

Connecticut Library Association Board Meeting  
December 21, 2023  
10:00 am Business Meeting via Zoom  
**Minutes**

1. **Call to Order:** President Sarah McCusker called the meeting to order at 10:03 am.  
**Approval of Minutes:** November meeting minutes  
A motion to approve the November meeting minutes was made by Doug Lord and seconded by Alessandra Casiello Motion approved. No abstentions.
2. **Old Business**
  - a. **President's Report** – See attached.
  - b. **Treasurer's Report** – See attached.
3. **New Business**
  - a. \$500 request for sessions with John Chratska – Ellen Paul/Sarah McCusker
  - b. Discussion of Technology/Technical Services sections – Doug Lord/Sarah McCusker
  - c. Legislative Breakfast- Scott Jarzombek

Representative Reports:

**CT State Library: Deborah Schander:** See attached.

**NELA: Scott Brill:** Absent.

**ALA: Kate Byroade:** Absent.

**ALA EDI Assembly: Kristina Lareau:** No report.

**ACLB: Denise Stankovics:** Absent.

**ACLPD: Alyssa Dansinghani:** Absent.

**America 250: Doug Lord:** The entire commission continues to progress. My little committee met, called outreach and education. I don't know if it's true across all of the committees, but we are still trying to articulate what American 250 means as well as express why under-represented group would want to participate in the initiative. Some of the feedback that folks are just not interested or see it as rather insulting to be even asked before it's really explained like "we want the picture frame to be big enough to tell everyone's story." We want to engage in these difficult conversations. I think it's perhaps one of the stigmas of the commissions that people think it's going to be a parade and a party when it's my hope and the commission's hope is that it is anything but. Having said that, we are progressing and figuring this out and dig in deep and articulate what's going on. I believe there is a larger commission meeting next month on the 18<sup>th</sup>, I could be wrong about that, but I will be sending out information as soon as possible. I know that there are libraries in every community and part of my goal is to make sure that all of the information that people want to receive in the communities in library land, academic, public, special, etc. gets out there. If you don't know what I'm talking about, if you don't know what America 250 is, if you're curious, if you're interested in local history, please let me know. I will put you down as a person whose interest is rising.

**BCALA: Robert Kinney:** Absent.

**Commission on Ed Tech: Colleen Bailie:** The commission is working hard on the strategic plan which should be out very soon. You should also see some emails coming out from Dawn and Chris Gauvreau about doing some listening sessions about the strategic plan. There has been some talk again about having a representative come to meetings for all the different

organizations that CET represents and talk about what they are working on. So that may be something we can look at doing again with CLA in the new year.

**Communications Task Force: Doug Lord:** the work is progressing. The latest decision was to try a discord server. I'm not an early adopter of technology but it is really cool, and I think it will be a great alternative for librarians to express themselves and share information in a way that is a little more casual and a little more productive. I think this will be launched fully in February provided that the meetings in January go well. It's exciting and a great tool for those who want to use it. For those who don't want to use it, no harm, no foul.

**CASL: Mary Ellen Minichiello & David Bilmes:** See attached.

**CLC: Ellen Paul:** It was a really busy fall with the vendor expo and the school library professional development. So, we are going to take a week or two just to breathe. In the coming weeks, the big thing that's coming is some new digital resource contracts. So, if you've got your membership renewal you've gotten one of these catalogs and in the back on the last page it says more digital products coming January 1<sup>st</sup>. I just signed a contract with EBSCO yesterday. We're working on Sage, Creative Bug and those should go live January 1<sup>st</sup>. I was pleased to be asked by ALA along with Colleen Bailie to go down to Washington, D.C. in March for their annual congressional fly in and I think Deborah will join us this year as well. So, we will have this really fun 3 person Connecticut Contingent storming Washington, D.C. asking for more money for libraries.

**FOCL: Debbie Misiaszek:** Absent.

**Library Connection: Laura Horn:** Absent.

**Region 1: Heather Aronson:** Absent.

**Region 2: Shana Shea:** Absent.

**Region 3: Chonte Fields:** Absent. See attached.

**Region 4: Erin Dummeyer:** Lynn at Easton public Library wanted to report that they have chosen "We All Want Impossible Things" by Catherine Newman as their one Book One town community read. The author will be in Easton on February 24<sup>th</sup> in the afternoon for a talk. Sheri from Stratford is pleased to announce that Tiffany McCrae has joined their team as the new head of Teen Services. A director who will remain anonymous said what I think we all are feeling, "nothing of note, just trying to get through the end of December."

