

Wallingford Public Library Association
Board of Managers Meeting
June 23rd, 2025
7:00 p.m.

The meeting of the Wallingford Public Library Association Board of Managers was held on Monday, May 23rd, 2025.

Board Members Present In-Person: Lisa-Marie Bellmore, Jaime Hine, Maria Rodrigues McBride, Art Elliott, Andrew Whitehouse, Willi Stahura, Dara Solan, Jared Liu, Umera Raza, Kristi Doerr, and Pat Bentley

Board Members Present Virtually: Suzanne Wright, Kristi Doerr, and Kate Zolner

Board Members Absent: Robbin Jackson, Trish D'Oliveira, and Deron Chang

Also Present: Meghan Currey, Head of Adult Reference Services, Rachel Taylor, Head of Adult Programming, and Dr. Larry Singer

Secretary Art Elliott determined that a quorum was present and called the meeting to order at 7:09 p.m. Roll was called with all Board Members acknowledging.

Public Comments: Dr. Singer was asked if he had any comments, he stated he was only on hand to observe the proceedings.

Departmental Update: Rachel Taylor, Head of Adult Programming, was on hand to go over program numbers and new initiatives. The finale of One Book One Wallingford was held on April 29th. It might be the most successful to date. There were many programs that tied into the main themes of the book, such as Raptors, Bird Brain, Reginal Dwayne Betts, Freedom Reads to name a few. 60 copies of the book, How to Read a Novel, were sold at the Library.

The Library was donated 5,210.62\$ from participants in the Great Give. No word on who gave the sixty two cents. It was the best Great Give so far and it will continue to fund the Wallingford Table series of programming

Other well attended programs were the Dragon Boat Festival on June 11th. The 250th Anniversary of Washington Visiting Wallingford, with former US Ambassador Sichan Siv, had 152 attendees. The Rocky Horror Picture Show shadow cast, held to coincide with Pride Month, was also well attended. Props were provided for the audience while the shadow cast performed. This may possibly become an annual tradition.

The Summer Program this year is Welcome to Wallyworld. There will be Hollywood specials, movies, and a scrapbook to keep track of challenges.

Ms. Taylor said that Local History programs are 'spectacularly attended.' Gardening & Flower programs are also well attended. Writing and Poetry program attendance is down.

The Library has started to use Meet Up to advertise programming to younger people. It's an app that I totally knew about before the meeting due to my own youthfulness.

The Library may start an English Language Conversation group for patrons for whom English is a second language. The Library already has already has French and Spanish Conversation Groups.

Meghan Currey, Head of Adult Reference Services, introduced herself to the Board.

Approval of Minutes: The Board reviewed the Minutes of the May 19th, 2025, Board of Managers meeting, the June 4th Strategic Plan Committee meeting, and the June 16th Budget & Finance Committee meeting.

On a motion duly made by Ms. Raza, seconded by Ms. Stahura, it was unanimously **VOTED** to accept all Minutes.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer's Report

Bank Account and Income Statement Review:

- In the May meeting, we reported a total balance of \$3,804,846 in the bank accounts as of April 30th. The total balance of the bank accounts as of May 31st was \$3,683,764.50. That's a total decrease of \$121,081.97 for the month of May.
- As of May 31st, our year to date net income was a loss \$589,559.42 vs. our budget loss of \$48,046.92 an unfavorable difference of \$453,135.33
 - For Income, we are ahead of the budget by \$29k due primarily to a refund (previously reported).
 - For expenses, we were overbudget by \$571k.
 - We are overbudget on Capital Expense by \$557k and furnishing by \$47k
 - This is off by being under budget in Employee Expenses by \$101k
 - A reminder that the capital expenditures for the study room and the furnishing overages are covered by prior year budget savings.

On a motion duly made by Mr. Hine, seconded by Ms. Bellmore, it was unanimously **VOTED** to approve the Treasurer's Report.

Library Director's Report: Ms. Scarpa was on a well-deserved vacation, her written Report follows:

