

Wallingford Public Library Association
Board of Managers Meeting
December 16, 2024
7:30 p.m.

The meeting of the Wallingford Public Library Association Board of Managers was held on Monday, November 25th, 2024.

Board Members Present In-Person: Suzanne Wright, Lisa-Marie Bellmore, Art Elliott, Jaime Hine, Maria Rodrigues McBride, Andrew Whitehouse, Willi Stahura, Deron Chang, Dara Solan, Pat Bentley, Jared Liu, Robbin Jackson, Umera Raza, and Tricia D’Oliveira

Board Members Present Virtually: None

Board Members Absent: Kristi Doerr and Board Fellow Megan Grossman

Also Present: Library Director Sunnie Scarpa, Assistant Library Director Julie Rio, and Marcel (Ms. Robbin’s grandson)

President Jared Liu determined that a quorum was present and called the meeting to order at 7:32 p.m. Roll was called with all Board Members acknowledging.

Public Comments: None

Departmental Update: Liz Gatter, Head of Cataloging & Collection Management, was on hand to update the Board. She stated between July and October for the new Children, and Teen, Libraries of Things 119 new and unique items were cataloged. Seventy-five toys, 25 board games, and 19 tech kits. All non-book items must be entered into the Catalogue manually. Each piece of a kit entered in separately, as well, making them much more time consuming than books.

Cataloguing books is like making store bought frozen cookies. Cataloging kits is like making cookies from scratch, she said. They take 5 to 6 times longer. The whole bibliographic description has to be written, and cross referenced, in a way that makes each part of it findable in the Catalogue. The number of new Reference books, dvds, and cds have declined. Kits and ‘non-traditional’ Library items have increased.

Approval of Minutes: The Board reviewed the Minutes of the November 25rd, 2024, Board of Managers meeting, the October 7th,

On a motion duly made by Ms. Wright, seconded by Ms. Bently, it was unanimously **VOTED** to accept the Minutes with no updates.

Treasurer's Report:

- In the November meeting, we reported a balance of \$4,173,574.82 in the bank accounts as of October 31st. The total balance of the bank accounts as of November 30th was \$4,178,652.26. That's a total increase of 5,077.44 for the month of November.
- As of November 30th, our year to date net income was a loss of \$31,378.34 vs. our budget loss of 45,034.44, an favorable difference of 13,656.10
 - For Income, we are ahead of the budget by \$32,856.37 due to a \$24.5k refund (previously reported) and bookseller income of 8,991.00
 - For expenses, we were overbudget by \$19,200.27, driven by spending in excess of budget for automated services, capital expenses, insurance and programs (same as last month). This is offset by savings in employee expenses and professional fees.

On a motion duly made by Ms. Wright, seconded by Mr. Chang, it was unanimously **VOTED** to approve the Treasurers Report.

Library Director's Report: Ms. Scarpa started with an update on digital loans, as they are an issue that lots of Libraries are facing.

The two main ways we have for patrons to download digital items are Hoopla and Overdrive (which also is accessed with the Libby app).

Ms. Scarpa's notes to follow:

Overdrive

- paid for annually through LION includes an annual fee, plus cost per title
- LION curates collections of titles
- we own the book for a specific # of checkouts OR specific time frame, then it disappears
- no concurrent checkouts lead to long wait lists

Hoopla

- charged monthly for usage
- Hoopla curates collection
- Concurrent use of books means no wait times
- Cost is per checkout NOT per title, so when use goes up, monthly charges balloon – limited ways to reduce cost lead to an inability to control costs

All libraries are struggling with the challenges and costs associated with these vendor models. For FY 24/25 we budgeted based on an expected 3-5% increase in circulation, our actual increase for the first half of the year has been 28%. We are averaging 54 new Hoopla users every month. Based on this increase, I'm currently forecasting we'll be over budget by \$15,000-\$20,000 in this expense line this fiscal year.

What can we do?

1. Cancel Hoopla and divert funds to Overdrive Advantage, which allows us to pay extra to cut down wait times on high demand books for Wlfd patrons
 - a. Guilford Library added \$20,000 to Overdrive Advantage in FY 22/23 and the reduction in wait times was not perceptible to most patrons
2. Institute monthly budget caps, so once our monthly budget amount has been reached Hoopla is essentially turned off for all patrons
 - a. Given current usage, it's likely the budgeted amount would be depleted mid-month, leaving frustrated patrons without access for half of every month
3. Cut music, movies, tv, comics and bingepasses to reduce costs
 - a. All of these formats combined only make up 12% of circulation, so while it's not likely to upset too many patrons, it's also not likely to make a big difference in terms of budget
4. Trim print non-fiction budget to divert funds to Hoopla, based on new LibraryIQ data
 - a. Adult non-fiction is taking up 23% of our space, but only makes up 8% of our circulation
 - b. Possible savings of \$15,000
 - c. Only impacts this year and next year, not a long term solution

Ms. Scarpa will be looking into options 3 & 4 this year and will keep the Board apprised of any changes or updates. She will also look into educating patrons about this issue. More information on the topic may bring a change in borrowing habits or some insight to use going forward.

In November, Ms. Scarpa attended the Directors Summit, an annual conference for Library Directors. She outlined several of the Speakers and topics covered, including The Future of Libraries, Attracting and Retaining Talent, Modelling Healthy Boundaries, Nurturing a Diverse and Inclusive Staff, and Advocacy. She felt the conference sparked both big inspiring ideas, as well as small, more practical strategies.

One topic that was touched upon was the increase in Book Challenges. Ms. Scarpa is in the process of drafting a form letter to use in the response process and will review the forms & procedures in the coming year.

HVAC Update: the units have arrived. Installation will happen with half the units at a time. By CT State Law all offices and public spaces will have to be kept at 65 degrees or the Library will be forced to close for the installation. Rich Heidgerd, Head of Facilities, will be meeting with Town officials tomorrow (12/17) to come up with a plan that will, hopefully, mitigate the impact on the Library business. The worst case is a possible 8 day shut down of the Library but subject to weather, some closing or disruption may be unavoidable.

Committee and Taskforce:

Board Sponsored Events: Ms. Stahura thanked everyone who contributed to the Board Holiday gathering. Lots of good snacks were provided.

President's Comments: Mr. Liu welcomed new Board Member Robbin Jackson, and Marcel as well.

Other Business: As of January 1st, 2025, Connecticut will enact new Employee Protections. An Addendum will be added to the Employee Handbook with the updated information, as well as an email sent to the Staff outlining the changes.

On a motion duly made by Mr. Whitehouse, seconded by Ms. Raza, it was unanimously **VOTED** to approve the new employee polices.

The Meeting was adjourned on a motion duly made by Ms. McBride, seconded by Mr. Elliott, it was unanimously **VOTED** to adjourn at 9:03p.

The next meeting of the Wallingford Library Association is scheduled for Monday, January 27th, 2025, at 7:30p. Happy New Year.

Respectfully submitted,
Art Elliott
Secretary