

DRAFT  
Bloomfield Public Library  
Board of Trustees  
Conference Remote Meeting  
<https://youtube.com/live/0FBNhck402s?feature=share>  
March 14, 2023

**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 (*Assistant Director*)

**Absent:** None

Quorum present? Yes, 6 of 6

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

*Roll Call* – All trustees present.

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

*Report from the Friends of the Bloomfield Public Libraries* – The Friends had nothing new to report.

*Chairperson's Report*

**BPL Staff in Connecticut** – A. Biffer highlighted the work of BPL staff on statewide initiatives, including Rachel Tonucci's participation on the panel discussion, Experiencing America, hosted by the state library, and E. Lane's testimony on E-Book costs and part-time paid sick leave at multiple hearings. A. Biffer thanked the entire BPL staff for all their unseen work during this time of transition.

**Budget Schedule** – The library's scheduled budget hearing has been moved to March 23 at 6:30 PM. A. Biffer said the board will want to watch and support the BPL budget proposal.

*Director's Report*

**BPL Professional Outreach** – E. Lane noted that Rachel Tonucci highlighted BPL's work with the Social Justice Book Club at the Experiencing America panel discussion. E. Lane and Diah Seccareccia are part of the inaugural Equity and Leadership Alliance cohort as part of the National Conference for Community Justice (NCCJ). BPL was one of three libraries selected to participate. Sara Ray and Rachel Tonucci had a Connecticut Library Association conference proposal accepted that will show how BPL's social justice work and strategic plan inform library programming. C. Siloac and Quincey Gill had a Connecticut Education Network conference proposal accepted that will focus on patron-focused technology planning during times of transition. E. Lane stressed that this professional development work by staff shows BPL as library leaders in the state and shines a positive light on Bloomfield.

**E-Book Legislation** – E. Lane recently spoke on behalf of two E-Book bills, HB 6829 and HB 6800. The cost and lease terms of E-Books directly impacts library budgets, with prices going up and terms getting worse, even as usage of E-Books grows. E-Book costs and terms make it appear that libraries do not have the materials that patrons need, at least not in a timely fashion. E. Lane encouraged the board members to write letters of support for these bills.

**Paid Sick Leave** – E. Lane also spoke on Senate Bill 1178, an act to expand Connecticut paid sick days. As reported to the board previously, the Town of Bloomfield has chosen to interpret the current law in a

way that provides part-time librarians with accumulated sick leave but not part-time library assistants. This means staff working side by side on the service desk receive different treatment, which is a social justice and equity issue. Town Manager Hawthorne supports extending leave for part-time library assistants and has added a budget modification in the FY 2024 budget that would support this change. Bloomfield is one of only a few libraries in the state who do not give part-time library assistants sick leave.

**Town Manager Resignation** – Town Manager Stanley Hawthorne, who has been a strong library supporter during his tenure, is leaving Bloomfield as of the beginning of April. Assistant Town Manager Sharron Howe will step in as interim town manager, and the town council will begin the search for a new town manager. E. Lanes hopes the town council hires a town manager who is able to stay and work with the council, since continuity in leadership is needed. The turnover of town managers the past four years has been a strain on the library, especially with the building project. E. Lane expressed her appreciation for Stanley Hawthorne’s leadership.

**Read Across America Week**– Bloomfield schools launched a literacy week to coincide with Read Across America Week. BPL staff were embedded in the schools, at every grade level, throughout the week, offering programs and services and hosting library card drives. For example, 75 teens acquired new library cards at Bloomfield High School.

**State of Library Address** – E. Lane, C. Siloac, and Allison Wilkos recently delivered a state of the library address, the first of what will hopefully be an ongoing annual occurrence. The mayor, deputy mayor, and library board chair all spoke as well. The address is in conjunction with a compiled annual report, which will be released soon. The address and report are a way to remind the community of all the ways the library serves them, and that this service will continue during the building project.

**Interval House Program** – The library continued its partnership with Interval House, a local domestic violence shelter, by co-hosting a series of sessions on domestic violence for teens at Bloomfield High School. 185 students attended the sessions. E. Lane attended one session and said it was eye-opening to hear teens speak about their experiences, especially on issues related to domestic violence and technology. E. Lane thanked Interval House and the educators at Bloomfield High School for making these empowering sessions possible.

**FY 2024 Budget** – The budget cycle is upon us. The library is essentially going in with a similar budget to last year, including budget modifications for BPL on Wheels and a library vehicle for deliveries. The town manager will deliver his budget proposal next Thursday.

**Library Building Project** – BPL staff is currently moving very quickly to ready the library for the move-out transition, since the current planned last day open to the public is Friday, April 14, and the move-out process is set to begin on April 17. The library will continue to slowly close down by reducing service hours. There will be downtime during this process, though the hope is to have seamless technology access through the initiative at 330 Park.