**Region 5: Emily Rush:** See attached.

**Region 6: Madhu Gupta:** See attached.

**SCSU: Cindy Schofield:** Our internships all just wrapped up. This year instead of having interns write papers, they had to do presentations. They are all posted on our Facebook pages, but I plan to get them sent to each library where they were. We had our first research forum; these are students who did a thesis or capstone project. That was a great success, and a lot of the research came from CT libraries. Our makerspace course has been approved. It has been taught twice as a non-official course but now it is an official course in the program. We are starting to develop one credit courses. Our thought is that it would be for our students but also for in-service training type things. If there are suggestions from CLA librarians for quick one credit courses, that would be good to know. As for CLA accreditation two-year review, that report is being prepared. One thing that came up is the age of our faculty being a negative. CSU just announced a retirement program so there may be changes to faculty quicker than we thought.

**Sustainability Taskforce: Doug Lord & Alessandra Casiello:** Things continued to progress, and everything is on track. Alessandra has been doing great and making sure things are really understood by all but also understandable for those in the future. Alessandra- you will see a

revision of the bylaws by next month before we present it to the membership. The financial plan is almost done, we are meeting with the Scheier's next week to go over some final things. For our trainings committee, we did run into an issue with starchapter- we received notices that our price is going to increase with starchapter. We are talking to them to find out what this means so we may have to find a new software for next year. Strategic plan is a lot of work and you may see a survey next month going out to the members.

Association Committee Reports:

**ADA: Maria Bernier:** No report.

**Archivist: Gerald Seagrave:** No report.

**Awards: Region Reps:** N/A

**Career Development: Andy Forsyth & Amanda Stern:** Andy- we have a timeline all set for the 2024 scholarship cycle. Things will go live on the website on January 8<sup>th</sup>. Thank you to John Casiello for making that happen. The deadline for getting applications into the committee will be February 29<sup>th</sup>. We have been working with Jerry Kardas from Kardas Larson. He's done a cost of labor update for the MLS and LTA 3 positions, and we are working on the benchmarks for management level positions. Amanda- the other thing is we will be doing another cohort of the mentoring program. Applications will be available in February. We are going to have an information session in January- date TBD. We are looking for a new group of mentors. You do not have to be a library director or a super long-time librarian. If you have a desire to give back and share what you know, we will be looking for you.

**Conference 2024:** Alessandra Casiello: we currently have 4 sponsors; 14 exhibitors registered already and have taken in about \$18,000 already. We have closed our submissions for proposals and received about 90 proposals. Today, I am signing the contract for our keynote, Mychal Threets. He will be our keynote on Monday and will join us for our president's reception the night before and our breakfast on Monday morning. He just started doing speaking presentations for conferences and got in before the price increased. Registration is opening hopefully by January 25<sup>th</sup>. I just selected our food menu. Our proposals will hopefully be selected at least for the day they will be on by the first week of January. The team is doing a great job, and it will be a great conference.

**Grants/Fundraising: Alessandra Casiello:** we finished up our giving Tuesday match grant, we did not get a lot of people to donate for the match. We got about \$235. Luckily, our matching vendor loves us, and they didn't want to give us less than \$1,000. So, we made \$1,235 from our giving day match. We still have our holiday shop open through December 31<sup>st</sup>. we have about \$400 from purchases there. I try to convince people to give us money so you may see that PEG has \$3,000 of donations. Back in October, I got an email from people looking to make a donation in memory of their mother, Michelle Van Epps who worked in CT libraries. Her son and his wife wanted to make a donation. They donated \$3,000 to PEG to disperse amongst people who apply. I've been working on our next fundraiser, a performer auction where performers would donate for free to be auctioned off. We have 25 performers giving us an event for this auction and all will start at \$100 and have a listing and should kick off February 1<sup>st</sup>. There is a free auction site called auctria or we can use a google form that links to StarChapter.

