

MEETING MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF LIBRARY DIRECTORS

MONDAY, MARCH 3, 2025

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

ATTENDEES: Valina Carpenter, Nicholas Jakubowski, Elizabeth Kanachowski, Andrea Kapchensky, Barbara O'Neill, Kimberly Ploszaj, Pina Salvatore, and City Council Liaison Sebastian Panioto. Library Director Deborah Prozzo and Assistant Library Director Scott Stanton

Absent: Eric Frenette and Danielle Rivard

Item 1- Call to Order

Chairperson Carpenter called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

Item 2- Public Participation

None.

Item 3- Approval of Minutes

Director Ploszaj MOVED to approve the minutes of the February 3, 2025 Regular Meeting. Seconded by Director Salvatore. All in favor. None opposed. Motion passed.

Item 4- Communications

Library Director Prozzo reported that Assistant Library Director Stanton received a card from George Baker, the performer who portrayed John Adams. He was appreciative of the invitation to speak, the set-up made him comfortable, the refreshments made the attendees feel welcome, and he looks forward to returning again in a couple years.

Library Director Prozzo received a letter from patron Joan Fournier, who was grateful for the help she received from Matt in the computer lab. He took her through the process of setting up her first cell phone. She will definitely be back.

Director Ploszaj reported that she received a text from her neighbor, thanking her for allowing her son Joey to attend last month's meeting virtually. He's involved in Scouts.

Item 5- Reports and Committee Reports

a. Finance Committee

No Report.

b. Property Committee

No Report.

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 90 items from last year which is good. The most circulated item in Hoopla is downloadable audiobooks. Increasing our Hoopla amount has increased circulation.
- Our Technical Services Coordinator is working with various departments on a big weeding project involving approximately 1,500 items which need to be withdrawn from the database because they did not carry over during the last ILS system migration 10 years ago. This could possibly impact our LCI assessment. We don't want to count items that aren't really there in the collection. We will be migrating to a new ILS system next year.
- The number of programs was up by 13%
- Program attendance was up by 35%
- New library card registrations increased by 23% (38 new cards were issued)
- Foot traffic was up by 24%

2) Year-to-Date Budget Report:

Everything looks to be on track. There are no problem areas. We are in excellent financial shape.

Manross Trust Funds - We've got approximately \$33,000 available, which does not include the last quarterly distribution that the Library Board voted to accept. That will be going to the Board of Finance for appropriation at the end of March.

Library Trust Funds - We've got a little over \$37,000 available between Goodsell and the Main Library Trust Fund.

Centennial Fund - The interest account shows \$45,000 plus.

I presented the Library Budget on Thursday, February 27, 2025. It went well. I want to thank Director Salvatore and Director Kapchensky for attending, along with Assistant Library Director Stanton and Beth Martin, Supervisor of Branch Services. Several Friends of the Library members were there as well. It was wonderful to see such support. We issued three new library cards and renewed one card. I came in with a realistic budget with a 0%

increase. Any individual line-item increases were offset by the savings in the CT Solar program. There was no discussion about cutting the budget. Questions regarding printing, overtime, the overnight shelter, etc. were raised and addressed.

Our theme for the budget presentation was "Bad libraries build collections, good libraries build services, and great libraries build communities."

Library Director Prozzo read aloud the following introduction to the budget presentation:

As many of you may know, Andrew Carnegie was a prominent philanthropist who heavily funded the construction of public libraries across the United States, believing that libraries were essential for community development and educational access. He once said, "A library outranks any other one thing a community can do to benefit its people. It is a never-failing spring in the desert."

Think about it . . .

Where can you go when you need to do research, apply for medical benefits, or take an online course for college credit and you do not have the financial means to purchase a computer or access the internet?

Where can you go to hear quality music, participate in book discussions, and engage in social interactions with your peers at no cost when you are on a fixed income?

Where can you go when everyday expenses have depleted your funds and your children are asking you to take them somewhere for entertainment and fun?

Where can you go if you hit a low point in your life, are unhoused and unemployed, and need a warm place to access resources that will help you get through the challenging moment you are going through?

The answer to all these questions is - the public library.

