

FINAL
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