



Windsor Library

SUSTAINABLE
LIBRARIES
INITIATIVE FINAL
REPORT

Who We Are

The Windsor Public Library is an incorporated library in Windsor, Vermont. Our service population is roughly 3,400 people. In 2024, we had over 11,200 visits to the library. 2,685 people (children and adults) participated in library programs.



Why join the Sustainable Libraries Initiative



We live in Vermont, where we experience so much natural beauty on a daily basis. We also know that climate change is happening, and is affecting life for all of us. It is urgent that humans planet-wide make the necessary changes to slow or even reverse climate change, and libraries – with their long history of sharing resources, and their roles as community centers and community education providers – are ideally situated to be at the vanguard of making these important changes. Joining the sustainable libraries initiative allows us to have the best information and to be well-supported as we strive to excel in supporting our community.

Sustainability Policy Passed 9/26/22

To be truly sustainable, an organization must embody practices that are environmentally sound, economically feasible, and socially equitable. With this in mind, the Windsor Public Library's Board of Trustees and staff are committed to minimizing our library's environmental impact and maximizing future generations' ability to live, work, and play in our shared natural environment, with equal access to clean air, clean water, and natural resources. We will strive to:

- ▶ Minimize pollution and waste
- ▶ Conserve energy and water
- ▶ Protect habitat
- ▶ Support renewable energy resources
- ▶ Buy environmentally friendly products, and
- ▶ Encourage environmentally preferable transportation.

Outdoor Spaces

- Our front garden is 80% native perennials.
- We have a compost bin for all organic waste.
- Our 3 backyard raised-bed gardens are for our children's program – vegetables grown and cared for by the children with librarian assistance.
- We use no pesticides, and flower beds are native so don't require watering.
- Recently in the backyard, we planted a tulip tree and a yellow birch – both vermont natives. Other surrounding trees include the red oak out front, a honey locust tree, and multiple sugar maples in the back.
- Our lawn is mowed (by a generous neighbor) with an electric mower.



Indoor spaces

- ▶ We open windows when we can for fresh air.
- ▶ Our HVAC is cleaned and maintained annually.
- ▶ Air purifiers are used in the children's room, meeting room, and staff office when windows can't be open.
- ▶ Smoking is prohibited on library property (inside and out.)
- ▶ Our small library has 16 plants for air quality and beauty.



A few of the Windsor Public Library resident plants

Transportation

WPL staff opt for green transportation.

- Two of the three staff members live in town and walk to work daily.

The other staff person lives 20 miles away but tries to bicycle at least twice a week. In the winter, this is weather dependent, but can also include biking or running to the Moover bus, which then takes them 13 of the 20-mile commute.

- Working from home is allowed and encouraged when possible



Energy

- ▶ Our furnace and HVAC are maintained annually.
- ▶ We have a programmable thermometer and keep the temperature low in the winter (62-65) and higher in the summer (78)
- ▶ The staff office has 2 Indow window inserts for cold weather to decrease drafts
- ▶ In 2023, we replaced all T-8 light bulbs with LEDs. This resulted in our monthly electric usage going from \$224 to \$180/month.
- ▶ Our bathroom light turns off automatically.
- ▶ Staff turn off unneeded lights when leaving a room.

