

FINAL
Bloomfield Public Library
Board of Trustees
Conference Remote Meeting
<https://youtu.be/0aiO9VOqbNM>
December 13, 2022

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

Absent: Todd Cooper, Beverlee Merritt

Quorum present? Yes, 4 of 6

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

Roll Call – A. Biffer noted the absence of B. Merritt and T. Cooper.

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

Report from the Friends of the Bloomfield Public Libraries

Friends Update – The booksale carts currently feature holiday sales to help reduce inventory. The Friends are gearing up to decommission their space in January by moving out items that the Friends will store during construction. Their book carts will be stored with other library storage during construction. P. Pearson wished the board and staff “Happy Holidays” from the Friends.

Chairperson's Report

Westport Library Tour – A. Biffer thanked Town Manager Stanely Hawthorne for touring the Westport Library with E. Lane, and pointed out that seeing a recently completed library construction project helps give a new perspective on the possibilities for our project.

Social Justice Roundtable – A. Biffer congratulated E. Lane for being invited to speak about BPL's Social Justice Mission Statement to the Connecticut Library Consortium's Social Justice Roundtable. Ava noted that Elizabeth's leadership on this issue not only helps BPL but also benefits other libraries in the state.

CCM Webinar – A. Biffer attended a Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM) webinar, *Constitutional and Free Speech Issues for Municipalities: Battleground Libraries*, which provided excellent information that will inform library policies and processes around this subject.

Town Attorney – A. Biffer thanked Town Attorney Marc Needleman for his thoughtful suggestions on the library's intellectual freedom policy and its reconsideration process.

Director's Report

Staff Retirement – Part-time librarian Priscilla Marks has retired after 26 years of service to the Town of Bloomfield. On behalf of the library, E. Lane applauded Priscilla and wished her luck.

Teen Advisory Group – BPL's new Teen Advisory Group (TAG) has met twice and will meet again on January 17. E. Lane thanked the Friends for funding the food for the program, which helps draw participants. This group will help guide BPL in its efforts to deliver collections and services to teens, as well as in shaping a teen presence in the new buildings.

Interval House – The holiday gift card drive with Interval House ends on December 16. This drive is an example of creating action-oriented initiatives to deliver on BPL’s Social Justice Mission Statement.

Social Justice Book Club – The Social Justice Book Club turns three years old in January. The next installment will occur on December 20 at 6:30 PM and feature *This Chair Rocks*, which deals with ageism. E. Lane gave a shout out to librarian Rachel Tonucci for her great work on the book club.

Budget Season – The library is preparing for the upcoming budget season. E. Lane mentioned that a drop in usage statistics will likely occur during construction, but that it is not reflective of staff doing less work. It is important to anticipate and prepare for this time of flux. Indications from council are that this budget cycle will be tight. The library is thinking about the budget in terms of a two-year plan, with an eye toward McMahon Wintonbury opening in a year. The library will submit the same requests for the capital improvement budget as last year – BPL On Wheels and a staff vehicle. E. Lane is increasingly concerned about staff using their own vehicles for library business.

BPL Everywhere – The library is continuing to grow its BPL Everywhere initiatives, which includes visits to daycares, pre-schools, and elementary schools. In October, BPL librarians did 46 pre-K outreach visits for 870 children. E. Lane thanked librarians Mara Whitman, Heidi Sacchitella, Sheila McCallum and Nicole Dolat for their work on this initiative.

Custodial Services – Public Works is having a custodial shortage, resulting in a lack of deep cleaning of the library facilities. Despite the shortage, Facilities Manager Glen Garrity is responsive to library custodial needs as they arise.

Town Leadership Team – The town manager is continuing to develop the town’s leadership team, with a recent focus on succession planning, which included training for department heads. The library is in a good place with succession planning overall, but needs to focus a bit more on library assistants and pages. The library is beginning to move forward with the second phase of its organizational restructuring.

