

The Prosser Public Library Board of Directors
Tuesday, January 14, 2020 at 5:00 P.M.
Prosser Public Library Community Room
Beverlee Merritt, Joan Geetter, Ava Biffer, Ann Leavitt, Leah Farrell, Maxine Ursery

AGENDA

- 1) Call to Order
- 2) Roll call
- 3) Report from the Friends of the Bloomfield Public Libraries
- 4) Chairperson's Report
- 5) Director's Report
- 6) Old business
 - a. Updating by-laws
 - b. Discussion of fine free policy
- 7) New Business
 - a. Meeting schedule for 2020
 - b. Budget
 - c. Meeting Room Policy
 - d. Fiscal Year 2019 Annual Report
- 8) Public comments
- 9) Approval of minutes of October 8, 2019
- 10) Approval of minutes of November 12, 2019
- 11) Approval of minutes of November 12, 2019 (Special Meeting)
- 12) Approval of minutes of December 10, 2019 (Special Meeting)
- 13) Adjournment

DRAFT
Prosser Public Library
Library Board of Directors
October 8, 2019

Attendance: Elizabeth Lane (*Library Director*), Joan Geetter (*Chairperson*), Beverlee Merritt (*Vice-Chairperson*), Martha Brackeen-Harris (*Secretary-Treasurer*), Ava Biffer, Ann Leavitt, Penny Pearson (*Friends of the Library Representative*)

Absent: Harvey Frydman

Quorum present? Yes, 5 of 6

J. Geetter called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m.

Roll Call – J. Geetter performed roll call and noted the absence of H. Frydman.

Report from the Friends of the Library

Membership Brochure – P. Pearson encouraged the board to take copies of the new Friends’ membership brochure for people who might be interested in joining.

Fall Book Sale – P. Pearson handed out the Friends’ book sale flyer and informed the board that Saturday, October 12th, is the last day for donations before the sale.

Kindle Project – At their October meeting, the Friends voted to sponsor a project that will provide specially configured Kindle Fire devices, with preloaded e-books and audiobooks, to some of the library’s homebound patrons. The Friends will assist the library with testing the devices.

Chairperson’s Report

Meeting with New Town Manager – J. Geetter had an encouraging meeting with new town manager Robert Smith. She came away with the impression that he genuinely seems to care about libraries.

Director’s Report

Barriers to Access – E. Lane said that the focus of her first year is going to be barriers to access. The following topics were discussed in relation to that concept.

Branding – As a way to clear up confusion about the town’s two libraries and solidify brand recognition, the library will now be referred to as the Bloomfield Public Library. E. Lane stressed that this name encompasses three libraries: Prosser, McMahon Wintonbury, and the digital realm.

Customer Service – Consistency in customer service – for example, having the staff greet people and walk the floor – is important, especially for reaching people who are not comfortable as library users and/or new to Bloomfield.

Fine Free Policy – Libraries nationwide are beginning to go fine free, with fines being increasingly seen as working against library goals such as access.

Collections – Collections at both libraries are out of date, especially non-fiction. Outdated books, lack of subject breadth, and overfilled shelves are problems that can lead to patrons turning away from the library. The project to weed outdated books and refresh the collection has started at McMahon Wintonbury, where the problems are especially pronounced.

School Outreach – A. Biffer asked about building relationships with schools. E. Lane anticipates an active outreach effort to begin after a year. She wants to begin with collections and branding projects to ensure the library is ready to meet the needs of students and teachers. E. Lane noted that the board of education currently needs to approve library flyers for distribution, which is a barrier to outreach.

Card Holder and Circulation Stats – The board reviewed card holder and circulation statistics over a five year period, which show an overall decrease. E. Lane plans to engage all staff in collection development and increase library card holders as a way to bolster circulation.

Library Connection – E. Lane recently attended her first Library Connection meeting. The organization is currently undergoing significant changes, including the search for an executive director after separating from their previous one.

Old Business

Discussion of attending the ACLB Conference - (This agenda item was moved for discussion as part of New Business.)

New Business

Branding – (This agenda item was discussed as part of the Director’s Report.)

Discussion of Fine Free Policy – (This agenda item was moved up from its original placement after Updating By-Laws.) The board discussed the possibility of implementing a fine free policy. The discussion focused on fines as a barrier to access, anticipation of arguments against the policy, circulation guidelines to effectively administer policy, and marketing and messaging potential. E. Lane is giving a presentation on the topic at the Connecticut Library Consortium’s Social Justice Roundtable on October 17th. The board watched a video of NBC 30 interviewing E. Lane and library patrons about the idea of a fine free policy.

Discussion of attending the ACLB Conference – (This agenda item was originally under Old Business.) E. Lane and all board members expressed an interest in attending this year’s conference for the Association of the Connecticut Library Boards, which will be held on November 8th. **MOTION to allocate Prosser funds to send all interested board members to ACLB conference;** seconded and passed.

