

Connecticut Library Association Board Meeting
January 15, 2025
10:00 am Business Meeting via Zoom
Minutes

- I. **Call to Order:** President Erin Dummeyer called the meeting to order at 10:01 AM.
- II. **Approval of Minutes from December:** Motion made by Lisa Miceli and seconded by Margaret Khan.
- III. **Old Business**
 - a. President's Report – See attached.
 - b. Treasurer's Report- See attached.
- IV. **New Business**
 - a. Review of the Strategic Plan

Representative Reports:

CT State Library: Deborah Schander: Absent.

NELA: Sarah McCusker: Absent.

ALA: Kate Byroade: Last year was the last ALA LLX, which was the new name for ALA Midwinter and that long standing midwinter meeting came to its end with last year but we still have council meetings. Next week Wednesday and Thursday and the following Wednesday I will be attending council sessions virtually and I haven't received any documents yet to know what's on the agenda. I don't think there's huge stuff. There's a new ALA executive director. So, I expect that we may have some sort of initial report from him about turning, turning ALA ship. ALA has been in facing considerable financial difficulties for the last several years and this needs to be turned around. I should have more in February. Erin- Are the council meetings only virtual now or are they hybrid for this for this midwinter? Yes, but I will be going to Chicago in June.

ALA EDI Assembly: Vacant

ACLB: Denise Stankovics: We have two webinars coming up. You probably have seen the notices that have gone out for the one next Wednesday, January 21st on Freedom of Information. That's a repeat of one we did earlier but we feel that topic is really important so we want to do it again for new board members who have joined since we last did it. On March 18th, we're offering a webinar on collection development and defense in view of all the challenges to books over the last few years. You'll be seeing more on that closer to the time.

ACLPD: Robert Kinney: Absent.

America 250: Margaret Khan: We are in the year of the 250th now July 2026 so that is coming up. The Commission is upping their meeting frequency to help get things right on track. We're working on getting representatives from every town. We are almost there and continue to accept affiliate organizations, which of course libraries are welcome to join as we will also be presenting at the conference this year on hosting programs focusing around those tough topics that have come up all throughout our nation's history. We're excited to be at the conference with everyone this year.

BCALA: Vivian Bordeaux: We're preparing for the annual Peabody Museum Martin Luther King Junior celebration, which will happen on this coming Monday. So, we're preparing to represent Black Caucus, the Connecticut chapter at that event. I'm looking forward to it. It's always a fun time. So many families come out and it's really interesting to hear what libraries are

representing from those families and they come from all over Connecticut. So, I'm looking forward to that as well as other chapter members.

Bibliomation: Alessandra Casiello: Bibliomation is in the process of creating our next strategic plan. We've been doing focus groups around the state and have a survey out to our membership right now as well. We have our big annual upgrade for our ILS system coming in February. I did want to take a moment to thank Ellen and Deborah who's not here, as we did have some questions and concerns from both our board members and our membership regarding the eBook legislation as it is, you know, a possibility of being triggered this coming legislative session. I really appreciate Ellen letting me reach out to you and answering questions I had and Deborah as well for our board and our members that have concerns. So that is it at the moment, other than we have several new library directors in our Biblio libraries, the Windham Free Library, Cheryl Stevens joined them a few weeks ago, the Babcock Library in Ashford. Caitlin Mosley, who was from Otis in Norwich, is the new director there as Ann Harper leaves. We also have Laura Moran at the Douglas Library in North Canaan. There's been a lot of movement so we welcome them to our Bibliomation family.

Commission on Ed Tech: Colleen Bailie: No report.

Communications Task Force: John Casiello: As noted last month, this has sort of shifted to a legislative focus. But from those meetings and conversations, we will develop a plan that broadens out to the greater CLA universe. And as noted in the strategic plan, there is plans to increase significantly our social media and other sources. So, if anyone wants to be involved in that, always reach out. It doesn't hurt to have some extra hands in that. If there's anything you want showcased or focused, like that's always been the issue with trying to do like a monthly thing is where do we get the content for it? So, we'll be reaching out more as this grows, but just keep in the back of your minds that we'll want feedback from all the chairs so that we have content that we are sharing with our members.

CAS-L: Gina Wiese: Absent.

