

MEETING MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF LIBRARY DIRECTORS

MONDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2026

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

ATTENDEES: Valina Carpenter, Eric Frenette, Nicholas Jakubowski, Elizabeth Kanachovski, Andrea Kapchensky, Kimberly Ploszaj (Zoom at 6:35 p.m.), Pina Salvatore, Betty Talmadge, and Council Liaison Steve Seymour.

Library Director Deborah Prozzo and Assistant Library Director Scott Stanton.

Absent: Danielle Rivard.

Item 1- Call to order

Chairperson Salvatore called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

Item 2- Public Participation

None.

Item 3- Approval of Minutes

Director Carpenter MOVED to approve the Minutes of the September 14, 2026 Regular Meeting. Seconded by Director Talmadge. All in favor. None opposed. Motion passed.

Item 4- Communications

Library Director Prozzo received a communication from Joan Monico thanking Joshua from the Reference Dept. for helping her store some CDs. She appreciated his highly experienced work ethic.

Library Director Prozzo was cc'd on a communication from Main Street Community Foundation that was addressed to Comptroller Diane Waldron. The annual distribution from the Frederick Manross Trust Fund was \$45,000. It was received on September 25th. The revenue account now holds \$141,354.63.

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

August 2026 Statistics Highlights: Patron visits and website visits were both up 5%. Wi-fi sessions were up 30%. Patron registrations were up 51%. Our overall circulation was about the same as last year.

Year-to-Date Budget as of 9/28/26: Spending in all departments is on track for the first quarter. There was no additional revenue logged in since the last report. The next deposit will be done this week. There was no interest reported for the Centennial Fund.

Library News: September was National Library Card Sign-up Month. We issued 195 new cards. We had excellent community response at the Farmers' Market, the Senior Center Health Fair, and all of our school-related outreach events. October is off to a great start, too. We have a stack of new registrations.

The Nutmeg Lit Fest scheduled for Saturday, September 26th was canceled due to the weather. We don't have a new date yet.

Our literary pop-up event, An Evening with Allegra Goodman, was held this past Wednesday. It was a huge success. Thank you to the many Friends and staff who made the event run smoothly and thank you to the Library Board for allowing us to use Manross Trust Fund money. We were allowed to close the library that evening and use Funk's parking lot. We had a great response. The feedback was tremendous. People really enjoyed the opportunity to be up close with the author. The event was entirely free for the public. The majority of attendees were from Bristol however, some came from Vernon, West Hartford, Simsbury, Avon, and Burlington. Because it was held at night, people who work during the day could attend. We had a themed refreshment table which went along with Allegra's latest book, *This Is Not About Us*. Library Director Prozzo read an email from Tina who works at another library: "My mom and I thoroughly enjoyed the event with Allegra last night. We were immediately welcomed, shown how to navigate the building, and greeted at every point. The run of show was clear, the questions and content were excellent, and Allegra was warm and funny. Both the book sales and autograph line were brilliantly managed and we left the event in a fabulous mood. I know how much effort goes into library programs and I just wanted to acknowledge everyone's efforts. Thank you for creating a memorable event." The Board should consider holding this type of event on an annual basis.

October will feature a wide range of programs for children and adults at both locations. We will be hosting a Friendsgiving Pie Party on Tuesday, October 20th to recognize and celebrate National

Friends of the Library Week. We invite all Friends and volunteers to the library.

The winter programming session runs through February. It includes Winter Reading programs, which the Friends always support. Scott has newsletters and promotional materials out. Today we just booked The Golden Scrolls for Bridgerton string music. Sunday hours from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. will start on January 10th and run through March 28th.

