

Director's Report to the Board of Agents

Silas Bronson Library

July 18, 2023

Raechel Guest, Director

Collection Policy

The State of Connecticut has implemented new legislation requiring public libraries to have collection development policies that are in compliance with the following statutory language in order to be eligible for state incentive grants:

- (i) No principal public library shall be eligible to receive a state grant in accordance with the provisions of subsections (b), (c) and (d) of this section if such principal public library that prohibits or otherwise limits the availability of any book or related library materials by banning, censoring or challenging such book or related library materials at such library.

Compliance with the statute is overseen by the State Library, which oversees state grants to public libraries. I sent our collection policy to the State Library for their review. The last time our policy was updated was 1999, with some sections dating from 1974. The policy includes a mission statement based on the original Bronson bequest of 1868, stating that one of the library's primary goals is "to encourage and sustain in (Waterbury) good order and sound morals."

The State Library has deemed our collection policy to be too outdated to be acceptable. They recommend that I work with the Board of Agents to fully update it. We have until November 15, 2023 to submit an updated policy in order to be eligible for the FY23/24 incentive grant.

I have included in your packet copies of our policy, the notification email from the State Library, and the sample policy they sent. I have also included the Materials Challenge Form we use. Our policies don't include a challenge form, so we created this one based off of a template from the American Library Association.

Staffing Levels

Three new Admin 1s started at the library this spring, bringing us up to full staffing for Admin 1 positions. However, we lost one of our newer Admins when she was promoted to an Admin 3 in Finance. We are waiting for a list of Admin 1 candidates to replace her.

I interviewed candidates for the position of Librarian 4 in charge of Circulation, but the candidate I selected declined the offer as she currently makes more money in a non-managerial position at another library. I am waiting for HR to send me more candidates.

I also interviewed a candidate for one of our two Librarian 2 vacancies. I am waiting to hear from HR about her start date. HR has reposted the Librarian 2 position, as we still have one vacancy.

The City has effectively eliminated one of our five Page positions. Pages work part-time at minimum wage. While the minimum wage has increased, the City did not increase our funding for the Pages. We were faced with two choices: either reducing all of their hours by a third, or firing one of the Pages and reducing the hours for the remaining Pages to a maximum of 17.5 hours per week (it's currently 19.5 hours per week). The good news is that one of our Pages, Igor Shvets, was promoted to an Admin 1 at the library, so we don't have to fire anyone. The bad news is that we are permanently short one Page position.

Pages are responsible for shelving library materials, keeping the shelves neat and in order, fetching materials from storage, and other collection-handling tasks. The staffing reduction will increase the amount of time it takes for returned materials to become available and make it harder to keep the shelves in order.

Summer Interns

The library is participating in the City's new internship/job shadow program for high school students. We anticipate having two students at the library this summer for a six-week internship and three students here for a two-week job shadowing program. All of the students will be at the library full time, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Elevator

The elevator came to a dramatic end on Saturday, May 13. The motor overheated and smoke started filling part of the basement. The Maintainer working that day spotted the smoke before anything other than the motor was damaged. The fire department was called and the building was evacuated. The fire department shut off the breaker for the elevator's power, but they recommended that someone stay in the building until Kone, the elevator company, or an electrician could verify that the power was completely off. The City Electrician arrived that evening and verified that the power was off. A technician from Kone came in on the following Monday and confirmed that the motor would have to be replaced. The estimated cost was about \$50,000 with a long lead time.

Since the elevator is being replaced at the end of the summer, it didn't make any sense to replace the motor. Instead, demolition of the elevator has started early, allowing plenty of time for the work to be completed before the parts for the new elevator arrive in September.

HVAC Systems

There was a delay in turning on the air conditioning this spring while we waited for a replacement part. During Sarracco's servicing of the HVAC system, they explained that we currently have it operating on manual, which requires someone to switch it over from heating to cooling and vice versa each year. If the system were working correctly, it would automatically switch back and forth as needed. Additionally, being in manual mode means that it runs constantly, using more electricity. The estimated cost of repairing the system is about \$26,000.

Roof

The roof over the east wing has sprung several new leaks on the second floor. The first leak, in the Children's Room, damaged about a dozen books. The other leaks were caught before they damaged any collection items. There is also a leak in the Admin Office on the mezzanine. Most of the leaks occurred during the torrential downpour on June 14. The drain holes on the roof became clogged, causing about half a foot of water to cover much of the roof. Our Maintainer 2 climbed up onto the roof the next morning and cleared the drains. Public Works finally patched the roof on July 13.

