

FINAL
Prosser Public Library
Library Board of Directors Meeting
May 10, 2016

Attendance: Roberta LaMonaca (*Library Director*), Shirley Thompson (*Chairperson*), Harvey Frydman (*Vice-Chairperson*), Beverlee Merritt (*Secretary/Treasurer*), Joan Geetter, Martha Brackeen-Harris, Paula Walek, Penny Pearson (*Friends of the Library Representative*), Phil Schenck (*Town Manager*), Mark Weisman (*Building Committee Chair*), Nancy Haynes (*Town Purchasing Agent*), Ruth Ann Marchetti (*Friends of the Library*)

Absent: No absences.

Quorum present? Yes, 6 of 6

Shirley Thompson called the meeting to order at 5:04 p.m.

MOTION to accept the minutes of the April 12, 2016 meeting; seconded and approved.

Public Statements – including discussion with Phil Schenck regarding plans for a new Prosser Public Library and a report from Mark Weisman, chair of the Library Building Committee.

Introductions – Town Manager Phil Schenck introduced himself and said that with so much going on with the library, he felt it was a good time to attend a meeting. As a bonus, Mark Weisman will present recent building plan changes by the architect. Phil said he'd be happy to answer any questions the board might have. Ruth Ann Marchetti, a member of the Friends, also introduced herself.

Presentation of Latest Town Hall Building Plan w/Mark Weisman – Mark Weisman revisited the plans that had been presented to the town council and the land use subcommittee, and said that the town hall site plan has generated a lot of feedback. Mark emphasized the need to embrace the process, and that the plans will evolve in response to comments and concerns. Today the architects have sent over a new town hall plan that aims to address some of the concerns that have been raised. Mark displayed an image of the new plan on the projector and gave an overview of the changes.

The new plan brings the building back from the road and retains entrances on Park Ave. and Bloomfield Ave. The parking loops behind the back of the building, allowing for 153-163 spaces, which falls into the target range. It might be possible to get up to 190 spaces, though part of the area in question consists of wetlands.

The new plan attaches the library directly to the town hall annex, at the point of the library's community room, which presents the potential for space-sharing. Attaching the library to the town hall goes back to the Tuthill and Wells plan, which many people liked, but it improves upon it by providing the library with a more distinct identity. P. Walek asked about the height differential. Mark said that the library would be a similar height to town hall, 1 ½ floors and 2 ½ floors at different points. This helps address concerns raised about the town hall being blocked. The plan also contains the outline of a potential town hall expansion. The next step for the architects and building committee is to look more closely at questions concerning the connection of the two buildings, security, construction materials, as well as what it would actually look like.

B. Merritt and P. Walek expressed a strong preference for this plan over the previous one. R. Marchetti noted that the new plan seems to provide more opportunity for landscaping and green space, which is important to people in the community. Mark agreed and pointed out areas that could be both functional and aesthetically pleasing.

Mark has spoken with Mayor Gamble about presenting a version of this plan at the May 23rd council meeting. That meeting will be the last shot before they deliberate. The building committee will meet next week to go over the plan. P. Walek asked why there weren't any library board members on the building committee. R. LaMonaca explained the process that led to the committee's formation, including the fact that the mayor appointed the members. Nancy Haynes noted that all building committee meetings are open to the public.

R. Lamonaca pointed out that the library board had voted to support a specific plan during the process in 2011 with Tuthill and Wells, and that the Economic Development Commission recently voted to keep the library in the center of town. Mark stressed the importance of the library board's input in the process. J. Geetter said it was important for the board to take a stand.

R. Marchetti attended the Economic Development Commission meeting where they voted to support the library remaining in the center. They will send their recommendation to the town council. She said there is a strong sentiment among many residents to keep the library in the town center.

S. Thompson thanked Mark Weisman and Phil Schenck. M. Weisman, P. Schenck, and R. Marchetti exited the meeting.

Report from the Friends of the Library

Outreach and Advocacy for Building Project – P. Pearson explained that a group of Friends meets weekly to develop outreach strategies for the building initiative, including the posting of information on the standing kiosks in both libraries. The displays have generated a positive response. The Friends are reaching out to the community and encouraging people to get involved and contact council members to have their say, though the Friends do not push a particular opinion regarding the library project. It's important for people to have a voice.

Book Sale – The Friends raised over \$3500 at the recent book sale. The sale was well-received. Fewer dealers on Thursday morning may have made the sale a little more enjoyable for regular buyers. Even with fewer dealers, the sale was a success. Penny thanked board members for their donations.

Spring Luncheon – The Friends held their spring luncheon last week in Seabury's newly updated dining room. Randi Ashton-Pritting, Director of the University of Hartford's libraries, was the guest speaker. Mark Weisman and other building committee members attended, as did Syd Schulman. Mark spoke about the building plans.

