

FINAL
Bloomfield Public Library
Board of Trustees
Conference Remote Meeting
<https://youtu.be/iZcPf-AGsc0>
October 11, 2022

Attendance: Elizabeth Lane (*Library Director*), Ava Biffer (*Chairperson*), Leah Farrell (*Vice-Chairperson*), Todd Cooper, Patrick DeLorenzo, Maxine Ursery, Penny Pearson (*Friends of the Library Representative*), Christopher Siloac (*Assistant Director*), Rachel Tonucci (*BPL Librarian*)

Absent: Beverlee Merritt

Quorum present? Yes, 5 of 6

A. Biffer called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM.

Roll Call – A. Biffer performed roll call and noted the absence of B. Merritt and T. Cooper. T. Cooper joined the meeting at 7:22 PM.

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 that the Friends are always open to funding requests for upcoming events and programs.

Chairperson's Report

Leah Farrell – A. Biffer praised L. Farrell for her extraordinary DEI work on behalf of Wallingford Library, as well as for the Racial Justice and Equity Resource Guide that she created. A. Biffer would like to use Leah's guide to inform an upcoming meeting, as the board makes sure the library is working towards the realization of its mission statement and social justice mission statement.

CIF Grant – A. Biffer thanked E. Lane, C. Siloac, and Allison Wilkos and the library staff for their work on the Community Investment Fund Grant for \$5.5 million, which has been moved to the approved list. This grant comes in addition to the \$1 million construction grant for Prosser that has already been secured, as well as the recent application for a \$1 million construction grant for the McMahon Wintonbury renovation.

MOTION by A. Biffer to move New Business to before the Director's Report on the agenda; seconded by P. DeLorenzo and passed unanimously.

New Business

Review and Approve Collection Development Policy – The library is working to update its policies and decided to make this policy a priority due to recent censorship and book banning issues. Librarian Rachel Tonucci, who took the lead on drafting the policy, presented an overview of the policy and its creation. This policy replaces the Materials Selection Policy. The policy was drafted using American Library Association (ALA) best practices, and includes links to the BPL's Intellectual Freedom and Censorship Policy, strategic plan and social justice mission statement. The document was reviewed, discussed and edited by a team of library staff. The library has a new data tool, Collection HQ, which will help with collection development and DEI initiatives.

In response to a question by P. DeLorenzo about the process of implementing the policy, R. Tonucci, C. Siloac, and E. Lane described the library's team approach to the process of collection development, including patron requests for materials, and emphasized that this policy document was not intended to be procedural, except in the case of the Request for Reconsideration document that it links to. E. Lane showed the board where to access policy documents on the library's website and explained the different documents that would be given to a member of the public if they challenged library materials. E. Lane briefly described the documented formal process for a reconsideration. In response to a P. DeLorenzo question about the need to involve the town attorney, A. Biffer said that the library board sets policy, often in alignment with ALA's legally-sound guidelines, but that the town attorney is consulted when additional counsel is needed on particular matters. A. Biffer stressed the importance of having the collection development policy and reconsideration process documented ahead of any potential challenges. **MOTION by P. DeLorenzo to accept the Collection Development Policy as presented by BPL staff;** seconded by L. Farrell and passed unanimously.

Director's Report

Senior Expo – The library attended the senior expo on September 20 and were able to sign up many people for library cards.

CT Lobbying Conference – E. Lane recently attended a Connecticut lobbying conference, organized by the Connecticut Library Association, that focused on digital equity, censorship, and E-books.

iSchool Intern – The library recently worked on a project with Courtney Withey, an extern from Syracuse's iSchool, who gave a presentation on deepening the library's relationship with the University of Hartford.

Meriden Site Tour – The Connecticut State Library is hosting a construction site tour of the Meriden Public Library on October 13, which is aimed at library staff and library board members. E. Lane invited board members to attend.

Social Justice Roundtable – Rachel Tonucci has been appointed co-chair of CLA's Social Justice Roundtable. E. Lane thanked Rachel for her leadership on these issues for Bloomfield and the greater library community.

Leah Farrell – E. Lane thanked vice-chair L. Farrell for her leadership on DEI initiatives. Leah's work was featured in CT Pages, a Connecticut State Library initiative to share good work with a broader audience.

Program Planning – The library is piloting a new method of program planning that targets programs to the literacies outlined in the library's strategic plan.

Public and School Librarians – Youth Librarian Heidi Moon is presenting at a joint conference of the Connecticut Association of School Librarians and Connecticut Educators Computer Association on November 4 to highlight how public librarians can serve school librarians.

NELA Conference – E. Lane and Allison Wilkos will attend the New England Library Association Conference from October 23 to October 25. This is the conclusion of the NELLs leadership program that Allison has participated in, and Elizabeth and Allison will do a presentation on library marketing.

Student Loan Forgiveness – The library is working to promote the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program. The deadline to file under the more generous program rules is October 31st.