**Library Construction Grants** – The Connecticut State Library is questioning some purchases in relation to the Prosser and McMahon Wintonbury construction grants. The town attorney is involved. Bloomfield does not believe it is in violation of the rules. E. Lane will keep the board in the know going forward.

**Library Transition Webpage** – E. Lane shared her screen and showed the board the building project transitions live document, which can be accessed from the library’s homepage and is the best place to find the most up to date information. E. Lane encouraged patrons to call the library for information, since there are a lot of rumors going around. She stressed that there will be continuity of service during building construction.

**MetLife Lease and Moving** – The MetLife lease is still not signed, but the April 17 date is still being considered the anticipated lease start date. The library met with three moving companies that are

preparing proposals with a deadline of this Friday. Once the lease is signed and the movers are hired, the library will be able to provide more definite answers to questions and begin implementing transition plans.

**Heidi Moon** – Youth Librarian Heidi Moon is resigning from her position in the library, with her last day being next Friday. Heidi has been in the youth department a long time and has formed a deep connection to the Bloomfield community through her work. She will be missed.

**MetLife Space Plan** – In response to a question by P. DeLorenzo about an update on the architect's layout of MetLife, E. Lane stated that the load bearing capacity of the floors at MetLife is still unknown, which will affect the space plan.

**Book Sanctuary City** – In response to a question by P. DeLorenzo about an update on moving forward with Bloomfield being a book sanctuary city, E. Lane said she followed up with the mayor and deputy mayor, and they are both in support of the idea. E. Lane will reach out to the town attorney for a draft declaration.

**Storytime Links** – M. Ursery thanked E. Lane and library staff for helping her provide streaming storytimes to her classrooms during Read Across America Week.

#### *Old Business*

**Discuss and possibly take action on Paid Sick Leave for Part-Time Staff** – E. Lane recommended an endorsement, through a formal vote, from the library board to encourage the town council to extend paid sick leave to part-time library assistants. **MOTION by P. DeLorenzo to have the board formally inform town council of its support for paid sick leave for part-time staff who qualify under terms of the state's paid sick leave statute;** seconded by M. Ursery and passed unanimously after discussion. Discussion of the motion focused on the number of employees affected, the budgetary impact, employee retention, legal opinions on the current state statute, and social justice in terms of frontline workers. A. Biffer and E. Lane will turn the vote into a formal letter to send to town council and the town manager.

**Discuss and possibly take action on Privacy Policy** – E. Lane noted that more time was needed for legal review of the new privacy policy. The policy will be reviewed by the town attorney. E. Lane hopes to deliver a vetted version to the board at the next meeting.

#### *New Business*

**Former Library Board Members** – E. Lane acknowledged the recent passing of two former library board members, Nancy Kamins and Joan Politis. E. Lane wanted to formally recognize their work and all they did for the library.

#### *Board Comments*

**State of the Library Address** – P. DeLorenzo apologized for not being able to attend the state of the library address. E. Lane said she would be sending out the final version of the annual report soon.

**Moving Spreadsheet** – P. DeLorenzo praised the library staff for all the hard work that has gone into the extensive itemized moving and storage spreadsheet. Patrick said it was impressive the way the library is doing all this work on the building project while continuing its essential mission of delivering services to the public.

**DEI Training** – P. DeLorenzo attended the recent Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion training that was hosted by the Town of Bloomfield in partnership with the YWCA, Hartford, and East Hartford. Patrick said the session was very good, and he recommended that others attend similar sessions, especially since DEI is a priority of the town.

**Paid Sick Leave** – P. DeLorenzo led a brief discussion about strategy regarding the board’s support for changes to paid sick leave policy. The hope is that the library board’s formal support for the idea will inform council budget deliberations, or will help move the issue to the Administrative and Education Subcommittee if needed.

**Hartford Courant Editorial on E-Books** – This past weekend the Hartford Courant published an op-ed about the E-Books issue. The op-ed was signed by E. Lane, along with the directors of the Hartford, East Hartford, and West Hartford libraries. A. Biffer spoke about the impact of E-Book costs and terms on her school library, which led to the school not offering E-Books to students.

*Approval of the Minutes*

**MOTION by B. Merritt to accept the minutes of the February 14, 2023 meeting as written;** seconded by T. Cooper and approved, with M. Ursery abstaining.

*Citizens’ Statements and Petitions* – There were no public comments.

**MOTION by M. Ursery to adjourn the meeting at 6:59 PM;** seconded by P. DeLorenzo and approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Christopher Siloac  
Assistant Director