

MEETING MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF LIBRARY DIRECTORS

MONDAY, JULY 6, 2026

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

ATTENDEES: Eric Frenette, Elizabeth Kanachovski, Andrea Kapchensky, Danielle Rivard (arrived at 6:36 p.m.), Pina Salvatore, and Betty Talmadge.
Library Director Deborah Prozzo and Assistant Library Director Scott Stanton.

Absent: Valina Carpenter, Nicholas Jakubowski, Kimberly Ploszaj, and City Council Liaison Steve Seymour.

Item 1- Call to Order

Chairperson Salvatore called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m.

Chairperson Salvatore congratulated Library Director Prozzo and her staff. The Bristol Public Library was named Best Library in Connecticut in the *Hartford Courant* 2026 Best of Hartford poll.

Item 2- Public Participation

None.

Item 3- Approval of Minutes

Director Kanachovski MOVED to approve the Minutes of the June 1, 2026 Regular Meeting. Seconded by Director Talmadge. All in favor. None opposed. Motion passed.

Item 4- Communications

Library Director Prozzo received a communication from Julie Matthews at Main Street Community Foundation regarding our ability to directly log into the Main Street portal to keep track of the funds they hold for us. Library Director Prozzo created a login and tried it out. Main Street keeps track of the people who make donations and acknowledges them.

A second communication was from Dave Oakes who is in charge of buildings and facilities for the City of Bristol. The city is going to fund a capital improvement project for the roof at the Manross Library for \$110,000. That is good news, but we may need an additional \$5,000 to \$10,000 based on the quotes. Public Works will take care of the bidding and select a contractor. The process will take months.

Item 5- Reports and Committee Reports

a. Finance Committee

No Report.

b. Property Committee

Director Kapchensky made a MOTION to take \$5,190.51 from the Manross Miscellaneous Trust Fund account to cover the cost of replacing the emergency exit door downstairs in the auditorium at the Manross Memorial Library. Seconded by Director Rivard. All in favor. None opposed. Motion passed.

Library Director Prozzo further explained that the door is warped, rusted, and sticking. Manross Miscellaneous Trust Fund money can be used for operating and capital projects. The amount quoted by Accurate Commercial Door & Hardware Services in Bristol falls under the threshold for going out to bid and is through the state contract.

Director Kapchensky reported that a ribbon-cutting ceremony was held in June for the Cawley Garden at Manross Memorial Library.

c. Policy Committee

No Report.

d. Strategic Planning Committee

No Report.

e. Library Director's Report

1) **May 2026 statistical highlights:**

Library Director Prozzo presented the statistical report in a new, colorful, easy-to-read infographic format. She welcomes any feedback about the style.

Our biggest challenge has been the transition from Sierra to Polaris, our new ILS system that is consortium-wide and includes approximately 30 libraries. The migration itself was smooth and we were very well prepared, however, there are always unexpected, unanticipated challenges. For example, people were unable to access the full catalog and place holds, so they did not come into the building to pick up items. This reduced our foot traffic. There was a huge decline in circulation and program attendance was low. Even reference questions and internet usage decreased. The good news is that we are up and running now, including the self-checkout. Overall, Polaris is a huge benefit and better experience. It's very user-friendly for both the staff and the public. The digital content was not impacted. We had

double-digit increases, especially with downloadable audiobooks. We are bouncing back. We will be compiling our June numbers and working on the annual report for the state.

2) **Year-to-Date Budget Report:**

Fiscal year 2026 has ended. We are busy opening all the POs for fiscal year 2027. We have until the middle of the month to pay any last-minute invoices. We only have a few items that are over budget. Those will be taken care of through transfers. There are sufficient funds that are still unencumbered in some of the line items, particularly in program supplies. Overall, we're in very good shape.

- Library Revenue: We came in at 114.7%. We met our projection and then some. The meeting rooms were heavily booked.
- Main Library: As of June 29, 2026 we've used 94.0% of the budget. When the POs are closed out, money will be released back to the city's general fund.
- Children's Library: We came in at 92.8% of the budget. There are only two line items - professional fees and program supplies. There's nothing out of the ordinary.
- Manross Library: They came in at 86.2% which is a little bit deceiving because it counts Manross Miscellaneous Trust Fund in those numbers. They were a little over on a couple line items but we have sufficient funds to cover them, e.g., overtime for some maintenance work done on off hours.
- Manross Miscellaneous Trust Fund: Money was used for all the children's and adult programs, Hoopla and Overdrive digital content, and the Author Luncheon. There is still \$65,807.87 left in the account. Without those funds, we would not have been able to provide all those wonderful programs, services, and events.
- Goodsell/Main Library Trust Fund: We used 51.3% and have \$34,198.68 left. The money carries over to the new fiscal year in August/September.
- Centennial Fund: As of April 30, 2026, there's \$49,074.91 in the interest account and approximately \$143,000 in the expenditure account. At some point, we'll consider moving the interest into the expenditure account. I sent out thank you letters today for online donations to the Centennial Fund. I'll be tracking the online donations on a monthly basis through Stripe.
- Frederick Manross Trust Fund: We share this with the Bristol Hospital. Currently, there's a total of \$1,121,420.88 in the revenue account. If the Library Board decides to use money, I would appropriate that amount to go into an expenditure account. The Board doesn't vote on the annual distribution that comes from Main Street. It gets immediately deposited into the revenue account. The money can be used for capital projects and operating

expenses. Traditionally, the Board has used it for bigger projects like the parking lot, the elevator, the bathrooms, etc.

