

Connecticut Library Association Board Meeting
March 19, 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. Membership Software Comparison, Discussion and Vote ([Link](#))
 - b. 2027 Conference Committee Nominations
 - c. 2026/2027 Slate of Officers

Representative Reports:

CT State Library: Deborah Schander: Just to update primarily on the budget process. At this point, we have concluded all of our official conversations with the Appropriations Committee and subcommittees, how we had our public hearing or hearing and then public hearing earlier in February and then the work session, not the first week of March. There were a lot of conversations and questions about the BorrowIt cuts and the impact to that. So, thank you to everybody who submitted testimony and spoke out about that. At this point, we will be waiting for the Appropriations Committee to present their proposed version of the budget, at which point they will go into negotiations with the Governor's office and OPM to finalize the budget. As just as a reminder, this is the short session, so everything has to be completed by early May and then the budget will go into effect in July. We have also been continuing conversations with OPM on our end so that they also understand the impact of those cuts should they go into effect. One of the things that came out around the time we were having the hearing was our estimated amount of funding from the federal government through IMLS and the LSTA grant would actually is anticipated to go up the next fiscal year and so, cutting BorrowIt would impact our MOE. So that was also shared with OPM as well and that tends to be a very strong argument in favor of not cutting those programs. So, at this point, we're waiting to see what the Appropriations Committee proposes for their budget. But if you have any questions, feel free to reach out but that is the major issue. We were also in DC the first week of March, following hard on the heels of the ALA group that was visiting as well. We were able to meet with staffers in all seven of our delegations' offices. As always, they're very positive conversations. People are very supportive of the work that we do. There is a dear appropriate letter about the support for IMLS and LSDA currently making its way through the House. The deadline for that has just been extended to another week. So, we had heard from several members of our delegation who said they had already signed up or were planning to sign on for that. I will say the internal scuttlebutt is that IMLS will be on the chopping dock foreclosure again in federal fiscal year 27. This is surprising. It's what we saw last year. It's what we saw all four years of the first Trump administration. So again, we see very strong bipartisan support for IMLS throughout this process. We are hopeful that that will not actually take effect what we do anticipate needing to continue to be responsive to that potentially for the next couple of years. So again, we'll keep you posted on that.

NELA: Sarah McCusker: NELA has just posted a job opening for a Membership and Communication Coordinator, which I'm going to stick the link here. It is a part time, mostly remote position, so if you know anyone who's interested please pass it on. There is a NELA board meeting next week, so I suspect more information will be forthcoming after that, but the conference is going to be October 25th through the 27th in Burlington, VT. I have not yet seen any information about programming proposals or anything like that, but as I say, I assume that it will be forthcoming very soon.

ALA: Kate Byroade: We had our final session for Winter Council and there were some structural bylaws of votes. We did finally approve a resolution to support and commend the work of librarians and archivists and institutions preserving government information since January 21st, 2025. We voted to approve that, and we ended up doing some wordsmithing and agreeing to hold off on the final approval of the resolution to accept the Librarian and Library Workers Bill of Rights. Not that people were opposed to it, but the idea was that it would be something that would come out of our June Annual Conference meeting and would hopefully get more attention just coming out of that annual conference time frame. Those are the big things. There's always this fun part where we have the honorary membership nomination, which I cannot reveal, and we voted on that in closed session and I voted on that. As of Tuesday, there had been only 97 Congress people who'd signed on to the Dear Appropriator letter. Murphy and DeLauro sit on a prop, So, they don't sign the Dear Appropriator letters because they are the appropriators, but the rest of our delegation has a very good record of signing on to this letter each year. I'm just not sure exactly who has at this point, but that is a consistent thing that is done. It's always something that Ala is asking us as chapters to facilitate those sign-ons and that's about it.

ALA EDI Assembly: *Vacant*

ACLB: Denise Stankovics: (Sarah) Wednesday night is a webinar presented by yours truly. It's on collection development, which is something all of you know a lot about, but your board members may not. So, I'll try to dig up the link for the registration and put it in in the chat, but that is what is going on.

ACLPD: Robert Kinney: Absent.

America 250: Margaret Khan: The National Commission is doing America 250's time capsule. Connecticut and all of our other states were invited to submit something to the time capsule. I'm not actually sure what we decided to submit. I heard it was a proclamation that it would be from the State of Connecticut that would be interred there for another 250 years. But when I find out for sure, I will definitely update you. The Connecticut 250th is partnering with the Connecticut State Office of Marketing and Tourism. They'll have all the 250th events from affiliate organizations now listed on the ctvisit.com website. That migration will be forthcoming. I will put into the chat more information on where you can register yourself as a participating organization for CT visit. There's a webinar on how to use the CtVisit.com platform coming up on the 24th of this month at 11 AM. I met with our fellow presenters for the 250th session that will be taking place at CLA. Touchy subjects navigating sensitive topics in America 250th CT programming taught to host programming conversations, discourses that might be controversial. We will be presenting on Tuesday at the conference at 2:30 pm for that. It's looking to be a good session, and I hope to see a lot of people there.

BCALA: Vivian Bordeaux: Absent. No report.

