

FINAL
Bloomfield Public Library
Board of Trustees
Conference Remote Meeting
October 13, 2021

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

Absent: Todd Cooper, Kathy Haller

Quorum present? Yes, 4 of 6

A. Biffer called the meeting to order at 5:34 p.m.

Roll Call – A. Biffer performed roll call and noted the absence of T. Cooper and K. Haller.

Report from the Friends of the Bloomfield Public Libraries

Book Sale Carts – As of this week, the Friends have put book sale carts back out at both locations, with books being offered for .50 or \$1.00. The Friends are also accepting book donations again. The regularly scheduled October book sale will not occur this year, but the Friends are looking for opportunities for pop-up or themed sales in the future.

Chairperson's Report

Construction Grant Application – A. Biffer thanked C. Siloac for his extensive work on the Connecticut State Library's construction grant application

Library Programs – A. Biffer praised the extensive virtual programs offered by the library. Recent programs include gentle yoga and cooking with Chef Matt from Carbone's Kitchen. Chef Matt is hoping to do a pizza-making program in the spring. Virtual library programs have become another way to service homebound patrons, beyond the delivery of library materials.

Upcoming Election – A. Biffer reminded the board about following state election laws regarding rules of advocacy. Trustees cannot advocate in their role as trustee this close to an election. They can, however, advocate as private citizens.

Kathy Haller – K. Haller will not be running for the library board in the upcoming election. A. Biffer thanked Kathy for stepping in and serving on the board.

Director's Report

Building Referendum – With 19 days until the referendum, E. Lane noted that bplct.org is the best resource for information about the building project. Elizabeth showed the board the live countdown to library vote graphic on the website and explained how it links to a web page about registering to vote, which also includes a sample ballot for the upcoming election. The library building project is question one on the ballot. E. Lane asked that the board and the Friends direct people to the website for accurate information about the project.

Town Manager and Big Read – Stanley Hawthorne, the new town manager, recently shared library news at a council meeting, regarding the library’s Big Read series, a partnership with Eastern Connecticut State University and the National Endowment of the Arts. The featured book is *The Best We Could Do*, by Thi Bui, which focuses on the issue of immigration, so the library’s programming for the series reflects that theme. The Friends have helped fund the programming, including a virtual author visit.

Reopening Prosser After Flood Damage – Prosser Library fully reopened for services during the week of 9/27. New carpet was installed in the entryway and the children’s workroom. The community room has not been finished. The closing of Prosser is reflected in lower circulation numbers for September, but McMahon Wintonbury stats were higher than ever, including 812 technology sessions. Despite Prosser Library being closed for a period, there were 54 new library cards issued.

McMahon Wintonbury Updates – Recent updates at McMahon Wintonbury include new youth shelving, painting of walls, installation of two AWE Computers for children, and a new public printer.

New Hires – Two pages and two library assistants have been hired and will be starting soon.

Seasonal Events – The library will be represented by staff at two upcoming seasonal events: the Fall Festival at Auerfarm on 10/16, and Trunk or Treat at 330 Park on 10/22.

Voter Registration Day – The library celebrated voter registration day by offering patrons the opportunity to register to vote, a service the library offers year round.

Fine Free Initiatives – New York Public Library recently went fine free, which created a big splash, including a story on the front page of CNN’s website and references by late-night comedians. The Acton Public Library in Old Saybrook announced going fine free today.

Public Art Commission – The former town manager, Phil Schenck, appointed E. Lane as the staff representative for the newly formed Public Art Commission, due in part to her art background. Elizabeth is excited to work with the commission.

Homebound Services – The library will now incorporate homebound deliveries into the monthly statistics. Homebound services include reference services via phone and email.

Friends Book Carts – The library is excited to have the Friends’ book carts back. E. Lane noticed that most patrons stop and look at the carts as they enter or exit. There is now a moneybox for self-pay, so that library staff does not need to handle money.

Library News – E. Lane reminded the board to spread general news about the library, and to get good library love out into the community.

Old Business

Evaluation Process for Director – The board discussed adding a staff survey to the process for evaluating the library director. L. Farrell proposed creating a survey based off the evaluation questions. This will allow for a staff perspective on questions similar to those being considered by the board. A. Biffer will send the board the evaluation forms for review. L. Farrell will take the lead on translating the form into a staff survey that can be submitted anonymously. The board will revisit this item at next month’s meeting.

New Business – There was no new business to discuss.

Public Comments – There were no public comments.

MOTION by M. Ursery to accept the minutes of the August 10, 2021 meeting as presented; seconded by L. Farrell and approved unanimously.

MOTION by B. Merritt to accept the minutes of the September 15, 2021 special meeting as presented; seconded by M. Ursery and approved unanimously.

MOTION by B. Merritt to adjourn the meeting at 5:59 PM; seconded by M. Ursery and approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Christopher Siloac
Technology & Administrative Coordinator