The Westport Library...

(May 21, 2026)

Approved Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting
Library Board Room - 7:00 pm
May 20, 2026

Trustees Present:
R. Boroujerdi
K. Patel
S. Bennewitz
B. Chan
S. Gordon
M. Sze
A. Alamani
C. Charise
J. Corgel
B. Gaylord
K. Guion
P. Wieser
A. Zwick

Trustees via Zoom: L. VanGundy, D. Travlos

Trustees Absent: D. Briggs, J. Price, M. Silverstein, P. Zakowich

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

Meeting called to order at 7:00 pm

President's Report: R. Boroujerdi.
The minutes of the April meeting were accepted by the Board and entered into the record.

R. Boroujerdi reported that the Book Fair and Young Families Event were highly successful. A summer Board outing was announced for July, to which new trustees will be invited. R. Boroujerdi also announced that P. Zakowich will be leaving the Board at the conclusion of his first term on June 30, 2026. He thanked P. Zakowich for his contributions and impact during his service. It was noted that P. Zakowich's planned departure had been taken into consideration during this cycle's Board of Trustees recruitment process.

R. Boroujerdi further noted that both the annual Board self-review and the Executive Director review will be distributed shortly, and he outlined year-over-year changes to the process, format, and composition of each review.Lastly, R. Boroujerdi stated that capital spending remains an ongoing area of focus. While no immediate action items will be presented to the Board, discussions regarding infrastructure needs and standard capital improvements (e.g., windows, chairs, and tables) will increasingly become part of future planning and working sessions.

Gov/Nom Committee Report: M. Sze

(1) Trustee Recruitment – 5 new trustees selected. CVs have been circulated. Candidates were presented with bio and background. Board of Trustees voting on 3 Library Appointees. Motion by M. Sze, seconded by C. Charise, unanimous. RTM votes June 2 on the two RTM appointees.

(2) Policies for discussion; policies were over six years old.

   a) The Sponsorship Policy, which had been circulated in advance for Board review as part of the Library's ongoing governance and policy review process, was discussed and updated to reflect current practices and best practices in nonprofit governance. Revisions included establishing a $100,000 threshold and adding parameters intended to further safeguard and align sponsorship activities with the mission and values of the Library.

   b) The Gift Policy was also circulated and reviewed as part of the broader effort to modernize policies and clarify procedures and protocols where appropriate. Updates included increasing the reporting threshold from $50,000 to $100,000 to better reflect current operational practices and maintain consistency within the Library's overall policy framework.

M. Sze made a motion to accept both policies, seconded by P. Wieser; unanimous. M. Sze also took the opportunity to recognize S. Presutto's important role at the Library.

<u>Finance Committee</u>: S. Bennewitz

S. Bennewitz reported Investment Committee met. Documents are up on the Board portal for review. The Investment Policy is being revisited in collaboration with the Finance Cmte.

For discussion, an updated draft framework for the Board Designated Fund was presented. The Finance Committee noted that the fund has historically functioned in practice as a quasi-endowment supporting general operations including providing $135,000 in support for the coming fiscal year.

The Committee is considering whether the fund could also be used in a more intentional way to support one-off strategic initiatives. The updated draft framework is intended to better define purpose, establish definitions and processes and provide a clearer structure for how the fund may be used and overseen going forward. It was also noted that the Board remains cognizant of ongoing budget pressures from the Town and the importance of thoughtful stewardship of available resources. Any proposed use of these funds would be focused on discrete, strategic projects intended to enhance and expand community impact and support the Library's mission and vision.

The updated draft framework remains under discussion and Board members were encouraged to review and reflect on the concept. It was also noted that the intention is to consider the Development Fund framework in parallel to ensure consistency across related approaches and governance structures.

<u>Treasurer's Report</u>: B. Chan

B. Chan reported programs, rentals, and Verso U. and café and retail are both up in income. On expenses, five categories where things were higher: administration (salaries, recruiting fees, benefits), café and retail, facility (electric up significantly), program costs and development (due to grant writer which takes time to measure efficacy and impact). B. Chan noted we are 2 months away from the end of the fiscal year and reminded the board that the broken pipe on the Riverwalk, as things stand, will drive us outside budget.

Development Committee: R. Herbertson

R. Herbertson provided highlights of Development Committee work to date. Significant number of larger annual appeal gifts this year, though drop in total donors by 4%. This year is looking strong overall. Analysis of giving from FY10-FY26 presented to the Board including deeper analytics, donor migration paths and statistics.

Executive Director Report: B. Harmer

R. Powell is on medical leave and is expected to be out for approximately six weeks. No StoryFest event will be held this year. The decision reflects the current absence of a Program Director and the opportunity to refresh and reimagine the event structure for future years.

B. Harmer provided an update on the Book Sale, noting that it appears to be the second most successful sale in Library history. The America250 initiative will be refocused to a more manageable scope, with emphasis placed on core programming priorities (around authors) and leveraging partnerships with local institutions and organizations.

An update was provided on the Director of Marketing search. The process is in its final rounds with several strong candidates advancing through interviews and assessments. The role is being positioned as a more active, impact-focused position and the Library aims to complete the search by the end of May.

An update was also provided on the Director of Programming search. Nearly 100 applications have been received and, while the formal interview process beyond initial screenings has yet to fully commence, the goal is to complete the search within approximately one month. It was also noted that the Executive Director and his staff remains actively engaged with leadership across local schools in support of ongoing programming and partnerships.

The Library continues to host significant numbers of students during AP exam study periods and is planning additional programming to support students during finals preparation.
BOOKED scheduling continues, with ongoing coordination required to confirm a date with the proposed candidate, with timing anticipated for mid-fall.

A report on VersoFest was shared with the Board. Considerable time was devoted to reviewing key metrics, ranges of impact and key learnings from the event. A budget summary was provided, with the reminder that VersoFest operates outside the Library's core operating budget and was approximately break-even for the year. Sponsorship support increased significantly for 2026, while attendance remained strong at over 3,000 participants, slightly below the prior high of 3,500.

Adjournment motion by S. Bennewitz, seconded by P. Wieser, unanimously agreed. 8:48 pm

Respectfully submitted by S. Presutto on behalf of Sheri Gordon