Bibliomation: Alessandra Casiello: We have a few of our staff members who will be presenting at the CLA conference, a session called Punk PCs on Tuesday. If you are looking for alternatives to using Microsoft because they're terrible, a lot of the times they're going to be

talking about some of those alternatives and what works best in terms of using those alternatives for different parts of your library. They are also going to be presenting that at CEN on the second day. It's a little bit of the same, but a little bit more on the tech side for CEN versus the library side for CLA. Other than that, we are just trying to get our next strategic plan passed and we have a few inquiries for new members. So hopefully we'll grow our membership this coming fiscal year. So, if we do, I'll let you know who's joining Bibliomation.

Commission on Ed Tech: Colleen Bailie: The CEN conference will be May 6th and May 7th, May 7th is the full day, and May 6th is some preconference stuff. So just keep an eye out for that. Registration is already open now for that. The Commission for Ed Tech also keeps kind of looking at looking at ways of doing some refurbished device rollouts throughout the state and kind of how that would operate and how that would work. We are going to be putting together a small working group at some point to think about how education for using technology would work. I did mention to them that we have some libraries throughout the state who could for sure have some people that could kind of be involved with that, especially libraries. I've had digital navigators in the past. So, keep an eye out as far as that goes as well. There's a lot of discussion as well happening around AI and especially in schools and libraries, and how staff use it and how the public use it. So, I imagine you'll see some stuff coming up in the Commission soon about policies and stuff for that.

Communications Task Force: John Casiello: We are meeting on Monday to further our conversations. There was interest in where we got through with the software, but we will continue to look at our existing methods and see how we can improve those.

CASL: Valerie DiLorenzo: CASL is sponsoring a showing of The Librarians at the Wallingford Public Library on April 23, from 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm. Registration is coming soon!

CLC: Ellen Paul: Absent.

FOCL: Debbie Misiaszek: The next important event coming up is our round table next Friday, March 27th, featuring the treasurer's role in FOCL.

LION: Joe Farara: Absent. No report.

Library Connection: Laura Horn: Absent.

Region 1: Heather Aronson: Absent.

Region 2: Lisa Miceli: See attached.

Region 3: Drusilla Carter: See attached.

Region 4: Kiera Parrott: Absent.

Region 5: Emily Rush: See attached.

Region 6: Madhu Gupta: Cragin Memorial Library has a long-time, full-time employee retiring this spring and they will be hiring someone new in the children's department. They are also in the process of creating a Library Commission in Colchester since their Board of Trustees is a private organization. Otis Library has received their Nonprofit of the Year Award from the Greater Norwich Area Chamber of Commerce on February 19th. They have also been awarded a grant from Project Peace to replace 10 of their adult computers and monitors. At the Public Library of New London, we are hosting our second annual gala on March 28th at the Coast Guard Academy.

SCSU: Cindy Schofield: Absent.

Sustainability Taskforce: Alessandra Casiello: We have gotten a lot of feedback from institutional members who think that the rate increase was very unfair, even though they had a chance to voice their concerns for like 90 days last year and nobody did. The bylaws that went into effect and the rate changed last year, people did not read either.

Association Committee Reports:

ADA: Marilynn Lewicki: No report.

Archivist: Gerald Seagrave: I received notes from the Technical Services section winter meeting for the archives. I also received files from the CLA Publicity Committee from 2004 to 2011.

Awards: Region Reps: John Casiello: All the nominations are in and we closed it. We didn't cover every category, but we covered enough that we'll have a good award ceremony. It's in the hands of the awards committee and we hope to make decisions within a week or so.

Career Development: Diana Preece and Mirja Johanson: All of our subcommittees are making general progress forward. Thank you, John, for all of our post this take this down, post this, take this down as the deadline bloom. They're in the process of scoring the essays for the scholarships. The Leadership Institute is looking at dates for the next conference. The mentor program pairings are in process. They are accepting mentors on a rolling basis. So, if someone wants to take that on, please do so, and spread the word. We are looking to share the slides from the compensation benchmarks presentation, so look forward to that coming up soon.

Conference 2026: Today is the last day for the early bird registration deadline. So, if you have not got it in and you want to get that discount, make sure you get your registration in. We did extend it because people were having troubles with their membership, so we wanted to give them time to get that member discount as well as the early bird discount, but it will not be extended today. Our committee has been hard at work just confirming all of the speakers and presentation so that we can have a final schedule out next week. We are awaiting one final speaker contract, so we're hoping to have that by the end of the week so we can put that that final program up for people to see. We have a really great schedule of events and for in terms of attendees right now we are at capacity for Monday. So, if you plan to go on Monday, make sure you get that in. We have about 10 spots left before I close it. So, make sure you do that. Tuesday's a lower day, around 300 people. Over the two days, we do have about 530 different people attending, which is really great. Currently, we have 50 different vendors that will be there. We're hoping to get some more vendors attending as well. As of yesterday's numbers, we are now making a profit as long as I have made the budget all correct, which I hope I have in all of these years. So, we will have a little bit of a profit and hopefully that will continue to grow. We're up to 9 sponsors, which is really great.