CLC: Ellen Paul: A couple of things, all of the non-print contracts have been updated. Most had no changes, but some did a little bit. Everything's live on our website if you want to see that. A couple of upcoming events, we're hosting a meet and greet for Barbara Johnson, who's the Connecticut school librarian who's running to be president of AASL. We'll put that in the chat. It's open to everyone to, to come and, and meet her. She's phenomenal. The CRPA program showcase is also coming up in February. I'll put a link to that in the chat. And then as I think I referenced in December, we are hosting John Chrastka in March, and I will put in the chat the link to the Public Library workshop that we're doing with him.

Meet Barbara Johnson, Candidate for AASL President on February 11:

<https://www.ctlibrarians.org/events/EventDetails.aspx?id=2026707&group=>

CRPA Program Showcase on February 13:

<https://www.ctlibrarians.org/events/EventDetails.aspx?id=2021447&group=>

It Is All About the Money: Funding, Power, and Public Value in Connecticut Public Libraries with John Chrastka on March 18: <https://www.ctlibrarians.org/events/EventDetails.aspx?id=2025057&group=>

FOCL: Debbie Misiaszek: Absent.

LION: Joe Farara: Absent.

Library Connection: Laura Horn: Absent.

Region 1: Heather Aronson: No report.

Region 2: Lisa Miceli: The Canton Public Library will hold a cozy open mic event, the Special Needs Edition, on Saturday, January 31st from 1:30 to 3:00. The Rocky Hill Library held Mateo's Kindness Club for ages 5:00 to 9:00 last Monday evening, where participants listened to

a kindness story and created a kindness project. The Plainville Public Library will hold Coco and Cozy a hookah break on Monday, 20 January 26th, 4:00 to 7:00 in the fireplace room. That sounds wonderful. The Hartford Public Library expansion of their Albany library is in the schematic design phase. That's exciting for them. And here in Simsbury tomorrow, we're welcoming ALA president and Simsbury native Doctor Maria McCauley, who will visit the library and speak to staff and trustees.

Region 3: Drusilla Carter: See attached.

Region 4: Kiera Parrott: Absent.

Region 5: Emily Rush: Absent.

Region 6: Madhu Gupta: See attached.

SCSU: Cindy Schofield: We just are about to submit our biennial report to the ALA accreditation committee and then we'll start working on the 10 year report which is due next year. That's a full self study. We've been working on it, but now it'll get into high gear. Interns are starting. The semester starts the 21st, so some interns have already started, but interns are ramping up and we're really excited this semester. We have somebody at the Middletown Service Center, which I'm sure it's going to be a really incredible opportunity for them.

Sustainability Taskforce: No other updates other than the strategic plan at this moment. I will let you know that John has gotten some inquiries from people who are going to renew their memberships and are wondering why the membership increase is there. Even though we did you know, have a long discussion about this last year as we were revising bylaws and membership levels and it was brought up at the Membership council, the annual membership meeting, and reported on, there are still people asking questions. So just make sure that if you are renewing for your institution as an institutional member that you are aware of what those costs are. They are on the website as well as the increase to the membership costs. I just wanted to mention that. And then next month, we will hopefully be having the software's discussion at the board meeting. So that's what's upcoming.

Association Committee Reports:

ADA: Marilynn Lewicki: We are excited for conference. We're gearing up for that. And in the last meeting we had a few people attend, I was like, yay, people coming out of the woodworks. And we just were talking about how we're going to update our meetings more and make it more of a kind of like I'm becoming AADA coordinator. So we're thinking about maybe sharing what I'm learning with everyone in the group.

Archivist: Gerald Seagrave: No report.

Awards: Region Reps: John Casiello: I missed the first week getting it out because it's the first was a Thursday and I didn't want to put it out on that Friday because I didn't think anyone was checking e-mail. And then I try to avoid sending it out right when the state library sends out their awards. It will go out either later today or first thing tomorrow. We have about two months for nominations to be open. So I'm not concerned about it getting out a little bit later. But yeah, you should be seeing that by the end of the week.

Career Development: Diana Preece and Mirja Johanson: I just want to second what Erin said about the compensation benchmarks. I think it's very exciting to look at and will be very useful and I'm very appreciative of Laura Horn, who's on the committee for making that happen. The other thing is that the scholarship information is on the website. Thank you, John. So please share that with the people who would be eligible and that's open for a few weeks.

