DRAFT
The Bloomfield Public Library Board of Trustees
Conference Remote Meeting
https://youtube.com/live/ekF7tfaejRg?feature=share
June 9, 2026

Attendance: Elizabeth Lane (*Library Director*), Erin Corbett (*Chairperson*), Patrick DeLorenzo (*Vice-Chairperson*), Sherry-Ann Chance, Claudia Gwardyak, Harvey Frydman, Angela LaBella (*Friends of the Bloomfield Public Libraries*), Christopher Siloac (*Assistant Director*), Allison Wilkos (*Assistant Director*)

Absent: Beverlee Merritt

Quorum present? Yes, 5 of 6

E. Corbett called the meeting to order at 6:08 PM.

Roll Call – B. Merritt was noted as absent.

Citizens' Statements and Petitions – There were no citizens' statements.

Report from the Friends of the Bloomfield Public Libraries

Membership – The Friends are looking to rebuild their membership numbers, which were impacted by the COVID pandemic. To help with membership and donation tracking, the Friends have purchased Little Green Light, a donor database system. The Friends have contributed around $25,000 in funding for the grand opening celebrations, summer reading, teen advisory group, and baby bags in this fiscal year. One problem is that there are significantly more funds going out than coming in, so a major membership campaign will be launched in the fall. As part of that campaign, the Friends have created a brochure that showcases funded library events and includes a membership form. A. LaBella and the board discussed the current focus on increasing membership, new fundraising ideas, the importance of getting people into leadership roles, and the library board's role in getting the word out about becoming members of the Friends. E. Lane noted that the library consistently features Friends information on BPL Online and in the newsletter, and that the library would like to revisit the idea of hosting a volunteer appreciation event, which had once been an annual occurrence.

Chairperson's Report – There was no chairperson's report.

Director's Report

Friends – E. Lane talked about the important role the Friends play and thanked them for their generous funding of library programs and their welcoming presence as library advocates.

Budget and Staffing – E. Lane explained that the library was the only department hit with a consistent hiring freeze over recent years, and that despite lower staffing levels, the library never pulled back services, which put a strain on staff. In the fiscal year 2027 budget process, additions to staffing were

considered budget modifications. The library asked for two full-time positions as modifications and did not get those. The library did get its status quo budget, as well as an improvement to its part-time budget. With the improved part-time budget, the library is now looking to hire part-time librarians and library assistants. The number of hours these new hires will work will vary depending on need and availability, and there are many gaps the library is hoping to fill so that it can better meet the goals outlined in the strategic plan. E. Lane stressed the importance of the back-of-the-house library work that often goes unseen but involves a lot of staff time and thinking time. She noted that onboarding new employees takes significant time, training, and planning. E. Lane stated that she was thankful for everything everyone did to support the library, and thankful for the funding the library did receive, especially considering the many cuts throughout the town. E. Lane noted that the referendum to overturn the budget did not garner enough votes, so the adopted budget stands and the library now knows what it has to work with.

Migration to New ILS – The consortium-wide migration to a new integrated library system (ILS) and online catalog, which involved 30 area libraries, is mostly complete. A. Wilkos said the migration went well overall, but that staff is now trying to learn to work with the system and its quirks and issues, as well as to redefine processes to better fit the system. She stressed the fact that staff and patrons are both still learning to navigate the impact of these changes. E. Lane added that the new mobile app is much better and should be available soon. She also thanked the public for their patience during the disruption.

Circulation Statistics and Monthly Stats – E. Lane gave insight into the reason for auto-renewals, which renew an eligible item without requiring a patron to call or visit the library, being counted as circulation transactions. She noted that the guidelines around statistical collection are mostly dictated by the state library.

Monthly Metrics and Reports – E. Lane reviewed the monthly metrics and key dates document that was included in the packet.

Prosser Library Grand Opening – The Prosser Library grand opening will be held June 22 to June 29. E. Lane talked about the importance of getting the word out that the library is open. The week includes the State of the Library address, a Nekita Waller concert, the Prosser Prom, a Book Dances performance, a banned book photo shoot, as well as a special storytime from Linda Gabianelli, beloved (and retired) BPL librarian. E. Lane encouraged people to register for the banned book photo shoot, which is limited to 50 people. All grand opening events are generously funded by the Friends. The library is also working on a grand opening postcard to go out to every Bloomfield household.

McMahon Wintonbury Exterior Renovation – The town council approved using the bond interest to help fund the exterior renovation at the McMahon Wintonbury Library. The hope is that the work will be finished this fall and that it will have a transformative impact on how the library appears to the public.

McMahon Wintonbury Grand Opening – The McMahon grand opening will be weather and landscaping dependent, so it is possible that it will have to wait until spring 2027. E. Lane noted that the tribute to former employee Mame Feemster will be part of the grand opening celebration.

Summer Reading – Summer reading registration has started, with 70 people already registering. E. Lane emphasized that summer reading is for all ages. The program runs from June 15 to August 8 and includes events and activities for all ages and interests. E. Lane noted the summer reading brochure that lists all the offerings and pointed out that every type of reading counts.

Library Building Committee (LBC) – The LBC held its last regular meeting, so there will only be special meetings going forward. There is still work being done and items being addressed. Among the things being worked on is reseeding and replanting at Prosser, bridge masonry work, concrete work on the plaza, HVAC issues, lighting, and exterior Wi-Fi. E. Lane noted how the porch at Prosser is popular and well used.

Duncaster – E. Lane spoke at Duncaster on May 18. She emphasized the importance of the library's relationship with both Duncaster and Seabury. Both communities feature many dedicated readers and library users.

Every Library Presentation – On March 18, B. Merritt and E. Lane attended a presentation from John Chrastka and Every Library called *It's All About the Money: Funding Power and Public Value in Connecticut Public Libraries*. The presentation provided good pointers on how to better talk about libraries for stakeholders.

