

**Approved
Windsor Library Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes
March 4, 2025**

Present: Cheryl Curtis, Betty Hellerman, Carol Sama, LeighAnn Tyson, Fran Ward Nelson, Denise Panos, Kaitlin Walsh, Coralee Jones, Mark Reeves, Gaye Rizzo

Absent: Caren Barry

Meeting called to order at 7:05 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: None

Rules of Conduct: Gaye asked for the Board's approval to include "public spaces may not be used for organized meetings and events" at the end of the first bullet in the Rules of Conduct.

Motion: To accept the Rules of Conduct as amended:

Made by: LeighAnn Tyson

Second: Denise Panos

Vote: Cheryl Curtis Y Carol Sama Y Fran Ward-Nelson Y Denise Panos Y Caren Barry absent LeighAnn Tyson Y Betty Hellerman Y Kaitlin Walsh Y Coralee Jones Y Mark Reeves Y

Staff Reports:

Despite the cold temperatures and bone chilling winds, both the main library and the branch have been **very busy** this **winter**. **Foot traffic rose 15%** and **programs** and **attendance** were up **38% and 34% respectively** compared to the **same period last year**. We've begun hearing the "**I couldn't find anywhere to park**" complaints again from library patrons. At the same time, we're receiving many more requests from outside groups to use the **library's meeting rooms**, and often to sponsor their own programs or activities intended to attract the public. We're thankful that the **Meeting Room policy** prohibits the use of outside groups for that purpose as doing so would most certainly put even more of a **strain on parking, limit access** to patrons interested in using **their library** and also might give people the impression that the library **endorses** whatever a particular group using the meeting room is **promoting**.

Something else we saw much more of this winter was the number of **“local authors”** interested in showcasing their **self-published books** at the library. One local business owner and non-resident wrote a book on self-care for medical professionals, published it herself, asked that we have it featured **on a table in the lobby, host a book signing** and even encourage patrons to **visit her business**. Another gentleman insisted that we add four nearly **unreadable** and **poorly formatted** novels to the collection that AI had helped him to write and Amazon had “published”. When we politely refused his donation, he was angry and complained that it took him a **whole month** to write the first book. The **Collection Development Policy**, which you’ve thankfully helped me to hone over the years “welcomes **donated self-published copies** in book or music format by **authors currently living in Windsor**” but also with the **“right to refuse** any title or remove any title, without notice, at any time, for any reason”.

A third **trend**, if you will, that we witnessed more this winter was the growing number of people who are coming to the library as they age in place while also struggling to cope with **health** and **memory loss issues**. Reference staff, for example, is spending a great deal of time helping **older folks** in person and over the phone with their **electronic devices**. They help patrons decide which devices are **best suited** to their needs and then **teach** them how to use them. If **memory loss** is involved, that means **teaching** and **re-teaching** the same skill to the same person day after day. Staff hopes to partner with **Windsor Library Association** in creating **memory kits** to help patrons in the early stages of memory loss and to also purchase a number of **“try it before you buy it”** items such as an **adaptive cane** or **noise amplifying** or **noise canceling headphones** for our **Library of Things** collection.

Something we in Windsor, thankfully, **did not** have to deal with this winter were issues related to **censorship** or **book banning**. Unlike some other libraries in the state, complaints about items in the collection have been minimal. Needless to say, we’re not planning to do any **programming, displays** or **engage in any public discourse** that might **“poke that bear”** on this incendiary topic.

You may have also heard about the number of libraries throughout the state who have **canceled** their subscriptions to **Hoopla**. This streaming service provides concurrent **audio, ebook** and **music downloads** to patrons on their **electronic devices** but due to their **pricing model** and their **non-disclosure of the materials** in their collection **written by AI** many libraries have cut ties with Hoopla. In Windsor, **Hoopla is still very popular** with our residents so we plan to keep it. **Overdrive**, our other **streaming platform**, is also creating controversy as librarians argue that we are being charged exorbitant prices for many of the popular titles we electronically lend to our patrons. For the **second year** in a row, members of the **Connecticut Library Association** have sought **legislation to prohibit this practice** but have, thus far, been **unsuccessful**. Some libraries have opted to **refuse to carry those titles** in their e- or

audiobook collections whose **publishers overcharge** them but in **Windsor** we have **not adopted** that practice.