- Budget Update

- The Town budget is now final and there were no changes for the Library, so the FY 25/26 budget remains as approved by the Board of Managers.
- Facilities Update
 - You may notice that we have new A/V in the Collins Room! I'm happy to say this was a surprisingly inexpensive upgrade and we got a whole lot of bang for our buck; including a higher quality display, much better speakers, the ability to connect wirelessly, and smart board capabilities too!
 - I'm also happy to share that we have [finally] completed the new mural in the Children's Area, which will serve as both a memorial for Deborah Fitzsimmons, and an ongoing fundraiser. The donors are currently reviewing the proposed language for our new signage, and then a form will be created for folks who would like to have their name added to the spine of a "book." This is a similar style of fundraiser to our tile wall, which was so popular we still get calls about (I got one this week!). If you'd like to see it in person, please head to the Preschool Area and look to the left, it's down the first aisle of picture books.
- Legislative Update
 - SB 1234 (the eBook bill) was signed into law by the Governor on May 29th. The goal of this bill is to force publishers to negotiate less predatory pricing structures for digital content for libraries. However, this bill uses a "trigger provision" meaning it will only go into effect if other states with a combined population of at least 7 million pass similar laws. At least two states are considering ebook bills, so this may go into effect sometime in the next legislative session (or not?).
 - SB 1271, a "Freedom to Read" bill, was folded into the budget bill HB 7287 and passed June 3rd. In short, this bill requires school and public libraries to have three policies: a Collection Development and Maintenance Policy, a Library Program and Display Policy, and a Materials Reconsideration Policy. Key provisions include:
 - **No book removed just for being offensive.** Challenges must cite educational or professional concerns.
 - **Local voices matter.** Only local residents can file formal challenges and they must do so in writing.
 - **Protects library staff.** Librarians following Board approved policy cannot be sued or harassed simply for doing their job.
 - **Materials stay available during review.**
 - **Policies must be public and inclusive.** Transparency is required, to ensure collections serve diverse populations and do not discriminate.
 - These efforts by CT legislators to protect the Freedom to Read are especially important as libraries and librarians nationally are under attack, as evidenced by a recent ruling from the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit (covering Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas) that overruled a 30 year precedent and effectively gave elected officials the ability to remove books from public libraries at will.
- Programming Updates

- We held our annual volunteer appreciation event on May 16th. It was well attended and several volunteers made a point to tell me how much they appreciated being appreciated!
- A recent Conversation on Race program facilitated a timely discussion on immigration.
- Our June Pride related events continue to be met with a lot of enthusiasm!
- Staff Updates
 - I'm thrilled to announce that we have hired a new Assistant Director - Sam Lee (she/her), is currently the Head of Reference Services at the Enfield Library and co-chair of the CT Library Association's Intellectual Freedom Committee. In addition to her management, fundraising, and leadership experience Sam's also been a vocal and effective advocate protecting the freedom to read for years - you may have heard her on CT Public's *Where We Live*, or seen her quoted in any number of articles about related issues. Sam has won several accolades for her work including the 2025 CLA Booster Award, 2022 CLC Jan Gluz Cooperative Spirit Award, 2020 ALA Gerald Hodges Intellectual Freedom Award, and 2019 CLA Intellectual Freedom Award. She believes strongly in building community resilience through mutual aid and spending out power and privilege. She'll be officially joining the WPL team starting on Wednesday, July 2nd!

Committee and Taskforce:

Budget & Finance: Mr. Liu stated the Library is going to be the beneficiary of a bequest from Harold B. Yeaton which could be substantial. This led into a discussion of the Samuel Simpson Society, a program started in 2013 to recognize those who add the Wallingford Public Library to their estate planning. Samuel Simpson gave money to boost the Library over 125 years ago.

The Town Budget passed with no changes to the submitted Library Budget. There was more talk this year about funding cuts than in previous years. One Town Counselor floated cutting 300k from the Library Budget. The Committee is going to be more proactive in educating the Counselors and the Mayor on the Library's budgeting process and financial abilities.

Strategic Planning: Mr. Liu gave a quick recap of the Six High Level Goals and discussion was held

On a motion made by Mr. Elliott, and seconded by Ms. Raza, it was **VOTED** 13 yay, zero nay, with 1 abstention, to remove the line "The full plan includes objectives and tactics to make the stated goals possible and quantifiable."

On a motion made by Ms. Raza, and seconded by Mr. Whitehouse, it was **VOTED** 12 yay, 1 nay and 1 abstention, to replace Goal Six, Objective 4, Task 3 with "Funds raised via a campaign will be for growth to expand new programs and services."

On a motion made by Mr. Whitehouse, and seconded by Ms. Solan, it was unanimously **VOTED** to approve the new Strategic Plan.

President's Comments: The Staff found the last Board of Managers Who's Who book useful and would like an updated edition.

Other Business: On a motion made by Ms. Bellmore, and seconded by Ms. Raza, it was unanimously **VOTED** to approve the Library Manager to sign contracts on behalf of the Library Board for the 2025/2026 fiscal year.

On a motion made by Mr. Liu, and seconded by Ms. Solan, it was unanimously **VOTED** to clear volunteer records older than 5 years old.

The Meeting was adjourned on a motion duly made by Ms. McBride, seconded by Ms. Stahura, it was unanimously **VOTED** to go with Fiondella, Milone, & LaSaracina LLP as our new auditing firm.

On a motion made by Mr. Elliott, and seconded by Ms. Solan, it was unanimously **VOTED** to adjourn the meeting at 9:06pm.

The next meeting of the Wallingford Library Association is scheduled for Monday, September 19th, 2025, at 7:00p.

Respectfully submitted,
Art Elliott
Secretary