Conference 2026: This is a very busy time for conference. Hopefully everybody saw the last few weeks coming into their e-mail, lots of announcements as we confirmed our keynote speaker. We also now have a preliminary schedule that is up on the conference website. We confirmed our Tuesday keynote speaker, which is actually going to be SeaTea Improv. They're going to do a live performance for us. So, if you're there on Tuesday, it's a good way to start the day, get you energized for another day of fun sessions and workshops. We also confirmed all of our after-hours events on Sunday. We will have our president's reception, which will be a little bit different. It'll be a short president's reception because we are going to be doing a screening of "The Librarians" on Sunday night. There will also be a virtual screening option. Both of these will have limited seats. The virtual screening option we can extend if we get enough interest, but when you purchase your tickets for the conference it will be an add on ticket screening as a free option. But we do need to have a head count so that we know how many people will be in that screening room. The in-person will be a small donation of \$10. You will get hors d'oeuvres and soft drinks. There will be a cash bar if you want to get something else and that will be happening at 5:30 on Sunday, April 26th. There will be a discussion afterwards amongst those that want to stay and discuss the film, so we're very excited about that.

We also have that evening, Drusilla and Sarah will be doing a craft fundraiser. It is a hardcover, book bag, or pocketbook craft. It is limited, so if you do want to do that, please make sure that you purchase that add on ticket as well. It'll be \$30 and includes all the materials that you need to make your pocketbook or your book bag as well as drinks and hors d'oeuvres. Then Monday we have our after-hours cocktails with vendors right after conference at 4:50 and then at 5:30, we have grown up Nostalgic book Fair. So, if you miss going to the Scholastic Book Fair as a kid or a book fair that your school had, this will hopefully resemble that. We're speaking with bookstores in Connecticut that generally aren't able to come to conference for the two days. So, this will be a way for them to come for just the evening and bring books and all the things that us book lovers want for you to purchase. It's \$10 entrance fee and it gets you hors d'oeuvres and then you can purchase whatever you want from the vendors that attend that night as well. So, we're very happy to have all of those things confirmed.

As we work through making sure all of the sessions are set for the preliminary schedule, please remember it is a preliminary schedule. If names are spelled wrong, all of that thing that gets corrected as we get the contracts for speakers will be sent out next week now that the preliminary schedule has been put together and then we'll be getting the contracts back signed. We asked for them back by March 15th at the very latest and that's when we will have a final schedule, as final as a schedule can ever be available. So a lot going on for conference. We have about \$20,000 taken in for exhibitors and sponsors. Right now we have 3 sponsors and about 16 exhibitors. So, if you are looking to have a table there, make sure that you sign up. Registration opens next Wednesday. That's the biggest thing, right? Early bird registration opens next Wednesday, so put that on your calendar.

Development: Alessandra Casiello: I already talked about the fundraisers that will be at the conference. We will also have our normal fundraising tables there with Merchant CLA merchandise as well as the Penny Social Auction. If anybody would like to donate an item for the Penny Social Auction, we take pretty much everything. We've had a lot of really great things donated to us over the years, so I appreciate anything that you're willing to donate, just let me know. It's also a very busy time for development right now as we are about to have our

performer auction. Our third performer auction is in February. I believe it is the week of February 9th is the Monday. It goes for the whole week. You get 5 days to bid on your favorite performers, presenters at a very low cost. They all start around \$100 and we have currently 21 performers that have signed up. We have space for 9 more. So, if you have connections with a presenter or performer that you think would want to donate an hour of their time, they are certainly welcome. Just send them my e-mail, we'd love to have them join us. We have many of our favorites from last year as well as the year before coming back and some new performers. Last year we made over \$4000. I'm hoping to hit the \$5,000 mark this year. We had libraries get present presentations and performers for very discounted prices, which was wonderful for them as well.

Intellectual Freedom: Sam Lee & Lindsay Delligan: Not much to report. We're providing support to libraries as needed. I'm always happy to do that. I will signal Boost the librarian's documentary screening at conference. I did see that documentary earlier this year. It is amazing and it's also really nice morale boost to see our colleagues do the hard work and get recognized for it. So, I'm really glad to see that at conference and Intellectual Freedom is always here to provide support.

