seconded by Director Kapchensky. All in favor. None opposed. Motion passed.

Item 4- Communications

None.

Item 5- Reports and Committee Reports

a. Finance Committee

No Report.

b. Property Committee

Director Kapchensky reported that the Friends of the Library are ready to send out a check to the company to work on the garden as

soon as all their paperwork is done. The second company never sent a bid.

c. Policy Committee

No Report.

d. Strategic Planning Committee

No Report.

e. Library Director's Report

1) January statistics highlights:

- Overall circulation was up by 13 items from last year with double-digit increases on digital materials.
- Reference statistics were down from last year with the exception of the number of technology questions answered. That's being driven, in some part, by the fact that we now have a computer lab staff person available. Patrons can book appointments or walk in. Classes are also offered.
- We've seen increased activity in the Bristol History Room. Reference staff retrieved 168 items requested by patrons doing research or simply based on their interest. 42 patrons attended Zach Hebert's History of Baseball in Bristol program.
- We had a 10% increase in the number of programs.
- Program attendance was up by 22%.
- We issued 172 new library cards, but that still was a 15% decrease from last year.
- Foot traffic was down by 17%. The weather had an impact.

2) Year-to-Date Budget Report:

Our numbers are stable. We are watching public utilities and natural gas which are most impacted by the weather.

Manross Trust Funds - We've spent \$48,640.71 but we still have \$41,166.33 available.

Goodsell/Main Library Trust Funds - We have \$44,823 available.

Centennial Fund - In the revenue account we have \$47,796. Nothing has been added to the expense account.

Main Street Community Foundation reported that money came in through the donate button on the library webpage. We are still waiting for a response from the Comptroller's office about getting the Centennial Fund donate button up and running.

I presented the Library Budget to the City's Board of Finance last Tuesday, February 24th and it was well received. There were no questions. Thank you to those who attended: Andrea, Pina, Nick, and three members of the Friends. It was a very long night which included the regular Board of Finance meeting and the Parks Department presentation. There is an article in *The Bristol Edition* noting that the Board of Finance praised the library's 0.78% budget increase request. Budget workshops will follow where things might be trimmed or adjusted. We should know in April if they will fund us fully as requested. I am always respectful of our taxpayers in town. When we're asked to hold the line, we make every effort to do that. Without the support of the trust funds, the Friends of the Library, and the pursuit of grant opportunities, it might be a different story.

3) Highlights of library activities:

- The Seed Library will open on Monday, March 16th at 6:00 p.m. followed by a seed starting class at 6:30 p.m. We'll be receiving 124 seed packets from the UConn Extension Services partnership with Ocean State Job Lot. Our Facebook post about the Seed Library already has 71 likes. It's very popular.
- The Author Reveal is set for Tuesday, March 24th at 2:00 p.m. Tickets for the Author Luncheon will be \$42.00.
- The Children's Department started their next session of story time. We're expecting to be very busy.
- The Friends of the Library Book Sale had really great foot traffic. Saturday's number was over 700.

f. City Council Liaison Report

City Council Liaison Seymour reported that they are getting together this Wednesday to start the library initiative of getting more people to sign up for a library card. They'll work on a video.

g. Friends of the Library

Chairperson Salvatore reported the following:

The Winter Used Book Sale concluded yesterday. Because of the big snowstorm, the setup was a little behind, but the sale dates remained the same. She thanked the library staff and Friends' volunteers who worked hard to make it a success. They made an estimated total of \$6,570.00.

The sorting and transporting of books for the upcoming pop-up book sales has been rescheduled from March 5th to March 11th. The books will be sold in the Friends' Café on the second floor. Please check the library's website or the Friends' website for sale dates.

Order forms for the Author Luncheon will be available right after the Author Reveal. Tickets will be mailed to you or you can pick them up here at the Main Library depending on what you check off on the order form.

