

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Collections – Collections at both libraries are out of date, especially non-fiction. Outdated books, lack of subject breadth, and overfilled shelves are problems that can lead to patrons turning away from the library. The project to weed outdated books and refresh the collection has started at McMahon Wintonbury, where the problems are especially pronounced.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