Legislative: Kate Byroade & Rebecca Harlow: The new legislative session will kick off February 4th. It's the short session where they are focused on tinkering with the budget and it's over very quickly. It's done in early May. We do not have any specific legislation. We will advocate as always, as needed, but we had huge success last year after four years of eBook legislation advocacy and two years of freedom to read bill advocacy. So the plan is to continue to build those relationships with legislators and to talk with them about Public Library funding and CASL's school librarians are working on legislation- they're going to be talking to legislators about a ratio bill that would mandate school librarians per X number of students in a school system, school district. Many school libraries have their librarians have been eliminated and this hurts kids and literacy and all those things that we want kids to have in school. We're working closely with Connecticut. Having passed a bill, Ellen is really doing a lot of the discussion with other states- I hop in and help as well. But we have sort of a national conversation happening. There's something like 15 states that are somewhere in the advocacy process for eBook legislation, notably New Jersey. They introduced a bill last session. Their sessions are on a calendar year basis. So they've just started their 2026 session couple days ago and it's expected that they will reintroduce their eBook legislation. New Jersey has a population of 7 million. So right there. So we are talking about what this means for the future and I would say that even if their bill is their law is passed and found to be substantially similar, there's still a long road because there's undoubtedly going to be challenges from the publishing industry. DC had a hearing on a on similar legislation and Steve Potash from OverDrive submitted something like 50 pages of testimony against libraries sort of Pooh poohing every argument that we have. So that was interesting. We are working on Connecticut digital equity, working to find state support for digital equity work, digital navigators, things like that, that were previously funded with federal dollars.

Erin- I'm going to put in the chat. I keep meaning to read the testimony and then I keep forgetting to look it up. This isn't the testimony, but it's Kyle Courtney's reporting on the testimony, if anyone else is interested in looking at that.

https://www.ebookstudygroup.org/overdrive_testimony#libraries

Outreach: John Casiello: everything's pretty much been covered. To expand a little on what Alessandra said during the sustainability, yeah, I have gotten a couple of inquiries about the price

hikes that started in July of last year. So we're almost through the full first year of that. I expect more conversations with people, especially as we lead into conference, because that's when a lot of people's registrations and renewals go into effect. One of the people asked if we were going to have increased services to warrant this increase. I took a deep breath before I answered that e-mail. But it just sort of harkens to the importance of communication and the meetings and workshops that you all are planning and doing and making sure that people are aware of all this stuff. And we're more than just annual conference. I wish I could have them attend a legislative meeting and see all the work that is going on. But anyway, I digress. That was just, they're always welcome. I'd love to be able to respond to be like, why don't you come to some meetings and get involved and see what that money is getting you. But I handled it much better than that. That is what I expect over the next couple of months is a little bit more and we can always speak more to the reason we did the increase was because we didn't increase for so long. I will feel those professionally. But yeah, it's important what you all are doing and I try to express that whenever we have these conversations about the price of membership.

PEG: Mary Etter: Absent.

Procedures: Lisa Miceli: It's my monthly cry for section bylaws. So, if you are a chair or Co-chair of a section, please spend some time reviewing your bylaws with your with your groups and the members of your committee and get them to me please.

Section Reports:

Children's: Vacant

CLASS: Vacant

College & University: Rob Walsh: Absent.

JEDI: Mary Richardson: I'm looking to onboard someone as a Co-chair, possibly have a meeting with them sometime this month. And I want to try and get some regular meetings, monthly meetings back on to see like what our section really wants and what we can kind of plan, put some legs under it. So, it's kind of like a vague, I have some info, but not yet, but we're working forward something.

Public Libraries: Jennifer Sullivan: Absent.

Reference & Adult Services: Christie Mitchell & Kelly-Ann Gardella: We are having our next section meet up on next Wednesday the 21st from 2:00 to 3:00 PM. We're starting the new year having everyone discuss programs and services that their library offered that has positively reached the community, patrons, or other librarians. Of course, we always are open to discussing any topic relating to adult services librarians. In March, we are hosting a mental health workshop. We don't have the date firmed up just yet. It's really close so we'll have more information about that next meeting.

Resource Sharing: Matt Earls: No Report

Technical Services: Ann Victor & Christine Rinaldi: In a couple weeks we have our section winter meeting on Friday, January 30th from 10 to 12. It is going to be a hybrid meeting. We are meeting in at the Middletown Library Service Center, but we're also going to provide a Zoom link to try and accommodate everyone and especially if the weather is not cooperative. And we're going to be talking about acquisitions in the aftermath of Baker and Taylor. Everyone is welcome.