Fountain

The mechanical system for the front plaza fountain malfunctioned and flooded the basement hallway in early June. We are waiting for Public Works to repair the problem before we can turn the fountain on again.

Pinocchio

The library has been given a new sculpture by Italian artist Deborah Napolitano, who participated in the public art program "On the Trail of Calder" in 2017. The new artwork is a depiction of Pinocchio and it has been placed on permanent view in the Children's Room. The sculpture given to the City of Waterbury in memory of Mary Jean Pisani. The gift to the library was made possible by Waterbury UNICO, the Spirit of Waterbury, and Pisani Steel. A ribbon cutting and unveiling ceremony was held in the Main Reading Room on June 2.

Pride Fest

On June 29, the library hosted Waterbury's first Pride Fest on the front lawn. Similar in setup to Harry Potter Day, vendor booths were set up along the walkways while performers used the platform in front of the main entrance as a stage. The performers included drag queens and drag kings lip synching and dancing, and a female rock band. The performances were all appropriate for general audiences.

The event ran smoothly and was very well attended. Among the attendees was Connecticut Secretary of State Stephanie Thomas. Many of our regular patrons came out to enjoy the performances. Other event attendees, who weren't library patrons, signed up for library cards that day. The event and the library were featured by the Rep-Am in print and online.

Here are some sample comments, some from our regular patrons, some from people who now feel welcome and safe at the library because of this event:

Marvelous! Well done, Silas Bronson. Proud to live in CT, and Waterbury. Thank you for this.

Bravo!!

I enjoyed myself today.

Thank you for saying yes to this event.

I loved hearing the party going on from my office. I hope it was a hugely successful event!

Over the course of the week after the event was held, a small number of people who don't use the library and didn't attend the event expressed outrage on Facebook. There is currently a trend nationwide for some people to express outrage over drag queen story times at libraries, operating under the mistaken belief that all drag queen performances are inherently sexual and therefore inappropriate for children. Protests over drag queens at libraries are typically connected to book banning efforts. Despite a few outbursts of anger and/or disgust on Facebook, public feedback has been overwhelmingly positive and we have not received any complaints beyond a few negative Facebook comments.

Hybrid Programming

We have been adding hybrid programming to our program roster, allowing patrons to attend programs either in person or via Zoom. During the pandemic, when all of our programs were on Zoom, we learned that many of our patrons prefer Zoom programs. Zoom programming also increases the library's accessibility for patrons unable to attend in person due to a disability or health issue. There is a small learning curve for the librarians running the programs, but they seem to be getting the hang of it.

Bibliomation

The Silas Bronson Library is a member of Bibliomation, Connecticut's largest library consortium. Sixty-three public libraries, three special, and eight schools share an Evergreen system with centralized cataloging and a shared computer network. Bibliomation operates as a nonprofit organization with a Board consisting of a dozen directors from member libraries. At the annual meeting in June, I was elected Secretary of the Board.

Donations

We received a donation of \$250 from a Bunker Hill patron who would like the funds to be used for the Bunker Hill Branch Library, but not for books. The librarian in charge of the branch is currently looking into options such as a limited coffee service (using a Keurig, for example).

Mobile Library

We attended outreach events at Woodrow Wilson School, Judah Family Christian Center, Kindergarten Readiness Night at the YMCA, North End Recreation Center, Deaf Expo at The ARC, Hopeville Church, North End Middle School, Community Give Back Day at Berkeley Warner Community Center, Be Your Community Resource Fair at City Hall, Brass City Charter School, Family Wellness Fair at TEAM, Inc., Wheeler Foster Care Chalk Walk, North End Recreation Center Summer Day Program at Wilby High School, Waterbury Pride Festival, CHD Hospitality Center, and Yoga in Our City at Fulton Park. During the outreach events, we issued 150 library cards, the majority of which were new cards (the rest were replacement cards), and distributed information about the library's services and programs.

