

**Draft of
Windsor Library Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes
Dec. 8, 2021**

Present: Cheryl Curtis, Fran Ward-Nelson, Denise Panos, Caren Barry, David Raney, Michael Zager, Betty Hellerman, Kevin Washington, Gaye Rizzo,
Absent: LeighAnn Tyson

Meeting called to order at 7:03 PM by Cheryl Curtis.

Cheryl asked for a volunteer to take minutes for the meeting. Carol Sama agreed to be Secretary.

Public Comment: None.

Resignations and Appointments: Betty Hellerman was re-appointed for a three year term to expire on April 23, 2024.

Staff Reports

If I had to identify the area of Library Services most impacted by the **COVID-19** pandemic, it would most certainly be **staffing**. Since re-opening in **June 2020** after being closed for **14 weeks**, we lost **one-third of the staff** and there continues to be **turnover**. As an example, just prior to the pandemic, we hired **three part time clerks** in **Kidspace** and only **one remains** on staff. **Shana Shea**, the full time Children's Services Librarian **left** at the beginning of COVID, was replaced last year by **Meg Schiebel** and **11 months later, Meg just left** to move with her husband to Amsterdam. The Wilson Branch **tutoring coordinator** never returned after we re-opened. The program ran **virtually** last year under the direction of **Mitchell Bruce**, a college graduate intern with **Public Allies CT**. This fall, Gabbie returned to **in-person tutoring**, hired a part time coordinator who then left after only three weeks to take a full time job. She offered the position to another candidate who **withdrew** and recently **hired a retired Hartford Public Librarian** who will, fingers crossed, start in a few weeks. Staff are departing for a variety of reasons that include **COVID concerns, full time job opportunities, retirement** and **relocation**. Salary and a 40 hour work week don't seem to deter candidates from applying but some would argue that it keeps Windsor from being competitive with other libraries in the state. Needless to say, the past two years for me have been all about **recruiting, interviewing, reference checking, hiring and training a steady stream of new employees**. Last week was disappointing as I realized after conducting **second interviews** for Meg's replacement as **Children's Services Librarian**, the best option would be to **not hire anyone** from that recruitment and to re-post the position after the holidays.

Programs at both libraries continue to be well attended and much appreciated. An outdoor **Goats on the Green** had **73 attendees** and the **Mad Hatter Tea Party** had over **60 people** participating this summer. Children and their parents **love Miss Meg** and her signature **blue hair!!** One parent commented that her little girl uses calming breathing techniques that Miss Meg taught them rather than having temper tantrums anymore. I also continue to receive glowing comments about **Miss Victoria** for her weekly young children's programs and **Miss Bonnie** for her interactive STEAM programs that appeal to older kids.

Nightmare on Broad Street was a huge success as long lines of children waited for treats at the main library. Three staff and four volunteers (including David and Loretta Rainey) gave out **3,350 treats** in the first hour of the two hour event before they ran out. Yikes! Thanks to all of you who contributed **candy** for the event. **Betty Hellerman** and **Valerie Gange's pretzels** were also a huge hit and every **pad and pen** from the huge box that **WLA donated** were picked up by trick or treaters.

The **Artist in Residence** program resumed and has been very well received. **Watercolor** artist, **Barbara Alex** drew over 50 people to her reception and each of her three participatory lobby demos averaged about 10 people. Barbara made **\$1,200** on the sale of her artwork, 10% of which will go to the library.

This fall, eighteen **staff** members became **certified** or re-certified in **CPR** and **AED**. Both libraries are equipped with new state of the art AED machines.

Staff also participated in three of the **Windsor Historical Society's 100th Anniversary** events in October.

The FY22 library budget included an additional **\$2,000 for EDI** (Equity Diversity, Inclusion). Thus far, those funds have been used for a **Hispanic Heritage Month** program, a **Haitian Day of the Dead** program and an **African American Heritage** database. Staff plans to use the remainder on **materials** that focus on **diversity**.

Middletown and **Farmington Libraries** are **joining LCI**, our consortium which currently serves 30 libraries in the region. This will **expand items available** for patrons to borrow (and pick up here) and will also **reduce our annual membership** assessment by a few hundred dollars. Middletown has been a member of LION Consortium (who also uses our Integrated Library System) and Farmington is a standalone library (using an Open Source ILS). **Middletown will join LCI on Dec. 8** and **Farmington** anticipates coming on board in **early 2023**.

Services at the main library were impacted by **two power outages** and a **water main break** within a single month this fall. In late October, a pole was knocked down on the eagle green and left the main library without power for an hour. Not long after, a **water main break** in front of Grace Church meant closing the library

for an entire day. Two weeks later, two transformers, damaged by heavy wind left parts of Windsor, including the main library, **without power** for much of the day and resulted in early closing.