**Intellectual Freedom: Sam Lee & Lindsay Delligan:** I do want people to know what is going on in Wyoming. The Wyoming Superintendent of Public Instruction released guidance on "establishing or modifying library materials" policy. It wanted school librarians to include a

content rating system that is basically copy and pasted from booklooks, which advocates books and unfairly targeting LGBT and BIPOC titles. The Wyoming library association did release a statement denouncing it and they've gotten a lot of traction with that. The superintendent has been getting flack for that hopefully we won't see any more copycats for that.

**Legislative: Kate Byroade & Olivia Scully:** Absent. See attached for report.

Ellen- After the glow of the listening session, I thought this was a great opportunity for us. I thought about Erica Byrne. She is Maxine Bleiweiss's daughter. They run a consulting firm for libraries across the state and Erica has a political background. I reached out to Erica to see if she could come on board as a help in this next session behind the scenes organizing us. Doing communications, writing press releases, tracking legislation so we understand where things are, etc. she has the knowledge and the capacity to guide us. I put together a proposal for a scope of work from erica and a fee for service. We are looking at potentially splitting the cost of this work 3 ways between CLC, CLA and CASL. We are still in discussion and will meet in the new year to discuss more of this. I feel like everyone feels this is a good investment in time and money. She is not going to be a lobbyist for us and will only be doing behind-the-scenes organizational work for us. To be really clear, I have asked CLA and CASL to pitch in \$2,500 and that is what CLC would be putting in as well and this person is worth more than that.

Sarah- I think it's a great idea. Over the next month, we will be having more conversations about cost and where it would come from.

Ellen- I also want to talk about Legislative asks. These came out of discussions from Sarah, Scott, Doug, Kate, Olivia and CASL and I had going into the listening session. After the listening session we formulated ideas. I shared a document with the legislative committee as well as Christine Palm. They are primarily around school libraries. We have asked the legislature to consider two bills- the Federal Right to Read act as well as a proposed bill out of Pennsylvania. Both of those bills work towards preventing book bans in schools and protecting school librarians. Our second ask was increasing the number of school librarians across the state of Connecticut and pointing out that CT has no regulations or requirements for school library staffing or funding and that surrounding states do have those things and pointing them towards a piece of legislation out of New Jersey that required a certain ratio of SLMS to students in public schools. And obviously eBooks which are more of a given since we are in year 3 of this. This is our legislative priority list this year.

**Outreach: John Casiello:** In the next couple of weeks, we will be updating forms for PEG, scholarships, and awards, which nominations which will launch in early January. Membership will pick up as well as people like to register for conference at a discounted rate. Please let me know if anything needs to be updated on the website.

**PEG: Mary Etter:** I am pleased to learn about the donation for PEG.

**Procedures: Lisa Karim:** No report.

Section Reports:

**Children's: Sage Gentry & Alexandra Remy:** Children's Section update is that we have our yearly workshop from 10-4 on Thursday, February 22 in person @ the Farmington **Libraries**.  
**CLASS: VACANT**

**College & University: Rob Walsh:** Absent.

**JEDI: Mary Richardson & Sam Connell:** JEDI has been meeting and planning our virtual workshop. A little bit of a train crash for us since back in October we reached out to Mychal

Threets who also agreed to speak with us but obviously we have to pivot so we do not take the energy away from the conference. We will meet in early January so if anyone has any ideas for a virtual speaker, please let us know.

**Public Libraries: Jennifer Sullivan:** Absent.

**Reference & Adult Services: Christie Mitchell:** Absent.

**Resource Sharing: Matt Earls:** No report.

**Support Staff: VACANT**

**Technical Services: Ann Victor & Christine Rinaldi-** No report.

**YA: Stephanie Smith:** No report.

**Adjournment: 11:19 AM Motion to adjourn by Scott Jarzombek. Seconded by Mary Etter.**

**Present:** Sarah McCusker, Scott Jarzombek, Doug Lord, Margaret Khan, Shannon Angelone, Deborah Schander, Kristina Lareau, Colleen Bailie, Doug Lord, David Bilmes, Ellen Paul, Erin Dummeyer, Emily Rush, Madhu Gupta, Cindy Schofield, Maria Bernier, Jerry Seagrave, Andy Forsyth, Amanda Stern, Alessandra Casiello, Sam Lee, Lindsay Delligan, John Casiello, Mary Etter, Lisa Karim, Alexandra Remy, Mary Richardson, Sam Connell, Ann Victor, Christine Rinaldi.