National Library Week is April 19th through April 25th. National Library Workers Day is on Tuesday, April 21st. The Friends will recognize all library staff on that day with special activities and treats. Every year since it was first observed in 1958, a theme is selected to celebrate National Library Week. This year's theme is "Find Your Joy." It's an invitation for people of all backgrounds to explore and discover what sparks joy in them at the library. The honorary chair is Mychal Threets, an award-winning librarian and host of the children's program *Reading Rainbow*.

At the Library Budget presentation, Marie O'Brien asked how Library Director Prozzo kept the budget at a minimum. She explained that she has a conservative approach and uses trust funds, Friends' money, and grants. Chairperson Salvatore thanked Andrea, Nick, and three Friends' members for attending with her.

h. Community Engagement Committee

Library Director Prozzo reported the following:

We will find out on March 17th if we got the \$2,000 LSTA grant for Lucky Diaz which would reduce the amount needed from the Manross Trust Fund. If we don't receive the grant, we're still okay because the Library Board approved using up to \$5,000 from the Manross Trust Fund.

The outreach event scheduled for Friday, February 27th was moved to March 27th from 3:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. at both locations of the Bristol Child Development Center. We will send someone to each site to promote library services and issue library cards to young families.

The Community Engagement Committee will meet on Monday, April 6, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. just prior to the Library Board meeting to start planning for summer outreach which will include the Farmers Market. Chairperson Salvatore noted that all Library Board members are invited to attend.

Item 6- Old Business

- a. Library Director Prozzo reported that we are still in the process of cataloging the artwork donated by the family of Joan Kuebler. It mainly includes works by Glo Sessions, but also sketches by Joan herself.

Item 7- New Business

- a. Library Director Prozzo reported that she met with Susan Sadecki and Whitney Shufelt from Main Street Community Foundation. They

proposed a new, automatic, streamlined distribution schedule to avoid voting and sending paperwork back and forth. They asked if we would accept the first quarterly distribution of the calendar year (they're on a calendar year and we're on a fiscal year) for all three funds. They had a deadline to get the checks out, so to avoid calling a Special Meeting, I took the liberty of telling them that they could send a check to the Comptroller's Office. If the Library Board chooses not to accept it, we can have the city send the check back to Main Street. In the past, the Library Board has always voted to accept all four quarters of the Samuel Goodsell and Bristol Libraries Fund. The Library Board has typically reinvested at least one quarter (sometimes as many as two or three) of the Manross Memorial Library Fund. Main Street Community Foundation is asking the Library Board to consider automatically accepting the first three quarters of the calendar year and perhaps reinvesting the fourth quarter of the Manross Memorial Library Fund, which might make the more conservative board members feel more comfortable. From Samuel Goodsell this year, the library will receive \$32,480. From the Bristol Libraries Fund, the library will receive \$4,840. From the Manross Memorial Library Fund we will receive \$117,800 but reinvest \$29,450 of it (the fourth quarterly distribution). Discussion followed regarding donor intent, carryovers, the option to change the distribution schedule in the future, etc.

Director Frenette MOVED to automatically accept all four quarterly distributions from the Goodsell Fund and the Bristol Libraries Fund. Seconded by Director Kapchensky. All in favor. None opposed. Motion passed.

Director Jakubowski MOVED to automatically accept the first three quarterly distributions from the Manross Memorial Library Trust Fund and reinvest the fourth quarterly distribution. Seconded by Director Rivard. All in favor. None opposed. Motion passed.

Director Kapchensky asked if we'd heard anything more about the roof replacement at Manross. Library Director Prozzo stated that she wasn't sure if Public Works had done their budget presentation yet. It's part of their budget. Initially, it's going to go through them.

Item 8- Adjournment

There being no further business, Director Frenette made a MOTION to adjourn the meeting at 7:15 p.m. Seconded by Director Rivard. All present voted in favor and the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Ruth Vontell

This meeting was digitally recorded.