

**Approved
Windsor Library Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes
March 10, 2021**

Present (via Zoom) Cheryl Curtis, Carol Sama, Fran Ward-Nelson, Denise Panos, Caren Barry, LeighAnn Tyson, Betty Hellerman, Kevin Washington, Susan Kirschner-Robinson

(in-person) Gaye Rizzo, Denise Ricotta (IT Librarian)

Absent: David Raney

Meeting called to order at 5:38 PM by Cheryl Curtis.

Cheryl asked for a volunteer to take minutes for the meeting. Gaye Rizzo agreed to be Secretary.

Public Comment: None.

Display and Exhibits Policy:

Gaye recommended that wording be added to the policy to address the increased number of requests from patrons that staff pull and display items from the library collection. In addition, length of time for those displays should be at the discretion of library staff.

Board members reviewed copies of the policy that had been mailed to them with Gaye's recommended changes and after some discussion suggested that these two sentences be added at the end of the Displays and Posters section:

"Requests that library staff retrieve, arrange and display materials from the library collection on a particular topic or theme may be considered. Length of time for the displays is at the discretion of library staff".

Motion: To ratify amendments made to Gaye's recommended changes to the Display and Exhibits Policy

Made by: Carol Sama

Second: Denise Panos

Vote: Cheryl Curtis Y Carol Sama Y Fran Ward-Nelson Y Denise Panos Y Caren Barry Y LeighAnn Tyson Y Betty Hellerman Y Kevin Washington Y Susan Kirschner-Robinson Y David Raney absent

Staff Reports

Your Windsor libraries are now entering their **ninth month of re-opening** following the **COVID-19** outbreak last March. Hard to believe but there are still libraries in the state that have yet to re-open and others that are only open by appointment or for curbside pick-up. In Windsor, the main library is open **seven days a week**, with abbreviated Monday –Thursday hours and an additional open hour on Sunday. Branch hours have remained the same. We're consistently

averaging about **10,000 visits** into the buildings each month and about a dozen curbside pick-ups every day. Library photocopiers, scanners and fax machines are busier than ever. Our “new normal” continues to include **social distancing**, the wearing of **face masks** (thank you, Caren Barry for the many masks you’ve made for the staff), **quarantining** of returned materials for 24 hours, limited use of public computers or wireless access and **no in-person meetings or programs**. Instead, we’ve learned to connect with one another and our patrons for those things via **Zoom**. We’re still obligated to **deep-clean** thoroughly in the morning and again in the early afternoon to remain compliant with the **Governor’s phase 2** re-opening plans for public libraries. We’ve grown accustomed to seeing large bottles of **hand sanitizer** scattered throughout our two libraries and after steady use, we’re ready to replace many of our floor markers.

Despite the many restrictions imposed on all of us by re-opening during a **pandemic**, we’ve received lots of **compliments**. Many are from patrons from surrounding towns, **thankful** that there’s a library close by where they can browse for materials to **read, watch** or **listen to**. Most, though, are from our own Windsor patrons who appreciate having access to materials as well as having a familiar and safe place to go to find **community** during a time of isolation. The library and its staff have also been a huge resource to people needing **computer help** when applying for a **job, unemployment** or, most recently, for an appointment for the **COVID vaccine. VAMS** (Vaccine Administration Management System) requires an email address, so imagine trying to set one up on your own, register in VAMS and then navigate the system to set up an appointment – all without access to a computer or the technical knowledge to use one. Our libraries have worked with town senior and social services staff to provide this very important, potentially life-saving help.

Although it might have been a COVID imposition initially, **virtual programming** is proving to have some real advantages. First, in-person programming limits staff to performers who live close by whereas virtual programming has brought presenters from **across the globe** to our patrons in Windsor. My favorite example is New York Times columnist, **Peri Klass**, who joined us from Florence, Italy to talk about the connections between **crafting and positive mental health**. Each month, as many as 2,000 people view or take part in virtual programming hosted by our libraries. Another benefit is that many of those same programs are **recorded** and can be viewed again or at a later time. Finally, we’ve come to recognize that some programs are **better suited** to being run **virtually. Book clubs** are just one example of this. People seem to prefer reading a book club title and then coming together to discuss it in the comfort of their own homes via **Zoom** rather than having to come back out in the evening to meet in person. At the same time, children still seem to enjoy in-person, interactive programs more than viewing them online. The Wilson Branch **tutoring program** is showing **mixed results** this year. Thanks to Zoom, students have been able to meet weekly with their tutors for **online homework help**. It’s a **safer alternative**

during the pandemic that requires **less space** and **supervision** but lacks much of the interpersonal **mentoring** that takes place when students are able to talk to their tutors in person. Also, after attending school virtually all day many of the children are showing **computer fatigue** by the afternoon. Once services are fully restored, staff will need to take a hard look at all of the programs the library offers and determine which should continue to be presented virtually and which should return to in-person attendance.