## **President's Report**

Sarah McCusker

I want to welcome Ann Victor and Christine Rinaldi as our new co-chairs for the Technical Services Section. Thank you so much for being with us and thank you Doug for pulling them in. Ann is a librarian at Fairfield University and Christine is the Head of Circulation at Silas-Bronson in Waterbury. We are very happy to have you here. Thank you.

The big news from this last month is the listening session at the State Capital. Thank you to all who attended. It was absolutely terrific to have so many people speaking so eloquently and convincingly about libraries and the importance of what we do. And, to have so many people there in the audience, especially with the relatively last-minute nature of the whole thing. It was really great to have so many people there and show that we're here, we're interested, we're dedicated, and we care. Thank you to all of you especially those of you who spoke there. I think that event got us a lot of momentum and goodwill with legislators and I'm looking forward to where we go from here.

A couple of weeks ago I went to Chicago for an ALA Advocacy Training. They flew in all the chapter presidents from all 50 states and all the presidents of different state school library associations. It was a really wonderful event. It was exhausting and a day and a half of nonstop events. It was training on building relationships in the community, advocacy networks, finding community partners, media literacy, interview practices. It was a lot of content packed into a very short period of time. But I've already had some debriefs about it with the legislative committee because a lot of it has to do with what they do and what we can bring back from this training to improve our advocacy efforts. You will be seeing some things rolled out from this over the next few months.

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## **Treasurer's Report**

Margaret Is unable to attend but all of the financials are listed in the Meeting Packet.

## **New Business**

### a. \$500 request for sessions with John Chratska – Ellen Paul/Sarah McCusker

Alice Knapp from the Ferguson Library has arranged for John to come to Stamford and do a public presentation along with someone from Pen America on Intellectual Freedom and Book Bans. Alice reached out to me and asked if John is going to be in Connecticut, should we ask him to do something for librarians. I spoke to him and he is willing to stay on another day. There will be a public presentation on Monday, February 26<sup>th</sup> and he is willing to stay for Tuesday, the 27<sup>th</sup>. We talked about doing a strategy session in the morning for people in Connecticut libraries who are deeply involved in legislation and advocacy. Then in the afternoon there will be a 3-hour training session open to all librarians on advocacy and activism in your own library. He asked if we could cover his expenses while he is here, which is \$1500. CLC is willing to put in \$500; FLAG (Fairfield Library Administrators Group) has agreed to put in \$500 and I was wondering if CLA would like to co-sponsor this as well with \$500.

Sarah- I would note that Margaret is not here and neither of our legislative committee representatives are here but there is money in our legislative committee budget to pay for this. There is money set aside to pay for legislative things and this certainly seems like it falls into that category.

Doug Lord- I would make a motion to have CLA sponsor John Chratska come to the state in the amount of \$500.

Seconded by Mary Etter.

Ellen- I will drop a link in the chat for that public session for the afternoon. We will start publicizing that after the 1<sup>st</sup> of the year. It will be at Ferguson Library in Stamford.

<https://www.ctlibrarians.org/events/EventDetails.aspx?id=1816242&group=>

### b. Discussion of Technology/Technical Services sections – Doug Lord/Sarah McCusker

Doug- Back when the world was a molten mass, both of those sections, Technology and Technical Services had been vacant for about 2 years. I brought it to a vote to say do we want to continue with these vacant sections, and I believe CLA voted to discontinue Technology but keep Technical Services and that's where it stands today. We may want to consider reinstating technology as a committee.

Sarah- Just to note, we have people who are interested so it's not coming out of nowhere.

Doug- I believe tech services now has co-chairs and now we would need to reconstitute Technology. Just briefly, I could be wrong, but I glanced through the bylaws recently and I believe if there are 15 members present today, but I'm not sure how that works procedurally.

Alessandra- Something to think about- the technology section was vacant for a long time because people thought it was an IT section. We have a lot of libraries who have makerspaces and those

people who are specifically in the makerspaces didn't know which section to be a part of. So, while the technology section would have been their section, they didn't realize that because they thought it was an IT section. So perhaps we want to think about this and create a new section rather than calling it technology and make it along the lines of makerspaces and technology, so those people know they have a place.