3) **Cooling Center:**

The mayor had us open the Main Library on Friday, July 3rd from noon to 5:00 p.m. as a cooling center. We provided full library services for the community. The Children's Department showed a family-friendly movie with snacks. Foot traffic was 130. We used the Sunday staffing model.

4) **Summer Reading:**

The first thing you'll see when you enter the Children's Department is a gigantic cooler which stores the pre-packaged free lunches that are delivered daily by the schools and distributed to the children. They had already given out 83 lunches when I stopped in today. We call and give an estimate. If we need more, they can sometimes bring additional lunches. Spread the word about this wonderful benefit for our community. Last year we served over 3,000 lunches.

5) **Youth Author Luncheon:**

Publicity for the Lucky Diaz event on Tuesday, August 18th went out through the school system and is being promoted in the Children's Department and at the Manross Library. We hope to have a great turnout. Both libraries are doing special programs to go along with it. We'd like to give each child that attends a paperback copy of the Spanish-English version of *Paletero Man*. It's a great opportunity for the kids to be exposed to another language. Lucky himself is Mexican-American. The books cost approximately \$7.00 each and will be purchased either from Amazon or RJ Julia depending on the bulk discount. There is registration for this event which will be held in-house on the lower level beginning at 11:30 a.m. with a pre-packaged lunch that the Friends could possibly serve to the kids.

Director Talmadge made a MOTION to approve up to \$2,000.00 from the Manross Miscellaneous Trust Fund for the purchase of books for distribution to children at the Lucky Diaz Author Event. Seconded by Director Frenette. All in favor. None opposed. Motion passed.

6) **Special Author Event:**

Authors Unbound sent an email offering us an opportunity to host Allegra Goodman of Cambridge, MA on Wednesday, September 30th for a reduced rate of \$5,000.00 because she'll be in the area. We

don't have a time yet. We could do this here at the library with some sort of hospitality hopefully provided by the Friends. It would be a low-key event capped at between 150 and 200 people because our parking situation is not ideal. We read her book, *Isola*, for Book Bites. Her new book is *This Is Not About Us*. She's familiar to book groups and that's our target audience.

Director Kanachovski made a MOTION to approve up to \$5,000.00 from the Manross Miscellaneous Trust Fund for a special author event with Allegra Goodman. Seconded by Director Talmadge. All in favor. None opposed. Motion passed.

f. City Council Liaison Report

No Report.

g. Friends of the Library

Chairperson Salvatore reported the following:

The Friends attended the Farmers' Market on June 20th. They sold a couple hundred adult paperback books and low-cost children's books. Chairperson Salvatore thanked Director Rivard for attending. It was very windy and they had to take the tent down. Director Kanachovski recognized Sarah and Patricia from the library staff. Library Director Prozzo stated that approximately 200 people stopped by the library table. We'll be attending the Farmers' Market again this weekend, July 11th. Chairperson Salvatore reported that the Friends will be raffling off a gift certificate to the Parkside Café, a local downtown area restaurant. There's no purchase necessary to get a raffle ticket. The Friends will also attend the Farmers' Markets on August 15th and September 12th.

Dollar Days started today, July 6th. In an effort to sell books and move inventory, the Friends will be selling adult books for \$1.00 in the café on the second floor.

The lobby book sales in both libraries concluded on June 30th. The funds raised support the libraries.

Chairperson Salvatore congratulated Rose Ann Chatfield who was the recipient of the 2026 Friends of Connecticut Libraries Individual Achievement Award which was presented at the FOCL Annual Meeting on June 20, 2026 in Avon. She was nominated by the Board of the Friends of the Bristol Public Library. Part of the application process was the submission of a nomination letter, which Chairperson Salvatore read aloud and passed around. It summarizes all that Rose Ann has done since becoming president of the Friends in 2002. Discussion followed regarding sending Rose

Ann a card of congratulations from the Library Board, publicizing the award in the newspaper and on the library website, as well as posting a photo on Facebook. The Friends' Board honored Rose Ann with a little get-together.

h. Community Engagement Committee

Director Kanachovski reported that there will be two upcoming author events and that the library will continue to attend Farmers' Markets.

i. Centennial Ad-hoc Committee

Library Director Prozzo stated that the online donation software is in place now and we received a check so things are starting. The committee may want to meet between now and September.

Item 6- Old Business

Director Kapchensky requested a summary of the Author Luncheon. Library Director Prozzo stated that we had a full house of 330 attendees, which is the maximum capacity at the DoubleTree. Holly's breakdown shows that 66% of the attendees were from Bristol. The rest were from out of town, but many were with somebody from Bristol. There were a few people from out of state- New York, Pennsylvania, and Rhode Island. A large number are in book groups. The feedback was extremely positive. The attendees liked Fiona Davis. She sat at the table with us and had lunch, talked with the mayor, signed books, etc. We couldn't have done it without the Friends. Everything was very smooth from ticket sales to centerpiece assembly. RJ Julia sold quite a few books. It was a very successful event. This was our tenth anniversary.

Item 7- New Business

None.

Item 8- Adjournment

Chairperson Salvatore reminded everyone that there is no Library Board meeting in August. The next meeting will be on September 14, 2026, which is the second Monday of the month, because the first Monday of the month is Labor Day and the library is closed.

There being no further business, **Director Kapchensky made a MOTION to adjourn the meeting at 7:36 p.m. Seconded by Director Rivard. All present voted in favor and the meeting adjourned.**

Respectfully submitted,

Ruth Vontell

This meeting was digitally recorded.