The **Windsor Library Association** reprised its **property committee** to address concerns relating to the **Wilson Branch Library**, which they own. They met with town Facilities Manager, **Whit Przech**, to walk through the building and learn how the building systems operate and also identify upcoming needs.

The **mask mandate** was lifted again in **Windsor** just before Thanksgiving. Staff are thrilled that they no longer have to police mask wearing at the library and are surprised by the number of **patrons** and fellow **staff** members who continue to **wear masks**.

On Nov. 9 the library received **Tarzan of the Apes** by Edgar Rice Burroughs in the book drop. When staff opened the front cover, looking for its **barcode** to discharge it, they discovered that the book was **very overdue**. Instead of a barcode, they found a stamped due date of **April 22, 1980**. The book was **41 year overdue!!!**

Our town **FY23 Budget Kick-Off** meeting was held this morning. Our budgets are for review by the town manager by mid-January. I will be asking for a small increase to Personal Services to allow salary and benefit adjustments and to utilities for both library facilities.

Windsor Library Association Update

Michael Zager, President of WLA, shared this report:

Fundraising

The hand addressing of envelopes went smoothly, followed by checking and envelope stuffing at the Wilson Branch in September (see photos at wlact.org/fund-raising). Despite the well-organized letter campaign and enjoyable gathering/work night, results thus far are disappointing.

Fall Campaign donations are still arriving but as of November the total amount donated is down 23.9%; the number of donors is down by 29.9%; the average amount donated by those who gave is up by about \$5 or 10%.

It seems that predictions of reduced giving a year or two after a crisis, such as the pandemic, are coming true. What to do?

1. I'd like to request that you contact friends, neighbors, and family and remind them to donate if they are able to do so
2. Calls for Giving Tuesday donations went up on Facebook, Nextdoor.com, and on wlact.org. Please direct friends to the website as an easy and secure method to donate. They may also mail donations to the address on the same page.

Wilson Committee

The committee completed a guided walk through the building with Whit Przech, the town Buildings and Facilities Director, to understand the condition of the building and to assess potential near term and future costs. The major maintenance project that will be required within five years or so is a new roof. The roof leaked in the summer but was repaired by a local patch, though that is only a short-term fix. There is also a crack in the concrete of the front entryway. Otherwise, the building is in good shape. Minor esthetic improvements such as painting of ceiling tiles and brightening of bathrooms were discussed but those are relatively simple, low cost projects.

The committee is also reviewing the lease and L.P. Wilson's will to understand the breakdown of WLA and Town responsibilities for major and minor maintenance items.

This committee is made up of Susan Kirschner-Robinson (chair), Mike Zager, Heidi Kelsey, Mark Reeves, Valerie Gange, Cynthia Peoples Hobson, and Nicole Jackson.

Social Media Policy

A committee is getting closer to publishing a Social Media Policy for WLA. The goal of this committee is to develop guidelines or a checklist to be sure that the posts reflect the mission of WLA. The policy language regarding inappropriate comments on social media is similar to that of the library's social media policy. A copy went to the membership for comment. Once the Executive Committee approves the policy, it will be published and posted online along with our bylaws and other policies. Members of this committee include Kandecia Avery, Shannon Karlowicz, Cheryl Curtis, and Cay Freeman.

Nominations Committee

Susan Kirschner-Robinson is the chair of this committee and will soon seek candidates for a variety of WLA roles. The WLA can always use more help, particularly from people with financial, technical, or artistic skills, or from people who are excited about reading and about our amazing library and want to make it even better.

Website Updates

The website is updated as needed so please view it periodically. Recent updates include additions to the home page, including a promotional presentation and a Giving Tuesday call for donations.

Minutes of the Previous Meeting: Sept 8, 2021

Motion: To accept the minutes with three grammatical corrections

Made by: Fran Ward-Nelson

Second: Kevin Washington

Vote: Cheryl Curtis Y Carol Sama Y Fran Ward-Nelson Y Denise Panos Y

Caren Barry Y David Raney Y Michael Zager Y

LeighAnn Tyson absent Betty Hellerman Y Kevin Washington Y

Set next tentative meeting date: March 9, 2022 at 7PM (Meeting Room #1)

Motion: To adjourn.

Made by: David Raney

Second: Denise Panos

Vote: Cheryl Curtis Y Carol Sama Y Fran Ward-Nelson Y Denise Panos Y Caren

Barry Y David Raney Y Michael Zager Y

LeighAnn Tyson absent Betty Hellerman Y Kevin Washington Y

Meeting adjourned at: 7:35 PM

Respectfully submitted: Carol Sama