Library Trustees Regular Meeting Minutes
Thursday September 11, 2025 630pm

The meeting is called to order at 631pm

The meeting minutes for August 14, 2025 are accepted as submitted

Director's Report:
Overview
Personnel

- I'm happy to report that we have hired a Library Assistant to cover 20 weekly hours at the Rathbun Library. Her name is Shomriel Sherman, and she will begin on Tuesday, Sept 23rd. Her hours will be 9:30 – 3 on Tuesdays, and 9:30 – 5 on Wednesdays and Fridays. Anastasia will be at the Rathbun on Mondays and Thursdays so we should have more consistent coverage in the Rathbun children's area.
- We have also hired one student intern from the HRHS who is starting tomorrow at the EHFPL. He will be working Wed & Fri evenings and Saturday mornings. His name is Ryan Atkinson, and he was highly recommended by Mrs. Stroili at the High School.
- Offsetting that good news is that Nancy Price, our full-time reference librarian at the Rathbun, has been out several weeks after a fall. She is doing well and is expected to return on September 23rd
- It's been challenging to keep the library staffed with two open positions and a third out on leave, but we're managing thanks to the flexibility of our part time staff filling in as needed!
- After all this I'm thankful I'll be attending a retreat for Library Directors on Monday. It will be at the lovely Guilford Retreat Center and it will be lead by Maureen Sullivan and Ellen Paul. I'm looking forward to getting to know my peers better and sharing ideas with them!

Budget FY26

- The FY26 budget began on July 1, 2025. We spent $77,779.36 of our 515K budget or 15.1% through the Sep 8th. We're well within our budget. A couple of line items are over budget and we discussed them at this week's will address them in his finance committee report.
- I attended the grant application webinar for the Connecticut Foundation of Middlesex County (CFMC). 64 people attended this funding webinar – several others from East Haddam – so it's quite competitive! They have two rounds of funding. The first round applications are due Oct 2nd and I have so many other deadlines for that date that I may do an April 1st spring application instead.

Overviews of August & September Events

- I'm also happy that The Words from the Woods book circle will resume its discussions on September 15th at 1:30 PM at St Stephen's Episcopal Church. Our book for this meeting is Kathleen Dean Moore's book, Wild Comfort: The Solace of Nature.
- The production of "Chorus Line" at the Goodspeed Opera House runs until Nov 2nd, and is again almost completely sold out. Thanks to the Goodspeed's generosity, we're still offering vouchers every week for two free tickets to each evening performance, and they are all taken within the first 20 minutes each Monday! They are available to East Haddam residents with current library

cards. Some people sign up for library cards because of this program, so we're grateful for this "Goodspeed Good Neighbor" program.

Summer Reading Program
Here's some of Anastasia's report about summer reading – it was a big success thanks to all the planning, prizes, and participants from schools and libraries.
"Summer Reading is officially done for this year and we had 99 participants counted! The raffle prizes have also been drawn and the winners have been called. At this point over half of the prizes have been picked up. Then, this month we had 40 different programs for ages 0-18 and their families and had about 214 total participants."
The CT State Library offers an evaluation form for the summer reading program and Anastasia has posted it at both libraries. We'll compile and report the results soon.
Anastasia also participated in the well-attended East Haddam Youth & Services Summer Palooza program from 10 – 2 on Sat Sept 6th. She set up her booth with colorful info flyers and had a magnetic fishing game that at least a hundred kids had fun with.
Director Projects
I'm making progress on my fall to-do list:

- I've begun updating the policies that need to be approved by the CT State Library & Library Board, and will bring them to the Board for approval this fall.
- I'm gathering statistics for the CT State Library annual report and will submit that report by the Oct 1st deadline.
- As mentioned earlier, we've hired one new staff members at Rathbun and an Intern at EHFPL so we'll be providing orientations for them
- Conduct performance evaluations with library staff members
- Hold monthly all library staff meetings and separate library branch meetings
- Continue advocating for a new library
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2025 Upcoming Library Events:

- Fairy House Workshop at Grange Sat Sept 20th 1:30 – 3 – Friends of Rathbun
- Friends of EHFPL Book Sale Fri-Sat Oct 10 -11th at Grange (time?)
- Half Pint Hamlet at Rathbun – Sat Oct 18th 2-5pm – Friends of Rathbun
- Safe Halloween – Library table – Oct 31st 5 – 8pm - Parks & Rec
- Authors Showcase - Grange – Sat Nov 8th 11 – 2pm – Joint EHFPL & Rathbun Friends
- Holiday Market at Grange & Old Town Hall – Sat Nov 22nd 10 – 3pm – Library
- Light up the Green – Moodus Green & MOC – Santa etc – Dec date TBA
- Sometime in Jan or Feb 2026 – Puppet Show at High School – to be scheduled – Rathbun Friends
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Finance Committee Report:

a) 2025-2026 Budget – The current year budget expenses YTD were reviewed. A significant part of the Dues & Fees line has been used (73.8%). This was due to having paid for the annual subscription to Ancestry.com. Additionally, the expenditures for Telephone/Cell Phone seem to be greater than expected (20.7%). E Morgen is going to investigate.

b) Grants - E Morgen reported the Middlesex Community Foundation is holding a webinar tomorrow to provide instruction on how to apply for their Fall and Spring grants. E Morgen is going to attend.
c) IMLS – Based on information that E Morgen has found, the current federal budget request is for funding to shut down the IMLS. Our system does not get any direct funding from the IMLS, but we may be affected depending upon what the CT legislature does with the state budget to try to backfill the loss to the CT State Library.

Governance Committee Report:

The Committee will begin meeting on the Monday before the Board meetings at 9am at EHFPL.

2025 Municipal Election – Dawn has completed her paperwork to run as a write-in candidate. There is one additional 4-year term that will need to be filled.

Annual Manual Review – The committee will begin the annual manual review. Kerry will complete sections 1-2, Shea will complete 3-4 and Juliana will complete 5 and the appendices.

The Board Effectiveness Survey was reviewed. Some recommended changes resulting from the survey are:

1. provide physical copies of handbooks and relevant documents during orientation of new board members.
2. The director will begin sending out the reports a day earlier to allow the Board more time to review the report
3. Work to better support the Friends groups
4. Have the Finance committee present an overview of the Budget to the board to ensure the entire Board is comfortable talking about the library budget with the general population.
5. Annual Review of Policies – The Governance Committee will begin a bi-annual Fall review of all library policies, led by the Director.

The CT State Library and CT state legisla□on is asking for updated policies from all state libraries. Much of this is centered around crea□ng stronger policies for banned books.

Due to staffing shortages, the director will seek an extension from the state. The current deadline is October 1, with a December 1 website update.

Friends Report:

Local Book dealer Ryan Knaggs will be coming to assist the Friends in valuing and pricing old book donations for the upcoming book sale happening at the Grange in October.

The Friends have need of additional support from the Trustees, and others, as volunteers to help move books from The First Church to the Grange for the book sale as well as help setting up and breaking down the event. They have reached out to the schools for student help and Shea will reach out to the Leos organization for assistance there as well.

The Friends are also considering asking him to join them at the Author's Showcase coming up November 8, 2025 at the Grange. They are considering his professional skills in valuing old books as an opportunity for the public to bring old books to be valued to the Showcase.

The Friends have created a joint flyer that represents both Friends groups from each Library. These flyers are printed and will be available at both libraries to showcase upcoming events sponsored by the Friends.

The Rathbun Friends group has officer elections at the next meeting and are also in need of helping volunteers for upcoming events as well.

Unfinished Business:

The 25-26 Budget was discussed earlier

The Strategic Plan-Evelyn has no report for this meeting, she will have a report for the next meeting.

The New Library next steps-Evelyn believes the next step should be forming a Building Committee. We are reminded that our ADA non-compliance is a "when not if" situation. East Haddam is 2 of the 3 libraries in the State that are out of ADA compliance. If we can demonstrate that we are working toward ADA compliance we may avoid steep penalties. The Building Committee formation will go toward addressing that.

IMLS cuts- Although East Haddam libraries are not directly affected by these cuts, the ripple effect may be felt going forward.

New Business:

Approval of June 12, 2025 meeting minutes

Motion made by Juliana, 2nd by John, motioned passed unanimously

Audience of Citizens: None

Meeting Adjourned 724pm