MEETING MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF LIBRARY DIRECTORS

MONDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2025

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

ATTENDEES: Valina Carpenter, Nicholas Jakubowski, Elizabeth Kanachovski, Andrea Kapchensky, Pina Salvatore, and Council Liaison Steve Seymour.
Library Director Deborah Prozzo and Assistant Library Director Scott Stanton.

Absent: Eric Frenette, Kimberly Ploszaj, and Danielle Rivard.

Item 1- Call to Order

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

Chairperson Salvatore introduced Steve Seymour, our City Council Liaison from District 3, and the Library Board members introduced themselves to him.

Chairperson Salvatore reported that there is one vacancy on the Library Board which is made up of nine members.

Item 2- Public Participation

None.

Item 3- Approval of Minutes

Chairperson Salvatore quoted part of Section 41:11 of *Robert's Rules of Order*: "It should be noted that a member's absence from the meeting for which minutes are being approved does not prevent the member from participating in their correction or approval." The vote approves the accuracy of the record not their attendance.

Director Carpenter MOVED to approve the Minutes of the November 3, 2025 Regular Meeting. Seconded by Director Kapchensky. All in favor. None opposed. Motion passed.

Item 4- Communications

Library Director Prozzo received an email from Dawn La Valle from the Connecticut State Library saying that the Bristol Public Library is now fully compliant. Our four new policies are in alignment with the CT state statutes that were recently passed. The policies, along with the form for reconsideration, are posted on the library's website. Library Director Prozzo thanked the Board for reviewing and approving the documents in a timely fashion, well ahead of the state deadline.

Library Director Prozzo was cc'd on a letter from Main Street Community Foundation to Comptroller Diane Waldron which included a check for $50,500 from the Frederick Manross Trust Fund. This annual distribution has not shown up yet as a deposit in MUNIS. The income for the Frederick Manross Trust Fund currently stands at $929,566.25 and is held with the city. Money from this fund has been spent on the elevator, parking lot, and HVAC projects at Manross. We share this fund with the Bristol Hospital.

Item 5- Reports and Committee Reports

a. Finance Committee

No Report.

b. Property Committee

Director Kapchensky gave an update regarding the garden in the middle of the driveway. The project is currently on hold because Peter Wojtusik is busy with Christmas stuff and couldn’t do any work. They are looking into getting quotes from two other companies.

c. Policy Committee

No Report.

d. Strategic Planning Committee

No Report.

e. Library Director’s Report

Statistics: Library Director Prozzo reported that we had a good, strong October. Circulation was up compared to last year. Most activities within the library are running in a positive number. The vacancies in the Reference Department and Computer Lab hurt our numbers upstairs, but now that the positions have been filled, there’s been an uptick in business, especially for Don Smith who’s been offering free computer assistance. He’s fully booked. We’ve transitioned from Baker & Taylor to Ingram for book ordering. Ingram onboarded an additional 2,000 libraries, added more staff, reconfigured the robotics at the warehouses, and added technology in order to meet the demand. Approximately 900 books that were on backorder with Baker & Taylor had to be re-ordered on Amazon. Unfortunately, we lost $40,000 for the Baker & Taylor book leasing. We are in the LCI lawsuit to try and get our money back. Director Kanachovski asked if a Manross distribution would help. Library Director Prozzo said that it would help since Manross relied heavily on leasing. She and Courtney Hanson, the Technical Services Coordinator, have completed the preliminary paperwork with Brodart McNaughton to have a book leasing option with monthly invoicing after the first of the year. We have approximately 226,000 books in our collection.

Year-to-Date Budget: We are approaching the halfway mark in the fiscal year. We are not where we were last year in repairs and maintenance because without a senior maintenance technician our ordering is a bit off. Our revenue is a little below last year, but I think we’re going to make that up. During the colder months, we’ll be watching our natural gas. Public utilities look similar to last year. The Children’s Library is on track and the Manross spending is in line. Trust fund expenditures are listed on the detailed reports in the packet. There’s been no Centennial Fund interest deposited since last month.

Library Highlights: We have a variety of special and recurring programs scheduled in December in all departments for all ages. We’d love for you to join us if you can.

Staff News: The two positions on the second floor have been filled, but we are still without a third custodian. Nobody signed for the position, so it went to the outside. Human Resources is handling that.

f. City Council Liaison Report

No Report.

g. Friends of the Library

(1) Chairperson Salvatore reported that the next meeting of the Friends will be on January 16, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. at the Main Library. The snow date is January 22, 2026. All members are invited to attend. If you’re not a member, you can come that night and join.