Home Deliveries (April 16 – May 12)

Number of Deliveries: 13

Number of Items Delivered: 90

Patrons Subscribed to Home Delivery: 40

Home Deliveries (May 13 – June 14)

Number of Deliveries: 14

Number of Items Delivered: 44

Patrons Subscribed to Home Delivery: 41

Home Deliveries (June 15 – July 12)

Number of Deliveries: 14

Number of Items Delivered: 52

Patrons Subscribed to Home Delivery: 41

Circulation Division

April Statistical Reports: Main Library

Total Collection Size: 270,729
Total Items Added to Collection: 817
Total Physical Items Circulated: 7,631
Total Circulation In-House: 235
Total Circulated at Other Libraries: 1,620
Total Circulated from Other Libraries: 412

Total Active Patrons: 31,503
Total Expired Patrons: 13,472
Total Patrons Added: 156

May Statistical Reports: Main Library

Total Collection Size: 271,170
Total Items Added to Collection: 864
Total Physical Items Circulated: 8,582
Total Circulation In-House: 304
Total Circulated at Other Libraries: 1,528
Total Circulated from Other Libraries: 480

Total Active Patrons: 28,967
Total Expired Patrons: 16,159
Total Patrons Added: 152

April Statistical Reports: Bunker Hill

Total Collection Size: 11,181
Total Items Added to Collection: 29
Total Physical Items Circulated: 469
Total Circulation In-House: 0
Total Circulated at Other Libraries: 109
Total Circulated from Other Libraries: 222

Total Active Patrons: 1,081
Total Expired Patrons: 389
Total Patrons Added: 4

May Statistical Reports: Bunker Hill

Total Collection Size: 11,212
Total Items Added to Collection: 35
Total Physical Items Circulated: 489
Total Circulation In-House: 0
Total Circulated at Other Libraries: 125
Total Circulated from Other Libraries: 247

Total Active Patrons: 998
Total Expired Patrons: 483
Total Patrons Added: 7

June Statistical Reports: Main Library

Total Collection Size: 271,799
Total Items Added to Collection: 1,193
Total Physical Items Circulated: 8,740
Total Circulation In-House: 149
Total Circulated at Other Libraries: 1,752
Total Circulated from Other Libraries: 451

Total Active Patrons: 25,361
Total Expired Patrons: 20,156
Total Patrons Added: 409

June Statistical Reports: Bunker Hill

Total Collection Size: 11,213
Total Items Added to Collection: 59
Total Physical Items Circulated: 639
Total Circulation In-House: 0
Total Circulated at Other Libraries: 141
Total Circulated from Other Libraries: 332

Total Active Patrons: 923
Total Expired Patrons: 580
Total Patrons Added: 9

OverDrive Circulation: April

Magazines: 65
Audiobooks: 474
Ebooks: 594
Total Checkouts: 1,133

Adult: 890
Teen/YA: 87
Children: 91

OverDrive Circulation: May

Magazines: 102
Audiobooks: 550
Ebooks: 576
Total Checkouts: 1,228

Adult: 901
Teen/YA: 109
Children: 116

OverDrive Circulation: June

Magazines: 108
Audiobooks: 580
Ebooks: 596
Total Checkouts: 1,284

Adult: 954
Teen/YA: 105
Children: 117

Museum Pass Use – April

Pass	Pass Type	Number Reserved	Checked Out	No Shows
Beardsley Zoo	Pick Up/Return at Library	3	2	1
Mattatuck Museum	Print from Home	4	4	0
Mystic Seaport	Print from Home	2	2	0
New Britain Museum of American Art	Print from Home	1	1	0
Wadsworth Atheneum	Print from Home	1	1	0

Museum Pass Use – May

Pass	Pass Type	Number Reserved	Checked Out	No Shows
Beardsley Zoo	Pick Up/Return at Library	4	3	1
EverWonder Children’s Museum	Print from Home	1	1	0
Mattatuck Museum	Print from Home	4	4	0
Mystic Seaport	Print from Home	2	2	0
New Britain Museum of American Art	Print from Home	1	1	0

Museum Pass Use – June

Pass	Pass Type	Number Reserved	Checked Out	No Shows
Beardsley Zoo	Pick Up/Return at Library	5	4	1
Connecticut Science Center	Coupon	1	0	1
Connecticut State Parks	Pick Up/Return at Library	1	1	0
KidsPlay Children’s Museum	Print From Home	1	1	0
Mattatuck Museum	Print from Home	6	6	0
Mystic Seaport	Print from Home	3	3	0
New Britain Museum of American Art	Print from Home	4	4	0
New England Air Museum	Print from Home	2	2	0
Old Sturbridge Village	Print from Home	1	1	0
Wadsworth Atheneum	Print from Home	1	1	0
White Memorial Conservation Center	Print from Home	1	1	0