Technology: Kate Sheehan & Jessica Wolford: Jessica sent out the link for our survey. Please on Conntech. We'll send it out through star chapter as well. Please, please, please encourage people to take it. They don't have to be a member and that's where we're at.

YA: Danielle Murray & Jackie Bush: We're just getting ready for our meeting next week on the 21st at Fable. We're going to be talking about planning summer reading because it's that time. We're also getting ready for conference- We have 4 sessions that we're excited about. One of them is the last day on Tuesday. So we're just going to tell everyone to meet us at the bar basically if they want to. So getting ready for next week and then we'll probably plan another meeting after that.

Adjournment: 10:51 AM. Motion made by 1. Kate Byroade 2. Alessandra Casiello.

Present: Erin Dummeyer, Margaret Khan, Shannon Angelone, Alessandra Casiello, Ann Victor, Brenda McKinley, Christie Mitchell, Christine Rinaldi, Cindy Schofield, Colleen Bailie, Denise Stankovics, Diana Preece, Drusilla Carter, Ellen Paul, Heather Aronson, Jackie Bush, Jerry Seagrave, John Casiello, Kate Byroade, Kate Sheehan, Lisa Micelli, Madhu Gupta, Margaret Khan, Marilyn Lewicki, Mary Richardson, Matt Earls, Rebecca Harlow, Robert Scheier, Vivian Bordeaux.

Old Business

a. **President's report- Erin Dummeyer**

I have some exciting news for CLA this month. We received a bequest over the holidays that was unexpected from a man named Robert "Bob" Boletsky. I'm going to put his obituary, but it's also something a friend wrote about him online. He was a former librarian, and he was also very interested in the history of Connecticut railroads. It's really worth reading this site and learning a little bit about him. I was reading through the comments last night and it sounds like he had a real following and really was considered one of the experts in Connecticut railroad history in our state. He died in February 2024, and he ended up leaving CLA \$65,000, which you guys probably know, this is a transformative gift for us. It's really incredible and it's very exciting. Our financial plan says that once the association has funds in excess of two years worth of operating expenses, we will be able to move funds into investment vehicles. Going back many, many years, CLA sort of had to come in financial straits and thanks to a lot of hard work from the folks that make up this association and some very successful conferences and a lot of efforts put into development and fundraising, we started to change paths to a more financially solvent organization. This helps us incredibly. Two years worth of operating expenses for us is about \$450,000. So if we move this donation into our savings account, we would be about 27% of the way there. We're currently at 13%. So, this was one of those wonderful windfalls that is only going to help the health of the organization and help CLA continue to fulfill its mission for years to come. It's really nice. I encourage everyone to look at the website and read a little more about Bob and just think about how wonderful that was that someone decided to give a gift like that to CLA.

I would like to make a motion to move the \$65,000 into our savings account. When we budgeted this year, we budgeted for a small deficit. Margaret can probably tell me exactly what that deficit was. I want to say it was like around \$2,000, which we sort of are hoping success of our conference will end up covering. So, we don't really need the \$65,000 to cover that deficit. OK, \$3,661 was the deficit we budgeted for. If we do end up needing some of that to cover our deficit, you know it would be there in savings, but I would like to just move it into savings now so that we can achieve a little bit of interest on it. So I'd like to make a motion to move the \$65,000 gift into the CLA savings account.

1. Kate Byroade 2. Alessandra Casiello

Any questions? I didn't really ask for questions or discussion.

Are we able to acknowledge it publicly?

Yes, as far as I know. I mean the check came with no restrictions. And I think in cases like this, it's always nice to publicly acknowledge and thank you for asking about that. I can write something up for you. And I know he is next of kin because they're mentioned in the obituary, but it's always nice to, I'll try and reach out to them as well. I worked with the executor of his will, who I think was a friend of his, but I have not been in contact with his family members yet. I just think he's able to share their information with me.

So that's the great news. The other news is just sort of neutral. I've been checking with the IRS, just checking on our move to become a 501(c)(3). Last time I checked, we had not yet been assigned to a determination specialist. Now we have been, I got the name and number of this person. I left them a message sort of following up. I've not heard back yet, but I was told it can take one to two months to process after being assigned A determination specialist. I mean, this is all IRS federal government talk. I'm actually pretty surprised to have that much information from the IRS. That's like a little bit more efficient than I would expect them to be. So just know that I keep on following up and I'll stay on it, but I'm hoping that no news is good news for officially coming to 501(c)(3).