Strategic Plan – To coincide with the updating of the library board’s by-laws, E. Lane proposed that the library embark on strategic plan, possibly one that covers only a 2 to 3 year window. The board briefly discussed methods for conducting the plan.

Updating By-Laws – The board’s by-laws have not been updated since 1972. E. Lane will provide the board with electronic copies of the current by-laws and best practice models for review. The board discussed the idea of working as a sub-committee to perform the work.

Public Comments – There were no public comments.

MOTION to accept the minutes of the September 10, 2019 meeting; seconded and approved.

MOTION to adjourn the meeting at 6:12 PM; seconded and approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Christopher Siloac,
Technology & Administrative Coordinator

DRAFT
Prosser Public Library
Library Board of Directors
November 12, 2019

Attendance: Elizabeth Lane (*Library Director*), Joan Geetter (*Chairperson*), Beverlee Merritt (*Vice-Chairperson*), Ava Biffer, Ann Leavitt, Penny Pearson (*Friends of the Library Representative*)

Absent: None

Quorum present? Yes, 4 of 6

J. Geetter called the meeting to order at 5:11 p.m.

Roll Call – J. Geetter performed roll call and noted no absences.

Report from the Friends of the Library

Fall Book Sale – The Friends earned over \$3700 from the fall book sale. P. Pearson thanked everyone for their donations.

Funding for Projects – At their October meeting, the Friends voted to provide funds to assist with teen programming, as well as funds for the Bags for Babies program, which provides newborns and their parents with a welcome bag of library-related gifts.

Spotlight Sunday – P. Pearson promoted the library's upcoming Spotlight Sunday concert, which will occur on November 17th. It is the last Sunday program of 2019.

Susan Campbell – B. Merritt suggested that Susan Campbell, Hartford Courant writer and library supporter, could be a good speaker for the Friends to sponsor. P. Pearson said she will consider the recommendation.

Chairperson's Report

New Library Board Members – With Danielle Wong's win for town council, J. Geetter forwarded the resume of another candidate for the library board to the chair of the democratic town committee. New board member Leah Farrell will be sworn in following tonight's meeting.

Director's Report

Library Staff Changes – E. Lane noted a number of staff changes at the library, including promotions of Carol Walters, Diah Seccareccia, Brooke Lyman, and Quincey Gill; the retirement of Sue Schwegman; and the resignation of part-time librarian Sarah Figgie. The part-time librarian position may be rewritten and expanded before being filled.

Meetings at Town Hall – E. Lane has met with Town Manager Robert Smith multiple times, and is set to meet with the public works department regarding the capital improvements process.

Non-Fiction Books – The youth department recently met with a non-fiction book vendor. There will be a focus on purchasing non-fiction books for McMahon Wintonbury.

Barriers to Access – E. Lane has asked staff to report instances where they see or hear about barriers of access. Some noted barriers to access are patrons with library anxiety, people who don't believe the

library is for them, and a lack of customer service aimed at non-traditional library users. Increased spaciousness on the floor and the library name change also tie-in with this goal.

Collection Development and Management – In response to the outdated collection at McMahan Wintonbury, Joni Celmer and Sheila McCallum are leading a weeding project focused on non-fiction materials published before 2006. Additionally, book carts are being moved off the floor and books are being relocated away from lower shelves to increase access. A representative from Baker & Taylor will visit the library and provide training for Title Source 360. This training will help with collection development, since more staff will be involved in selecting materials for purchase,.

MacMillan E-Books – The state librarian wrote a formal letter to the publisher MacMillan, concerning their decision to price e-books beyond the means of libraries.

Exterior Building Signage – E. Lane discussed plans to add the name Bloomfield Public Library to both buildings, while also retaining signage with the current individual building names. Elizabeth would like to consider back-lit signage.

Promoting Library Cards – A focus over the next year will be on the promotion of library cards as being free and for everyone.

Don Harris – E. Lane met with Don Harris of the board of education about the relationship between the library and the schools.

Community Partners and Outreach – The Hartford Foundation is giving \$100,000 to each local community. E. Lane will be part of a town committee to decide how to spend the gift. E. Lane and J. Geetter recently attended a Rotary Club luncheon. In October, the youth department visited 18 classrooms.

Professional Development – This past month there has been a push for professional development opportunities for staff at every level. This focus will continue.

Fine Free Presentation – At CLC's recent social justice round table, E. Lane gave a presentation about libraries going fine free. Simsbury Library provides a good case study for other Library Connection libraries; they found that books were being returned earlier.

October Statistics – The board reviewed circulation statistics from the past five Octobers and discussed the importance of having numbers presented in context as a way to track progress toward goals. Using state data, E. Lane and C. Siloac will look at ratio of card holders to population for surrounding towns as a comparison.

Marketing – Staff will participate in a series of best books of 2019 Facebook posts, as way to promote collection and introduce staff to public. The idea of installing a monitor near the circulation desk to promote events and services was discussed.

Event Sign-Up – A discussion occurred about the issue of managing attendance, based on event sign-ups, when the community room is at capacity.