Online Presence: April

Facebook Reach April 1 – April 30: 8,292

Facebook Followers as of 5/10/2023: 2,922

Instagram Reach April 1 – April 30: 346

Instagram Followers as of 4/5/2023: 1,084

Twitter Impressions April 1 – April 30: 1,271

Twitter Followers as of 4/5/2023: 501

Wowbrary Active Subscriptions as of 5/10/2023: 91
 Wowbrary Webpages Viewed April 1 – April 30: 442
 Wowbrary Clickthroughs to Catalog April 1 – April 30: 50

Website Visitors April 1 – April 30: 1,777
 Website Sessions April 1 – April 30: 2,631
 Website Pageviews April 1 – April 30: 4,901

Most Visited Website Pages (April 1 – April 30):

Home Page: 2,307	Digital: 96	Book Sale: 26
Programs: 282	Calendar: 85	New Movies: 24
Bunker Hill Branch: 220	Hall of Fame: 25	Directions: 18
Museum Passes: 220	eBooks: 69	Friends: 17
Research: 159	Borrowing Questions: 62	Geekdom: 15
About Us: 146	Newsletters: 55	Requests: 13
How to Get a Card: 141	Home Delivery: 52	Book a Librarian: 9
How to Find Books: 138	Board of Agents: 48	Meeting Rooms: 7
Ask A Librarian: 134	Library History: 32	Business Resources: 5
Genealogy/Local Hist.: 129	Computer Classes: 23	
Children's Division: 101	Teen/YA: 27	

Online Presence: May

Facebook Reach May 1 – May 31: 7,619
 Facebook Followers as of 6/15/2023: 2,973

Instagram Reach May 1 – May 31: 302
 Instagram Followers as of 6/15/2023: 1,093

Twitter Impressions May 1 – May 31: 790
 Twitter Followers as of 6/15/2023: 500

Wowbrary Active Subscriptions	as of 6/15/2023: 92
Wowbrary Webpages Viewed	May 1 – May 31: 436
Wowbrary Clickthroughs to Catalog	May 1 – May 31: 69

Website Visitors	May 1 – May 31: 1,729
Website Sessions	May 1 – May 31: 2,627
Website Pageviews	May 1 – May 31: 4,914

Most Visited Website Pages (May 1 – May 31):

Home Page: 2,421	How to Get a Card: 98	Hall of Fame: 23
Programs: 294	Digital: 89	Mobile Library: 21
Research: 168	Newsletters: 82	Friends: 15
Bunker Hill Branch: 164	Borrowing Questions: 73	New Movies: 15
Children’s Division: 154	eBooks: 69	Directions: 14
About Us: 143	Library History: 57	Requests: 12
Ask A Librarian: 138	Teen/YA: 39	Geekdom: 11
Museum Passes: 135	Board of Agents: 32	Business Resources: 11
Calendar: 132	Book Sale: 29	Book a Librarian: 8
Genealogy/Local Hist.: 129	Computer Classes: 26	
How to Find Books: 126	Home Delivery: 26	

Online Presence: June

Facebook Reach	June 1 – June 30: 14,028
Facebook Followers	as of 7/11/2023: 2,995

Instagram Reach	June 1 – June 30: 819
Instagram Followers	as of 7/11/2023: 1,095

Twitter Impressions	June 1 – June 30: 1,078
Twitter Followers	as of 7/11/2023: 503

Wowbrary Active Subscriptions as of 7/11/2023:
Wowbrary Webpages Viewed June 1 – June 30:
Wowbrary Clickthroughs to Catalog June 1 – June 30:

Website Visitors June 1 – June 30: 2,370
Website Sessions June 1 – June 30: 3,221
Website Pageviews June 1 – June 30: 5,619

Most Visited Website Pages (June 1 – June 30):

Home Page: 2,724	About Us: 112	New Movies: 23
Programs: 568	How to Find Books: 101	Hall of Fame: 21
Children's Division: 211	Borrowing Questions: 80	Home Delivery: 19
Museum Passes: 185	Newsletters: 76	Geekdom: 15
Bunker Hill Branch: 176	eBooks: 64	Friends: 14
Research: 175	Program Registrations: 52	Mobile Library: 13
How to Get a Card: 153	Board of Agents: 44	Computer Classes: 11
Genealogy/Local Hist.: 145	Teen/YA: 32	Business Resources: 9
Ask A Librarian: 135	Library History: 25	Requests: 6
Digital: 124	Book Sale: 30	Book a Librarian: 6
Calendar: 113	Directions: 30	Government Documents: 6