Collection HQ – As Rachel Tonucci mentioned in her presentation, the Library Connection consortium has purchased Collection HQ, a new collection management tool that will help the library build and weed its collection in an intentional way.

Narcan Training – E. Lane, Sara Ray, Mara Whitman, and Allison Wilkos participated in Narcan training, which will now be available at both buildings. Library staff will be trained on how to administer Narcan.

Domestic Violence Awareness Month – October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month and the library has partnered with Interval House for an educational program on October 13. The library will also participate in Purple Thursday on October 20, with a social media campaign and with staff wearing purple to highlight the issue of domestic violence.

DEI Focus Groups – The town is participating in new DEI initiatives, and library staff participated in focus groups to help with that process.

New Librarian – A new part-time librarian, Lorri Huddy, has joined the staff. Lorri has been trained to work at both locations.

Library Building Project – The building committee has been busy. New drawings of McMahon Wintonbury, some of which feature a wood facade, are now on the library website. The library continues to work on swing space. The library submitted the construction grant application for McMahon Wintonbury and has heard back with a greenlight from the SHPO office. The deadline for design development documents is October 7, with cost estimates expected around November 2. A Planning and Zoning review meeting is scheduled for October 27. Lastly, E. Lane spoke about the CIF grant and highlighted the work of the deputy mayor, everyone at the state level, as well as C. Siloac and Allison Wilkos for helping to write the grant, which was a clear articulation of BPL’s vision.

Voter Registration – The library participated in Voter Registration Day and continues to be a place where people can register to vote.

Hispanic Heritage Month – The library is celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month, in a variety of ways, through October 15th. E. Lane noted that the Mango app available through BPL Online is a great way to learn conversational Spanish.

Banned Books Week – The library celebrated Banned Books Week with a presentation by Sam Lee, who helped advise the writing of BPL’s intellectual freedom policy, titled “Intellectual Freedom: Protecting Your Right to Read,” which is available to watch on BPL Online.

Digital Equity – Library staff had the privilege of attending a talk on digital equity by ALA Executive Director Tracey Hall, at Hartford Public Library. L. Farrell helped organize the event and many stakeholders, including the deputy mayor, attended. BPL feels strongly that federal dollars should not only go to equipment but also training and skill building. In August, BPL had 1,681 public computer sessions, totaling over 82,000 minutes of use. E. Lane stressed the depth of the digital divide in Bloomfield and how it impacts outcomes in education, health, and employment.

IT Support – P. DeLorenzo asked about the status of library IT needs, in light of management turnover in the town’s IT department. The lack of IT support is an ongoing issue but a few steps have been taken: C. Siloac has been approved for more access to systems by the town manager; the town has hired a consultant to assist with IT and may hire more; and TSKP is looking to hire a consultant for the building project. One of the most important needs is for someone to assist with IT in the swing space. C. Siloac reported that Warren Plummer, who works primarily in the police department, has stepped up to handle more IT duties for the whole town.

Planning and Zoning – P. DeLorenzo asked what the planning and zoning meeting planned for the building project will entail. E. Lane wasn’t sure but thought it might involve the Prosser exterior, as well as the potential placement of the dumpsters. The library does not want the dumpsters and trash removal to be highly visible to the public and hopes that a larger discussion can take place.

Swing Space – In response to a question from T. Cooper, E. Lane noted that the primary swing space will likely be in Wintonbury Mall. Additionally, the library plans to place librarians and some collections in

schools, and is also tentatively considering the idea of services in a computer lab at 330 Park, which would depend on agreement from other department heads.

Domestic Violence Awareness Month – In response to a question from T. Cooper about partnerships around domestic violence awareness, E. Lane reiterated the partnership and program with Interval House and the library's involvement with Purple Thursday. Information on this topic will also be posted in the bathrooms at both libraries.

Public Computer Usage – In response to the computer usage stats that E. Lane shared, T. Cooper talked about the importance of getting the word out to parents in the community about how library usage can translate into better educational outcomes and future success. E. Lane cited the example of the recent child tax credit application, a process that contained many technological obstacles for applicants, to show how the library and its resources can help people through every part of an important and challenging process.

Old Business – There was no old business to discuss.

By-Laws – Next month the library board will need to review and update its by-laws as needed. A. Biffer will send everyone a copy to work from.

Approval of the Minutes

MOTION by T. Cooper to accept the minutes of the September 13, 2022 meeting as presented; seconded by L. Farrell and approved unanimously.

Board Comments

Thank You – P. DeLorenzo thanked E. Lane, C. Siloac, L. Farrell, R. Tonucci and the rest of the library staff for their amazing work and all the progress made on the building project. He expressed his excitement at being part of it all as things move forward.

MOTION by M. Ursery to adjourn the meeting at 7:57 PM; seconded by T. Cooper and approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Christopher Siloac
Assistant Director