(2) Chairperson Salvatore sent out the press release and the flyer related to the holiday mini-sale that the Friends are holding in the lobbies of both the Main and Manross libraries during the month of December. Items will be available for purchase whenever the libraries are open. Patrons pay (cash only) at the Circulation Desk. The sale features nearly-new, gift-quality books for readers of all ages, a large selection of children’s picture books, movies, music, puzzles, and other holiday-themed items. New items will be added frequently throughout the run of the sale. This annual event provides shoppers with the opportunity to stock up on reasonably priced holiday gifts and winter reading material, and the proceeds from the sale help the Friends fund reading programs and activities for all ages at both Bristol libraries.

h. Community Outreach Committee Report

No Report.

Discussion followed regarding special programs, school visits, community events, library card promotions, etc. which are all dependent upon available staff and volunteers. Assistant Library

Director Stanton noted that on December 13th the library will be participating in the Arts and Culture Commission's stroll around Bristol's historic district.

Item 6- Old Business

a. FY27 Budget Draft

Library Director Prozzo provided a summary of the budget process and timeline. The Comptroller sent out information on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving telling us to hold the line, however, it is difficult to maintain strong public service and respond to increasing community demand when operating costs are rising.

Main Library: Library Director Prozzo discussed various line items on the non-wages side of the budget. She explained that money in the revenue accounts goes back to the city. She suggested reducing the professional fees line item by utilizing Manross Trust Funds to pay $12,000 of the LCI assessment which is $52,808 this year. Also included in that line item is the security guards. She anticipates an increase of 50 cents per hour which brings us up around $26,000. Scott would spend what's left on performers, entertainers, and guest speakers. Library Director Prozzo reached out to Nancy Haynes, the Purchasing Agent. The economic forecast is not ready yet, but Nancy felt confident that we could keep our utilities (Eversource and CT Solar) the same. She said that natural gas will increase 16% so we added $2,300 there. Regarding the phone, we are looking into removing our fax line. Repairs and Maintenance shows the biggest increase: $16,000 to cover the new 5-year lease agreement with Bibliotheca for the RFID system. We were able to decrease postage a little bit. Our program supplies are being held at $130,000. The total for non-wages is $405,215 which reflects a 3.65% increase from last.

Overtime and other wages are dependent on regular wages which haven't been filled in yet. Library Director Prozzo provided a part-time wages calculation for the pages. Minimum wage goes up in January.

Children's Library: Their salaries are included in the Main Library's budget. They have only two line items: professional fees for their entertainers and program supplies. The dollar amounts will be the same as last year.

Manross Library: There is an increase on professional fees to accommodate the increase for the security guard. There is an increase on utilities because we did not have sufficient funds last year. In FY24 we spent $17,701 but in FY25 we spent $28,000 perhaps because the Manross Auditorium was used more and the perimeter units were not working. We used Manross Trust Funds to cover the difference because they can be used for operating expenses and capital expenditures. There's also an increase on natural gas.

Overall, Manross shows a $122,700 increase on the non-wages side which reflects a 4.7% increase.

Trust Funds: Library Director Prozzo did not give any projections yet. We won't know until January.

We've done what we can with energy efficiency. The Main Library is on CT Solar and we've got LED lighting at both libraries. We've done HVAC work at Manross and have set point management so City Hall is monitoring all the temperatures throughout the two buildings. We've done in-house repairs where we can and we've done vendor comparison to make sure we're getting the lowest cost. The city utilizes consolidated purchasing to keep costs down.

Regarding staffing and workflow, we've utilized our floater positions so that they were covering a lot of the vacancies that we had. We've streamlined our circulation and acquisitions processes. We've consolidated wherever we can to help control increases despite the rising costs.

The budget supports the priorities that align with our mission across all age groups at both locations. We want equitable access and safe, well-maintained facilities. We offer technology and digital literacy support. We've got high-quality public engagement and community-building events. We've got strong early literacy programming in the Children's Library and we've got robust programming for teens and adults.

Library Director Prozzo respectfully requested the Library Board's approval of the FY27 Budget as presented.

Director Kanachovski MOVED to approve the FY27 Budget Draft. Seconded by Director Carpenter. All in favor. None opposed. Motion passed.

Item 7- New Business

None.

Item 8- Adjournment

There being no further business, **Director Kapchensky made a MOTION to adjourn the meeting at 7:39 p.m. Seconded by Director Jakubowski. All present voted in favor and the meeting adjourned.**

Respectfully submitted,

Ruth Vontell

This meeting was digitally recorded.