

DRAFT
Bloomfield Public Library
Board of Trustees
Conference Remote Meeting
November 9, 2021

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

Absent: None

Quorum present? Yes, 6 of 6

A. Biffer called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.

Roll Call – A. Biffer performed roll call and noted that all were present.

Report from the Friends of the Bloomfield Public Libraries

Update on Friends – Volunteers are back in the library and working steadily on maintaining book carts and processing donations. P. Pearson thanked staff members Allison Wilkos and Sara Ray for their help getting Friends’ communications out to the public.

Chairperson’s Report

Patrick DeLorenzo – A. Biffer welcomed P. DeLorenzo to the library board. P. DeLorenzo spoke about serving on the town council for over four terms and how he hopes to bring that experience to the library board.

Thank You– A. Biffer thanked Penny Pearson and the Friends for their support of the library on many fronts. She also thanked library staff for delivering a high level of service under stressful conditions, including flooding and COVID-19. Ava frequently hears good things about the staff from members of the public.

Director’s Report

Librarian Promotions – With the retirement of Linda Gabianelli a year ago, youth services librarians Heidi Sacchitella and Nicole Dolat really stepped up to the plate. The library recently promoted youth Heidi and Nicole from the position of Librarian II to Librarian III. E. Lane read her recommendation for promotion for both Heidi and Nicole, stressing their integral role in promoting BPL and guiding the library forward.

Community Room – Public Works will schedule the final work needed to be done in the community room in the next week or two. This will complete the restoration of spaces following the recent flood.

Building Referendum – E. Lane thanked the 2,716 people who voted yes on the building referendum. She also thanked the library board, friends of the library, building committee, the public, and library staff.

State Library Construction Grant – On November 22, the State Library Board for the CT State Library will make a decision regarding recipients of library construction grants, which will determine the status of the \$1,000,000 that BPL has applied for.

Presentations to Town Council – Each town department will give a brief presentation to the new town council. Additionally, the council will receive a booklet highlighting each department. The first round of presentations begins tonight. E. Lane and C. Siloac will present for the library next Tuesday, 11/16.

Social Justice Issues – The library has experienced hate crimes aimed at the LGBTQ+ community, including the defacing of books in the teen non-fiction section, and the stealing of pride flags. E. Lane stressed that these actions will not be tolerated, and that the library welcomes and serves all. The social justice committee is working on a response to this issue.

Mask Mandates – The mask mandate was lifted for Bloomfield, with the exception of schools and libraries, due to their focus on families.

Art Display – E. Lane showed photographs and social media featuring the new Community Partners in Action Prison Arts Program displays at Prosser and McMahan Wintonbury. This partnership is part of the the National Endowment of the Arts's Big Read event that the library participated in. There is a more extensive show at the Mark Twain House & Museum. Elizabeth reminded everyone that the library offers a discount pass to the museum.

Professional Development Workshops – E. Lane recently attended a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion workshop aimed at library leaders that was offered by Library Connection. BPL staffers Diah Seccareccia and Brooke Lyman attended similar training through the Connecticut Library Consortium that focused on working in a culture of care.

Graduate Intern – The library's graduate school intern, Meredith West, finished her successful internship on Monday, 11/8, which included a tour of the library by her professor. Meredith is pursuing her MLIS degree at Southern Connecticut State University. Meredith helped the library with programming, public relations, and professional development. The library looks forward to hosting more internships.

Reading Partners – BPL is in the process of enlisting participants in the Children's Reading Partners program. The reading partners are volunteers that will read one-on-one with children.

Community Events – The library participated in a number of recent community events, including Trunk or Treat at 330 Park, parent's night at BELC, and Auer Farm's fall festival. These outreach events help get library cards into more hands. There were 55 new cards issued in October.

New Staff – Two new pages have started at the library, Abigail Daigle and Amyra West. The new pages will be cross-trained to work in different departments and buildings. There are also two new library assistants completing the hiring process and set to start soon. E. Lane thanked the human resources department, which is currently short-staffed, for their work on getting these new hires.

Marketing – The library has started a social media campaign for Native American Heritage Month. Now that the referendum has passed, a new flyer for the building committee has been created to provide information to the public and promote public participation at the meetings.

Old Business

Evaluation Process for Director – L. Farrell created a draft of the staff survey that may be included in the library director's evaluation process. The board reviewed and discussed the survey, noting issues with the number rating system, the need for an introduction, and the potential problem with anonymity. Staff input is best understood as part of the mid-year check-in rather than a formal aspect of the evaluation. The board will revisit the survey and discuss the evaluation process further at future meetings.

New Business

Election of Officers – The election of officers must take place at the first meeting following the election of the town council. **MOTION by T. Cooper to nominate Ava Biffer as chairperson;** seconded by L. Farrell and approved unanimously. **MOTION by M. Ursery to nominate Leah Farrell as vice-chairperson;** seconded by T. Cooper and passed unanimously. The board and E. Lane expressed appreciation for A. Biffer’s leadership.

Review and Approval of Meeting Schedule for 2022 – The board reviewed the proposed meeting schedule for 2022 and discussed possible conflicts, summer meetings, meeting location, and meeting start time. The board decided to move the start time of meetings to 6:00 PM. **MOTION by A. Biffer to confirm the 2022 meeting schedule that is to be submitted to the town clerk’s office, with a change of meeting start time to 6:00 PM, and the addition of McMahan Wintonbury as a possible location;** passed unanimously.

Public Comments – There were no public comments.

Board Comments

Building Committee – A. Biffer talked about the importance of spreading the word about building committee meetings to the public. The committee wants to hear from people.

Building Project – T. Cooper spoke about the need to focus messaging more on building function than design; up-to-date functionality will serve the citizens.

MOTION by T. Cooper to accept the minutes of the October 13, 2021 meeting as presented; seconded by B. Merritt and approved unanimously.

MOTION by M. Ursery to adjourn the meeting at 6:42 PM; seconded by B. Merritt and approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Christopher Siloac
Technology & Administrative Coordinator