Fall Trip – With so much going on with the library, the Friends have decided not to host a fall trip this year.

Book Sale Publicity – R. LaMonaca expressed her appreciation for what a good job Joyce Libbin does with publicity for the sale. She helped get the sale covered in the Hartford Courant on Friday, which increased turnout that day. The library board thanked Penny and all the Friends for their hard work.

Chairperson's Report

Library Building Plans – S. Thompson stated that she has had many conversations with council members, and that she wants to see the library and senior center combined into one new building, rather than combine old and new sections, as in the town hall plan. A new building at the 330 Park location would position the library in the center of three schools. She mentioned the lack of parking at the current Prosser location, and the need to renovate town hall as reasons for preferring a new large complex.

A discussion ensued as to which plan other board members preferred. B. Merritt prefers that the library stay in the center, and doesn't think that school children will walk to the library on their own after school,

especially since they have libraries in their schools and will generally need to take the bus from after-school care. She also mentioned that the town hall is in good shape for its age. The board discussed the fact that the architects have essentially gone back to the town hall plan from 2011, and that it would have been nice to have a board member on the building committee for purposes of continuity. R. LaMonaca mentioned that the building committee and the architects started their designs using town center building guidelines established by the town council.

H. Frydman asked how the process will play out from this point. R. LaMonaca explained that the town council will make the final decision as to whether or not it goes to referendum. The town has \$25-\$35 million to bond. A new building at 330 Park is estimated at \$50 million, so if we tie the library into that project, it won't go forward this year. Councilman DiLorenzo recently spent over an hour doing a walkthrough of the library with Roberta. The council is seeking input from the board.

P. Walek asked R. LaMonaca what her preferred plan would be. R. LaMonaca said she wants any of the three, and that her mission is to get a new facility for the citizens of Bloomfield. She also mentioned that her research shows that public libraries should be in town centers. J. Geetter mentioned two other drawbacks with the 330 Park plan: it will once again delay any action on a new library building, and the delay could jeopardize state grant funding. R. LaMonaca noted that she spoke to Ken Wiggin, the State Librarian, at the CLA conference, and that he said we can apply and receive a grant before the project is officially approved, as long as it meets future deadlines for funding and construction.

The board discussed the need to voice their support for a plan before the town council deliberates. S. Thompson said that she wants a new library, but is not comfortable voting for a particular location.

MOTION to state that the Prosser Public Library Board of Trustees is in favor of building a new Prosser Public Library adjacent to the town hall; seconded and passed, with one member dissenting.

Director's Report

Celebrate Bloomfield Dinner – The library will be selling tickets for this year's Celebrate Bloomfield dinner at Wintonbury Hills Golf Club. The tickets are \$30.

CLA Awards – R. LaMonaca showed the board the awards for best website and logo that the library received at this year's Connecticut Library Association conference. Along with Roberta, website committee members Chris Siloac and Heidi Sacchitella received the award. Allison Wilkos, the head of the committee, is on maternity leave and could not attend.

National Library Week Program – The Libraries Transform program at Carbone's Kitchen, which ran during National Library Week, netted the library a \$50 contribution to the building fund.

McMahon Wintonbury Building Updates – R. LaMonaca is working with Ben Whittaker on building updates at the branch. The carpeting will be updated during the week of June 20th. Chris Siloac will disconnect computers and other technology on the weekend before, and the hope is to have the computers accessible by the time the library opens Tuesday afternoon. Both bathrooms will also be renovated, though they will need to be done one at a time.

Freedom of Information Act – Seven staff members attended this year's CLA conference. One of the sessions Roberta attended was on being in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act. Roberta learned that executive sessions should be on the agenda, or added to the agenda during the meeting, and that the reason for the executive session needs to be stated. There are five reasons that a board can call for an executive session: for issues related to personnel, litigation, security, sale of property, and discussions of classified documents. Phil Schenck has also asked that all town agendas follow a similar format.

Old Business

Vote to Approve Funding for Annual Volunteer Appreciation Reception – Roberta also learned that a special meeting held via conference call is the way the board should vote when it's not in session, as opposed to using email as it has done in the past. Due to this change in process, Roberta asked if the board could vote for funding the volunteer appreciation reception again. **MOTION to allocate up \$500 for the volunteer appreciation reception;** seconded and passed. The reception will be held on May 26th, from 4:00 – 5:30 PM.

New Business – There was no new business.

MOTION to enter executive session at 6:09 PM to discuss the Library Director's annual evaluation; seconded and passed.

The board ended executive session at 6:53 PM.

MOTION to adjourn meeting at 6:54 PM; seconded and approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Christopher Siloac,
Technology & Administrative Coordinator