<https://www.tapatalk.com/groups/thenhrhtanewhavenrailroadforum/passing-of-robert-bob-belletzkie-tylercystation-t11530.html>

b. Treasurer's Report- Margaret Khan

We have 531 active members as of the end of December. We've received \$22,000 in membership dues a little over 50%. So, we've met our halfway mark already for the year in good shape with that. We've received \$2,400 in donations, no out of the ordinary expenses. You know the big stuff is going to happen in a couple of months when we get a little bit closer to conference. If we were to close our year out right now, midway through we would have had made a net income of \$22,000. And so that's promising for the end of the year to recoup that deficit we budgeted for. And the IRS mileage change has increased to 72.5% for this calendar year.

New Business

a. Review of Strategic Plan

https://ctlibraryassociation.starchapter.com/images/CLA_Strategic_Plan_2025-2028_2.pdf

Alessandra- Last December, we put in our new strategic plan. It's a three-year plan. We are supposed to just review annually, see what we've achieved, what has moved forward, what things have changed and what we still need to work on. So, I'm going to just so everybody's looking at it, drop it into the chat [Above]. It is accessible on our website in our board handbook. There are six goals in this strategic plan. So I'm going to just start kind of going through goals one and two enhancing membership. We have established new membership tiers, which is our enhanced institutional membership. I'm happy to say we got our very first inquiry of it this past week. So hopefully that will allow for more organizations to support their staff in in paying for membership as it is a really good discount when you're buying multiple memberships through that enhanced institutional. We are still working on enhancing member benefits and we do recognize the work of our members in the library community in various ways when we see that happening at an extraordinary level. I think we're doing pretty well with goal number one. Goal number 2 is about leadership and longevity. We have not come up with the first part of this objective, which is to provide incentives and discounts to those that volunteer their time and energy on the CLA board. We're hoping to do that in the future. We have ensured that training and documentation is updated yearly and passed down to new board members and we've been working with other state organizations to voice concerns of our

membership that also apply to them, most notably working with NELA this past year quite closely.

Goals three and four

Goal three was about our financial plan for stability. Membership dues were to be increased over a period of three years. We started that increase last year. Our cost of workshops and professional development are to increase based on cost of living expenses only, which we have done this year in terms of we've only had a few workshops that were at a cost and all of those went up slightly, but not too, too far ahead of cost of living. So that, that is a good point to make for our membership and our non-members as well that we do affordable workshops, a lot of free professional development as well. And our financial plan is reviewed by the Executive Budget Committee yearly.

Goal four was about communications and marketing. We are lagging on this a bit just because we've had a lot of other things going on this past year. We are hoping to do our monthly e-mail communications on CLA happenings again, monthly e-mail communications for from the CLA president about other organizations and the creation of a public service campaign. These are things that kind of got put on the back burner as we had a really big legislative year this past year and we were working on the membership tiers and increases. So that is a point where we will want to step up in the next year.

Objectives 5 and 6, advancing advocacy. This is where I think we have had our biggest movement and strides. We said to continue work on eBook and other timely legislation. I think it's safe to say that has been a really wonderful aspect of this past year. The work that went into the eBook legislation and continues to go into that, along with other legislation that has come up, provide comprehensive assistance and resources for libraries. I know our Intellectual Freedom Committee is constantly working with our libraries that are being targeted for book bans and challenges. I think we're doing an amazing job with this. We do still have our form for people to notify us. So I think this point has been definite progress for us from the past and we want to campaign for better funding for libraries and library agencies across the state, which we continuously do and we will continue to do this legislative session as well. Finally, goal number six was accessibility for inclusion. Provide more virtual options that will include accessibility resources. We provide a lot of workshops virtually now as well as in person. So, I think that is safe to say that we're doing well. Provide funding for professional enhancement grants to those needing financial assistance to take part in CLA. Last year we were lucky enough to get a nice little donation to go directly to PEG. So, we are able to do that a little bit more than we have been in the past and then increase representation for members amongst our committees and sections. We are working constantly to get new members of our committees and sections and trying to grow them. I think most notably we've had some really good growth in our young adult section, which kind of was teetering off in the past few years. So you know, props to them for, for getting that going again, as well as our technology and, and technical services sections who have just been putting things out constantly, whether it be workshops, meetings, meetups. I think both of those sections have really worked to get their committees and I mean to get their sections back to a lively representation. So that is what I will say. I'll hand it on over to Erin for any comments that she would like to make.