3) Highlights of library activities:

- The Seed Library will reopen for the season on Monday, March 10th at 5:30 p.m. followed by a special program, "Splendid Seeds to Sow this Spring" at 6:30 p.m.
- Sundays have been going very well, especially with all the programs being offered every week in the Children's Department. Yesterday, the Friends wrapped up their Book Sale with a Bag Sale. On the last Sunday, March 23rd, we will be featuring the postponed February Coffee House with the band Good Trouble at 2:00 p.m.

- March is chock full of programming, including the Author Reveal on Tuesday, March 25th at 2:00 p.m. Tickets for the Author Luncheon go on sale April 2nd. They will be \$39.00 this year.

4) Staff News: I'm sorry to say that Mark Bolduc, our Senior Maintenance Technician, will be retiring at the end of the month. There is currently a hiring freeze in effect, but the mayor has indicated that he would be willing to discuss it, so I will be making an appointment.

f. City Council Liaison Report

City Council Liaison Panioto reported that the city is going through the budget and strategic planning processes. He asked Library Director Prozzo about any long-term, five-to-ten-year capital improvement projects. Parking is a big concern. There's not enough parking when we have 2 or 3 events going on at the same time. We're landlocked. You can't grow the facility if you don't have parking. This might be part of the economic development plan for the city.

g. Friends of the Library

Director Salvatore reminded everyone that National Library Week is April 6 - 12. The Friends will honor and thank the librarians and staff.

The Book Sale was a great success. On behalf of the Friends, Director Salvatore thanked Debbie, Scott, and the library staff for their assistance throughout the week, as well as the dozens of Friends who volunteered their time, especially Rose Ann Chatfield who coordinated the entire event. Proceeds from the sale will supplement and support programs and services at both libraries. Library Director Prozzo noted that foot traffic on Thursday was 728, people were shopping all day on Friday, and there was a line from the front door to the upper parking lot before we opened on Sunday at 1:00 p.m. for the Bag Sale.

Director Salvatore announced that the next Friends of the Library meeting will be held on Saturday, April 26th at 10:00 a.m. at the main library. This is the annual meeting and elections will take place. All members are invited to attend. If you're interested in knowing more about the elections or if you'd like to run for a position, contact Rose Ann Chatfield.

h. Community Outreach Committee Report

Library Director Prozzo stated that we used the community outreach truck to deliver books to Edgewood School in February and we're looking forward to bringing it to the Farmers' Market and other events, including the Duck Race. Director Kanachovski

suggested bringing it to Cambridge Park on Jerome Avenue. The Bristol Library has a long history of community outreach.

Item 6- Old Business

- a. Library Director Prozzo reported that we can immediately link a donate button on our website to Main Street without a problem because the small library trust fund account is not connected to city funds. She and Scott met this past Friday morning with Ryan from the Treasurer's office to discuss a donate button to the Centennial Fund held by the city. They were very encouraged because Ryan felt that the Little Green Light software, which Debbie researched a year ago, was a very likely method to do a donate page and could be used citywide. He reported back to Diane Waldron, the Comptroller, who sent the terms of agreement to Corp Counsel and to Eric in the IT Department for review. Eric felt that Little Green Light was not PCI compliant, meaning that there might not be sufficient security measures when using credit and debit cards with this third party. We may need to consider PayPal or another company, however, Little Green Light generates statistics and automatic thank-you messages. It is geared to non-profits and it's reasonably priced. Discussion followed.

Director Salvatore MOVED to launch the donate button on the library webpage that links to the Main Street Community Foundation funds. Seconded by Director Ploszaj. All in favor. None opposed. Motion passed.

Item 7- New Business

- a. **Director Ploszaj MOVED to approve closing the library on Saturday, May 24, 2025 for the Memorial Day weekend. Seconded by Director Jakubowski. All in favor. None opposed. Motion passed.**

Item 8- Adjournment

There being no further business, **Director Kapchensky made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:25 p.m. Seconded by Director Jakubowski. All present voted in favor and the meeting adjourned.**

Respectfully submitted,

Ruth Vontell

This meeting was digitally recorded.