

Chronology of Library Events and Related Information
Prepared by the Library Board of Trustees, February 6, 2024

Date	Information
1920	Town population 896
1928	Town resident Daniel Clark Joyce, a farmer, member of the CT House of Representatives and town treasurer, passed away in 1928. In his will, he bequeathed to the Town \$7,000 to build a town library and \$21,000 to purchase books and operate that library. The town would not receive funds until after the death of one of Mr. Joyce's beneficiaries.
1930	Town population 926
1940	Town population 1,345
1945	Daniel Clark Joyce's funds became available to the town.
1947	The Library Board was established.
1949	The town approved at a town meeting on May 5, 1949 to repurpose the former town hall at 165 Whisconier Road into a public library.
1950	Town population 1,688
1951	Town completed renovations of the old town hall into a public library, which opened in September. It was named The Joyce Memorial Library after its major benefactor, and it contained 3,000 books.
1953	The Friends of the Library was formed to meet special needs of the library.
1960	Town population 3,405
1970	Town population 9,688
1975	A 9,600 sq ft library was built at 182 Whisconier Road. The old library building was to be used by the Brookfield Historical Society.
1980	Town population 12,872
1985	The population increased by 34% since the new library opened, and residents began discussing the need for a larger library.
1988	The town hired the first of many consultants and architects to explore options for a larger library, but no actions occurred.
1990	Town population 14,113
2000	Town population 15,644
2002	The Library Board commissioned Library Development Solutions of New Jersey to do a space needs study. They determined the library space was inadequate for the increased population. Note: in 2015, the space requirement for Brookfield, using guidelines developed by the Connecticut State Library, indicate our library should be 27,000 to 32,000 square feet. Our library is 9,600 sq.

2002 The Brookfield Plan of Conservation and Development determined a new library as a more pressing need than recreation or community center.

2009 The Town contracted with the architectural firm Tuthill and Wells who recommended relocating the library to the Municipal Campus. The State authorized a library construction grant, but since no construction occurred, the grant lapsed.

2010 Town population 16,452

2012 The Board of Selectmen appointed a Facilities Planning Committee, which recommended three capital projects: Library, Parks and Recreation Field House and decision on Huckleberry School's future. They estimated bonding in 2019.

2015 The State required each town to develop a Plan of Conservation and Development every ten years to provide guidance and information on the needs of each town. (Note: the current requirement is to develop a plan every five years.) In 2015, our plan cited the need for a new library (p. 136) and the need to upgrade both Huckleberry and Whisconier schools. No other town building needs were cited.

2015 The Town received a new \$1,000,000 construction grant from the State, with the stipulation that the project be approved by the voters by March 1, 2018.

2017 January: The Town hired the architectural firm of Doyle Coffin to provide pre-referendum services including presentations and discussions with town officials, library staff, and the public concerning location and services to be provided.

Library Board considered numerous sites for a new library and determined that the Municipal Campus would be the best. Plans were made to relocate the field used by the Brookfield Soccer Club to another site on the Municipal Campus.

Doyle Coffin updated the Library Space Needs Study and timeline and prepared preliminary designs and visual displays for a new library.

In August, the Library Board surveyed the community on library use. 1,036 responded, with most citing the need for more space.

2018 February 27: A referendum was held to expend up to \$14,775,000 for a new library. Votes in favor were 1,203 and votes against were 2,296. The referendum failed.

March 1: The \$1,000,000 construction grant from the State lapsed.

The Library Board determined that, while most people recognized that the current library was too small, lacked meeting spaces and was not fully ADA

2019 compliant, the main reasons the referendum failed were that citizens were concerned with the possible school referendum concerning the future of Huckleberry School and those who supported a soccer field in its present location were unaware of plans to relocate the soccer field on the Municipal Campus.

2019 March 5: The town held a referendum on a new \$78.1 million elementary school to replace Center, which would remain a town building, and Huckleberry, which would be demolished.

August: The Board of Selectmen appointed the Center School Ad Hoc Committee to “explore the ‘highest and best’ use” of the Center School facility. Ten appointed members identified approximately 143 committees/organizations/town departments who might be able to use part of Center and invited any to present their need to the commission.

2020 Town population 17,528

August 1, 2020: The Center School Ad Hoc Committee recommended to the Board of Selectmen that the “entire facility be renovated and repurposed to accommodate a new Library (40,000 sq ft), the Parks and Recreation Department (14,000 sq ft), and made available for other periodic community use.”