A final point of **frosty contention** among my Library Director colleagues across the state was the **State Library's decision** to no longer award those libraries lending to patrons in **Hartland** with Borrow-it grant funds. You may recall that **BorrowIT** is a **cooperative program** among public libraries that allows a resident of any town in the state with a library card to **borrow materials** from **191 other public libraries** in the state. Libraries are then reimbursed annually based on their level of lending. Since tiny **Hartland**, with **no paid staff** and only **10 open hours** each week, is unable to share with other towns, those towns who share with Hartland residents are now going to be denied the reimbursement grant. **Granby**, for example, lends thousands of items to Hartland residents each year and their reimbursement (about \$2,000 per year) will be cut off. There is much **indignant chatter** about the injustice of this recent decision by the State Library.

We were very fortunate, last month, to hire **Susan Yanello** as a part time cataloger. Windsor can now boast that we have **three original catalogers** when there are only a handful of libraries throughout the state that have **even one!** **Audra Zimmerman**, another of our catalogers, was the former owner of **DGI**, a company that **cataloged** materials for public, academic and special libraries **world-wide**. Susan worked for Audra. **Sharron Mund**, our third cataloger, was trained over many years to do original cataloging. Most libraries simply copy catalog or buy records from **OCLC** (Online Computer Library Center), a global company that provides original catalog records.

Other new part time staff this winter include **Beth Warweg**, who replaced Kara Filmer in Kidspace and **Jonathan Cuppini**, who replaced Bridget Carbonetti as a reference librarian. Vacancies we hope to fill soon are for a part time lending clerk and a new janitor.

The **tutoring program** at the **branch** has reached maximum capacity with **44 students** and **44 tutors** participating each week. That program is enjoying amazing success with **Tricia Jefferey** as Coordinator.

Staff in all town departments are taking part in online **cybersecurity training**. Each of us is required to watch a short **3 minute video** each week and then complete a short **quiz** before proceeding.

A final winter highlight of note was the **Connecticut Valley Tobacco Museum's "Brilliance in the Valley" mural** that was on display throughout the month of **February** in celebration of **Black History month**. The 4' x 6' mural highlighted **war-era Southern students from Historically Black Colleges and Universities** (HBCUs) who traveled to Connecticut and Northern farms for summer work as tobacco laborers. A corresponding **video**, featuring the mural's

creator and local artist, **Ellis Echevarria**, (who, sadly, died on Jan.17th) could be viewed in the lobby as well. When I was first asked to display the mural, I was **worried** that depicting blacks as underpaid, migratory workers might upset some of our patrons. But after consulting with **Cheryl Curtis**, I learned that this mural has value not only for its artistic and historical significance but also as a fine example of “dignity despite hardship”. Thank you, Cheryl. **The mural was very well received.**



Windsor Library Association Update:

Mark Reeves noted that they just had their Winter Meeting with a presentation from the fundraising committee and with a focus on the donor base. The base is shrinking but the remaining donors seem to be giving more.

They are working to develop new initiatives, redesigning their signage, working on an ambassador program that will include kits for WLA members to bring with them for their messages at the beginning of library programs they've sponsored. Mark also mentioned that WLA members shared their favorite books at the Winter Meeting. A list of those books will be kept and available.

Minutes of the Previous Meeting:

Motion: To accept the minutes with one grammatical change.

Made by: Mark Reeves

Second: Coralee Jones

Vote: Cheryl Curtis Y Carol Sama Y Fran Ward-Nelson Y Denise Panos Y Caren Barry absent LeighAnn Tyson Y Betty Hellerman Y Kaitlin Walsh Y Coralee Jones Y Mark Reeves Y

Set next tentative meeting date: June 3, 2025 at 7PM (Meeting Room #2)

Motion: To adjourn

Made by: Denise Panos

Second: Carol Sama

Vote: Cheryl Curtis Y Carol Sama Y Fran Ward-Nelson Y Denise Panos Y Caren Barry absent LeighAnn Tyson Y Betty Hellerman Y Kaitlin Walsh Y Coralee Jones Y Mark Reeves Y

Meeting adjourned at: 7:47

Respectfully submitted: Carol Sama