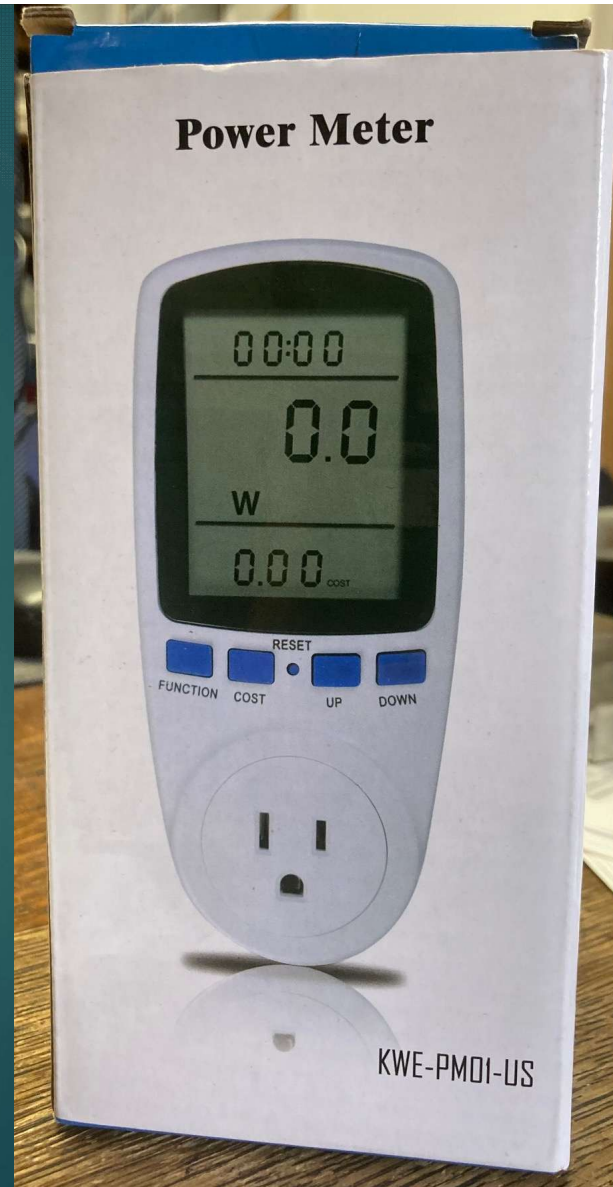


Energy, cont:

In 2023, we replaced the 4 patron desktop computers with Chromebooks – 2 that are locked to the table and 2 that can be checked out to use elsewhere in the library. Chromebooks use less electricity and also allow us to use our space more creatively and efficiently, such as during this recent jigsaw puzzle contest.



A Power Meter in our library of things lets patrons see how much energy different appliances use and make better decisions on what to use and how much to use it.



New Flat Roof

We had the flat roof over our office replaced in 2024. This gets us a step closer to being able to have solar panels installed on the roof that will cover 1/3 of our electricity. (This pic was after receiving 3 feet of snow in December 2020.)



Patrons can check out a firewood moisture meter to make sure their firewood is at the optimum dryness for burning.



Materials

- We purchase and use recycled paper.
- We use one-side-used paper for scrap paper and note-taking
- We print double-sided unless single-sided is needed.
- Recycle bins are available in all rooms.
- Programming supplies are primarily recycled materials donated by the community or occasionally (as in this children's project) invasive species that are pulled up and then used.
- We encourage attendees at our potlucks to bring their own plate/cup.
- We have a collection of washable silverware and cups that we use for events.
- We use water from the tap, not bottled water.



One children's program involves harvesting invasive fragmites and using these to create bees nests (where native bees can "hole up.")



Materials, cont:

We borrow a rotating selection of large-print books from the VT Department of Libraries rather than buying new LP titles. Our youth librarian had the great idea of creating temporary sleeves out of old underwear elastics with the information and barcode on them that could be transferred from book to book with no waste. (We did laminate the info sheet so it would last...)

Our monthly mending group is thriving and keeping ripped or damaged clothing in use and out of the trash.



Materials, cont: Windsor's Great Giveaway!

We participate in and spread the word about Windsor's biannual Great Giveaway. Windsor has 2 "Dump Days" a year when Windsor residents can throw away unwanted, unrecyclable items, but the Great Giveaway happens the week before dump day, where residents can list items they don't want on a town-wide spreadsheet with their addresses so items are shared and re-used rather than discarded.



Collective Impact

- Two community conversations were conducted as part of our recent strategic planning
- Multiple interviews were held this summer with 12 Windsor leaders who are not regular library users
- The library created a survey that was completed by over 80 Windsorites.
- The library created an interactive civic display in April touting the Micromoo: Windsor's free microtransit that needed their budget to pass on town meeting day. (It did pass!)
- The Windsor Public Library partners regularly with other Windsor organizations.



