

The Bloomfield Public Library Board of Trustees
SPECIAL MEETING

Tuesday, January 13, at 6:00 P.M.

Erin Corbett, Patrick DeLorenzo, Sherry-Ann Chance,
Harvey Frydman, Claudia Gwardyak, Beverlee Merritt

Hybrid Meeting:

- **To attend this meeting via Zoom Conference Remote Meeting, please register here:**
<https://bplct.librarycalendar.com/event/library-board-meeting-virtual-and-person-11344>
- **To attend in-person, come to BPL McMahon Wintonbury Library, 1015 Blue Hills Avenue, Bloomfield, CT 06002**
- **The meeting will also be streamed live on YouTube at:**
<https://youtube.com/live/ZCM935eiIg0?feature=share>

AGENDA

1) Call to Order

2) Roll Call

3) Citizens' Statements and Petitions

Statements by members of the public may be oral or written and shall start with the speaker's name and address and shall continue for no longer than three (3) minutes, unless permitted by the Chairperson or Trustee presiding.

4) Report from the Friends of the Bloomfield Public Library

5) Chairperson's Report

6) Director's Report

7) Old Business

1. Discussion of Library Building Committee project timeline and impact to library services
2. Discussion of Future Strategic Plan

8) New Business

1. Consider and Take Action Regarding Updated Mission Statement
2. Consider and Take Action Regarding a Library Vision Statement
3. Discussion of the Importance and Role of the Bloomfield Public Library Social Justice Mission Statement

9) Citizens' Statements and Petitions

10) Board Comments

11) Approval of Minutes

1. December 9, 2025

12) Next Meeting: February 10, 2026 at 6:00 PM

13) Executive Session

1. Personnel Matter: Library Director
2. Personnel Matter: To discuss the performance review of a library employee.

14) Adjournment



Monthly Metrics and Key Dates

January 2026

	FY 25 Totals	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
New Library Cards						214	181
Total Telephone		973	1,156	1,452	1,678	1,646	1,659
Website Page Activity (Visitors)		2,672	2,769	3,120	3,622	3,623	2,985
Programs (Total)	1,007	76	67	53	70	81	101
Program Attendance (Total)	25,839	1806	2044	1026	2,536	2,055	2,449
BPL Online Resources Use	27,202	3112	1811	2337	2,219	2,385	2,060
Physical Circulation	64,964	3401	4363	4037	4,288	6,888	9,293
Digital Circulation	27,437	2799	2724	2694	2,507	2,631	2,722
BPL Tech Space Visits	6,188	0	0	0	0	0	0
BPL Atrium Visits	18,609	0	0	0	0	0	0
BPL Prosser Visits					272	3,238	4,227
BPL McMahon Visits	14,448	5606	5264	4998	5158	3,160	3,003
BPL Total Physical Visits	39,245	5,606	5,264	4,998	5,430	6,398	7,230
BPL Overall Usage (combines all usage numbers above, except for the number of programs)	184,777	16,724	16,206	15,092	16,980	20,357	23,754



Monthly Metrics and Key Dates January 2026

Project Timeline:	
First Library Building Committee Meeting	July 29, 2020
BPL Referendum Vote	November 2, 2021
BPL Buildings Close to Public:	June 30, 2023
Opening of BPL Tech Express at 330 Park Ave in Bloomfield :	July 19, 2023
Opening of BPL Atrium Library, 1300 Hall Blvd in Bloomfield :	August 15, 2023
Prosser Groundbreaking Ceremony:	January 24, 2024
Prosser Beam Signing Ceremony:	June 13, 2024
Closing of BPL Tech Express at 330 Park Ave in Bloomfield :	March 14, 2025
McMahon Wintonbury Library Soft Opening to Public:	March 17, 2025
Closing of BPL Atrium Library, 1300 Hall Blvd in Bloomfield :	June 6, 2025
Prosser Library Ribbon Cutting Ceremony:	Aug. 16, 2025
Prosser Library Soft Opening to the Public:	October 28, 2025
McMahon Wintonbury Library Exterior Renovation Completed:	Spring 2026
Library Grand Openings:	Spring 2026



December 2025

BLOOMFIELD PUBLIC LIBRARY'S MONTHLY REPORT

LAST 30 DAYS

☐ December Numbers

- ☐ New Library Cards: 181
- ☐ Telephone Calls: 1,659
- ☐ Website Visitors: 2,985
- ☐ 101 PROGRAMS/2,449 ATTENDEES
- ☐ BPL Online Resources Use: 2,060
- ☐ Physical Circulation: 9,293 (Up from 6,888 in Nov.)
- ☐ Digital Circulation: 2,722
- ☐ BPL McMahon Wintonbury Library Visits: 3,003
- ☐ BPL Prosser Visits: 4,227 (Up from 3,238 in Nov.)
- ☐ Total Physical Visits: 7,230

DATA

- ☐ December BPL Overall Usage (Includes program attendance, digital circulation, physical circulation, BPL online resource access, and visits. This figure gives a better general snapshot of library use over the month.): **23,754** (Up from 20,357 in Nov.)
- ☐ New Metric: BPL Study Room Use Total: 228
 - ☐ McMahon Wintonbury: 107
 - ☐ Prosser: 121

NEXT 30, 60, 90

- ☐ Prosser Library building project: Staff continue to work through the master completion list, with a focus on HVAC performance, building balancing to address sound issues, and completing the ground floor for full patron access. Management of remaining punch-list items, particularly identifying and accurately documenting issues, continues to require significant administrative time and is placing added strain on overall operations. Additionally, the installed HVAC system differs from the original design specifications, and staff are currently assessing the long-term implications, including warranty end-of-life considerations.
- ☐ Prosser Library Tentative Grand Opening: Spring 2025.
- ☐ Strategic Planning: BPL launched a new strategic planning cycle in July. A final draft now includes an updated mission statement and a first-time vision statement. These documents will be reviewed by the Library Board in January and February.
- ☐ Save the Date: Take Your Child to the Library Day is Saturday, February 7. Libraries will offer extended hours in celebration.