Development: Alessandra Casiello: We have our final fundraisers of the year at the conference. Sunday night, we're doing a showing of the librarians with some hors d'oeuvres after the President's reception. We also have a Monday night event, which is called the Grown-Up Nostalgic Book Fair. We're still looking for a couple more vendors for that, so if you know of anybody who creates bookish things or owns a bookstore or something that you think would be have been really great when you went to the Scholastic Book Fair as a kid, you know, send them over to our website so that they can sign up to be a vendor for that. It looks like it's going to be a really fun event, and it's grown up because you know there will be hors d'oeuvres and alcohol so people can enjoy that. Currently we have already made around \$700.00 for the fundraisers for conference, and the auctions will also be running, and we think we'll hit our goals for that. For our auctions this year, we have a lot of really cool things. We have a couple drones that we're putting up for auctions. So, if you're looking for prizes for your summer reading prizes for kids and teens, we have a lot of different things. We have drones, we have an iPad, we have a lot of gardening stuff. So definitely buy one of the silent auction sheets to put in tickets for those and

we will have our fundraising table with just some shirts, key chains, and bookish things there as well.

Intellectual Freedom: Sam Lee & Lindsay Delligan: One-pagers from Freedom to Read Foundation about recent intellectual freedom book banning censorship cases can be helpful for folks. A free training course from the Freedom to Read Foundation for anyone interested is next Monday. Kate and Sam will be presenting at Set the Stage on Monday.

Legislative: Kate Byroade & Rebecca Harlow: Erin and I worked on some messaging around HR7661, which for those of you who are not aware is the federal book ban bill. Erin created a message to go out to members, and I worked on an advocacy toolkit so that people can contact their representatives in the house. So, thank you to Erin for doing that and thank you to Alessandra for very quickly updating our website to help with that. Just a quick update on what we'll be addressing is that yesterday this did pass out of the Education and Workforce Committee, so it will be moving to the House for a full vote. So, I expect we'll want to do some more advocacy around this. The other thing that the committee is moving forward with is communication tools. We do have a work group that's working on developing new tools to communicate with existing and potential members as well as potential advocates. So hopefully that group can address some of the issues that people were hoping to resolve with a new platform. The last update that I have is that our committee has a subgroup that is working on selecting some legislators to give a legislator of the year or two. As you know, we had some pretty big bills that went through the state legislator last year and we had a lot of legislators who are very supportive of libraries, and we want to make sure that we recognize them this year.

Outreach: John Casiello: No report.

PEG: Mary Etter: No report.

Procedures: Lisa Miceli: No report.

Section Reports:

Children's: Vacant

CLASS: Vacant

College & University: Rob Walsh: Absent.

JEDI: Mary Richardson: Yes, we actually are trying to bring back monthly meetings and have one scheduled. You can register for it today. I'm going to e-mail out about that. So, if anybody's interested in saying what you want to see for Jedi in the upcoming year, we'll be talking about what kind of workshops we want to do and looking forward. You can also see it's at CLA because we also have a section meeting there too. So, we're just trying to get our ducks in rows.

Public Libraries: Jennifer Sullivan: Absent.

Reference & Adult Services: Christie Mitchell & Kelly-Ann Gardella: I wanted to report we had our Mental Health and Wellness workshop a week ago. We had seven people attending along with three presenters and two co-chairs. But it was a very engaging program and everyone who attended were fully participating. They got a lot out of it and a few of the participants were nonmembers. So, we did earn a small fee for CLA with that program. Kellyanne Gardella and I will be our last term as co-chairs of the reference and adult services section. But we don't want to leave the position vacant. So, we did reach out to Noel Sander of Ferguson Library in Stamford, and he is interested in the position and he's available to start on July 1st. We did collaborate with him earlier in the year and I think he would be great for the position.

Resource Sharing: Matt Earls: Absent.

Technical Services: Ann Victor & Christine Rinaldi: Absent.

Technology: Kate Sheehan & Jessica Welford: No report.

YA: Danielle Murray & Jackie Bush: We're just getting ready for the conference. We have a bunch of sessions planned. We have our section meeting, we're doing an intro to manga and graphics, a teen arts and crafts petting zoo. We're planning teen programs on a shoestring budget, and Danielle is doing the seven c's of positive youth development and libraries. So, we're just panicking and getting ready to do all of those at the conference.

Adjournment: 11: 21 AM. Motion made by Mary Etter. Seconded by Kate Byroade

Present: Erin Dummeyer, Brenda McKinley, Margaret Khan, Alessandra Casiello, Ann Victor, Christie Mitchell, Colleen Bailie, Debbie Misiaszek, Deborah Schander, Diana Preece, Drusilla Carter, Emily Rush, Erin Dummeyer, Jackie Bush, Jerry Seagrave, John Casiello, Kate Byroade, Kate Sheehan, Lisa Micelli, Madhu Gupta, Margaret Khan, Marilynn Lewicki, Mary Etter, Mary Richardson, Mirja Johanson, Rebecca Harlow, Robert Scheier, Samantha Lee, Sarah McCusker.

Old Business

a. President's report- Erin Dummeyer

HR 7661, the federal book banning bill, has moved to the House. Every Library has been doing some good advocacy work for it as well. It's now time to call your representatives, call your Congress people about the bill because they call it something else, but it's really a book banning bill and would hold back federal funding from schools from having certain books in their collection. We've seen a lot of this in state legislators now we're seeing it in the federal legislature.

