

DRAFT
Bloomfield Public Library
Board of Trustees
Conference Remote Meeting
May 11, 2021

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

Absent: Beverlee Merritt

Quorum present? Yes, 5 of 6

A. Biffer called the meeting to order at 5:33 p.m.

Roll Call – A. Biffer performed roll call and noted the absence of B. Merritt and T. Cooper. T. Cooper joined the meeting shortly after roll call.

Report from the Friends of the Bloomfield Public – The Friends had nothing new to report.

Chairperson's Report

Building Committee Special Meeting – A. Biffer reminded the board that there was a special meeting of the library building committee scheduled for 5/12, which will feature Tai-Soo Kim showing architectural drawings of the proposed buildings.

Director's Report

New Finance Director – The town has hired a new finance director, Curtis Eatman, who comes to Bloomfield from Hamden, CT, where he served as finance director and economic development director. He is scheduled to start on May 24th.

Summer Reading – This year's summer reading program will run from June 21st to August 20th. The library will partner with Auer Farm on a series of adult reading programs.

Building Costs and Public Works – Dan Carter, director of public works, sent an email to the building committee inquiring about soft cost estimates associated with the new buildings. Public works will need to budget ahead of time for recurring costs.

Library Building Committee – The library building committee hosted a phone campaign to reach out to residents of district #3. Over 2000 people were reached. The phone campaign, along with building information sessions on Zoom and at McMahon Wintonbury, are all aspects of communicating the steady progress of the building committee to the public. E. Lane reiterated that all building committee meetings are open to the public. The meetings appear on library event calendars.

Social Media – In May, the library's social media feeds are focused on Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month and mental health awareness. This is an outgrowth of the library's attention to healthy literacy and cultural competency.

Bathroom Renovation – The renovation of the handicapped-accessible bathroom on the adult level is complete, so there is now a public restroom on the first floor.

Staff Vaccination – In two weeks, all staff members who had wanted the vaccine will be fully vaccinated.

Browsing Appointments– Browsing by appointment is now being offered at Prosser. The service has been safe and user-friendly.

April Stats – Museum passes saw an uptick in April, as well as a healthy use of online resources. E. Lane reminded the board of the value of the museum passes, many of which provide free admission and can be borrowed from home.

Mask Issues – Mask compliance is becoming more of an issue lately, often due to people who are vaccinated thinking it is no longer necessary. Masks must be worn to use BPL services.

Bloomfield Schools Partnership – The library has partnered with the Bloomfield Public Schools on a fun and informative program from the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum, with each presentation being aimed at different age groups.

Social Justice Efforts – As part of the library’s social justice efforts, two May programs – a podcast chat and a presentation by Dr. Jason Chang -- have focused on Asian American History

Old Business – There was no old business to discuss.

New Business

Potential housing of Wintonbury Historical Society documents at BPL – E. Lane explained that two library staff members (Mara Whitman and Allison Wilkos) are currently on the board of the Wintonbury Historical Society, and then read a letter from the historical society about the possibility of storing their documents in a new Prosser library building. E. Lane and A. Biffer presented the board with many issues to consider before undertaking the establishment of an archive/special collection: security, trained staff, policies, collection scope, funding, cataloging, digitization, insurance, climate control, and legal needs. Additionally, with the cutting of square footage from the proposed Prosser building plan, space is already at a premium. After much discussion about similar initiatives in the state and other approaches, the board agreed that they needed more details from the historical society before making any decisions. E. Lane and Allison Wilkos will schedule a meeting with the historical society as way to obtain more information.

CT State Library State Grant for Public Library Construction: Letter of Intent – An emailed letter of intent to apply for a \$1,000,000 construction grant from the state library is due by 6/30/21. **MOTION by T. Cooper to authorize the filing of the letter of intent to allow an application for the state grant for public library construction;** seconded by M. Ursery and approved unanimously.

BPL Strategic Plan – BPL does not currently have a strategic plan, so library staff is beginning to draft a plan to cover the period of 2021-2025. The recently completed public survey, which includes data from over 1,700 respondents, will help shape the plan. The plan will be a working document, but will also contain a simplified public version. E. Lane reviewed the five goals the plan will focus on: library cards, responsive service, connecting people to collections, removing barriers to access, and library as place/programming. E. Lane hopes to have the plan completed within the next month, so it is possible that the board will be able to vote on it in June. For the purposes of construction grant, the plan will need to be in effect by 9/30/21.

Public Comments – There were no public comments.

MOTION by M. Ursery to accept the minutes of the April 13, 2021 meeting as presented; seconded by T. Cooper and approved unanimously.

Social Media and New Library Buildings – E. Lane said that some social media activity about the new library building has led to confusion from the public, especially with people thinking that the library is closing down. E. Lane reiterated that the library is not closing down.

MOTION by L. Farrell to adjourn the meeting at 6:28 PM; seconded by M. Ursery and approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Christopher Siloac,
Technology & Administrative Coordinator