SIMSBURY PUBLIC LIBRARY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES – STRATEGIC PLANNING SUBCOMMITTEE
Town of Simsbury, Connecticut
Regular Meeting
September 23, 2026, 2:00 P.M.
Simsbury Public Library – Weatogue Room

PUBLIC COMMENTS can be submitted, to be read during the public audience portion of the agenda, to the Simsbury Town Clerk at townclerk@simsbury-ct.gov. Please submit your comments no later than 4:30p.m., Tuesday, August 25, 2026.

1. Call to order
2. Establish quorum of Trustees
3. Approval of minutes
4. Approved Strategic Planning Goals
5. Update on Report draft – Chair Letter, About Our Town, Welcome, Mission & Values, etc.
6. Committee questions, concerns
7. Adjournment

Respectfully submitted,
Cameron DiSanto

Library Board of Trustees' Strategic Planning Subcommittee

Town of Simsbury, CT
Regular Meeting
August 26, 2026 – 2:00 P.M.
Simsbury Public Library – Weatogue Room
725 Hopmeadow Street, Simsbury, CT 06070

MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER – Madam Chair McGrath called the meeting to order at 2:01 P.M.

Library Board of Trustees Members
Present: Holly McGrath, Chair; Don Heymann, Co-Chair; and Anne Erickson.
Absent: Mary Glassman, Secretary.

Simsbury Public Library Staff
Present: Lisa Miceli, Library Director; Chris Carney, Head of Adult Services
Absent: Stephanie Prato, Deputy Library Director/Head of Children's Services.

Other Attendees
Present: President of the Friends of the Library, Greg Golinski, Davina Fogel, Jennifer Kirkland, Karen Cantelmo, Dan Sommer, Board of Selectmen Member, Diana Yeisley.
Absent: Jamie Sepa, Shawn McLaughlin, Kathleen Miklus.

II. ESTABLISH QUORUM OF TRUSTEES

Quorum of Trustees was established.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – JULY 22, 2026 MEETING

July 22, 2026—Special Meeting

MOTION: Ms. Erickson made a motion, seconded by Co-Chair Heymann, to approve the Minutes of the July 22, 2026, Meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

IV. PUBLIC AUDIENCE

No Public Audience.

V. DISCUSS STRATEGIC PLAN 2027-2031 GOALS

The committee reviewed the revised strategic plan goals and supporting objectives. The revisions incorporated feedback from the previous meeting and were intended to simplify the language, consolidate overlapping concepts, and reflect community survey feedback. The committee discussed and agreed that minor wording changes would make the objectives clearer and less repetitive.

VI. COMMITTEE QUESTIONS, CONCERNS, NEXT STEPS

The committee discussed next steps:

- Compile statistics and data points demonstrating the library's value to the community and measuring progress.
- Incorporate a "Welcome to Simsbury" section and a letter from the Chair.
- Continue development of the introductory and background sections, including community and library data, the vision and mission, and supporting information from the community survey.
- Prepare and circulate another draft of the strategic plan for review.
- Begin collecting photographs and other images for the visual layout of the final document.
- Staff and committee members will share relevant photographs from library programs and community activities.
- Continue reviewing and refining the goals and supporting objectives at the next meeting.

Next meeting: September 23, 2026.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Ms. Erickson made a motion, seconded by Co-Chair Heymann, to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.

Madam Chair McGrath adjourned the meeting at 3:02 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,
Cameron DiSanto
Administrative Secretary

Letter from the Chair of the Library Board of Trustees

Dear Fellow Simsbury Residents,

I am pleased to share with you the Simsbury Public Library Strategic Plan for 2027 through 2031. Since its establishment, Simsbury Public Library has played an integral role in the vibrant life and well-being of Simsbury by providing free and equal access to information, experiences, and educational resources that build community and inspire a lifetime of learning. By updating the strategic plan every five years, the Library surveys the needs and desires of residents and reflects these priorities in the goals that guide library services and community engagement.

During the implementation of the previous Strategic Plan, from 2022 to 2026, the Library grew in many key areas with an emphasis on strong community partnerships and responsive outreach. These collaborations have led to many community gatherings, a range of dynamic programming, and intergenerational events. (see Highlights, page X.)

As we celebrate our achievements, the process to develop the current Strategic Plan has created opportunities for reflection on how to continue moving the Library forward during rapidly changing times. This Plan was developed based on input from you, the residents, the Friends of the Simsbury Public Library, the Library staff, civic organizations, and town departments and officials.

At the Plan's core were questionnaires available to all Simsbury residents and Library patrons. During several listening sessions at the Library and at other venues in town, residents were invited to engage in conversations and share their aspirations, concerns and ideas about strengthening the community. The feedback we solicited was purposely not focused solely on the Library as a standalone entity but on how the Library can help meet the changing needs of the broader Simsbury community.