Now for some good news- she can't really spread the word too much herself when she's acting as a representative of CLC and their director, but Ellen Paul is running for State Rep. You have to check out her website: Ellenforstaterep.com and she is running to represent Andover, Bolton, Glastonbury, Hebron, and Marlboro. She's not running on a library platform- she's running on a more general platform. But it would be really cool to have a State Representative in Connecticut's legislator who obviously knows libraries so well. She's trying to be very ethical in that she can't campaign when she is working for CLC. So, I'm just trying to like kind of do it for her. I also before we move on, I just wanted to say today is the last day for early bird registration for the CLA conference. So, I wanted to not only encourage people to register, but also just want to thank the CLA conference committee, especially Alessandra, Olivia, Shannon, Vicki, John, Christina. You guys don't see a lot of what they do behind the scenes, but wrangling StarChapter and renewals and trying to get folks registered with the early bird rate, it's a huge headache for them. I'm so appreciative of everything they've been doing behind the scenes. So, thank you so much to the CLA conference committee. I know it's going to be great and when people attend, it'll be seamless thanks to people like that.

b. Treasurer's report- Margaret Khan

We're doing really well with membership this year. We have as of the end of February 536 members. We've received \$38,000 in membership dues, which is almost at our yearly target of \$40,800. So, I think as everyone renews those memberships in advance of conference, we will definitely exceed our anticipated revenue for membership this year. We've also received \$61,000 for conference. So that's going to keep on keep on chugging along as we get closer to the date. The Passport program has brought in \$1,200 as of the end of February so, we'll have some more some more transactions showing up for next month's report, but a great start to the Passport program. Section and committee budgets will be due on May 15th. That form will be made available hopefully by the end of next week. I'll make sure to get that out to all of our chairs. I'm going to do it a little bit different this year in a Google spreadsheet so that everything is in one place on one format, just make it a little bit easier for me to compile everything into one budget. So please keep an eye out for that. If you have any questions along the way about preparing your budgets, I'm happy to help. Those will be due after the conference on May 15th.

New Business

a. Membership Software Comparison, Discussion and Vote (Link)

This is something that we've been talking about for several months. We looked at this a couple years ago. This year, we narrowed it down to two other softwares that we were comfortable investigating a little bit more into because Bob has some experience with both of these. These are the member softwares that other library associations close to us

use. So, the Maine Library Association uses Wild Apricot, Member Clicks is used by NELA. They used to have Wild Apricot, so these are ones that we know work well for what we're doing. Just a comparison chart here as the board had asked for some in more information. Trying to wrangle everybody to get demos for these is very hard because we can't even get everybody to attend the training session for the current software that we have. We did demos with just the people who use it the most and gathered the information for the rest of the board. The software committee would like us to move towards Member Clicks, but it is quite a bit more expensive than what we are currently paying. The first one we're looking at is what we currently have, which is StarChapter. The second is Member Clicks and the third is Wild Apricot. Both Member Clicks and Wild Apricot are owned by the same company called Personify so some of the things overlap. Member Clicks would be \$5,500 per year. They did just send me a discount if we sign with them by the end of March that they would lower it to \$4,795 per year. The other thing that would go into this if we went to Member Clicks is there is an implementation fee of \$1,875, onetime fee. This also comes with training. The reason why they gave us that discount is because when we originally did the demo with them and spoke to them, we said that we would need to be transferring things so that it was up and running by our fiscal year of July 1st. That's why they said they would need to have this in place by the end of March in order to do the training, transfer all of our member information over, as much of the website as we want to move over by that time. So that's why they gave us that discount. The other big pricing issue that we have is credit card fees. So currently with StarChapter, we pay a monthly fee of \$1,995 for what they call Star Pay, which is their credit card payment processing portal. Then we have 3.25% + \$.40 cents per transaction. Member Clicks does not use their own credit card portal, but they do have a discount if we were to enroll with Payroc- it would be a \$1,695 monthly fee and then it would just be the standard processing fees depending on the credit card. So, you know that number would be up in the air with them. For Wild Apricot it is 2.9% + 30 cents per transaction with no additional monthly fee. StarChapter is revising their costs right now- Right now we pay \$246 per month. They are going to raise that to 270 per month but get rid of the \$19.95 monthly Star Pay fee. So, it evens out -it's about \$5 more, but it's not the monthly credit card transaction fee.

The other things that we wanted to point out was that the type of support that we get is that both Wild Apricot and StarChapter are just kind of support ticketing systems, but they are mostly self-service. Member Clicks has other additional training that you can purchase in batches of three hours. They give initial training and they do have the ticketing support as well. Then finally the add-ons: This was a big a big thing that the software committee had had talked about. Member Clicks and Wild Apricot both have some add-ons that people have requested that our membership software has, which includes text messaging. What we've been trying to do with Discord, which is a communal place for people to have discussions, ongoing discussions, posts, post about things going on in library land and especially legislative committee thought this would be good. They have something called community, which is an extra cost. For Member Clicks, it is \$4,000 a year. They said that they would lower that again for us \$3,500 per year if we signed up by the end of this month. There are other add-ons or a job board which I put a little * down here to tell you how the pricing works cause it's like we get a

percent back on jobs that are posted there. Then the member app and conference app is also an add on that we could do for \$4,000 a year. So again, it's a very pricey software, but these are things that people have asked for. Wild Apricot does have some of these. They have text messaging, which is a onetime fee of \$30 to set up plus a monthly fee of \$6 and then four cents per text message sent. Member Clicks does not have this as an option, but Wild Apricot also has job board. They have community, but their pricing is a little bit different, and they said that it would depend on our setup with them. So that's the stuff about the add-ons.

