

Director's Report to the Library Commission

Discussing June & July 2026 | Presented August 2026

Taking July off means a very long Director's Report! Thank you in advance for reading though everything, and please let me know if you have any questions.

Maternity Leave:

- Staff did a wonderful job managing the library in my absence, including navigating multiple high attendance programs and internet outages. They kept everything running smoothly until my return and I am thankful to have such an amazing team!

Budget:

- During the budget presentation to the Town Council in March, it was requested that we restructure our funds to present a better understanding of the exact cost of the LION Consortium. When discussing this with the Finance Department, they recommended making the change at the beginning of FY27 so it would be easier to compare budgets when presenting our FY28 proposal. As I prepared this change, I noticed we had a number of funds that were allocated in inappropriate lines. I have since reorganized the budget within the existing Munis structure. Any changes that require a new line, even if we are transferring in already approved funds, need Council approval and would have to wait until FY28. With that in mind, please see the attached document that includes the original budget structure and the adjusted one. I am happy to answer questions about what was moved and why during our meeting.
- When I mentioned the change in budget break down at the last meeting, it was requested that we separate e-materials from physical materials. Unfortunately, due to the restraints of only using existing lines within Munis, I am not able to do that at this time. However, I am happy to include it here:
 - *Electronic Materials: \$17,276*
 - LION OverDrive: \$7,276 (this is a contractual obligation through LION and is thus included in the LION line of Munis, not the books/materials line.)
 - OverDrive Advantage Collection: \$2,000
 - Hoopla: \$8,000 (Hoopla is supplemented by the Friends who pay the service directly. They budgeted \$12,000 in their FY25. Please note that they run on a different fiscal year, Oct.-Sept.)
 - *Physical Materials: \$44,274*
 - Periodicals: \$4,756
 - Adult Materials: \$19,600
 - Youth Materials: \$18,676

- *Other: \$50*
 - Ledyard High School Yearbook: \$50

General Library News:

- We finished the weeding project at Bill and swapped the locations of the Fiction and Non-Fiction collections. In doing so, we were able to expand the following collections for both teens and adults: Large Print, Graphic Novel, and International Language. We are very excited to be able to meet patron needs by growing these collections!
- The library was approved for a staff scheduling program. We implemented Humanity in July, which allows staff to view their schedule online or an app, submit leave requests, express interest in open shifts, and more. It should make scheduling easier and faster, while also allowing us to quickly compare to payroll.
- With the start of the fiscal year, we began an analysis of our current services and collections. The goal was to evaluate their return on investment and ensure that funds are being allocated appropriately. Specifically, we are looking at JobNow and newspapers:
 - After reviewing JobNow's stats for the past few years and with the knowledge that the State Library was providing a comparable service, free to libraries, we opted to cancel it. Unfortunately, the State announced the cancelation of their service exactly one week after the group-buy period for member libraries in the Connecticut Library Consortium ended. Should we decide to reinvest, we will have to wait until next year. While we do not have comparable service, it still only served 26 people in the last year. We plan to assist patrons in-house and refer them to local agencies who would offer services and assistance designed for our geographic area.
 - As for the newspapers, The Day's pricing has remained relatively stable and has consistent, noticeable usage. It is also one of the only sources for local news, making it a highly valued resource in our community. USA Today and Wall Street Journal had significant price increases last year outside of what we had budgeted. While we were able to afford them for another year due to the Friend's generous support of Hoopla, we are concerned about their costs moving forward. To better understand the usage of these two newspapers, we are asking patrons to mark on a tally sheet whenever they use one. No decisions have been made about newspapers at this time. Regardless of what we decide for the Wall Street Journal and USA Today, we will continue our membership for The Day.
- Ledyard High School students made us lost and found boxes. The design is Lorraine's vision that the students brought to life. New procedures for managing lost and found items were developed and the boxes are established in both buildings. We are grateful for their support and craftsmanship!
- I am planning to start our strategic planning process in September. The planning team will consist of the Director, as well as representatives from the Commission, Friends of

Ledyard Library, Adult Services, Youth Services, and Circulation. My goal is to include staff from multiple professional levels, including a Library Associate. Working group sessions will be held with the full commission, friends' group, and staff, as well as community conversations, surveys, and interviews. The planning team will facilitate these groups and help sort through the feedback. I hope the Commission can select someone to be on the team during this meeting.

- The Mayor has approved the library to host occasional after-hours events. We are planning to partner with the Friends of Ledyard Library on a Fairy Ball in October, as well as an event with the Grinch in December. We will share additional details when they are finalized.
- The Connecticut State Library reached out about a new initiative they are partnering on with DEEP. The Laptop ConneCT program will provide free laptops to every principal public library in Connecticut. The laptops are meant to circulate to qualified residents for long term loans, with the exception of a small percentage for in-library use. The Library is required to host intake appointments, followed by training sessions before issuing laptops. The State is providing curriculum for the training. We plan to partner with Social Services to develop a procedure for distribution. Laptops should arrive sometime in September.

