

FINAL  
Bloomfield Public Library  
Board of Trustees  
Conference Remote Meeting  
December 8, 2020

**Attendance:** Elizabeth Lane (*Library Director*), Ava Biffer (*Chairperson*), Leah Farrell (*Vice-Chairperson*), Todd Cooper, Beverlee Merritt, Maxine Ursery, Penny Pearson (*Friends of the Library Representative*), Christopher Siloac (*Library Staff*)

**Absent:** Ann Leavitt

Quorum present? Yes, 5 of 6

A. Biffer called the meeting to order at 5:36 p.m.

*Roll Call* – A. Biffer performed roll call and noted the absence of A. Leavitt.

*Report from the Friends of the Bloomfield Public Libraries*

**General Update** – A Friends volunteer had been coming to the library once a week to organize the book sale room and gather items to distribute to local partners. At the moment, everything is caught up and the Friends are in a holding pattern in terms of the sale. The Friends have decided to fund a raffle prize, such as an iPad mini, to create an incentive for participation in the library’s upcoming survey.

*Chairperson’s Report*

**Praise for Staff** – A. Biffer praised the library staff for the incredible job they have done providing service to the community during difficult circumstances. Ava also thanked C. Siloac for his work on behalf of the library board.

**Website Photos** – Library board members should send E. Lane headshots for the library board’s webpage, which needs an updated photo.

**Director Evaluation Form** – The board should plan to work on the draft of the new director evaluation form at the January meeting. After the form is finalized, the board can move on to assembling an orientation packet for new board members.

**Information Requests** – The town manager has asked that all information requests from the public go through the town manager’s office.

**Building Vision** – Board members should send A. Biffer their ideas for the building vision document.

*Director’s Report*

**Everybody Learns Grant** – The library received \$42,000 from the state to expand services at this time. The library is spending the fund on a variety of needs, such as technology, furniture, shelving and PPE. The finance department is adhering to stricter spending guidelines than what the state library envisions for the grant, but the library has adjusted accordingly.

**Promotional Mailer** – A mailer promoting library services is being sent out to all households in Bloomfield this week. The Connecticut Conference of Municipalities has once again helped, so the library

only needs to pay for postage not printing. The mailer is built around the phrase, “We’re here for you,” and focuses on library cards and service offerings.

**Constant Contact** –The building committee is making great strides, including the hiring of consultants to assist with surveys, branding, and PR. One new improvement is that the library will begin using Constant Contact for weekly distribution of promotional emails. To reach more people, the library will also begin adding all email addresses from the Sierra database to the mailing list, with an easy opt-out option included. The move to Constant Contact will provide the library with more elegant and usable promotional emails.

**Survey Prize** – As P. Pearson mentioned in her report, the Friends will provide an iPad as a raffle prize for library survey participants.

**Building Committee** – To help propel movement and attend to more granular detail, Greg Davis, the chair of the building committee, has decided to create working groups to work on construction, programming function, and an external interest group. The groups will include library board members. E. Lane will meet with each of the groups as well.

**Building Vision** – The staff building vision document is being finalized. E. Lane will send it to the board in the next week or two, and the board can decide whether or not they want to sign on to the staff vision or craft their own document.

**Monthly Statistics** – The monthly statistics were not ready in time for the meeting, so E. Lane will email them to the board at a later date.

**New State Librarian** – Deborah Schander has been hired as the new Connecticut State Librarian. She has a background as a law librarian and information professor. A. Biffer and E. Lane have already reached out to her, and other board members were encouraged to send a welcome from Bloomfield.

**Public Works** – A new facilities manager is starting on 12/21, and other positions in public works are being filled. The hope is that these hires will help address issues that arose with the recent staffing shortage.

**Staff Thank You** – E. Lane is seeking ideas from the board on how to thank the library staff. L Farrell has some ideas to discuss during New Business.

**Staff Retirements** – E. Lane noted that two longtime library staff members retired recently: Linda Gabianelli and Peggy Roussos. A proper celebration for both will be given when circumstances allow for gathering.

**State Annual Report** – E. Lane and the board reviewed the library’s state annual report for fiscal year 2019-2020. E. Lane pointed out the library’s positive responses to COVID-19 service questions, as well as an increase in database usage and reporting of a new youth Spanish collection at McMahon Wintonbury. E. Lane will share the report with the board via email and asked them to reach out with any questions.

**Social Justice Initiatives** – E. Lane reviewed the Social Justice Initiatives document with the library board. The library’s focus on social justice coincides with the town council’s priorities. Goals include the breaking down of barriers and a responsiveness to the needs of all members of the community. The document details the many initiatives the library has launched to address social justice issues: a social justice committee along with all staff meetings on the topic; surveys and a slack channel; collection development and programming; and professional development opportunities such as one conducted by the National Conference for Community and Justice. The next step is to focus on action items towards improving library services, including the involvement of members of the public. E. Lane asked the board to review the document and share their insights, after which she would like to share it with members of the town council.

**Social Justice Programming** – In response to questions about including the public in social justice initiatives, L. Farrell shared her experience as the host of a successful series of virtual conversations on race for the Wallingford Public Library. Leah stressed that the facilitation of a safe and comfortable environment that provides room for everyone’s voice, with norms and agreements set ahead of time, is the key to success.

*Old Business* – There was no old business to discuss.

*New Business*

**Review and Approval of Meeting Schedule for 2021** – The board reviewed the 2021 meeting schedule, and discussed the possibility of changing the start time of the meeting once in-person meetings resume. **MOTION by L. Farrell to approve the meeting schedule for 2020 as presented;** seconded by B. Merritt and passed unanimously.

**Filling Retiree Positions** – B. Merritt asked if the library had plans to fill the open positions resulting from recent retirements. E. Lane stated that she has already spoken to HR about filling the positions, and that she has a person in mind for youth services who would fit her team-oriented approach.

**Staff Recognition** – The board discussed ideas for a staff recognition effort. L. Farrell suggested a video message of thanks, as well as treats and refreshments. The board decided on the idea of a video and treats from Pasticceria to coincide with a staff holiday Zoom party on Wednesday, December 23rd, at 10:30 AM. Some board members may attend the party. L. Farrell asked the board to send her a short video. E. Lane will reach out to Pasticceria for pricing, and then the board can approve Prosser Funds for the treats via email.

*Public Comments* – There were no public comments.

**MOTION by T. Cooper to accept the minutes of the November 10, 2020 meeting as written;** seconded by M. Ursery and approved, with B. Merritt abstaining.

**MOTION by B. Merritt to adjourn meeting at 6:36 PM;** seconded by T. Cooper and passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Christopher Siloac,  
Technology & Administrative Coordinator