Online ADA Requirements – BPL is working through the new federal requirements, set through the Americans with Disabilities Act, that ensure public websites and online resources are accessible to everyone. The library website was run through town software that helps with compliance, and the issues noted mostly concerned color contrast. The library will continue addressing color contrast issues online and in print going forward.

McMahon Wintonbury One-Year Celebration – In March, BPL held the one-year anniversary celebration of the reopening of the McMahon Wintonbury Library. E. Lane thanked Howard Frydman for taking photos of the event, which were featured on the front page of the *Bloomfield Messenger*. The board discussed how lovely the anniversary ceremony was. E. Lane noted that colleagues from Greenwich recently visited McMahon Wintonbury to look at the three study pods.

Puzzle Library – There is now a free puzzle library at Prosser, in the corner across from the main service desk, near the cafe. The idea is that patrons can take or leave puzzles as they please. There is a woman who often completes the puzzles while sitting in the cafe.

Greenway Project – The Bloomfield Greenway project, which includes a trail from Tyler Street to Blue Hills Avenue, will essentially provide a safe walking path to McMahon Wintonbury Library. The greenway will benefit the library, especially for youth access.

Bookmarks - During National Library Week, the middle-schoolers designed bookmarks for the library. There are 8-10 distinct bookmarks, which BPL has given out at the library and in the schools. This is an example of the kind of programs the library does with the board of education. E. Lane thanked the students for their creative designs.

Staff Development and Appreciation – E. Lane asked if the board would consider a vote to provide $1,000 to cover the recent staff development day lunch, which was focused on training for the migration, as well as other staff appreciation activities over the summer. E. Corbett said the board will address this item during New Business.

Literacy Night – BPL hosted literacy night with the board of education at Prosser last week. This is the second year of BPL hosting the event, which included the superintendent, board of education members, principals, and many students and their families. The Read to Grow bookmobile was parked out front, so every student was allowed to take a book home to keep. E. Lane thanked the Lions Club for providing snacks.

Prosser Art Exhibitions – The third Prosser art exhibition was featured in the *Bloomfield Messenger*. The idea is to have new exhibitions quarterly. The current exhibition of photography is a partnership *w*ith the Mandel Jewish Community Center. The next exhibit will feature paintings from a local Bloomfield artist, and then after that the library will feature work from the Prison Arts Collective. E. Lane stressed that the library will continue to have diverse art offerings from different partners in the community.

Board Questions/Comments – In response to a question from P. DeLorenzo about hiring, E. Lane explained that there have been two job postings, one for a part-time librarian and one for a part-time library assistant, but that the library plans to hire multiple people for each posting. E. Lane explained that the hope is to find a range of qualified candidates who can fill key gaps in the library. One gap of 19 hours comes from a long-time youth librarian retiring in July. E. Lane explained that the amount of hours part-timers work varies depending on the individual and the library's needs. P. DeLorenzo asked about the status of the solar panels project. E. Lane said there was an assessment of some work that needed to be completed and that most of it was fixed, but that there is not a clear timeline yet of when the cranes will be on location to install the panels. E. Lane talked about the potential budget impact solar could have on energy costs once it is in place.

C. Gwardyak noted that the Conservation, Energy & Environment Committee is partnering with BPL to present a film screening and discussion for *The Story of Plastic*, on Tuesday, September 15, at Prosser Library. E. Lane noted that this event is an example of how far out ahead the library plans its programming. This is one reason the library cannot quickly accommodate program ideas from the public or community partners. E. Lane noted how the films at Prosser are becoming more popular, and that the Friends, in their role as library ambassadors, have been providing refreshments such as fresh popcorn.

S. Chance gave a shout out to the library for providing positive front page news for the Bloomfield community. E. Corbett noted the phenomenal work the library staff is doing and stated that her professional colleagues are highly complimentary when they visit the library.

E. Lane added that she recently attended the Connecticut Library Consortium's (CLC) annual meeting, which was held at the new Southington Library. E. Lane is the treasurer of CLC, and she emphasized that BPL's partnership with CLC had saved the library over $50,000 last year, due to their collective buying agreements on behalf of libraries across the state. At the annual meeting, BPL's own librarian Sara Ray received the sole award given out, in recognition of her service to the profession. E. Lane stated that BPL

is lucky to have Sara and pointed out that it is her experience and organizational savvy that helps the library deliver so many successful programs.

Old Business

Discussion of Library Building Committee project timeline and impact to library services – This item was covered as part of the *Director's Report*.

Discussion of Fiscal Year 2027 Budget – E. Lane noted that the library is already thinking about the budget for FY28.

New Business

Staff Development and Appreciation – As mentioned during the Director's Report, E. Lane is requesting $1000 to reimburse for the lunch from TJs Burritos that was provided during the recent staff development day, and to use the remainder of funds for other staff appreciation activities during the summer. **MOTION by H. Frydman to approve board funding of $1000 for professional staff development day luncheon and staff appreciation**; seconded by C. Gwardyak and approved unanimously.

Citizens' Statements and Petitions – Ava Biffer noted that she just signed up for summer reading through the library's website.

Board Comments – There were no board comments.

Approval of the Minutes

MOTION by H. Frydman to accept the minutes of the March 10, 2026 meeting; seconded by P. DeLorenzo and approved as submitted.

The next meeting is July 14, 2026 at 6:00 PM. Meetings will be held in the Prosser Library conference room (room 218) going forward, though there will be at least one meeting a year held at McMahon Wintonbury Library.

MOTION by H. Fryman to adjourn the meeting; seconded by C. Gwardyak and approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:14 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Christopher Siloac
Assistant Director