

DRAFT
Bloomfield Public Library
Board of Trustees
Conference Remote Meeting
<https://youtu.be/7nei1c0ddfQ>
May 10, 2022

Attendance: Elizabeth Lane (*Library Director*), Ava Biffer (*Chairperson*), Leah Farrell (*Vice-Chairperson*), Todd Cooper, Patrick DeLorenzo, Maxine Ursery, Christopher Siloac (*Library Staff*)

Absent: Beverlee Merritt

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 B. Merritt.

Report from the Friends of the Bloomfield Public Libraries

Book Sale – A. Biffer gave a report on behalf of the Friends, noting that they were excited about the upcoming book sale, which will run from June 8th to June 11th. The Friends thanked library staff for their help with the sale and said that publicity would be going out soon.

Chairperson's Report

BPL Staff at Conferences – A. Biffer noted the exceptional representation of Bloomfield Public Library at the recent annual conferences of the Connecticut Library Association and Connecticut Education Network. Staff members E. Lane, Allison Wilkos, and C. Siloac presented, as did M. Ursery from the library board. A. Biffer thanked the presenters for helping put a positive spotlight on BPL and Bloomfield.

Director's Report

Human Resources Director – The town's HR Director has resigned, and the search for a new director has begun.

Library Job Openings – The library is currently looking to fill a full-time librarian position and a part-time librarian position.

Taste of Bloomfield – E. Lane and Elizabeth Dill, director of University of Hartford's library, attended the Chamber of Commerce's Taste of Bloomfield on April 26th.

Wintonbury Poetry Series – Tom Nicotera is stepping down as chair of the library's long-running Wintonbury Poetry Series. The library is currently working on finding a new chair. The library received a donation of \$1000 from a generous anonymous donor to help sustain the series, which is beloved by many Connecticut poets. Since going virtual due to COVID-19, the series has had attendees from around the country. A celebratory event for Tom and the series is in the works.

Friends' Book Sale – Library staff is working with the Friends on their last big book sale in the current Prosser building. As of last Saturday, book donations will no longer be accepted. This information is being communicated to the public in multiple ways.

FY23 Library Budget – The library did not get most of its budget requests, in part, because some councilors thought it wasn't needed right now due to the status of the building project and the upcoming move to swing spaces. The library will push hard for the additional full-time positions in next year's budget, to ensure readiness when the new buildings open to increased usage. BPL issued 72 new library cards to patrons last month.

Trustees on Building Committee– E. Lane thanked A. Biffer, L. Farrell, and M. Ursery for their dedication and hard work on the building committee. The library staff recognizes their commitment to this project.

Letter of Intent for Grant – The letter of intent for the next round of the state library's construction grants is due on 6/30/22. E. Lane has been in touch with the state library about the possibility of securing this grant for the McMahon Wintonbury Library building.

MeeScan Self-Check – A MeeScan self-checkout station has been installed at Prosser. The library is doing a soft roll out of the service, with publicity to come after the staff has had time to evaluate the service. The move to a self-checkout option is a way to appeal to the subset of patrons who prefer accessing library collections in a different way.

Library Connection App – Library Connection has rolled out a mobile app that allows patrons to more easily interact with the library's catalog and digital presence. Staff is currently testing the service, with a publicity campaign to follow.

Building Project Update – Building clean out days are ramping up in June, with a plan to move from one Thursday a month to every other Thursday. The work of narrowing down and defining the swing spaces continues. The outreach subcommittee is working on a communication plan, which includes generating enthusiasm for the new buildings through billboards and lawn signs. The building committee hopes to see updated pictures of the facade in the next few weeks.

Funding Opportunities – A. Biffer expressed concern about the possibility that the cost implications of a staggered build would be more than the funds provided through a state construction grant for McMahon Wintonbury. She thought it was advisable to hold off on pursuing the grant until Downes Construction clarifies the costs. Ava also expressed a desire to find other funding opportunities, preferably with less onerous application processes.

Library Budget Discussion – In response to a question from P. DeLorenzo about capital improvement projects and the library budget, E. Lane confirmed that the library did not receive funding for the staff vehicle, the library-on-wheels, the expansion of digital technology, and the two new full-time positions. The library did receive \$21,000 for three promotions, as part of an organizational realignment. The library also did not receive any ARPA funds, which E. Lane described as disappointing, especially when one considers the success of libraries throughout the state in obtaining those funds. P. DeLorenzo thought the library provided a strong narrative for its needs this year and expressed his disappointment at the lack of funding for the library's initiatives. In response to P. DeLorenzo's question about the status of ARPA funds, E. Lane said there is still room for further negotiation, since some funds are remaining. E. Lane said that the library building project may have influenced how the library's budget was perceived, with councilors seeing less immediate need for the library. A. Biffer emphasized the importance of having stakeholders understand that delivering full services in swing spaces is going to be very challenging and staff-intensive.

ARPA Funds – P. DeLorenzo asked if there was a way that the board could help advocate for ARPA funds for the library. A. Biffer suggested that urging people to respond on behalf of the library to the town’s upcoming survey on resource allocation is a good starting point. A. Biffer emphasized the scope of the services that the library provides to the town. L. Farrell said part of the challenge was changing a culture of underfunding the libraries. A. Biffer stated that engagement of the public is the answer, with a focus on the robust services the staff provides for the public. Ava also stressed the importance of the board being vocal and strong during next year’s budget process.

New Library Cards – A. Biffer praised the library’s incredible turnaround on issuing new library cards. E. Lane thanked the front line staff for working diligently to promote library cards to the public.

Old Business – There was no old business to discuss.

New Business – There was no new business to discuss

Approval of the Minutes

MOTION by P. DeLorenzo to accept the minutes of the March 8, 2022 meeting as presented; seconded by L. Farrell and passed unanimously.

Public Comments – There were no public comments.

Board Comments – There were no additional board comments tonight.

MOTION by T. Cooper to adjourn the meeting at 6:31 PM; seconded by P. DeLorenzo and approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Christopher Siloac
Technology & Administrative Coordinator