

DRAFT
Bloomfield Public Library
Board of Trustees
Conference Remote Meeting
<https://youtu.be/IRFjp-kugsk>
September 13, 2022

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

Absent: Maxine Ursery

Quorum present? Yes, 5 of 6

A. Biffer called the meeting to order at 6:03 PM.

Roll Call – A. Biffer performed roll call and noted the absence of M. Ursery and T. Cooper. T. Cooper joined the meeting in time for the executive session.

Citizens' Statements and Petitions – There were no public comments.

Report from the Friends of the Bloomfield Public Libraries

Friends Update – P. Pearson said there was nothing new to report but noted how pleased the Friends were to fund the very successful summer reading program and complimented the library staff for making it a success.

Chairperson's Report

Cybersecurity Workshop – A. Biffer attended a regional workshop on cybersecurity and noted that civil institutions are being targeted for disruption, including blackmail. The library board may want to discuss these issues as part of forecasting technology in the new library buildings.

Assistant Directors – A. Biffer formally congratulated Chris Siloac and Allison Wilkos on their promotions to Assistant Director on July 1, 2022.

Community Partnerships – A. Biffer commended the staff on its continued efforts to build community partnerships, including working with Blue Hills Fire Department on Juneteenth events. Ava congratulated E. Lane, L. Farrell, and T. Cooper of the BPL Juneteenth trivia team for coming in second place.

Director's Report

Building Leaks – Both library buildings experienced leaks recently, including new leaks. Leaks occurred in and around the Friends area and in the electrical room.

Power Outages – Prosser, along with other town buildings, experienced a series of power outages. These power outages were problematic and impacted library staff and members of the public who were doing important work on library computers. The problem seems to have been resolved.

Voter Registration Day – The library is participating in National Voter Registration Day on September 20th. Both libraries will feature balloons to draw attention to how easy it is to register to vote. There is a strict directive from state statuettes and the state library that public libraries ensure voter registration materials be made available in the library.

Awareness and Prevention Months – The library is focusing on Suicide Prevention Month and Domestic Violence Awareness Month on social media and within the library. E. Lane spoke about the tragic case of the East Granby library director, and noted that domestic violence is a significant issue in Bloomfield.

McMahon Usage – In reviewing FY 2022 stats, it is clear that increased usage at McMahon Wintonbury has continued. Previously, usage between the libraries would split 80/20 but now it is closer to 70/30. E. Lane gave a shout out to McMahon staff for improving the look and feel of the facility and for getting more library cards into patron hands.

TV News Segment – Channel 3 News aired a segment on Bloomfield Public Library as a cooling place this summer. E. Lane commended librarian Rachel Tonucci for presenting the library well in the segment.

NELLS Participation – Allison Wilkos is one of five people from Connecticut selected to participate in the New England Library Leadership Symposium (NELLS) for 2022. The symposium meets virtually every Thursday and wraps with an in-person conference where E. Lane and A. Wilkos will present on BPL's marketing initiatives.

Summer Interns – The library had wonderful summer interns, Rion and Bryanna, this year. In addition to each of them being assigned to a library building, they helped BPL roll out TikTok content for the first time.

Barcode Scanners – The library has installed new barcode scanners that can scan barcodes on people's phones. This change helps make digital access easier.

State Library for the Blind – The library is exploring a closer partnership with the Connecticut State Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped. Librarians Heidi Moon and Rachel Tonucci have attended information sessions. Bloomfield has a number of visually impaired people, and the library would like to connect them to resources.

Poetry Celebration – The library hosted a poetry celebration at McMahon Wintonbury to celebrate library staffer Tom Nicotera, who is stepping down as the lead of the Wintonbury Poetry Series. The poetry series has run for 26 years and has featured many talented poets, including an open mic component. E. Lane said the town should be proud of this ongoing poetry series.

Summer Reading – E. Lane thanked the Friends for funding this year's successful summer reading program. This year's program had 143 more participants and nearly 1000 more program attendees than last year. E. Lane gave a shout out to programming staff for all their work over the summer.

Child Tax Credit – The library worked to connect as many Bloomfield families as possible with the child tax credit. There were many issues with the exclusively online application process. These issues highlight the digital divide.

Teen Services – The library has increased its focus on teen services, which has led to an increase in circulation and new programming ideas, such as dream boards and button making. Nicole Dolat held a successful Bookcon event at 330 Park that included over 180 participants. One important part of building literacy and lifelong learners is ensuring that youth have their own books in the home. Program feedback was collected on a tablet at the event. E. Lane thanked the staff at 330 Park for hosting the program, and gave a shout out to Nicole and everyone who worked to make the program a success.