Summer Reading

- A full evaluation of our Summer Reading / Summer Adventure Program will be available in the next Director's Report, but here is a snapshot:
- Adult
 - We're proud to say that this Summer Reading has been incredibly successful! As of August 8, we have 203 people registered, which is a 223% increase from last year. Of those who responded, 85% were Ledyard/Gales Ferry residents, and 72% of all participants said they heard about the program through library staff.
 - A new change we've implemented is doing weekly drawings, which has gone very well. There is one more weekly drawing left, and the grand prize drawing. We hope to use what we've learned and make summer reading even better next year
- Youth Services
 - We are happy to report that we have had a highly successful summer programming season for our youth patrons! Programs have been well attended, with almost all reaching capacity, demonstrating strong community interest and participation. Our Summer Adventure Program encouraged consistent reading habits while special events, hands-on activities, performers, and educational workshops brought new and returning patrons into the library. Our Adventure Program is unique in that it not only logs reading but anything participants make or explore as well. This allows for more participation, especially from those reluctant readers who are often difficult to engage.

- As of August 8 we have 436 total registrants. This includes 385 individual registrations and 51 registrations from our pilot program with Child's Play Day Care Center. This pilot program will help us form the basis for reaching out to other day cares and involving them in the program next summer. Additionally, there have been 2,521 logged from our individual registrants and 35 adventures logged by Child's Play. We expect this number to increase before logging adventures closes on August 15.
- It has been a rewarding and impactful summer! The strong registration numbers, consistent engagement, and positive response to our programs highlight the library's important role as a welcoming community hub for families with children and teens. Going forward, we will continue to do our best to offer opportunities for learning, discovery, and connection for all ages.

Library Building:

- With the end of the fiscal year, I used our remaining funds to fulfill some building wish list items, including:
 - Bill Library
 - ADA Accessible Doorknobs for the maintenance closet, basement, and storage closet
 - Two small book carts, one for shelving and one for Technical Services
 - New bulletin board material to refurbish the existing boards in the meeting room. This will remain partially done in anticipation of the technology being added to the space (see below).
 - Gales Ferry Library
 - Single-sided book carts for storing books that need to be shelved
 - Small book cart for shelving
 - A new rug for the Children's Department; the old one was relocated to Bill
 - Replaced a broken office chair
 - Storage shelf for the basement
 - Both Libraries
 - Poopbag dispensers were mounted in both bathrooms. Instead of asking families to dispose of their soiled diapers in the dumpster, families can use a bag to contain the smells and mess. As a new mom, I have first hand experience of how helpful this is!
- When exploring our options for hybrid meetings, I asked the Town's IT Department what resources they could share. Justin is in the process of a multi-year CIP to upgrade the Town's meeting spaces for hybrid capability. For FY27, he was able to get us a camera system for hybrid meetings. The camera system is incredibly advanced and we are

grateful that he included our building in his plans! Staff received training on August 7, so we are all set to use it for both meetings and programs. For FY28, he offered to help replace our screen and projector with a SmartBoard. With this in mind, I am refraining from finishing the bulletin board project, as they will be removed to accommodate the new equipment. Any upgrades for Gales Ferry meetings need to be discussed with Parks & Recreation as they hold the lease for the Community Center. Staff will discuss internally about any technical needs the Library has for the Gales Ferry basement, taking into consideration accessibility and storage.

Library Field News

- The federal government is considering changes to or ending the E-Rate program. This is the program that provides discounted access to internet for schools and libraries. This year, Ledyard Public Library will receive \$1,476 for internet access and \$2,400 for dark fiber. Over the years, we have received \$49,616 in discounts or reimbursements. I would encourage everyone to review the [proposals](#) and the Schools Health & Library Broadband Coalition's [action page](#) for an in-depth overview of the changes and how you can share your voice on the matter.
- The American Library Association announced a new [The Librarians' and Library Workers' Bill of Rights](#). The resolution is simple, often assumed, but necessary to formalize in today's environment. We are fortunate to work for a community that values our library workers and their wellbeing.

Town News

- The Town's committee for celebrating America's 250th anniversary asked if we could display their poster exhibit. Each of the 10 posters features a Ledyard resident who played a role in American history and culture. The posters start with William Ledyard and end with present day Casey Neistat, a content creator known for videos that blend art, journalism, and storytelling. The exhibit is on display through the end of August, when it will be moved to the schools.

Voting & Discussion Items

- It is not in the governing documents for the Commission to approve Holidays. As Library employees have union contact negotiated holidays, we will utilize the Town's approved list moving forward.
- The following items are for discussion and eventual voting. They do not need to be completed during this meeting, however I want to start the conversation around them.
 - While onboarding, I familiarized myself with the library's policies. I found a number of inconsistencies regarding ages and circulation loan periods. The attached policies would align the ages to the State's law for unattended children, which is 12 years old.

- I would also like to propose eliminating the Internet Permission Form and replacing it with a more comprehensive Internet Use Policy, also attached. To verify that the form was no longer necessary, I reached out to Brian Grimmer, our E-Rate consultant. He said that it is a common misconception that E-Rate requires a permission form. As long as we meet other requirements, such as the filtering software, we are in compliance. I also feel that the form is a barrier to students who may be using our resources with no ill intention. It also doesn't address wireless access, which many youth utilize without our knowledge.

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