As we recovered from the COVID era – engagement numbers gradually increased each year, finally meeting pre-pandemic levels – the Library continues to face new challenges. These include changing Town demographics (more older residents and fewer children), and the increasing use of social media and technology by all age groups, sometimes resulting in mental health challenges and loneliness. Simsbury, like most communities in the United States, is also dealing with financial constraints, which impact all Town services, as well as concerns about social cohesion, the lack of civil discourse, and the impact of emerging technologies like artificial intelligence.

Given these challenges, the data we collected from more than 450 respondents reflected a strong desire for the Simsbury Public Library to continue growing and evolving as an inclusive and welcoming community hub of exploration, learning and connection. Many respondents also wanted the Library to serve as a place where different voices can be heard to promote civic dialogue and mutual understanding. This Plan aims to reflect these priorities by combining traditional Library services with

innovative systems, events and programming starting with books and digital reading materials and extending to new, accessible ways to learn and share knowledge and ideas.

The Board of Trustees of the Simsbury Public Library hopes this Strategic Plan will help Simsbury residents understand where the Library is heading and how it expects to meet its objectives. We remain firmly committed to providing excellent service to our patrons and being a safe, welcoming and inclusive gathering place for community connection and lifelong learning.

Holly McGrath
Chair, Simsbury Public Library Board of Trustees

About Our Town

A Brief History
First inhabited by the Massacoe Tribe, the land along the banks of the Farmington River Valley provided rich soil and abundant fish and game for the indigenous people, as well an opportunity for early settlers who migrated to the area's fertile grounds in the mid-seventeenth century.

Founded in 1670, Simsbury's early citizens farmed the land, manufactured explosives, quarried rock, and transported goods along the canal system that ran through the center of town. Their legacy of hard work and neighborly care laid the foundation of our thriving community.

Welcome to Simsbury!
Simsbury is a suburb of Hartford located in Connecticut's scenic Farmington Valley. With a population of 2X,XXX people, the town is nestled among woodlands, parks, and agricultural land.

In addition to single-family homes, Simsbury's new apartment complexes have provided housing alternatives, welcoming more than X,000 new neighbors. Yet, Simsbury retains its small-town feel with robust civic engagement through dozens of clubs, service organizations, sports leagues, and houses of worship. The local economy is supported by a vibrant combination of small businesses, retailers, restaurants, and corporations.

A well-educated community that values educational excellence and lifelong learning opportunities, Simsbury residents are proud of their school system. The high school's graduation rate is 9X%, and schools have consistently ranked near the top in state-wide mastery tests. The Town is also home to several private schools, as well as an active home-school population.

Community members and visitors enjoy the outdoors along the town's hiking and biking trails and the scenic Farmington River. The Town also offers excellent outdoor facilities, including the Simsbury Meadows Performing Arts Center, Simsbury Farms Golf Course and Recreation Complex, and many parks and hiking trails.

Simsbury Public Library has grown in service to the town since it was founded as the Simsbury Free Library in 1872. With thoughtful growth over the years, the Simsbury Public Library was able to expand its footprint and diversify its resources for patrons. Simply put, the Simsbury Public Library has become essential to the community as a connector, convener, and center for learning.

After several renovations and expansions, the library is now a

45,795 square-foot building that serves the public with eight meeting rooms, streaming broadcast capabilities, a thriving Children's Department, a dedicated space for teens, the Business and Career Center, and the Innovators Workshop.

The majority of Library funding comes from the Town of Simsbury in the form of tax appropriation. Simsbury Public Library also seeks grants, receives bequests and memorial gifts, as well as substantial financial and programming support from the Friends of the Simsbury Public Library.

The Town has invested $X.XX per week per capita for the past three years. The return on that investment is currently $4.68 for every $1 spent.

Guided by the 2021-2026 Strategic Plan, Simsbury Public Library made significant strides in both in-person and digital access for patrons. Library staff have connected with residents regularly at off-site programs while encouraging patrons to visit the Library for a wide variety of programs, classes and events.

During and after the Covid pandemic, digital resources were updated and expanded, so the public could access programs from home and online, which enabled patrons to remain connected to the world and each other through Library services and resources. Residents and businesses looked to Simsbury Public Library as a trusted source of information.

With excellent public schools, an award-winning library, outstanding recreation facilities, beautiful open spaces, and a robust business community, the citizens of Simsbury take pride in our history with hope and aspirations for an even brighter future.

Highlights

- Nationally ranked by _____ as one of only two Connecticut libraries as a Library Journal Star Library.

- As teenager engagement has increased, Teen Services Librarian Mary Richardson received the Connecticut Library Association Excellence in Young Adult Service Award in recognition of her work creating a safe and welcoming space for teens.

- Pollinator pathway gardens were established on the Library grounds.