Director Jakubowski requested data on an infographic showing the total number of library cards registered, the number of new library card registrations, and the number of cards that have expired each month. Library Director Prozzo does not have the number of library cards that have expired monthly. The annual running total number of cards is close to 17,000. She will add the total number of cardholders to the statistics report. The strategic planning goal is 20,000. Library Director Prozzo stated that one of the things driving the increase in library cards is the Laptop Connect Program which we are launching this week. Participants must have a current, valid Bristol library card in order to be eligible for a free laptop. They must also show proof that they are participating in SNAP, HUSKY or Medicare. Don Smith, the Computer Lab Supervisor, will be running the one-hour "Introduction to Using the Computer" classes. The laptops will circulate on a permanent loan. Discussion followed.

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. At the Friendsgiving Pie Party on October 20th, The Friends of the Bristol Public Library will be recognized for their financial contributions and volunteer hours which make the library a special resource for the community. On behalf of the Library Board, Chairperson Salvatore thanked the Friends. She will give a card to the Friends signed by the Library Board members.

At the Allegra Goodman Pop-up Literary Event, the Friends did a wonderful job providing refreshments, helping in the parking lot, and providing other assistance wherever needed.

The Friends attended four Farmers' Markets. They had 397 people sign up to win a gift card to a local restaurant. They also gave out free books.

The Friends of Connecticut Libraries Newsletter highlighted the Godfrey Memorial Library in Middletown which hopes to collect the cemetery records of everyone in Connecticut. It is an

independent, non-profit library specializing in genealogy in both family and local history. It's open to the public for a fee. Carol Ansel is the library director. Her goal is to provide an online index of every American from 1607 to date. The library contains passenger and immigration lists, databases for various newspapers, and MyHeritage database. Assistant Library Director Stanton stated that we may have Carol Ansel do a genealogy program here in the spring.

h. Community Engagement Committee

No Report.

Director Kanachovski thanked Library Director Prozzo for the Allegra Goodman event. She is proud of the Friends and the library staff. It was nice that Manross Trust Funds were used for the event. The author was a very good speaker. It was a bit more intimate than the author luncheons. The question-and-answer portion was great.

i. Centennial Ad-hoc Committee

Director Carpenter reported that they hit a little bit of a wall while researching records from the early '90s to determine the original intent of the Centennial Fund and what type of fund it was. Library Director Prozzo did some further investigating and reported the following: The Centennial Fund was formed in 1992. At a City Council meeting held on July 13, 1992, council member White made a motion to rescind the authorization for the creation of a Bristol Library Centennial Account within the general fund and to establish an appropriation for the Library Centennial Account within the reserve fund for capital and non-recurring expenditures. The motion was voted on and passed, but there's no mention of the resolution, which might not have happened. The City Clerk's office could not find the resolution in City Council minutes. In 1996, \$50,000 was given to the City of Bristol as principal to be managed by the city and that was called the Library Centennial Account. That's where the interest is coming from. The interest goes into a revenue account which currently has about \$50,000 in it. There's also a revenue account for cash and check contributions for the Centennial Fund. In addition, there's a new revenue account for contributions made online via the donate button on our web page. Then there's the expenditure account that has \$143,000 in it. The Library Board can decide to do an appropriation. Right now, everything's just sitting in these various accounts.

Library Director Prozzo suggested that the Centennial Ad-hoc Committee consider doing an annual appeal for donations for the next hundred years. They can work with Scott to develop some sort of statement for the PR. Scott could contact Brian Johnson at *The Bristol Press*. Director Carpenter suggested that the Centennial Ad-hoc Committee meet with Scott on Thursday, October 8th at 5:30 p.m. to discuss ideas and get momentum going before the holidays.

Director Jakubowski suggested that Giving Tuesday, which is the Tuesday after Thanksgiving, be the target date for launch because the majority of fundraising for nonprofits happens between the beginning of November and the end of December. The committee will work on getting a proposal and/or presentation ready for the next Library Board meeting on November 2nd.

Item 6- Old Business

None.

Item 7- New Business

None.

Item 8- Adjournment

There being no further business, **Director Frenette made a MOTION to adjourn the meeting at 7:09 p.m. Seconded by Director Carpenter. All present voted in favor and the meeting adjourned.**

Respectfully submitted,

Ruth Vontell

This meeting was digitally recorded.