Lisa Karim- Can I read the bylaws before we continue this?

Alessandra- It is 15 members to create a new section. The bylaws do not state anything about reinstating an abolished section. My assumption is that if we abolish a section, we start as if it didn't exist. We need 15 member signatures and a petition from the board to create a section.

Lisa- So we cannot constitute a section today.

Sarah- We will put that on the January Agenda. Doug will take care of the signatures.

c. Legislative Breakfast-Scott Jarzombek

So, we have a date but no budget yet. The date is March 14<sup>th</sup> at 9Am and it's for an hour and a half in the second floor atrium. Right now, we are working on catering and because of the holiday it's hard to hear back from people. My hope is before the next meeting we will have a decent idea of what the budget will look like for this. We are aiming for 50 people, and we are close to that for the listening session. We are going to give you more details and get everyone excited about that.

Alessandra- If you want me to find a sponsor for the food, I can try and find someone for that.

Sarah- That would be great. We do have legislative events in the legislative committee's budget set aside, so we do have money for this.

Scott- we will have a podium and ask for some people to speak. Any input or ideas even if it's what we want to serve for food, let me know what you think might be successful.

Sarah- We will put that back on the January agenda as well.

## **State Librarians Report**

Deborah Shander

Good morning, everybody.

Two quick updates for you. At our November State Library board meeting, we welcomed two new members. Scott Matheson, who is the Superintendent of Documents for the US Government Publishing offices joined us as a governor's appointee and Claudia Jalowka who is part of the Judicial branch is the chief justice's new representative to the board. We are very happy to welcome Scott and Claudia.

The state of Connecticut of course continues to have conversations about digital government. There was a summit a few weeks ago for commissioners and agency heads, which I attended. One of the things that came out of that conversation was all digital government not being the same as only digital government. The reason I bring that up is because I know particularly when it comes to libraries, there are a lot of questions about how people come into libraries, how people who come into libraries, interact with government, if everything is being pushed online. We have people who want to access their tax forms in print, who want to be able to access things. I do want to raise that there is recognition of that., Dawn and I had a conversation with the Secretary of State earlier this week in which that was also part of the conversation of making sure even as the state is moving towards digital government, that doesn't necessarily mean that paper is going away or making sure that things are available in multiple formats for many different reasons. Those are two of the conversations happening in the state about digital government.

### CASL Update December 2023

- Dec. 5 - Successful listening session at the Capitol office building with CLA and CLC. Many librarians of all types attended to show their support.
- Dec. 11 - close to 30 CASL members attended professional development about AI hosted by EdAdvance. This event was so popular they had to add spaces. This continues to be a major area of focus and interest.
- March 2, 2024 - NerdcampCT will be held at Sedgewick MS in West Hartford. This free event is open to all those who love books and literacy. Registration will open in January, but save the date! Riverbend Bookshop will be partnering with us.
- October 21, 2024 - CASL Conference : will be held at the Wyndham Hotel & Conference center in Southbury, CT.

### CLA Region 3: December 2023

Babcock library is teaming up with the USDA to celebrate Smokey Bears 80th Birthday with the Smokey Bear Reading Challenge. our local fire department will be joining us along with Smokey himself for a morning of fire prevention education od of course birthday cake.

Chonte Fields

### CLA Region 5 News: December 2023

#### **James Blackstone Memorial Library, Branford**

- Miss Mary is Retiring!: After 21 years of storytimes and crafts and lots of laughs, Mary Lockery (aka Miss Mary) is retiring from the James Blackstone Memorial Library. Mary has spent those years in the Youth Services department and has been a special part in countless lives. Her warmth and positive presence in the library will be missed, but we are happy she'll be able to spend more time with her family. Congratulations, Mary!
- Construction Grant Awarded: The Blackstone Library has been awarded a State Construction Grant for a project to enclose the balcony in our auditorium. The project will result in two additional small meeting rooms in the library. The balcony enclosure project was part of an add/alternate project in the previous renovation, and our Strategic Plan that was completed last year only reinforced the community's need for meeting spaces. We hope to move forward with the project in the coming year!