Social Cohesion

- ▶ The Windsor Public Library(WPL) passed a DEI policy in early 2025.
- ▶ The WPL regularly has programs celebrating Windsor's LGBTQ+ populations, including the June 2025 VT Humanities-sponsored talk by Stan Baker and Peter Harrigan – one of the couples who first sued the state of Vermont for the right to get married in the late 1990s.
- ▶ A big community aspiration here in Windsor is to live sustainably in this age of climate change. Each year, we have several programs related to this community goal.



Social Cohesion, cont.

- ▶ Celebrating the Stories of Windsor (a 2024-2025 program which collected and shared stories from Windsorites from different demographics and life situations) allowed an opportunity for community residents who would normally not interact to engage with each other.



- 1. Kick-Off Event October 7th, 6:30PM - Windsor Welcome Center**
Led by performance artists Marv Klassen-Landis, Ham Gillett, and Michael Zerphy. Including humor, songs, and stories. All are welcome!
- 2. Writing for Personal Expression and Healing—Nov. 4, 6:30—Library**
Participants will gain insight into using writing to express themselves and record life events. They will learn to use journaling as a tool for healing and growth. They will practice helping others use these techniques.
- 3. Storytelling and Story Writing—Nov 18, 6:30—Windsor Library**
Participants will gain comfort in telling their stories. They will receive tips on framing a story and telling it in front of an audience. Participants will be able to practice sharing these techniques.
- 4. Poetry Can Be Fun—Jan 2nd, 6:30—Windsor Library**
Participants will be shown the joy of poetry, and will see how poetry can be used to engage an interviewee. Participants will practice helping others enjoy poetry games, exercises and forms.
- 5. Interview Skills Training—Dec.16th—Windsor Library**
Participants learn to interview another, one-on-one, to hear and reflect their stories. Participants will be paired up to practice interviewing one another.
- 6. One-on-one Interviewing other Windsorites to glean their stories.**
- 7. Final Celebration—June —Windsor Welcome Center**
<https://windsorlibrary.org/CSW> to learn more!

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

In 2023, we were able to install a lift so that folks unable to navigate stairs can finally access our bathroom, children's room, and meeting room.

We installed a handicapped door opener on our front door in 2024.



Final celebration after the lift was installed



Resilience Planning

- ▶ The Windsor Public Library has a disaster preparedness plan
- ▶ We regularly provide programming on native trees, gardening, foraging and more.
- ▶ We have a seed library where folks can “borrow” free seeds to plant in their gardens. In 2026, we will start having seed saving programming so that folks who want to can return saved seeds to the seed library.
- ▶ We frequently have outdoor walks or hikes where participants can connect with one another and experience the beauty of Windsor.



Financials

The Windsor Public Library is in a pretty good position financially.

- We have a \$300,000 investment account, and only take distributions from it if we can do so without affecting our future reliance on this money.
- Staff make a living wage (albeit have no health care.)
- Working to be able to offer health insurance to staff is a focus of our new strategic plan.
- Library cash flow fund balance is adequate to serve the public and ensure the business continuity of the library during financial disruption.

Our Plans to Continue to Work Towards Triple Bottom Line Sustainability in the Future

- ▶ Continue to work so that staff have a living wage including health care
- ▶ Search out grants or other funding sources to install photovoltaic panels on the library's flat roof
- ▶ Work with the Town of Windsor in being a part of their emergency planning as we face climate change.
- ▶ Continue with collection weeding to free up space for additional community space
- ▶ Continue to strengthen partnerships with other Windsor organizations, both nonprofit and for-profit
- ▶ Have a library staff or board member join the Rotary Club for additional connection with local businesses.
- ▶ Increase and perhaps formalize library offering of information literacy training, especially in this age of AI.
- ▶ And more!

Thank you for this wonderful
opportunity to increase our
sustainability by completing the
Sustainable Libraries Initiative
program!