New Haven Library Event – E. Lane attended an impressive immigration-focused conversation at the New Haven Free Public Library. The library used the well-attended program to showcase its new event space.

2020 Census – As part of an initiative by Lieutenant Governor Susan Bysiewicz, libraries will assist with the 2020 census by helping people navigate the online census process. This assistance is part of the library's focus on digital literacy.

Old Business

Strategic Plan – This agenda item was postponed until a later meeting.

Updating By-Laws – E. Lane handed out a document from the state library, *Best Practices for Connecticut Libraries*, which includes a section on governing. The board discussed the importance of updating the by-laws immediately, as well as aspects of the drafting process, for example, integrating term information that is currently part of town charter. The board decided to cancel the regular December meeting and call a special meeting instead, aimed at revising the by-laws.

Discussion of Fine Free Policy – The board discussed the pros and cons of a fine free policy, including the findings of libraries – such as Simsbury Public Library – that have already instituted the policy. Library staff would be responsible for coming up with details as to how the policy is implemented. E. Lane will ask Simsbury for the guidelines they used. The board stressed the importance of focusing on the positive aspects of the policy change, especially in regards to library access. Marketing the policy change was also discussed, including the idea of implementation around National Library Week in April. **Motion to initiate a fine free policy**; seconded and passed.

New Business – There was no new business to discuss.

Public Comments – Leah Farrell, who was elected to the library board but had not yet been sworn in, attended the meeting as a member of the public and expressed her excitement at joining the board.

Due to a lack of time for review of the minutes, the board opted to vote on approval of the minutes at the January meeting.

MOTION to adjourn the meeting at 6:14 PM; seconded and approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Christopher Siloac,
Technology & Administrative Coordinator

DRAFT
Prosser Public Library
Library Board of Directors
Special Meeting
Tuesday, November 12, 2019 at 4:30 P.M.

Attendance: Elizabeth Lane (*Library Director*), Joan Geetter (*Chairperson*), Beverlee Merritt (*Vice-Chairperson*), Ava Biffer, Ann Leavitt, Penny Pearson (*Friends of the Library Representative*)

Absent: None

Quorum present? Yes, 4 of 6

J. Geetter called the meeting to order at 4:35 p.m.

Roll Call – J. Geetter performed roll call and noted that all were present.

Discussion of attending the ACLB conference – The board members’ attendance at this year’s Association of Connecticut Library Board’s conference – “Telling CT Library Stories” -- on November 8th, 2019, spurred a number of conversations. The following items were part of this discussion.

State Legislators – The board discussed the importance of getting Bloomfield’s state legislators – Bobby Gibson, Doug McCrory, and Derek Slap – on board with the need for a new library, and to make sure they’re aware of the timeline and votes surrounding the state’s library construction grant program. In response to this need, board members will meet with representatives.

Building Committee – The board discussed potential building committee members and stressed the importance of having the committee formed soon.

Building Timeline – To get a referendum on the ballot for November 2020, a building plan will need to be ready to go by Labor Day. The board noted the need for a timeline with key dates noted. The timeline will be helpful when speaking with councilors, representatives, the town manager, and other stakeholders about moving forward on the library building project.

Dawn LaValle – A. Biffer attended a session at ACLB hosted by Dawn LaValle, Director of the Division of Library Development for the Connecticut State Library, and suggested that the board may want to consider inviting Ms. Lavalle for a meeting or retreat. **MOTION to have a board retreat with Dawn LaValle from the Connecticut State Library**; seconded and passed.

Susan Campbell – B. Merritt was impressed with Susan Campbell’s presentation at ACLB, especially the section about establishing a social media presence for the library board and the Friends. The board, along with P. Pearson from the Friends, discussed the possibility of pursuing a social media presence for sharing library-related information as well as advocacy. A. Biffer will explore this option.

Public Comments – There were no public comments.

MOTION to adjourn the meeting at 5:10 PM; seconded and approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Christopher Siloac,
Technology & Administrative Coordinator

DRAFT
Bloomfield Public Library
Library Board of Directors
Special Meeting
Tuesday, December 10, 2019 at 5:00 P.M.

Attendance: Elizabeth Lane (*Library Director*), Joan Geetter (*Chairperson*), Beverlee Merritt (*Vice- Chairperson*), Ava Biffer, Leah Farrell, Ann Leavitt, Maxine Ursery

Absent: None

Quorum present? Yes, 6 of 6

J. Geetter called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m.

Roll Call – J. Geetter performed roll call and noted that all were present.

Discussion of updating the library board's by-laws -- In accordance with the Governance section of the CT State Library's Best Practices in CT Public Libraries 2017 document, the Library Board worked on updating the Library Board of Directors' by-laws. The by-laws were last updated in 1972. Moving forward, the Board will work to review them at least every three years.

Public Comments – There were no public comments.

MOTION to adjourn the meeting at 6:30 PM; seconded and approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Lane, Library Director