#### **East Haddam Library System**

- Karen Van Zetten, children's librarian at Rathbun Library, will be retiring after 20 years. The position will be posted very soon.

#### **Brainerd Memorial Library, Haddam**

- Brainerd Library director Tom Piezzo will be the next director at the Southington Public Library, effective January 2, 2024.
- Rep. Christine Palm sponsored our successful State Bonding Commission request of \$380,000 additional funds for the Brainerd Library renovation.

#### **Scranton Memorial Library, Madison**

- Allison Murphy, current Director of the East Haddam Library System, will be the new Director at Scranton Memorial Library. Her first day will be January 10<sup>th</sup>.
- Jesse Bernier is our new Adult Programming Librarian! She previously worked at the Wallingford Public Library and the Brainerd Memorial Library.

**Milford Public Library**

- After 14 long months, our new elevator is up and running!

Respectfully submitted,  
Emily Rush  
Region 5 Representative  
E.C. Scranton Memorial Library

CLA Region 6: December 2023

East Lyme Public Library- in the process of hiring a new Assistant Director.

Public Library of New London- The Library is working with the Salvation Army Boys and Girls club of NL to provide youth enrichment programs.

Waterford Public Library was a part of the inaugural cohort of CLC libraries that completed their new strategic plan with guidance from Maureen Sullivan and Ellen Paul.

Ledyard Public Library has several vacancies. They are looking to fill the Assistant Librarian I – Adult Services and Library Technician II – Youth Services positions.



## CT Library Association Legislative Committee Report - December 2023

Respectfully submitted by Olivia Blake & Kate Byroade

### ALA Event

Sarah M. and Jenny L. attended an ALA event in Chicago, which was a positive experience, with many presentations from ALA staff and Chapter Presidents on how to talk to the press, Intellectual Freedom landscape, dealing with hostile audiences, damage control, etc. May consider CLA event on how to build local alliances.

### Legislative Listening Session

A listening session was held on 12/5/23, with Lieutenant Governor Susan Bysiewicz and a number of Connecticut state legislators. 70-80 library workers were in attendance, and several spoke on issues related to intellectual freedom, ebook costs, support for school librarians, and more.

We received overall positive feedback from those who were in attendance, including legislators.

For the full recording, visit CT-N: <https://ct-n.com/ctnplayer.asp?odID=22388>

Earned press (thanks to Ellen for compiling this list!)

- [Tens of thousands down the drain. CT Officials aim for first-in-the-nation action to address eBook costs](#) from the Sunday Hartford Courant. Also posted on [Info Docket](#).
- Editorial in Hearst CT newspapers: [Librarian being harassed should be a rallying cry in culture war](#).
- [CT Capitol Report on WTNH reports on book bans](#) (see time stamp 16:37).
- [Librarians Push for Legislative Protections in Response to Book Challenges](#) in the CT Examiner.
- [CT Librarians looking for lawmaker help as they face harassment tied to book bans](#) in the CT Insider.
- [Lawmakers discuss book banning debate with Connecticut Librarians](#) on WTNH.
- [High Licensing Costs Threaten e-Book Library Collections Across the State](#) in the CT Examiner.
- [CT had over 100 book challenges this year. Librarians ask lawmakers for help](#). From WSHU

### Legislative Breakfast

Following postponement of the regional legislative events we'd been planning, we've shifted gears to prioritize one big legislative breakfast shortly after the session begins. It will be scheduled sometime in February or March, at the Legislative Office Building in Hartford. Stay tuned for details.

### CT eBook Legislation

Info sessions are scheduled for January 23 & 24 - check the CLA events calendar for info, more details & registration to come. The sessions will be a reprise of those held in early 2023, updated for the coming 2024 session.

### Capacity-Building

The committee has seen significant growth in activity over the last couple of years, with no signs of slowing. To the contrary, we expect to continue actively working on various legislation

beneficial to CT's libraries and the communities they serve, during the 2024 session and well beyond. In order to support this growth, and ensure sustainable efforts, we are planning a capacity-building discussion session in Jan. 2024.

**Upcoming Meetings**

Tuesday, January 16, 2024 – 3:00 pm

Tuesday, February 13, 2024 – 3:00 pm