Organizational Realignment – With the promotions of Chris Siloac and Allison Wilkos to assistant director, the first round of organizational realignment is complete. E. Lane thanked them for their work and noted that they have been acting in the role of assistant director for longer than the official promotion date.

Staff Training – Staff recently attended training on ableism and self-care, which was presented by a psychologist. E. Lane summed up the importance of the training with a quote by Maya Angelou: "People

will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.”

Storywalk – The library is working with the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) on a storywalk at McMahon Wintonbury.

CT Big Read - The library is participating in the Big Read event again this year, in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts and Eastern Connecticut State University. The library will plan programming and possibly an art installation around this year’s book, *Interior Chinatown* by Charles Yu.

FY 2022 Stats – The library continues to see increases across data points, especially in library programming. In FY 2022, the library hosted 608 programs and had 13,000 participants, which is nearly 2000 more than last year. In June, the library had its highest visitor count (8,083) since the pandemic began.

Intellectual Freedom – Book bans and challenges continue to be a problem for libraries across the country. BPL is hosting Sam Lee, an expert on these issues, for a program tonight on intellectual freedom.

Library Building Project – The library has formed a swing space committee to ensure we have spaces that allow us to continue services. The library will also have staff in schools. Office hours have already started at the high school, which has already led to 22 more teacher cards.

Grants – The library has applied for a \$5.526 million Community Investment Fund (CIF) grant, as well as a \$1 million dollar construction grant for McMahon Wintonbury Library. The library also received a Connecticut State Library grant to digitize newspapers from the World War II era. This historical material will end up in the Library of Congress.

Funding for Prosser Project – On July 28, the town council approved the appropriation of \$1.5 million, which included the \$1 million construction grant for Prosser, to retain the square footage planned for the new Prosser building. E. Lane thanked the town council for continuing to support the building project.

Building Project Timeline – The current timeline has the library leaving its facilities in early 2023, with the swing space opening in February or March. The library will keep the community informed. E. Lane noted that Library Building Committee meetings, which are held every other Wednesday at 6 PM, are a good way to stay in the know.

ALA Conference – Heidi Moon and Nicole Dolat attended the American Library Association Conference in Washington D.C., specifically to walk the vendor floor and gather ideas for furniture, materials, technology, etc. They brought back many ideas that can be incorporated into plans for the new buildings.

Library Video – E. Lane played the video “Welcome to the Library” for the board, a story from CBS News that shows what a 21st Century library can be.

Meeting Times – E. Lane is coaching her son’s soccer team this fall and asked if the library board can move its October and November meetings to 7:00 PM instead of 6:00 PM. The board did not see a problem with the change, though A. Biffer will reach out to the board members not in attendance to check their schedules.

Swing Space and Storage – In response to a question from P. DeLorenzo, E. Lane explained that the library’s internal swing space committee is tasked with determining what will be stored, planning materials and services in the swing space, and deciding which items will be discarded. Storage will consist mostly of books, since the best furniture will be taken to the swing space. The primary swing space is at Wintonbury Mall, though there are candidates for a second space being considered, while staff will also deliver library materials and services from the schools. One other consideration is the library’s historical collection, which requires a specialized environment. The town has a contract with Meyer in Windsor, so they have been contacted.

E. Lane said the library hopes to have some solid storage numbers by the end of the week. P. DeLorenzo asked if Carmen Arace Middle School is being looked at for housing library collections, and E. Lane confirmed that it is. B. Merritt asked how the library is determining what materials to take to the swing space. E. Lane said the swing space committee is working on that question, and that the plan is to have a browsable collection with an emphasis on new materials. BPL will also need to rely on borrowing items through system holds from other libraries, and the staff will need to educate the public more on the holds process. E. Lane emphasized that the proposed swing space at Wintonbury Mall is much smaller than the 9,000 square foot space the library had wanted, which makes planning services difficult.

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 June 14, 2022 meeting as presented; seconded by L. Farrell and passed unanimously.

MOTION by P. DeLorenzo to accept the minutes of the June 28, 2022 special meeting as presented; seconded by B. Merritt and passed unanimously.

Board Comments – There were no board comments.

MOTION by P. DeLorenzo to enter executive session at 6:49 PM for a personnel matter, related to the performance review of the library director; seconded by B. Merritt and approved.

The library board entered public session at 8:11 PM.

MOTION by T. Cooper to adjourn the meeting at 8:12 PM; seconded by P. DeLorenzo and approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Christopher Siloac
Assistant Director