

MEETING MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF LIBRARY DIRECTORS

MONDAY, JANUARY 5, 2026

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

ATTENDEES: Valina Carpenter (Zoom), Eric Frenette, Nicholas Jakubowski, Elizabeth Kanachovski, Andrea Kapchensky, Kimberly Ploszaj, Danielle Rivard, Pina Salvatore, Betty Talmadge, and Council Liaison Steve Seymour.
Library Director Deborah Prozzo and Assistant Library Director Scott Stanton.
Absent: None.

Item 1- Call to Order

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

Item 2- Public Participation

None.

Chairperson Salvatore introduced Betty Talmadge, the new Library Board member who replaces Barbara O'Neill. She also reintroduced Steve Seymour, the new City Council Liaison.

Item 3- Approval of Minutes

Director Frenette MOVED to approve the Minutes of the December 1, 2025 Regular Meeting. Seconded by Director Ploszaj. 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

No Report.

c. Policy Committee

No Report.

d. Strategic Planning Committee

No Report.

e. Library Director's Report

Library Director Prozzo presented the following:

(1) **November 2025 Statistical Highlights:**

- Physical circulation is down by 5%, but e-books and downloadables have shown huge increases. Hoopla/Kanopy, in particular, is up 44%.
- There were fewer patron visits in November which is consistent with seasonal trends.
- Reference questions decreased, but Internet and database usage was up.
- Our total number of programs was down because the children's calendar of events is switching.
- Interlibrary loan activity is very good. We are lending out quite a few books which will translate to money from the state at the end of the fiscal year.
- Collection development and circulation have been negatively impacted by the Baker & Taylor bankruptcy.
- We had a decline in new library card registrations. We have a lot of work to do to reach the goal of getting 20% of the Bristol community to have a library card.
- Meeting room bookings increased but attendance decreased due to smaller group sizes.
- WiFi sessions decreased due to a software reporting glitch from last year, not an actual decline in usage.

We track library website hits through Google Analytics. Web Factory manages the website. WiFi sessions are tracked through WhoFi software. Director Jakubowski initiated discussion regarding how to get people who access the website to register for a library card.

Director Carpenter asked for an update on book ordering. Library Director Prozzo stated that approximately 400 items are still back-ordered. Ingram, our new vendor, is inundated and having trouble meeting the demand. The number of holds is high.

Chairperson Salvatore asked about book leasing. Library Director Prozzo explained that without the leasing option, we have to purchase books on Amazon for book discussion. She and the Technical Services Coordinator submitted a profile to lease with McNaughton through Brodart on October 3rd but they haven't heard back. They'll reach out to them again at the end of the month.

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

We're right on track with the exception of some of the POs for books. I'm going to ask the Comptroller to carry over program supply money in all four accounts to the next fiscal year because circumstances warrant it. If we have to

wait until next fiscal year for a lot of the inventory to come in, then it needs to be paid for out of this year's budget, not the new budget year. I ask for the Board's support with this request. There is no deadline to spend money that's carried over.

Our trust funds have plenty of money, which is used to pay for services and activities not covered in the budget.

The Centennial Fund interest balance is up to \$47,525.69. Robin Manuele will create a new account for Centennial Fund online donations so we can track them once we add a button on the website. A patron recently donated to the Centennial Fund with a check.

The library's budget hearing is scheduled for Tuesday, February 24th immediately following the regular Board of Finance meeting. The directive was no increase on the non-wages side. The Main Library and Children's came in at zero. Manross has a slight increase. We budget within our means and look at the trends. The wages side comprises 70% of the budget. There's no cap on personnel numbers.

(3) **Library Highlights:**

Many activities are planned at both libraries for the month of January. Please join us and spread the word.

(4) **Staff News:**

We might have a new custodian/maintenance person starting next week. H.R. is finishing up the hiring process.

f. City Council Liaison Report

Council Liaison Seymour reported that the budget process just started. They're going to be reviewing some projects to see what's needed while trying to keep taxes low.

g. Friends of the Library

Chairperson Salvatore is a member of the Friends, the bookstore coordinator, and the liaison between the Friends of the Library and the Library Board. She invited Steve and Betty to join the Friends. There are volunteer opportunities available.