- As demand for technology has increased, technology throughout the Library has been upgraded using funds from annual Public, Educational, and Governmental Programming & Education Technology Investment Account (PEGPETIA) grants.

- Simsbury Public Library serves as a hub library for the Connecticut Library for Accessible Books.

- The Library hosts a Little Free Food Pantry thanks to the work of 7th grade community member JJ Hanrahan.

- Circulation of digital materials, ebooks, and e-audiobooks has increased by 18%.

- The Library's Head of Children's Services has been named Deputy Library Director, which gives the library additional management support and staff cohesion.

- In partnership with the Simsbury Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Council and Social Services, the Library has hosted three annual Community Pride Picnics.

- In partnership with the Simsbury Sustainability Committee, the Library has hosted three Annual Community Sustainability Fairs.

- The Maker Space has expanded and regularly hosts guest instructors.

- The Business Career Center … To discuss.

Our Vision

The Simsbury Public Library inspires an inclusive community that values exploration and connection through learning.

Our Mission

The Simsbury Public Library provides free and equal access to information, experiences and educational resources that build community and inspire a lifetime of learning.

Where Everyone is Welcome

Simsbury Public Library welcomes patrons, staff, and volunteers of all ages, abilities, races, genders, ethnicities, cultures, religions, sexual orientations, gender identities, socio-economic statuses, political affiliations, and viewpoints.

We invite you to visit the Library, which is committed to providing a comfortable space where your individual needs are met with respect and without judgment. As a vital Town asset, we provide equal access to information and resources, so each individual can thrive and learn in an ever-changing society, thereby supporting the community's desire for tolerance, openness, acceptance, and inclusion.

To promote these values, Simsbury Public Library will:

- Create and sustain a culture of respect, in which individuals are heard, valued, and included.

- Remain engaged with the community in a process of continual improvement and responsiveness.

- Develop and implement programs, services, collections, and spaces for all ages and backgrounds.

- Expand strategic partnerships and collaborations with local organizations to overcome social injustice and advance equity in the community.

Programs and platforms may change over time, but one thing that remains the same: the Library's unwavering commitment to provide superior traditional library services and evolving digital resources that the world has come to rely on.

This document is the result of community surveys, library staff input, and the work of a dedicated strategic planning committee. The committee was comprised of members of the Library Board of Trustees, Library staff, and representatives from the greater Simsbury community.

The Strategic Planning Committee compiled this new plan with a full understanding that the people of Simsbury want to live in a community that is welcoming, inclusive and active.

(approved goals)

Goal 1

Simsbury Library welcomes everyone and fosters social connections and understanding in a safe, vibrant learning community.

- Increase opportunities for civic engagement and understanding through public forums, programming, and opportunities for community dialogue.
- Promote the depth and variety of Library services and resources to encourage deeper and broader patron engagement.
- Create opportunities for residents to share their ideas and talents and to learn from collective experiences.
- Increase collaboration and strategic partnerships with civic organizations, businesses, and other libraries to expand the scope and reach of the Library's services and programs.
- Communicate broadly, through multiple outlets, to maximize public awareness of Library resources.
- Meet people where they are – including robust family programming, a variety of outreach efforts, and services for homebound residents.

Goal 2
Simsbury Library provides a safe and accessible space to explore and access physical and digital resources and technology support.

- Ensure the Library facility, programs, and materials are accessible to everyone of all ages and abilities, ensuring children and teens have specially designated areas to help them feel welcome.

- Optimize accessibility by presenting programs at the Library, in the community, and online.

- Expand access to digital collections, including ebooks, audio books, and streaming content.

- Continually evaluate current and emerging technologies to meet the needs of the community. -

- Offer accessible, welcoming, and well-maintained grounds and facilities that align with the town's evolving needs.

- Enhance the community's knowledge of and appreciation for the natural environment to strengthen healthy connections and community well-being.

Goal 3
Simsbury Library supports a community that

values and welcomes people of all abilities, cultures and experiences.

- Engage the broad community in a learning process that supports diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Expand strategic partnerships and collaborations with local organizations that strive to overcome social injustice in the community.
- Strengthen programming that fosters both individual and community understanding of social, cross-cultural, intellectual, and political affairs.
- Provide opportunities for patrons to engage with the visual arts, music, literature, etc. to elevate human kinship and artistic appreciation.
- Enhance and publicize services that welcome and engage new residents.

Goal 4: Simsbury Library provides learning opportunities through its business and career center while promoting local economic development.

- Support individual career development and employment by providing informational and skill-building programs.

- Continually disseminate timely relevant information, resources and guidelines to the business community.

- Align with town goals and collaborate with town departments and commissions to support economic development.

- Host programs with local businesses and nonprofits to raise awareness of community resources and expertise to spark new initiatives.

- Provide resources for entrepreneurs to encourage business incubation.

- Maintain the Innovators' Workshop to include relevant technologies.