

## **ANNOUNCEMENT**

The City is pleased to announce a restructuring of leadership and support staffing at the Walker Memorial Library that will provide for enhanced management of the library and its personnel. These changes will result in increased flexibility to expand and adjust hours of operation and better deploy our available resources to serve the needs of our library patrons.

Three librarian positions have been converted into two managerial positions (a Senior Librarian and a Librarian), with the inclusion of two additional Library Assistant positions. The Senior Librarian position will focus on library operations, and the Librarian position will focus on programming and community outreach, both serving under the direction of Library Director Rosemary Bebris. This change will provide a clear management structure, along with providing appropriate supervisory coverage during expanded hours of operation in the future. The two Library Assistant positions have been created to strengthen service delivery support for the library overall, rather than restricting their focus to specific sections within the department, providing them the flexibility to provide support wherever needed.

These changes address a silo effect which had previously divided librarians and their respective staff into separate operational units, providing instead a library that can now operate as a single cohesive department. These changes also enhance collaboration between staff members and improves staff flexibility to respond to changing needs and new opportunities for the library. The Walker Memorial Library has faced many important changes lately, including offering services in a post-pandemic world, changes in technology, and the creation of a Library Advisory Committee, and these structural changes are a strategy to prioritize stability and longevity for this critical City resource into the future.

This organizational restructure is accomplished through existing funding for the library and as a result of an existing vacancy, without the loss of any existing staff members. These changes had been contemplated for more than a year, but due to pandemic restraints on library operations, they are just now being implemented.

We are additionally pleased that Lending Services Librarian Luke Sorenson has accepted the promotion to the new position as Senior Librarian, and Youth Services Librarian Kate Radke has accepted the promotion to the new position as Librarian.

Luke has served as the City's Lending Services Librarian since June 2016 and brings diverse library experience and an extensive educational background to his new position. Prior to joining the City of Westbrook, Luke served as the director of the Rumford Public Library for five years. As a volunteer, Luke

lent his professional expertise to organizations ranging from Librarians Without Borders to the Jewish Public Library Archives. Luke completed a Bachelor of Arts in Major Religious Studies, Minors in Photography and Women's Studies from Morningside College, and a Master of Library & Information Studies from McGill University. In his tenure as Lending Services Librarian, Luke has implemented best practices to establish an efficient, patron-oriented environment for the Walker Memorial Library community. In his new role, he will provide leadership as part of the library's management team and focus on library-wide public service operations.

Kate has served as the City's Youth Services Librarian since September 2019 and joined the library seven years ago, having advanced through progressively more responsible positions in the Youth Services department. She has played a key role in the success of our youth programming and outreach efforts. Whether partnering with the local schools and organizations on literacy-based programming or learning American Sign Language for story time, Kate has dedicated herself to connecting the youth of Westbrook to the library's resources. As Librarian, Kate will expand the library's programming and outreach efforts and provide inclusive engagement opportunities for all patrons. Kate completed her undergraduate work in French and in Archaeology at the College of Arts and Sciences at Boston University. Kate also holds a Master of Science in Arts Administration from Boston University's Metropolitan College.

These promotions recognize the contributions that Luke and Kate have made to the City of Westbrook and the Walker Memorial Library during their tenure. Their appointments were effective February 27, 2022, and the many qualities and skills they bring to these positions will undoubtedly further improve our services to the citizens of Westbrook. Please join me in congratulating Luke Sorensen and Kate Radke on these promotions. The two new positions of Library Assistant will be posted immediately and announcements regarding changes to the hours of operations will come at a later date.

With our Library Advisory Committee in place and this staff restructuring, we are excited for the future of our community and the Walker Memorial Library as we continue to invest in critical community resources.

