

FINAL
Bloomfield Public Library
Board of Trustees
Conference Remote Meeting
<https://youtu.be/of2FjrxbgDM>
January 11, 2022

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: Patrick DeLorenzo

Quorum present? Yes, 5 of 6

A. Biffer called the meeting to order at 6:04 PM.

Roll Call – A. Biffer performed roll call and noted the absence of P. DeLorenzo and M. Ursery. M. Ursery joined the meeting at 6:14 PM.

Report from the Friends of the Bloomfield Public Libraries

Update on Friends – The Friends were busy with book cart sales in December. Patrons were appreciative. Volunteer staff is beginning to return and there is hope for an in-person book sale in spring or summer.

Chairperson's Report

Town Website – A. Biffer had a cordial and constructive meeting with Town Manager Stanley Hawthorne regarding the town website issue. The town manager has contacted the IT department about the needed changes. E. Lane and A. Biffer will continue to monitor the town website.

Building Construction Webinar – A. Biffer and general library staff attended a Connecticut State Library building construction webinar focused on swingspace. The webinar provided useful information that could help with avoiding pitfalls other libraries encountered.

Director's Report

MLK Day Celebration – As part of the library's Martin Luther King Jr. Day celebration, members of the Bloomfield Lions Club – Phyllis Perry and Constanza Paramo-O'Brien – will read books that the LIONS donated to the Lori Jean Watson collection. These books focus on African-American and Hispanic characters and themes. The donations were purchased in response to collection lists curated by BPL Youth Librarian Heidi Sacchitella, which have been shared with other Lions clubs.

Take Your Child to the Library Day – February 4th is Take Your Child to the Library Day. The library is offering an Afro-Beat Workshop and a harmonica give-away.

New Collections – The library is developing language collections, with a focus right now on materials in Spanish and Russian. The youth department has added a new format of picture book, Vox Books, which features built-in audio that reads the books aloud.

COVID-19 Protocols – The increase in COVID-19 cases has impacted the library. The library has tightened controls to help maintain service, such as requiring staff to wear KN95 or surgical masks, staff shifts limited to one location, firm observance of social distancing, along with town mandates that require sick staff members to stay home.

New Finance Director – The town has hired a new finance director, Keri Rowley, just in time for the budget process. Keri had previously served as the town's finance director.

Library Construction Grant – On November 22nd, the library was officially awarded the \$1,000,000 construction grant for Prosser.

MLIS Student Case Study – Graciela Rivera, branch manager at Hartford Public Library's Park Street Library @ the Lyric, and a Syracuse University MLIS student, presented a case study to all library staff regarding BPL services, particularly around services to people experiencing homelessness. E. Lane will send Graciela's presentation to the board.

Ableism Staff Training – E. Lane is seeking board approval for altered library hours to allow for staff training aimed at ableism, with a focus on autism-spectrum disorder and other invisible disabilities, to be presented by Erin Lamb of Lighted Path Consulting on April 13th. The request is to open the library at 2 PM that day. **MOTION by L. Farrell to approve new library hours for April 13th**; seconded by B. Merritt and passed unanimously.

Online Program Feedback Form – BPL completed a pilot project with an online program feedback form in 2021. This form will be rolled out for all programs as of 2022. An email with a link to the survey is sent out to each program attendee. E. Lane walked the board through the form, which encompasses a 6 point scale, choice-based questions, and open-ended questions. The pilot project was successful, with most programs garnering high ratings, as well as good suggestions for future programming. The survey helps ensure that the library is providing the programming that the community wants. One issue still being considered is how to address personal attacks in the surveys. The library originally was hoping to start in-person programming in January, but with the COVID surge that decision will be at least delayed until March.

Building Project – The work of the building committee continues to move quickly, with TSKP presenting a new design for the McMahon space at tomorrow's meeting. Other building related items to note are the continuing discussions with the Wintonbury Historical Society regarding merging their paper materials with BPL's historical collection, which should be resolved by Friday, and a partnership with University of Hartford's Acoustic Program and Laboratory, which will consist of a student project to assess sound at both locations.

Wildflower Grant – BPL has applied for a Wildflowers Nationwide Library Initiative Grant aimed at connecting the library with other eco-friendly groups in town.

FY23 Budget Process – The library's FY23 budget is due. Requests for the ARPA fund allocation of Bloomfield's \$6 million in funds will be part of the budget process. Some municipal libraries have requested a percentage of their town's funds. One of the library's areas of focus, which coincides with the town manager's priorities, is creating a better organizational structure, since the current structure is flat. E. Lane reviewed the library's organizational chart and noted internal promotion requests for two assistant library directors and a circulation manager position. The library would also like to add a full-time

librarian and a full-time library assistant position. With the library's continued expansion of services, investing in staff makes sense.

The board discussed the proposed organizational chart, which was created in its current style at the town manager's request. E. Lane will email the library board both the current flat organizational chart and the proposed chart. B. Merritt asked if the cost associated with the promotions can be covered in this year's budget; and if the increase is being added to next year's budget. E. Lane responded that they are hopeful the raises could be covered this year, and that they are still working with HR on how to properly handle promotions.

There is an increase in the part-time staff budget, due in large part to the decision to combine the McMahon and Prosser part-time staff into one budget line, which better reflects the way staff works across locations. The corresponding McMahon part-time line has been zeroed out. The other increase is to the education line, from \$1000 to \$4000, which is needed for professional development to maximize library services and stay cutting edge. E. Lane stressed the importance of the board's role during the budget process, and shared the ARPA wishlist that library staff has compiled. E. Lane will meet with Town Manager Stanley Hawthorne and Finance Director Keri Rowley on January 24th to discuss the library budget.

Masks at the Library - E. Lane confirmed that the library has surgical masks to provide to members of the public who don't have a mask, or have an inappropriate mask. Library staff continue to hone their approach to handling mask issues.

Old Business

Policy Documents – E. Lane noted that the recent policies and related questions have been sent to the town attorney for review, and that she will update the board once there is a decision.

New Business - There was no new business to discuss.

Public Comments – There were no public comments.

Board Comments

Professional Development Opportunity – A. Biffer mentioned the professional development opportunity that E. Lane had emailed the board. The board is receiving a group rate, so please let Elizabeth know if you wish to participate.

MOTION by B. Merritt to adjourn the meeting at 6:39 PM; seconded by T. Cooper and approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Christopher Siloac
Technology & Administrative Coordinator