

Director's Report to the Board of Agents

Silas Bronson Library

December 17, 2018

Raechel Guest, Director

Front Plaza Project

Kurt Kuegler, the engineer who was brought in to assist with the front plaza renovation project, returned on December 7 to assist us with proper winterization of the fountain and to review the functionality. All of our Maintainers were able to attend the meeting and have their questions answered. Kuegler will be following up with the manufacturer regarding some minor questions about the fountain in winter.

Watterworth Signs has been selected to create a new sign for the front lawn, replacing the sign that was installed during the late 1970s. Watterworth will also be responsible for removing the old sign.

East Wing/Teen Zone Renovation

We have selected vendors for the carpeting and the glass wall for the computer classroom. We do not have enough money available for the Teen Zone glass wall, which means we will continue using the movable walls as the barrier for that space.

I met with the carpeting vendor on Thursday last week to discuss the project and begin selecting colors and patterns.

We anticipate that the vendor installing the computer cabling will start the job in early January. The City's electricians will finish up their wiring at about the same time.

Accounting Issues

At the request of Michael LeBlanc, Director of Finance, I met with Mary Jane Boucher from Internal Audit last week to review the issues we've been having. As I work on creating Cash Handling Procedures, she will review all proposed procedures and forms to ensure that we adopt the best standards and practices. My goal is to complete the Cash Handling Procedures by the end of January.

VITA

We have joined the United Way of Greater Waterbury and CT Association for Human Services VITA program (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) to offer free tax prep at the library. We had previously been offering the service through the AARP, but they were not able to be here last season or this upcoming season. VITA is available to individuals earning less than \$54,000 per year. The VITA system will allow the public to make appointments by calling 211; we have previously offered first-come, first-serve tax prep, which was problematic.

Library Publicity

I talked about the library's programs and services for a one-hour block on WATR's Talk of the Town last week and have been invited to return in January. I anticipate that this will be a monthly segment to promote the library.

Annual Budget Request

Our annual funding request to the City of Waterbury is due on Friday, January 4. The budget allocation won't be decided until June, by which time we will hopefully know what to expect from the State budget and aid to municipalities. Any reduction in funding by the State to the City may result in a decrease of funding to the library. We currently have one Librarian II position vacant due to the City's budget concerns. We were previously asked to keep the position vacant until March. I am hoping to be able to fill the vacancy at that time, but uncertainties at the State level create uncertainties here.

Card Suspensions Due to Fees/Fines

Per the Board's request, we attempted to determine how many of the 4,579 patron card suspensions are for children or children's books. However, it cannot be done automatically and it will take an extremely long time to look up each record manually. A sampling is attached, but it is impossible to say if it is a fair representation.

As mentioned previously, a current trend in public libraries is the elimination of all late fees and, in some cases, lost or damaged book fees. If fees are over \$5, our patrons can no longer borrow anything from the library. People living in poverty are disproportionately affected by this policy, as they are the ones least able to pay the fees. Children who are most in need of the library's resources often end up losing their library privileges because their families can't afford the fees.

Waterbury's poverty rate is at 25.4%. That's a quarter of the city's residents who most need the library and are least able to afford to pay their library fines.

Here are some options for the Board to consider on this topic:

- Elimination of fines for late items;
- Elimination of fines for lost/damaged items;
- Raising the threshold for suspending cards (currently set to \$5, the official Board policy states that borrowing privileges will be suspended when a patron's fees exceed the price of a paperbound book as established by the bibliographic database);
- Keep the fines for late and lost/damaged items, but stop suspending borrowing privileges entirely, encouraging patrons to pay what they can, when they can, or setting up payment plans for people with excess fines owed;
- Hold an amnesty day or week, during which patrons can return long overdue items without any fines.

We have seen an unusual decrease since 2009 in the percent of Waterbury residents who are library cardholders (from an average of 48% to an average of 25%), even as the number of library visits per capita has remained relatively constant. Although the percentage of resident cardholders finally started to increase in 2016, we are still seeing the total number of cardholders drop each year. One explanation may very well be the suspension of borrowing privileges for thousands of cardholders.

Circulation Division

November Statistical Reports: Main Library

Total Collection Size: 265,923
Total Items Added to Collection: 837
Total Items Circulated: 10,050
Total Circulation In-House: 203
Total Circulated at Other Libraries: 843
Total Circulated from Other Libraries: 346

Total Active Patrons: 10,960
Total Expired Patrons: 13,568
Total Patrons Added: 126

November Statistical Reports: Bunker Hill

Total Collection Size: 15,376
Total Items Added to Collection: 55
Total Items Circulated: 647
Total Circulation In-House: 0
Total Circulated at Other Libraries: 53
Total Circulated from Other Libraries: 160

Total Active Patrons: 403
Total Expired Patrons: 453
Total Patrons Added: 8

Museum Pass Usage, November 2018

American Clock & Watch Museum: 0
Barker Comic and Cartoon Museum: 0
Barnum Museum: 0
Beardsley Zoo: 1
Children's Museum/Roaring Brook Nature: 1
Connecticut Science Center: 0
Connecticut's Old State House: 0
EverWonder Children's Museum: 0
Harriet Beecher Stowe Center: 0
Imagine Nation: 0
Institute for American Indian Studies: 0
KidsPlay Childrens Museum: 2

Maritime Aquarium at Norwalk: 0
Mark Twain House: 0
Mattatuck Museum: 1
Mystic Aquarium: 0
Mystic Seaport: 1
New Britain Museum of American Art: 0
New England Air Museum: 0
New Haven Museum: 0
Old Sturbridge Village: 0
Peabody Museum of Natural History: 1
Wadsworth Atheneum: 1
White Memorial Conservation Center: 0

Online Presence

Facebook Followers as of 12/12/2018: 1,157
Facebook Reach Nov. 14 – Dec. 11: 3,240
Facebook Post Engagements Nov. 14 – Dec. 11: 1,330

Instagram Followers as of 12/12/2018: 322
Bronson Teens Instagram Followers as of 12/12/2018: 144
Twitter Followers as of 12/12/2018: 309

Website Visitors November 1 – November 30: 1,866
Website Sessions November 1 – November 30: 3,143
Website Pageviews November 1 – November 30: 5,840

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

Home Page: 3,187	eBooks: 117	Teen/YA: 28
Programs: 249	Children's Division: 84	Directions: 28
How to Find Books: 190	Borrowing Questions: 84	New Movies: 26
Research: 173	Museum Passes: 82	Library History: 25
Genealogy/Local Hist.: 158	How to Get a Card: 82	Newsletters: 23
Bunker Hill Branch: 158	Hall of Fame: 60	Friends: 18
Ask A Librarian: 144	News: 51	Board of Agents: 16
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