

STATE OF CONNECTICUT, RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS
STATE LIBRARY BOARD
November 24, 2025

INDEX

Members joining in person:
Jessica de Perio Wittman

Members joining via Teams:
Antay Bilgutay, Judge Henry Cohn, Mary Etter, Allen Hoffman, Scott Matheson, Claudia Jalowka, Betsy Pittman, Sandy Ruoff, Sheri Szymanski, Sally Whipple

Members absent: Melissa Hickey

Others joining in person:
Deborah Schander, Dawn LaValle, Maria Mayer

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m. by Chair Jessica de Perio Wittman. Maria Mayer took roll call attendance of Board members. No attendance of the members of the public attending the meeting was taken.

MINUTES

Mary Etter noted one typo to correct. PASSED unanimously as amended.

MINUTES
Motion

BOARD COMMENTS

Sally Whipple shared that every time she reads through the State Librarian's report, she is quite impressed and sees an organization that is reaching out across the State in every kind of way, conducting trainings, informing citizens, and helping them do their jobs better. She shared that the reports make her proud to be a Connecticut resident and have a library that is this active and helpful to people in the State.

BOARD COMMENTS

PUBLIC COMMENT

None at this time.

PUBLIC COMMENT

STATE LIBRARIAN'S REPORT

Deborah referred everyone to her written report for a full list of recent agency activities. She then highlighted several recent initiatives. She recognized the Division of Library Development team, led by Dawn LaValle, for the work done following the passage of the new library policies law which went into effect July 1st; these reviews ensured that public libraries are in compliance with the law, allowing them to receive the incentive grants/State funding. Deborah shared her gratitude for all the great work the DLD team has done and continues to do.

STATE LIBRARIAN'S REPORT

Deborah then shared that the State Library has been involved in a number of facilities projects at the 231 facility in Downtown Hartford. She stated that the Judicial Branch has recently completed a major roofing improvement project over the facility that impacts both sides of the building; in particular, solving leak issues over the special collections and museum storage areas, as well as in the

State Librarian suite. She shared that we have also been working with the facilities team to install new lighting in the museum, highlighting the importance of lighting and how it can negatively impact objects and documents within a museum environment. She expressed her great appreciation for the Judicial Branch's willingness to work with the CSL, despite the very different purposes of the two branches of government and usage of the shared building.

Deborah then shared that the State Library is proceeding with the study related to a potential State Archives site and have met with the architects and the team who are working on that study several times now, providing feedback on the work so far. A final report from them is expected in mid-December which will include their recommendation for how to proceed with that site, as well as some in-depth information about potential costs. We are anticipating that this will be a formal request before the General Assembly in our 2026 session.

Next, Deborah shared that we have formally launched fundraising efforts for the Connecticut's Revolution exhibit, which we anticipate opening on July 4, 2026. An event was held with the Connecticut Supreme Court Historical Society, who have been instrumental in disseminating information about this project to law firms, the legal community, and others. She shared that once the exhibit opens, it is anticipated to be open for a year and estimated that approximately 12,000 people will have the opportunity to visit our Museum for free. Deborah shared that Jennifer Matos and her team have been doing an amazing amount of work to prepare for it, with more to come.

The last item that Deborah highlighted is that the State Library is proceeding with a new hire who will be the Government and External Affairs Manager, the first of its kind within our agency. The position's focus includes legislative and agency affairs as well as strategic communications.

REPORTS OF BOARD COMMITTEES

None at this time.

OTHER REPORTS

External Organizations

A written report from Connecticut Supreme Court Historical Society, authored by Donald Rogers, Secretary, was included in the Board packets.

CONSENT AGENDA

The items that were on the consent agenda are:

2026 Meeting Calendar (SLB DOC 25-7)

State Public Library Construction Grant Recommendations (DLD)
(SLB DOC 25-8)

**REPORTS OF
BOARD
COMMITTEES**

**OTHER
REPORTS**
External
Organizations

**CONSENT
AGENDA**

Jessica asked the Board if any members would like to request that either Consent Agenda item be removed for separate consideration. Scott Matheson requested item 25-7 be moved to New Business in order to conduct a discussion regarding the number and frequency of Board meetings. It was so moved. Jessica then asked for a motion to approve the consent agenda as now presented.

Approval of Items on the Consent Agenda: There being no objections, the consent agenda was MOVED (M. Etter), seconded (S. Ruoff) and PASSED unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

Budget Update: Deborah shared that we are still waiting on funding decisions regarding the 2026 budget for IMLS and noted that there was a court ruling on Friday with respect to the lawsuit that Connecticut has joined, alongside 20 other States. She stated that the Judge issued summary judgment in favor of the States, as well as a permanent injunction preventing IMLS and the other involved agencies from implementing the executive order that was issued in March. We continue to wait on final decisions regarding the FFY 2026 budget now that the House and Senate subcommittees essentially restored full funding for IMLS in their proposed versions of the budget.

Legislative Update: Deborah stated that while our funding was not part of the special session a few weeks ago, we anticipate it will be a major portion of the conversations about the State Library in the regular session starting in February.

NEW BUSINESS

2026 Meeting Calendar (SLB DOC 25-7):

It was MOVED (M. Etter) seconded (S. Szymanski) that the State Library Board approve the dates of the 2026 Meeting Calendar and PASSED unanimously.

It was then MOVED (S. Ruoff) seconded (S. Szymanski) that the State Library Board proceed to a discussion regarding the dates and frequency of the 2027 Meeting Calendar. Jessica then opened the floor, and the Board held their discussion. Following the discussion, it was then MOVED (S. Matheson) and seconded (M. Etter) that the Chair, Jessica de Perio Wittman, and Secretary, Deborah Schander, of the State Library Board, work together with consultation from the State Library staff to identify the best possible schedule that will enable the Board to be in compliance with all statutory requirements, in a way that does not inhibit the work of the Board or the administrative staff, that will allow the Board an appropriate amount of input, and will enable us to continue to invite external organizations present to the Board as needed. PASSED unanimously.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Jessica requested that the Board go into Executive Session to discuss additional responsibilities for the State Librarian. At 1:42 p.m. it was MOVED (S. Matheson) seconded (M. Etter) THAT THE BOARD GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION AND INCLUDE DEBORAH. All others in attendance temporarily exited.

Motion

OLD BUSINESS

Budget Update

Legislative Update

NEW BUSINESS

Motion

Motion

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion

At approximately 2:21 p.m. the Board came out of Executive Session. It was Moved (A. Bilgutay) seconded (M. Etter) that the State Library Board 1.) approves the addition of revenue-generating writing projects related to the State Librarian's responsibilities as an optional task; 2.) approves allowing the State Librarian to pursue possible legislative action to direct the revenues of such projects to the State Library agency, rather than the General Fund; and 3.) that this provision be reviewed at the end of the first project undertaken by the State Librarian. PASSED unanimously.

Motion

ADJOURNMENT

At 2:25 p.m. it was MOVED (S. Syzmanski) and seconded (B. Pittman) TO ADJOURN. PASSED unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion

The next meeting is scheduled for 1:00 p.m. on Monday, January 26, 2026.

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah Schander, Secretary

Maria T. Mayer, Recorder