The New Library Committee, a subcommittee of the Library Board, met frequently to develop timelines, provide information to the town, discuss next steps with the Municipal Building Committee on the library’s use of the former Center School and site.

2021 The Town budgeted \$30,000 for a phase 1 study of Center School to determine the feasibility of the site and structure to be repurposed as a library with spaces for Parks and Recreation. Two other phases would ensue.

December: The Town advertised the requirements for Phase I and twelve firms sent proposals. Members of the Municipal Building Committee, Library Board and Parks and Rec interviewed four candidates.

2022 June: The architectural firm of Doyle Coffin (D.C.) of Ridgefield was awarded the project and our contact was Rick Zini.

September: Zini provided a zoom presentation on progress in Phase I to the Library Board, New Library Committee and Parks and Rec. We stressed the need for three cost analyses, with no additional space:

- 1) upgrading the existing structure,
- 2) renovating part and demolishing and adding part new,
- 3) demolishing all and building all new with increase in footage..

2022 November: we received an update report from D.C, which still did not include the three options. Additionally, the cost estimate updates did not include all costs (e.g., furniture, equipment, professional services) which would increase the total by approximately 20%. We discussed our concerns with the Municipal Building Committee.

At the request of the Selectmen, we began discussing with Parks and Rec the possible uses we could make of Center School after 8/31/23.

2023 January: Doyle Coffin submitted their Phase 1 report to the Municipal Building Committee.

Christina Cumberton reported to the Capital Committee on the need for a larger library to accommodate the growth of the town, the space constraints with our current facility and grounds, and continuing ADA concerns.

The Library Board of Trustees requested \$150,000 in the town budget for phases II and III as the total amount needed primarily for the required architectural drawings to apply for a State Library Construction grant of \$1 million. We agreed that the funds could be provided over a three year period.

Note: We checked with the State Library and they indicated we would be eligible for the State grant as long as the library was part of the project.

March 27: Jessely Pineda, chair of the NLC, guided a group of approximately 30 representatives from the Board of Selectmen, Historic District Commission, Parks and Rec staff, library staff, Board of Education, Library Foundation, Library Board Trustees, members of the New Library Committee on a tour of CES. She provided a diagram of the building and indicated where certain programs and activities could occur.

April 3: The MBC submitted to the Board of Selectmen Doyle Coffin's final Phase I report report from on the Center School Reuse project.

April 3: The Board of Selectmen charged the Municipal Building Committee *to determine the most economical plan for allowing Parks & Recreation Department, the Brookfield Library and other entities in the town to move in and utilize the CES in its current state and determine all associated costs for short and long term planning purpose. Additionally, it [sic] not economically feasible to utilize CES without major expenses that the MBC determine a plan to shutter and all associated costs....*" The motion passed 3-0.

May: The Board of Selectmen authorized the MBC to form a committee to include representation from the library and parks and rec to determine the use of

2022 Center School after the Board of Education vacated at the end of August. It is unclear whether that committee ever met.

June: Christina Cumberton, chair of the Library Board, requested that the Board of Finance and Board of Selectmen designate additional funds in a separate reserve account to accomplish Phases II and III, in order to apply for a \$1 million State of Connecticut Library Construction grant.

June: The town approved \$50,000 in a special reserve fund as of July 1, 2023 for Phase II pre-referendum services.

2023 August: Candlewood Lake Elementary School opened for students in pre-k—5. Huckleberry School was demolished and Center School became vacant.

September: The new Candlewood Lake Elementary School opened.

Fall: The First Selectwoman announced that Center would be winterized and would remain vacant.

2024 January 2024: The Library Board submitted a request for additional funds in the special reserve account to be used for Phases II and III.

First Selectman Steve Dunn announced a special committee would develop short, medium and long term use of Center School as a Community Center to include a new library and space for parks and rec.

Other Information: The Brookfield Library Foundation, a private non-profit, was formed in 2010 to “advocate for and engage in fundraising for a new Brookfield Library.” The Foundation sponsored the play “Love Letters” in 2021 and comedy shows in 2022 and 2023 so that townspeople would become familiar with the Foundation’s mission. The Foundation was unable to undertake any significant fundraising activities until the Town officially supported a plan for a new library, including a time table to move to a referendum.

Town Wealth, July 2023; The State of Connecticut determined the wealth of the 169 towns in the state based on property tax base and income per person SS10-261(a)(5). The lower the number, the greater the wealth capacity for that town. Brookfield ranked 40th. Area towns ranked as follows: New Fairfield 43, Newtown 44, New Milford 79, Bethel 81, Danbury 124.