Art Installation – The last art installation, a partnership with Eastern Connecticut State University, is up at both buildings and has already generated a lot of positive feedback.

Building Committee – The project is moving very quickly, and BPL leadership is doing its best to keep up. There is not currently a swing space location locked in. E. Lane is hoping for the best possible decision, including the exploration of other options. Communication issues continue to be a problem, with no recent communication between the library and the owner’s representative. E. Lane keeps requesting a milestone document with timelines and has not received it, so the library is being proactive about setting dates and moving forward on its own with things such as building farewell parties and service stoppages.

Building Project Grants – Last week the bond commission approved the \$5.526 million CIF grant. E. Lane thanked the legislators, deputy mayor, and other supporters who helped make this possible. Unfortunately, the McMahon Wintonbury construction grant did not make the agenda. The library is in communication with Representative Gibson and Senator McCrory about next steps and hopes the grant will still come through.

Timeline Documents – E. Lane said she hopes there are more timeline answers at the building committee meeting tomorrow night. Once there is more clarity, the library plans to do more outreach, including another event with the public to showcase buildings, as well as information in the Bloomfield Messenger.

Old Business

Review and approve changes to Intellectual Freedom and Censorship Policy – E. Lane shared her screen to review recent changes to the policy, which reflect suggestions and guidance from the town attorney. The most substantial changes include the removal of a limit to the number of challenges, which follows recent best practices, and an expanded time duration for addressing challenges, from 20 to 60 business days. P. DeLorenzo noted that allowing only one challenge at time and a duration of 60 days to

address each challenge will likely still protect the library from being overwhelmed by challenges.

MOTION by P. DeLorenzo to approve changes to the *Intellectual Freedom and Censorship Policy* as presented; seconded by L. Farrell and passed unanimously.

Review and approve changes to Request for Reconsideration of Material Form – Essentially, the changes to this form are the same as the ones discussed in the policy above. A. Biffer wondered if the town attorney’s suggestion, which was omitted, of changing “you” to “we” on question 8, may be worth considering, since it potentially changes decision-making authority from the patron to the library.

MOTION by P. DeLorenzo to approve the changes to the *Request for Reconsideration of Material Form* as presented, with the proviso that if staff consults the town attorney and he asks that the change from “you” to “we” in question 8 be made, then the change will be made accordingly; seconded by L. Farrell and passed unanimously.

Staff Appreciation – The BPL leadership team met to discuss staff appreciation and decided that a breakfast event would occur onsite on a Thursday morning in January, and that each staff member would receive a small gift. **MOTION by L. Farrell to approve up to \$1000 for a staff appreciation party and gift;** seconded by P. DeLorenzo and passed unanimously.

New Business – There was no new business to discuss.

Approval of the Minutes

MOTION by P. DeLorenzo to accept the minutes of the November 15, 2022 meeting as presented; seconded by M. Ursery and approved unanimously.

Board Comments

McMahon Wintonbury Grant – P. DeLorenzo asked E. Lane about the financial impact on the project of the McMahon Wintonbury construction grant not being awarded in time. E. Lane said that the project wasn’t dependent on the grant, and that the grant would be used to pay down the referendum amount or appropriated for excess expenses if needed. She noted that the Prosser construction grant was used to save the square footage, so the McMahon grant would be a good buffer if any future obstacles occurred.

Library Budget Planning – P. DeLorenzo floated the idea of adding swing space related costs to the library’s budget plan for FY 2024, if possible, to help give the library more options. A. Biffer added a concern that the assumption by the building committee that public works would handle upgrades and repairs in the swing space may not be fully considering the departmental budgetary impact of the labor and materials. E. Lane said this is one reason that public works and library staff want to visit the space again, and one reason for wanting to see the proposed lease. A. Biffer stressed that it is important to anticipate the swing space’s potential impact on departmental budgets going forward.

MOTION by L. Farrell to to adjourn the meeting at 6:50 PM; seconded by P. DeLorenzo and approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Christopher Siloac
Assistant Director