Erin- Thank you so much, Alessandra, for your work on the strategic plan. I will tell you that I refer to it often and cite it, and I think I'll have it like right next to me in this folder right here. It's very helpful to have to know exactly who, where we're going. And I know that I used it when I filed that form to switch us to 501(c)(3). I had to refer to this strategic plan in many instances. So, it's great that you're keeping us honest with it.

Region 3: Drusilla Carter

Liz Thornton of Bentley Memorial in Bolton:
just saying hello

Sue Phillips of Hall Memorial in Ellington:

Cool stuff in the works in Ellington include our annual Minigolf at the Library event to be held on Saturday, January 31. If anyone hasn't seen one, I invite everyone to come and see. It's great! The next week, for Take Your Child to the Library Day, we will be hosting the WhaleMobile! It's a life-sized inflatable humpback whale that will take over our main floor. I can't wait!

Not as cool is the completion--at long, long last-- of a basement waterproofing project. Yay! And also a spiff up the FOL Book Cellar, their used book selling space. Lastly, not "cool" yet--more "warm" now lol--is an upgrade to our HVAC control system. Lots of service guys around our building very early in the morning.

Steve Ossias of Willington Public:

our E.O. Smith student raising funds for a 3D printer as a part of their senior project raised over double their goal. We're working on ordering and receiving equipment and supplies with them, and in the coming months will work on developing policies for use, staff training/guidelines, and the student will be running a few workshops to show people how to use it. Our plan is to have the printer ready for workshops and for public use by late Spring.

One possible concern (or not if it isn't applicable to what the board discusses) is we are about to hit budget season. Our library was cut \$42,000+ dollars last year due to being a revaluation year for the town. We were seen as lower hanging fruit (we were the 2nd largest cut to the overall budget, with most other areas receiving zero or minimal increases) and told to use prior year savings/investment income we had to keep ourselves whole. So far we are looking to be okay despite using investment income that'll take some time to build back into our coffers. It's a new year, and some of the membership as well as leadership has changed across multiple boards, hopefully in our favor. I'm mostly concerned about how to encourage new Board Members to speak up in support of our budget once they approve it, and how to ensure the new powers that be don't disregard the promises made by past officials and we end up either further eroding years of investment income as a best-case scenario, or reducing operations/materials/services worst case if we aren't made whole.

And here at the Douglas Library of Hebron:

We are finally (!) repainting the main floor and entry atrium for the first time in no one knows how long. A multi-year battle gained us enough funding in the budget to do a floor a year, and then take a year off and tackle whatever else needs doing, like replacing flooring or furniture. Things are a teeny bit chaotic and we have learned that people come to the library to read books but not signs, because the number of people walking through the door that says "do not use," past the signs that say "closed for painting," under and around painters, and then are surprised when we tell them they need to leave because we're closed is mind-boggling. We're running curbside pickup and the children's floor is open, so we're doing our best to serve patrons while not losing brain cells to the paint fumes.

CLA Board Meeting
January 15, 2026 Meeting
Region 6 Libraries

Waterford Public Library - The Waterford Public Library is partnering with Waterford Senior Services to offer a weekly Memory Café to provide social engagement for patrons with dementia and other cognitive disorders along with their accompanying care partners. The program will begin in February.

Ledyard Public Library- Jessa Franco is the new Director at Ledyard Public Library. They are fully staffed and have a few projects in the works.

Public Library of New London- The Public Library of New London will be hosting a Black History Film Fest every Friday in Feb. The movie screenings will be followed by a discussion by NL Black History Film Historian, Lonnie Braxton.

Stonington Free Library- The library participated in the Ocean Community Chamber of Commerce Nutcracker Trail and hosted a successful “Jigsaw Jamboree” puzzle competition on January 11. A new weekly volunteer program with neurodiverse students from Stonington High School began in January. The Board and staff identified three 2026 strategic initiatives: a community-wide survey, enhanced security, and a planned giving brochure.

Otis Library- The Otis Library is currently recruiting for two positions. They are also managing changes to their 401(k) plan and CEN connection.