In terms of pricing, as I said, we currently pay \$246 per month for StarChapter. If we went back to annual, it does reduce it a little bit. There's a prepaid one year \$225 per month and then the other one has and if you prepay for one year, you get 10% discount. If you prepay for two years, it's a 15% discount. For Wild Apricot, theirs is \$252 per month, much similar to what we're currently paying. The one thing that does concern us about is their pricing structure is a little bit different. So CLA currently has 1859 contacts that include our members and nonmembers and the structure that we have with them allows for up to 8000 contacts, up to 2000 Members Clicks tax for Wild Apricot. The price we received was for 2000 contacts. So, because we are so close to that number, if we went up a tier it would end up being 485 per month, which puts it over the cost of Member Clicks. It would end up being over \$5,500. For Member Clicks the price we received was for 1000 member contacts plus an additional 3000 non-member contacts. So that is why, you know, with the software committee, they were leaning towards Member Clicks if we were going to make a change simply because it's more robust, it has more of what people were looking for. And if we move to Wild Apricot, we're just in the same situation and we may have to pay more depending on if our membership grows. So, my job was to just let you know where the software committee was leaning. Member Clicks would be quite a bit more per year even with the discount. Right now, we pay just under \$3000 a year for StarChapter before any credit card fees and with the discount that Member Clicks is giving, it would be \$4,795. It's quite a bit of an increase of about \$1700 per year. If we wanted to do any of those add-ons, that's going to increase the cost even more. But it is up to the board what they want to do. I know people aren't happy with StarChapter. I will say what I've said this whole time; it is an education issue. If people don't go to the training, if people aren't going in there, they're going to be frustrated with how to use it because it's not something they use every day.

You all have that link if you want to look at things and then if anybody has comments or if anybody from the software committee who's here wants to say anything else, you know, feel free to add in anything.

Marilyn Lewicki- I'm not on the software committee. I totally agree with you, Alessandra. I think StarChapter could be useful if you just actively go in there. The only reason why I say this is because I actually use member clips clicks as an admin NELEA. I was APR chair and I had to assist Megan who was working there at the time, and she was trying to train me on that. It's not that I couldn't understand it, but I felt like for me it was a little bit harder to navigate on Member Clicks and I don't want to sound smug, but like the outline of the platform just seemed a little outdated. Like I felt like I was using software from like 2002, you know what I mean? When I came over to CLA and now I'm

ADA chair and I'm looking, I'm like, OK, I have to just listen to Alessandra, look at the clicks, even e-mail you because I emailed you a few times asking, "where do I do this?" But it seemed a lot more straightforward and user friendly. It was easier for me to navigate. There were some questions but then I figured it out or I'll reach out to you. I think just as a person that's used both, for me, it was nicer to use StarChapter. I vaguely remember when I was on the board for NELA that they were also thinking about switching and were looking for a different vendor back then. That was two years ago. I don't know if they're still using Member Clicks, but I do remember that they weren't so happy either because they also wanted better communication to do mass emails. That felt like sometimes it wasn't going the way that they had thought it would be and they would just settle for it because it was cheaper, because they got a good price. It was more convenient. But that's just from my experience. To be honest, I think StarChapter is ok, but Wild Apricot does look pretty snazzy. But I can understand that it's a lot more expensive and we'll get more members. They're definitely going to charge us more in the long run. But I was looking at Wild Apricot, and it does seem a lot sleeker and a lot more user friendly as well.

Alessandra- The other pull for Member Clicks is that they have a feature that manages institutional memberships, which is our biggest pain point, in which you are able to connect individuals to the institution like you would a library card with like a parent card and a child card. So that was one of the other reasons that the software committee did really like Member Clicks because of that pain point. I think it's all going to come with whether people go through training and look at the documentation no matter what we go to.

Drusilla Carter- Out of curiosity, because I agree that text messaging would be a really nice feature, but is it possible that we stay with our current software but add on? I know Bibliomation just added ShoutBomb. That's something we could look at to add that feature with our existing software.

Alessandra- Yes, it would be an integration possibility. We use ShoutBomb at Bibliomation. There is obviously a fee for the development of it and most of the development comes from our team. Since CLA wouldn't be doing that, I don't know how much that charge would be from ShoutBomb. I don't want to give quotes off of them, but their text messaging platform just the base integration of it was about \$4,000 for Bibliomation. I think that's what you're going to look at no matter where you go. If we do it through whatever software, whatever they have as an integration, there is going to be an implementation fee. StarChapter does not have their own text messaging integration. It's just because again, you need developers on the team to work on those things.

