

MEETING MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF LIBRARY DIRECTORS

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2026

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

ATTENDEES: Valina Carpenter, Eric Frenette, Nicholas Jakubowski, Elizabeth Kanachovski, Andrea Kapchensky, Kimberly Ploszaj (Zoom), Danielle Rivard (Zoom), Pina Salvatore, and Betty Talmadge. Library Director Deborah Prozzo and Assistant Library Director Scott Stanton.

Absent: City Council Liaison Steve Seymour.

Item 1- Call to Order

Chairperson Salvatore called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

Item 2- Public Participation

None.

Item 3- Approval of Minutes

Director Talmadge MOVED to approve the Minutes of the July 6, 2026 Regular Meeting. Seconded by Director Kanachovski. All in favor. None opposed. Motion passed.

Item 4- Communications

Library Director Prozzo received a card from a patron thanking us for the services we provide to the community. In particular, she emphasized her appreciation for the computer lab and Don Smith who's been invaluable. They are far from tech-savvy and Don has provided a lot of assistance. The card says, "Best public library ever."

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

1) June 2026, FY2026 & July 2026 Statistics

We had a very strong finish to the fiscal year 2026. The library circulated 262,706 items, we had 176,128 patron visits, we hosted almost 1,500 programs, and we had over 50,000 people of all ages in attendance. There were 105,000 Wi-Fi sessions and 588,000 website visits. We had 2,182 new cardholders and we answered more than 27,000 questions.

In July, we had a little decrease in circulation, but our program offerings increased by 8%, patron registrations increased by 6%, and patron visits increased by 3%.

2) Year-to-Date Budget

We are only 2 months into the new fiscal year, so there really isn't much to report at this time. We are still waiting for the trust funds to carry over. Revenue is up. The detailed report for all of our trust funds shows what we've spent to date on book purchases and programming.

There's over \$50,000 in the Centennial Fund interest account and \$1,050 in the Centennial Fund contribution account (checks and cash). We discovered that we will have to do a deposit to move online donations made via Stripe into a contribution account. The Centennial Fund has three revenue accounts and one expenditure account. If the Library Board wants to move money from a revenue account into the expenditure account, Debbie will do the appropriation paperwork for the Board of Finance.

3) Summer Reading

We had a very successful summer reading program at both locations. The library was very busy. Thank you to the Friends of the Library for supporting us financially with very nice prizes and to the Hospitality Committee for providing refreshments and hospitality at many of the events.

We ended the summer with a huge children's author event. We hosted Lucky Diaz, who is Mexican-American and came from Los Angeles. He put on a wonderful performance and was very gracious and patient. He spent a lot of time with the individual families and signed copies of his book, which the children received for free. RJ Julia gave us a bulk discount. Over 180 children and adults attended. Thanks to the Friends, the lunch line moved along smoothly. Manross Trust Funds were used for this great community event. We did not have to pay for travel because Lucky was already here on the East Coast. Both the Children's Department and the Manross Memorial Library offered related programming to support the event and prepare the attendees.

4) Allegra Goodman Author Event

Allegra Goodman will be traveling from Massachusetts, to New York, and then to Connecticut. She will give a presentation here at the Main Library on Wednesday, September 30, 2026. We are taking advantage of a great opportunity to host an author of that caliber at that price point. Due to limited parking and the inability to rely on Funks for additional parking, I am asking the Library Board to support me in asking the mayor if we could close the Main Library from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. in order to accommodate all of the attendees. Right now, we have about 120 people signed up for tickets and 92-96 parking spots. We will ask attendees to carpool and the employees will park elsewhere. Staff working that night would man the phones for regular library business, assist with parking, etc. Manross Library would remain open.

Director Rivard MOVED to request approval from the mayor to close the Main Library from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. on September 30, 2026 for the Allegra Goodman event. Seconded by Director Ploszaj. All in favor. None opposed. Motion passed.

5) Annual State Report

The annual state report is due on October 1st, but I completed it and submitted it on August 12th. By participating, we will get money back from the state. I have a copy on file if anyone would like to see it.

6) National Friends of the Library Week

We will be celebrating National Friends of the Library Week which is October 18 - 24. We are planning to have either a breakfast or a luncheon here to recognize the Friends and all their hard work this past year.

