

FINAL
Prosser Public Library
Library Board of Directors Meeting
December 13, 2011

Attendance: Roberta LaMonaca (*Library Director*), Nancy Kamins (*Chairperson*), Howard Frydman, Beatrice Llewellyn, Beverlee Merritt, Joan Politis, Paula Walek, Penny Pearson (*Friends of the Library Representative*)

Quorum present? Yes, 6 of 6

N. Kamins called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

MOTION to accept the minutes of the October 11, 2011 meeting; seconded and approved.

MOTION to accept the AMENDED minutes of the November 9, 2011 meeting; seconded and approved, following changes to the section entitled “Sign Placement at Prosser and Branch.”

Chairperson’s Report

Wintonbury Signage – N. Kamins spoke to Thom Hooper about the board’s uneasiness regarding the town’s request for library funds to help pay for new signs at Prosser and Wintonbury. He was sympathetic to her concerns. She also spoke with David Baram, and he agreed that town council should have figured out how to pay for the renamed signs at Wintonbury. R. LaMonaca stated that the library ended up contributing \$408.70 to help pay for the signs. The board discussed the issue of reciprocity between the library and the town, especially in regards to the budget. H. Frydman reiterated his recommendation that the library request funds, in next year’s budget, for an informational monitor for the lobby.

Storm Response – N. Kamins commended Roberta and the library staff for the way they handled the storm and power outage. Nancy has received calls from many Bloomfield residents who used the library during that week, some for the first time, and all of them were impressed by the library’s responsiveness, such as staying open extended hours.

R. LaMonaca reported on a follow-up meeting at town hall, in regards to the town’s handling of the power outage. Many people in other departments, as well as citizens, did not realize the library was open. The library needs to find better ways of communicating during future emergencies, such as posting information at shelters.

Public Statements – There were no public statements.

Director’s Report

New Phone System – The library has a new phone system. When patrons call the library, they are greeted by a message with options. Each staff member has his or her own extension, allowing for voicemail; Roberta gave her direct extension to the board. As part of the introductory greeting, there is an option to listen to upcoming events. The new phone system is long past overdue and a welcome change.

Trustee Leadership Conference – B. Llewellyn gave a report on the Trustee Leadership Conference that she and R. LaMonaca attended in Hartford. Bea handed out a copy of a presentation called “Library Board Basics,” and Roberta said she has a sample of a trustee handbook that she will copy upon request. According to Bea, the library board is effectively doing many of the things discussed, but might want to focus on updating by-laws, regular self-assessment, and providing new members with an orientation kit. Other conference presenters spoke about the need to “know your community,” the importance of advertising and appealing to teens, and the small portion of the budget that towns allocate to libraries.

Echoing Bea's report, Roberta referred to a recent pie-chart in the state's annual report on public libraries, which shows that only 1.1% of the revenue collected by towns in Connecticut is allocated to libraries. Roberta thought the conference was worthwhile and inspiring, especially its focus on advocacy. In some towns, the library board and Friends group work together to promote the library.

Bloomfield Early Learning Center – The recent closing of the Bloomfield Early Learning Center on Rockwell Avenue has affected the Wintonbury library, which worked closely with the center. Claudia Wright is looking to reach out to other pre-schools within walking distance of the library.

Bingo at Senior Center – R. LaMonaca recently called out numbers at the Senior Center's afternoon bingo game. She enjoyed the experience and has been invited back.

Visit with Architects – R. LaMonaca, Carol Lennig, Linda Gabianelli, and Laura Vasselle visited the recently renovated Avon Public Library, which was designed by the same architects currently working on a site evaluation for Prosser. Roberta was impressed with the seamless way the new addition combined with the original building. The library stayed open in the old building during construction, and has now moved services to the new section while the original building is gutted and renovated. Unlike Avon, if the current Prosser Library building were renovated and added onto, library services would have to move to a temporary location.

Old Business

Sign Placement at Prosser and Branch – R. LaMonaca provided the board with aerial shots of both libraries, each marked with a suggested location for the new signs. The board agreed with the location of both signs, but it was decided that the Wintonbury sign on Blue Hills Avenue should be placed perpendicular to the building, allowing drivers to see the sign head on.

Presentation of Strategic Plan – The strategic plan is being finalized, and copies should be sent to the board before the January meeting. The board will need to formally adopt the plan. After that, R. LaMonaca will set up meetings with the public, the Friends, and other groups in an effort to share the plan and look for advocacy opportunities.

New Business

Public Library Association Conference – This year's PLA conference will be held in Philadelphia from March 13-17 and features a roster of great programs. Since education expenses were deleted from last year's budget, R. LaMonaca proposed that Prosser Funds be used to allow staff members to attend. She would like four people to attend, and estimates the cost will run around \$1000 per person. She plans to use Connecticut money to help with the expense, so she would need \$2500 from Prosser Funds.

MOTION to allocate \$2500 from Prosser Funds to offset the cost of library staff attending the PLA conference in Philadelphia; seconded and approved.

Report from the Friends of the Library – There was no report from the Friends.

MOTION to adjourn meeting at 5:08 PM; seconded and approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Christopher Siloac,
Senior Staff Assistant