Margaret Khan- I'm wondering if through the demos and the information you've learned so far from these vendors, is anyone vendor going to save significant staff time that we put into utilizing it so that it can justify an increased cost. Also keeping in mind too that I think either way you go, you're going to be looking at continued increased costs. Star Chapter's abrupt changes in their pricing structure are part of the reason why we started

looking into this. So, it's going to be expensive either way we cut it. But for an initial upfront increase, are there time savings to justify the cost?

Alessandra: I think the appeal that Member Clicks has is that you can pay for them to train your people. I do our training for free and it's a lot of my time. So, it would obviously save me time, but it would cost the organization more. That's why I've just always just done it because after we do that, we have to pay for them too. On the on the side of financials and reports, I'll let Bob answer that because he's worked with all three of these softwares now, so he knows how much time goes into all of that.

Bob Scheier: I think interface design can be subjective. So, everyone's going to have their opinion. I've worked with all three and I can only just tell you my experience and how it which one works best for me. I find the StarChapter interface to be very unintuitive and the response time server wise working in that system is very slow and sometimes it times out and I can't get reports that I have to reduce the number of results in order to get things back. Their support is not that great, and I find the way that the system is laid out and how it keeps information, especially when someone expires, is very problematic. So, I'm not a fan of StarChapter. I'll just say that I have used all three. I am more inclined to be in favor of Member Clicks of the three. It just again, I can understand it looking dated, so I think that's valid. But from the back end, it's a big plus for me. For instance, I can just go in and check off all the invoices for the month and print out the whole lot of them. Start chapter, I have to go one at a time, search each one and it out, save it as a PDF because I like to save those in QuickBooks attached to each invoice, so it saves me a lot of time. It also has integration with QuickBooks that I used when I was with NELA which allows me to keep things more easily in sync. Member Clicks also has a lot of downsides, and I think people will have valid points about it at the website. The Interface is not great, and I don't know if it's improved since I've last used it. Member Clicks has its pluses as well. If we were to go in that direction, I think the way it manages bundles would be perhaps helpful for us. It allows each of the libraries to have an institutional account and manage the number of people that they pay for on the bundle, and they can add and remove if whoever's the manager at the library. It would ease the pain point we currently have with institutional memberships, which StarChapter doesn't handle well at all. Member Clicks has an institutional membership feature, but I haven't used it. But we'd have to explore that with them to see whether that would be helpful for us.

Alessandra: John, I know you know on the membership side a lot of what Bob just said, but if you want to add anything in, in terms of your time.

John Casiello: The one thing StarChapter has not been helpful at all for is that we have a number of organizations and members who are not getting our emails and not because they've unsubscribed, but because there's either some sort of block on a firewall on their account or there's some weird over bounce limit that StarChapter imposes and they've not been helpful in resolving that. Now that could happen with any of these, but we have asked during some of the demos of like how can we resolve those and they've been at least more supportive and that they could resolve it, because that's my big concern.

We know that a lot of people are not getting our communications. Some of them are by choice and they don't remember that they've done that. But some of them are, like my organization for some reason, a lot of our people at Richfield Library don't get it. They don't get our notifications, and I've tried desperately to fix that. StarChapter doesn't offer any help, and we can't resolve it and I don't know how many it is. It's very hard to even get a report of that. But again, I don't know if that would be resolved with any other software but it's a big frustration with StarChapter.

Bob: Just to add to that, I did recently ask StarChapter just to remove all the blocks. You can get a report, and I can see them and they refuse to do what they said. You have to go one at a time and you have to make sure that you tell the library to e-mail their tech support to whitelist their domain name and IP addresses. That is a big problem. We tried that and it still didn't work. I think that yes, a real problem. I just wanted one last thing and then I'll shut up. I think that the training with Member Clicks is very good.

Alessandra: I will say that they've been very responsive with every question after the demo that I've asked.

Kate: Under your point about like training, I mean those of us who aren't using it, I took your training. It was excellent and then did not log into StarChapter for quite some time and then went to do it and went, oh, did I write this down well enough? I think that's just that's human nature if you're not in there every day. I know for me, when I'm doing this process in-house for our stuff, I look at the people who are using it the most. Those are the people whose time I want to save. Always, always, always. It doesn't matter if I, as the person who uses StarChapter a few times a year, if I have to stop and go, how does this work? Again, you're using it every day. For the people who are using it constantly, those are the people whose time I want to save so personally. Then also in terms of the stuff people have asked for, I'm just curious about your take on it, because I mean, this is the Saturday story time problem, right? Like people ask for Saturday story time and then they don't show up. It would be great; it would be super cool. We've gone through this here. People want discussion boards for book groups and knock yourself out setting them up, and then nobody signs because it sounds like a fun idea, but is somebody going to sign into one more platform? I'm on a bunch of discords and our discords are good.

Alessandra- My opinion on the add-ons is to not do any add-ons because honestly, it's not going to pay. We had a team of people who worked on the communication Discord last year and we ended up with just a few people who joined and then the only people who spoke about it were Mary Richardson was posting stuff for Jedi. That was it. We spent all this time on something with a free software. We're about to pay \$4,000 for a software with people who are saying, oh yes, this is a good way to do it. Well, nobody reads our emails. How many times have I had to send out the same thing over and over because people don't even read our emails. Are they really going to go on to a discussion board? Like we see the emails coming through Conntech every day that have the same information. We know people aren't reading these things. So, I wouldn't pay for \$4,000 for an add on. I'm going to tell you that. But I know of the things that were brought up in

other parts of CLA that they wanted something similar to a discussion board where they could do that. So, this does have an option. It's just I don't think it's worth the price.