Without a doubt, the area **most affected by the pandemic** at our two libraries was **personnel**. Since re-opening on June 22, 2020, about **one-third of the staff** resigned or retired. I've spent more time in the past several **months** recruiting, interviewing or training new staff than I've spent in the past several **years**. **Kidspace** was impacted most as no sooner did we hire three new part time clerks to fill vacancies when the full time Children's Services Librarian resigned, one of the two Directors of Special Programs staff members resigned and another clerk requested a leave of absence. Thankfully, all but one of our vacancies has been filled. New full time staff members include: **Meagan Schiebel**, who became the new **Children's Services Librarian** in January, replacing Shana Shea, who left to pursue a career in marketing. Meg has several years of experience, most recently as Head of Youth Services at the Meriden Public Library. She holds a Master's degree in Library and Information Science from the University of Wisconsin. Meg is joined by **Alexandra Remy**, who was hired as **Reference/Teen Librarian** in December to replace Andy Geary, who left to become Youth Librarian in Tolland. Alex comes to us from the Springfield City Library where she served as Reference/Teen Librarian and then as Branch Supervisor. She holds a Master's degree in Library and Information Science from Simmons College. Finally, **Christine Gorton** was selected to become the new **Library Assistant** in December after the retirement of Laura Pastula. Chris has worked part time at the Wilson branch and main library as both a Clerk III and a cataloguer since 2006. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Finance from Central Conn. State University and has previous experience in banking and in the non-profit sector. As someone pointed out at a recent staff meeting, the one thing we should all look forward to once the pandemic is over is being able to see what each of us looks like underneath our **masks**. Hard to believe that I've **interviewed, hired, trained** and then spent months **working** with more than a **dozen** people whose faces I've never even seen!

The \$1,859,510 **2022 budget** that I'm submitting to Town Council, reflects **optimism** for the upcoming fiscal year. Increases are strictly for **salary** and **benefit costs** and there's no mention of COVID related expenses such as additional daily deep cleaning of our buildings. Maybe it's unrealistic but I'm hopeful for some well attended outdoor in-person programs this summer, reinstatement of some, if not all of our services next fall/winter and a chance to actually see rather than imagine the smiles library staff is eliciting from our patrons.

In closing, Denise and I would like to thank you all, once again, for accommodating the **time and venue change** for this meeting.

Windsor Library Association Update

Susan Kirschner-Robinson reported that WLA has been very busy with work on their bylaws, fundraising and nominations. She asked everyone to please let her know of names of people who might be interested in serving. She noted that they are interested in both expanding and sustaining their current donor base. While they made their goal this year, they acknowledge that it might go down in the second and third years. May 20th is the annual meeting. The Association hopes to host a hybrid outside/Zoom meeting but won't have assurances of that until mid to end of April as they are still waiting for direction from the Governor.

Minutes of the Previous Meeting: Sept. 10, 2020

Motion: To accept the minutes

Made by: Carol Sama

Second: Betty Hellerman

Vote: Cheryl Curtis Y Carol Sama Y Fran Ward-Nelson Y Denise Panos Y
Caren Barry Y LeighAnn Tyson Y Betty Hellerman Y Kevin Washington Y
Susan Kirschner-Robinson Y David Raney absent

Set next tentative meeting date: June 9, 2021 at 5:30pm via Zoom.

Motion: To adjourn.

Made by: Betty Hellerman

Second: Denise Panos

Vote: Cheryl Curtis Y Carol Sama Y Fran Ward-Nelson Y Denise Panos Y
Caren Barry Y LeighAnn Tyson Y Betty Hellerman Y Kevin Washington Y
Susan Kirschner-Robinson Y David Raney absent

Meeting adjourned at: 6:10 pm

Respectfully submitted: Gaye Rizzo