Chairperson Salvatore reported the following:

- (1) The next meeting of the Friends is on January 15th. The snow date is the following Thursday, January 22nd. You have to be a member to attend, but can join that night.

- (2) The holiday mini-sale in the lobbies of both libraries was a success. Rose Ann is working on the numbers.
- (3) The Friends will be having their annual Winter Used Book Sale from February 25th through March 1st in the meeting rooms on the lower level of the Main Library. This is their biggest event. Friends' volunteers are involved with all different aspects of the event. Rose Ann emails a sign-up chart to the members with jobs and time slots. The book sale proceeds are used to provide hospitality, sponsorships, and prizes for the reading programs.

Director Kanachovski inquired about the Author Luncheon. Library Director Prozzo stated that it will be held on June 11th. The Reveal is scheduled for March 24th at 2:00 p.m. Rose Ann has not set the ticket sale date yet.

h. Community Outreach Committee Report

Director Kanachovski would like to do another children's author event.

Library Director Prozzo stated that the children's staff has quite an extensive outreach schedule with the schools and preschools. We're part of the Bristol Early Childhood Collaborative. We have not seen a list of upcoming community events like the Farmers' Market yet. Some outreach involves staff working overtime.

Discussion followed regarding book fairs, competitions, contests, treasure chests, treasure hunts, incentives, mini-golf in the library, etc. to promote library card sign-ups.

Item 6- Old Business

Chairperson Salvatore stated that Director Talmadge will fill the vacancies left by Barbara O'Neill on both the Property Committee and the Policy Committee. Director Talmadge introduced herself. She was born and raised in Bristol, spent a lot of time at the library, and did a tremendous amount of volunteering before doing home health care for her mother. She looks forward to serving on the Library Board.

Item 7- New Business

- a. Library Director Prozzo reported that Joan Kuebler's daughter, Dana Seguljic from Diamond Point, New York, came to the library last May wanting to donate three framed pictures by Glo Sessions to the Bristol History Room. They depict a woman eating on a bench, a visit with Florida Scott Maxwell, and the third one is currently wrapped in a cardboard overlay. She also left a black portfolio containing at least 75 sketches by Glo and Joan and a white portfolio that Scott is starting to look at. If the Library Board is interested in accepting this donation, we need to do

further cataloging. The framed artwork is large and would need to be hung in a secure location.

- b. Dave Oakes, the facilities manager, recommends putting on a new roof at Manross due to the leaking problems. Also, shingles blew off in a recent storm. Dave got two roofing quotes for the Board's consideration. He and Debbie discussed how the project would be funded. He may not have enough money in the city's building budget. Rather than postpone the project, Debbie suggested using Frederick Manross Trust Fund money (interest, not principal), not the Manross Miscellaneous Trust Fund, to pay for part of the roof. In the past, we've used Frederick Manross money for the elevator project, bathroom renovations, and parking lot at Manross. Millennium Builders of Torrington quoted \$139,711.52 and Eagle Rivet quoted \$58,900.00. Discussion followed regarding the need for a third quote, the quality and type of materials, the life-span of the new roof, the bid process, the dollar amount or percentage that the Board is willing to approve for appropriation, etc.

Director Kanachovski inquired about the status of getting a consultant to do a space study at Manross. Library Director Prozzo stated that we haven't done this yet.

Director Carpenter inquired about making arrangements to have Susan Sadecki from Main Street Community Foundation come in to give us a comprehensive report with year-end numbers.

Item 8- Adjournment

There being no further business, **Director Rivard made a MOTION to adjourn the meeting at 7:45 p.m. Seconded by Director Ploszaj. All present voted in favor and the meeting adjourned.**

Respectfully submitted,

Ruth Vontell

This meeting was digitally recorded.