

(March 5, 2026)

Approved Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting
Zoom - 7:00 pm
February 25, 2026

Trustees Present:

R. Boroujerdi, K. Patel, S. Bennewitz, B. Chan, M. Silverstein, A. Alemani, D. Briggs, J. Corgel, B. Gaylord, J. Price, L. Van Gundy, P. Wieser, A. Zwick, M. Sze

Trustees via Zoom: K. Guion, S. Gordon, C. Charise, D. Travlos

Trustees Absent: P. Zakowich

Also Present as a Member of the Development Committee: R. Herbertson

Meeting called to order at 7:10 pm

President's Report: R. Boroujerdi.

Minutes of January meeting accepted by Board and entered as such. R. Boroujerdi began the meeting by discussing the importance of VersoFest (both as an attendee and volunteer) and offered a thank you, on behalf of the board, to EJ Crawford, the Communications Director, who is leaving the Library to return to a position at Yale University. Plans for a more fulsome discussion around programming are tentatively planned for the Spring.

R. Boroujerdi also noted that while there are no near-term issues at hand the library building is beginning to age and its systems are getting older. Care and attendance to capital needs will likely become more prevalent into and beyond next fiscal year. The library's transition project largely impacted the interior. With regard to the exterior, Library windows and roof will, at some point, need replacement. The Town of Westport has the Library roof on the Capital Planning list and the new Selectman and Finance Director are aware.

Gov/Nom Committee Report: M .Sze

M. Sze reported that the Whistle Blower policy was reviewed and was recommended by our auditors. Details of escalation were provided to all board members as well as reference to the employee handbook and training which provides staff directions. All policies can be found on the Library website.

Trustee Recruitment is on schedule. Looking for people with expertise in legal governance, knowledge of non-profit, digital and media, AI and finance. Job description was sent to the Board and they were asked to share the information with their contacts. R. Boroujerdi noted there are 4 open seats, 2 that the Library is responsible for and 2 that the Town of Westport will be able to nominate for.

Development Committee: R. Herbertson/M. Silverstein

Annual Appeal raised \$471,304 this year, 122% over last year. There were fewer donors this year, but donations were larger. The Board contributed over \$20,000 and this does not include BOOKED. Development Committee is preparing for next year's campaign. L. Van Gundy and A. Zwick are going to work with S. Hayden

and R. Powell to cultivate new donors utilizing the data stored in our systems. One of the goals is to develop relationships with families who have young children and utilize the Library. L. Van Gundy also highlighted a mini project to revisit some of the data and metrics tied to Development outreach.

Treasurer's Report: B. Chan

B. Chan January financials have tracked closely to the budget. Program revenue exceeds the budget & cafe/retail revenue is showing a 27% increase. Administrative & facility costs are 12% higher than budgeted, but overall costs are being carefully managed so that total expense tracks closely with the budget. The fiscal year ends in June so expect some year-end true-ups as is normal for our process.

Finance Committee: S. Bennewitz

S. Bennewitz, B. Chan, A. Tencic, and B. Harmer presented FY26/27 Budget to the Town. S. Bennewitz thanked everyone for their hard work and contributions. The Board of Finance had questions and will prepare a list to send to B. Harmer for Library to answer.

Post a successful audit and sign-off the IRS Form 990 is in process and the Library will make the May 15th deadline.

Strategic Planning Update: T. Donohue

Reading Initiative is underway. Verso Studios has a new website. Common Ground is in the process of revamping the goals. Key project is streamlining Library data systems. Currently Library has over a dozen systems that collect data and do not aggregate the information. Impact measurement is starting to improve but will take time to collect more information. A focus on Westport residents remains critical.

Executive Director Report: B. Harmer

B. Harmer spoke about the pilot AI program D. Briggs held in the Forum with AI actress Tilly Norwood and the Library's America 250 plan to bring in historian authors to discuss the history of our country. This initiative will be sponsored by the Lundberg Master Series in the Arts with additional support being solicited.

Adjournment motion by S. Bennewitz, seconded by P. Wieser, unanimously agreed. 8:20 pm

Respectfully submitted by S. Presutto on behalf of Sheri Gordon