Kate: Whatever makes your job and whatever makes the people use it the most. If the cost increase for the software in terms of like the base software, if it is something like making mass changes, if you cannot make mass changes in software, why do you have this? But as in terms of the use of people who either aren't using it or only using it periodically, we can deal, the periodic users, we can suck it up and deal with whatever is going to make everybody who's using it more regularly is life easier.

Jackie: I only use StarChapter occasionally, so I guess I don't feel everyone else's pain who uses it all the time. But I mean, my main concern is of course the money- can we afford this? Are we going to have 5 more fundraisers to cover the cost? Especially if we're not going to use all these extra add-ons. I just don't want to see us in a constant financial hole because we're getting this fancy new software that we're not going to wind up using. I just got back in CLA and heard about how our membership is down and we have to charge for all of these section meetings that we're doing. That's what worries me the most is that we're going to change softwares and we're not going to be utilizing all these cool things, these add-ons. Then we're going to have to keep on trying to have all these extra fundraisers just to cover our bases. So that's just what's worrisome to me, that's all. I understand I don't use StarChapter as much as some of the other people, but it's just a red flag to me, that's all.

Margaret: Second question here, was there any indication from Member Clicks or Wild Apricot about the amount of time CLA folks would have to put in for the migration? How hands-on would it be on our end?

Alessandra: Member Clicks was and has been very responsive when we've asked questions. Now in terms of the migration, when we gave them our timeline, they said on their end they would need three months to do that. I don't know how involved we are going to have to be other than to say like we want this piece migrated over, we want this piece migrated over. Bob, if you have any more intel on that part. In terms of Wild Apricot, they haven't been great at being responsive to my questions. So, I also can't really speak to that, and they didn't give a timeline for that migration. So, Bob, if you know more since you have organized the original demos.

Bob: I can just tell you from experience, I don't have experience migrating to Wild Apricot, but I'm pretty confident that I can say that you won't get much help except through your ticketing system. It's marketed as a self-serve kind of system. I think you will spend a little more time, whereas Member Clicks are very handheld support. They do a lot of the heavy lifting in the back end, and you collaborate with them, but they manage everything. I think the website would be the most labor intensive and it's fairly unflexible in terms of their website interface. The only the upside to it is it's all integrated into one platform and so a lot of the functionality works together. I think one of the nice features that I found with Member Clicks and this is not talking about any add-ons or anything is, is the way that the system works with the database and the communications part of it, the

reporting, and definitely on the back end for financial part of it, it's much more sophisticated and would be easier for me anyway.

John: I was just going to say on the topic of the website, regardless of whether we migrate or not, I think everyone would say our website needs a complete overhaul anyway. So, we would certainly bring some stuff over. But I think as an organization, we really need to look at the website, and each section needs to be a part of what looks like going forward.

Brenda (chat): Alessandra does an outstanding on the StarChapter training. But we as an organization are expecting this time commitment. We are all volunteers. Those using StarChapter the most may not always be in a position to dedicate the amount of time it takes. I also agree with Kate; those who are using it the most should have a large weight on the decision. It should be about streamlining and improving the work for those who are doing the work on behalf of the organization. I also hear the monetary concerns, the budget is always an issue for the organization, but is this work smarter not harder situation?

Alessandra: I think all of those are, are really valid points. I think that's why the software committee was leaning towards Member Clicks. It is a higher expense, but it did seem to answer a lot of the questions in terms of the time that the people using StarChapter. A lot is spent on those time-consuming things. It's all going to depend on training for everybody else. But for John dealing with membership, Bob dealing with invoices and me just dealing with random everything else, paying the cost seems like a better solution. One thing I have said, I'm not always going to be here, like I don't plan to do this forever as a volunteer. So, we need people to be able to use the software the way we train people to use it because we are a volunteer organization and the sections need to be able to go into the software as well.

Brenda McKinley: It might be telling that the only people who use it are the ones who have to use it.

Bob: One thing I do remember from NELA now, it's been some time. So, my opinion is clouded in some ways by the fact that it makes my life easier. But it is not easier to learn for the everyday board member who comes in every now and then. It's going to be the same kind of learning curve to find their way around. It may be a little more intuitive, but there is that learning curve. I don't think we're going to solve that problem with this software. At NELA, we didn't even let most of the board members into that platform because the other thing I remember is the financial stuff is there and we didn't want people to get into the financial part of the system. I don't remember if there's any way to block that through permissions or anything like that. So that's a consideration if we do decide we want to move forward with member clicks is to double-check on how we would manage that in the system. Right now, we do have in StarChapter that blocks people from seeing certain things, just cause credit card information would be available to every board member.

Margaret: Sticking with the cheapest software just because it's the cheapest might be penny wise, pound foolish in the long run. Especially as pricing structures change, and transaction rates increase.