7) Laptop Connect Library

We are a Laptop Connect library. We are participating in a program sponsored by the State Library and the DEEP which will allow us to bring 97 free laptops to our community. The state requires participants to have a valid library card in their town. You must be at least 18 years old. You must also be in one of the following assistance programs: SNAP, Medicare, Husky, CT Energy Assistance Program, or Low-Income Energy Assistance Program. We are currently taking names of people who are interested. During intake, we will meet with the individuals to make sure they are eligible. After attending a digital training session with Don Smith in the computer lab, they could then check out a computer, which comes with a small briefcase, for a 5-year loan period. The expectation is that we will not see the computers again. Tech support and service will be provided via a 1-800 number. We have to maintain the inventory. The state does not want to know who has the computers, just that they were

distributed according to the rules. Participants would need to have their own wi-fi at home. Spread the word. Not all libraries chose to participate.

f. City Council Liaison Report

No Report.

g. Friends of the Library

Chairperson Salvatore reported the following:

The 21st Annual National Friends of the Libraries Week is October 18th through the 24th. The celebration offers a two-fold opportunity to celebrate the Friends. The Friends can use the time to raise awareness of their group in the community and to promote membership. It's also an opportunity for the library and Library Board to recognize the Friends for their help and support. On behalf of the Library Board, we thank the Friends of the Bristol Public Library for their hard work, fundraising, advocacy, and dedication to making our community a better place. The Friends' volunteers make our libraries special. They run the bookstore, attend special events like the Farmers' Market, provide hospitality, etc. We're very fortunate to have a very active and committed Friends group.

The Friends now have a Facebook page. We invite you to follow "Friends of the Bristol CT Library" to learn about upcoming events. Holly works hard as the Friends' Publicity Chair.

The Friends offer sponsorships throughout the year whereby staff can apply for funds to help support special projects or equipment. The applications are subject to review and approval by the Friends' Sponsorship Committee. For example, the Friends are sponsoring the Young Adult Junk Journaling Program on September 21st.

Recently, two members of the Friends Board have partnered with the Children's Department to set up a Friends table at certain children's events. They sell children's and youth books in good condition and promote the Friends group. They have attended two children's events so far and plan to do more in the future.

Preparations are underway for the Holiday Lobby Book Sale which will take place at both libraries in December.

The Friends helped celebrate the close of the summer reading program with funding for refreshments and prizes.

In July and August, the Friends held their first annual Dollar Days sales in the Friends Café on the second floor. Deep discounts were offered on books, DVDs, and CDs.

The Friends have been involved in a lot of community activities. On August 18th, they partnered with the library at the Pencil

Hunt at Muzzy Field, which was organized by Parks and Rec. The library solicited new library cards and the Friends gave away good quality children's books for free. It was also an opportunity for the Friends to promote themselves. The total number of books distributed for all community events was approximately 260.

The Friends attended the Farmers' Market on September 12th along with library staff. Rose Ann reports that the gift card raffles and sale of low-cost books were very successful this summer.

h. Community Engagement Committee

Director Kanachovski confirmed that the Lucky Diaz event was a success and that the Allegra Goodman event will be held at the end of September.

i. Centennial Ad-hoc Committee

Director Carpenter reported that the committee met after Betty, Beth, and Debbie did quite a bit of research. They reviewed many documents to look at the history and intent of the fund which was started in 1992. There seemed to be a hole in some of the information from 1992 to 1995. We are trying to piece the puzzle together with meeting minutes from the actual committee, the Library Board, and the City Council. One of the questions is whether this was a permanent endowment or a city account? On September 11, 1995, the Library Board put the money in an endowment fund and wanted to dissolve the committee. Library Director Prozzo explained that we have a copy of the Library Board's resolution to establish the fund but no evidence that the City Council actually took action on that. The City Clerk looked at records from 1994 to 1997 and could not find City Council meeting minutes that talked about the resolution. Library Director Prozzo offered to contact Corp Council since they drew up the original resolution and might have something on file that indicates that it did go through the City Council. Director Kapchensky stated that if it's an endowment fund, there are lots of restrictions regarding how the money can be used. Library Director Prozzo explained that the fund, as it stands with the city right now, does not use the word "endowment." We have no problem accessing the money which is in an expenditure account. We've used it twice for various projects. We're earning interest, getting contributions, and the donate button is live on the website. Director Carpenter noted that during the Centennial Ad-hoc Committee's informational meeting, there was some discussion about perhaps moving the fund to Main Street Community Foundation.

Item 6- Old Business

None.

Item 7- New Business

Director Kanachovski inquired about having one Library Board meeting a year at the Manross Library, which had been done prior to Covid. Discussion followed regarding meeting room availability at Manross and the 2027 Library Board meeting schedule.

Library Director Prozzo reported that September is National Library Card Sign-up Month. We are encouraging all Bristol residents to get a free Bristol Library card, which opens the door to many resources, including digital databases. We will be out in the community on Thursday morning promoting library cards and library services at the Senior Center Health Fair. Director Frenette suggested going to St. Joseph School one day to do sign-ups and Director Rivard offered to bring flyers to the various schools. Assistant Library Director Stanton provided Chairperson Salvatore with Mayor Ellen Zoppo-Sassu's Proclamation regarding Library Card Sign-up Month which was established in 1987. Chairperson Salvatore read part of the Proclamation aloud. It is celebrated every September to mark the beginning of the school year and to emphasize the value of public libraries.

Item 8- Adjournment

There being no further business, **Director Kapchensky made a MOTION to adjourn the meeting at 7:25 p.m. Seconded by Director Carpenter. All present voted in favor and the meeting adjourned.**

Respectfully submitted,

Ruth Vontell

This meeting was digitally recorded.