What started this conversation a few years ago was that Star Chapter was astronomically different price and in the past three years, that price has gone up by almost \$1,000. We have to be very cautious of whatever software we're with, just knowing that prices can increase that way. But StarChapter seems to be doing it every six months at this point because they haven't done it for so long. Which we understand because we did the same thing.

Erin: I was ready to call the vote until what Bob just said about the financial stuff. We have to confirm that there's a way to block the financial information before we move forward with Member Clicks because I don't think our members would want tons of volunteer board members to have access to their credit card info. I was all ready to vote for Member Clicks, but now I feel like I can't really vote for it till we have confirmation that we'd be able to block that because otherwise we're restricting use of it to just a few board members, which I don't think is going to help with our sort of continuity problem.

Bob: We could vote with just that as a caveat. Like, yes, assuming that the permissions are going to be prohibited and be flexible enough to accommodate those to get in the system without touching the financials.

Erin: I'm comfortable with that.

Bob: I just wanted to make sure I threw it in there because I couldn't remember that being a discussion point and I don't know where that system is now. Now it's been a few years.

Erin: Do you want me to make a motion, Alessandra?

Alessandra: It's, it's whatever you all feel is the motion to make at this point. This has been a discussion for several years. We did the due diligence. We went through the demos; we picked off the other ones that we just didn't think fitted with what we needed and we were left with these three choices. So, of the three, what do we think is the best move for the organization to know the financials and the work that goes into each of them?

Mary: I just have a quick and odd suggestion. Why don't we test their responsiveness and send the question right now, delay the vote till later in the meeting because we have all the reports in between and let's see what they say about it.

Alessandra: I'll send a question right now and we'll go through the rest of the meeting.

We have not gotten a response yet, but Bob said he looked at the documentation, and it does seem like you can do that. You can set financial permissions off for anybody. So,

they wouldn't be able to change any of the revenue codes or any of the financial major financial pieces. OK, so it sounds like we're ready to make a motion after all the discussion before.

Motion made by Erin Dummeyer. Seconded by Mary Etter. Motion carries.

Erin: Thank you to the software group for looking into that and doing all that due diligence.

Alessandra: Bob, John, and I will connect with them. Hopefully, we can get this started for our July fiscal year and we'll let you know about the financial part. Hopefully, we get that discount in at the end of the month.

b. 2027 Conference Committee Nominations- Brenda McKinley

For the conference committee, there are three nominations.

There are the program co-chairs, which would be Tom Nolan and Sarah McCusker. Then there is also the Exhibit co-chair, which is Molly Verillo.

We'll make a motion to approve. All in favor.

c. 2026/2027 Slate of Officers

The first thing I need to do is to make a motion to add this to the agenda. Erin: I'll second that motion. So, I am pleased to announce the nominations for the 2026/2027 slate of officers for Vice President/President-elect, we have Margaret Kahn, who's our current Treasurer. For treasurer, we have Devin Andrews, who's the director of the Mansfield Library. Region 2 Rep would be Lisa Micelli, Region 4 Rep would be Kara Parrott from Darien, and Region 6 Rep will be Katie Huffman from the Phoebe Griffin Noise librarian in Old Lime.

That is the slate of officers proposed for next year and I have not received any other nominations. So, at this moment, everyone is running unopposed. So, I will move the slate of officers, and we will vote at the annual meeting.

CLA Region 2 Representative Report
Lisa Miceli
March 2026

Plainville Public Library now offers a telescope through their Library of Things.

Burlington Public Library's Seed Library is now open.

Berlin-Peck Library is offering a Prom Dress Swap Shop.

Lucy Robbins Welles Library in Newington is holding registration for their May 17th 5K which raises funds to support the library.

Region 3- Drusilla Carter

Steve Osier, Willington Public Library:

"I'm waiting for an email for further details, but our town's Board of Finance Chair just called me asking to resubmit our budget assuming we do not get the \$50,000 restored as an option for their board to consider (it would be about 18% cut of what the town would be funding us if we were got back what was cut). I am working on scenarios, but with that loss in funding right now being considered as an option I am going to consider a mix of cutting building hours, reducing staff increases, staff reductions, etc."

Hebron:

Our new grant-funded 3D printers are up and running, and we're gearing up for classes for patrons. We've also added a few new items to our Library of Things: a sewing machine, a typewriter, and a slide projector (and it was lots of fun introducing our younger staff to the "ancient technology").

Lindsay Delligan, Lebanon:

The Friends, in conjunction with the Windham Regional Arts Council (WRAC), are sponsoring the 26th annual Equinox and the Arts exhibition which shows the works of local adult artists. Art drop-off was last weekend, and the show opens Friday, so they are busy organizing and hanging art.

CLA Region 5 News: March 2026

Willoughby Wallace Memorial Library, Branford

Willoughby Wallace now has THREE staff members (out of only eight in total!) pursuing library master's degrees. Meridith Korn & Thia Wrightsman are both at SCSU and Dorothy Levine has matriculated at Simmons—all three have started school within the last year.

The Keyes Gallery (AKA our meeting room) has recently undergone a mini makeover project with fresh paint and new carpet. A much-needed update as the room had not had any work done on it since the library's 2003 renovation. Next up - hopefully! - new audio-visual equipment and new furniture to better support the multiple programs held in the room each week.

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