PERSONNEL, CONCERNS, MISC.

- ☐ Impact of Budget Reductions: The \$116K cut to BPL's part-time budget, combined with anticipated increases in service demand, may affect our ability to adequately meet community needs and impact staff morale. Burnout is an ongoing concern.
- ☐ Increasing administrative demands from Town Hall- such as FOIA requests and other time-sensitive requirements- are consuming far more staff time than in past years. Combined with the building project workload, BPL is falling behind on routine administrative tasks and has reduced capacity to focus on core operations.
- ☐ Organizational Update: BPL continues to undergo significant organizational change. We appreciate patience and understanding during this period.

DRAFT DOCUMENT

BPL Strategic Plan 2026-2030

Mission Statement: At Bloomfield Public Library (BPL), our focus is on people. We break down barriers to access, build community, and encourage lifelong learning in order to improve the quality of life for all.

Vision Statement: BPL aspires to be the heart of the community.

Bloomfield Public Library features three locations:

- Prosser Library, located at 1 Tunxis Avenue, across the street from Town Hall, at the intersection of five avenues.
- McMahon Wintonbury Library, located at 1015 Blue Hills Avenue in the highly trafficked eastern side of town, including the densely populated Blue Hills neighborhood.
- BPL Online at bplct.org features 24/7 access to information and resources and includes our suite of online resources and social media content.
- BPL Everywhere, meeting the public where they are in intentional ways outside of our physical spaces.

Goal 1: One Library Card, Endless Possibilities

Expand awareness and use of Bloomfield Public Library by ensuring every resident understands the value, reach, and opportunities provided through a single library card across all BPL locations and beyond.

- Promote full access to BPL Online, McMahon Wintonbury Library, and Prosser Library as one connected system.
- Improve the mobile library experience to reach residents where they are.
- Refine and strengthen BPL Everywhere through intentional outreach strategies that deepen connections with residents, organizations, and underserved populations.

Goal 2: Library Advocate: Here, Near and Afar

Strengthen the role of Bloomfield Public Library by actively advocating for libraries, intellectual freedom, and equitable access at the local, state, and federal levels.

- Interact with stakeholders and policymakers to support libraries and library funding.
- Uphold and promote intellectual freedom as a core library value.
- Implement a Library Ambassador Program to empower community advocacy.

Goal 3: BPL as Expert Resource Dealer for Community

Position BPL as a reliable connector that helps residents navigate and access local, state, national and international resources that support individual and community well-being.

- Develop referral services that connect residents to essential resources.
- Provide concierge-style support for navigating community, government, and social services.
- Ensure services are responsive, accessible, and aligned with community needs.

Goal 4: Strengthen Literacy and Learning Through Empathy and Access

Advance equitable literacy and lifelong learning opportunities by intentionally aligning library services with community needs, the library's [Social Justice Mission Statement](#), and an ongoing commitment to addressing the digital divide.

- Lead with empathy to improve quality of life in the community, with a focus on access and education in these key areas:
 - Technology access and training
 - Social justice and cultural competency
 - Lifelong learning from birth to seniors, including reading, writing, early and basic literacy
 - Financial, legal and health literacy
- Sustain and expand inclusive programming that supports literacy and learning at all life stages.
- Develop and curate collections that reflect diverse voices, experiences, and information needs.
- Invest in professional development that builds staff capacity in cultural competency and responsive service.

Goal 5: Community + Library = A Better Bloomfield

Cultivate meaningful partnerships and experiences that position the library as a central force for connection, creativity, and lifelong learning in Bloomfield.

- Center community partnerships in planning and service delivery.
- Create “library magic” through welcoming spaces, programs, and interactions.
- Improve the quality of life for our neighbors, foster lifelong learning, and create the next generation of library users.



BPL Social Justice Mission Statement

January 2021

At the heart of Bloomfield Public Library's mission is ensuring that staff and patrons are treated fairly and respectfully, that resources are provided equitably, and that we consistently strive toward inclusion for all members of the community we serve. We want to provide a safe environment for our staff and public. We want to be proactive with our social justice efforts by engaging in staff development around these topics to help us better understand one another, learn and grow through dialogue and resource sharing, and better serve the public as we build capacity for empathy and a wider range of perspectives. We also want to bring this dialogue to our public.

Our social justice work is both internal and external in nature. It includes an internal professional development component that focuses on personal growth and reflection. It also includes regular meetings on this topic as a staff to keep this work at the forefront of everything we do and to help us to be more intentional and accountable to our entire public. We hope that this continued internal conversation on social justice and equity will impact and improve every aspect of our work. Finally, this work includes an external component that focuses on bringing dialogue about this issue to our public in many formats. Our intention is to be part of the change by bringing more awareness about social justice issues to our public and moving the conversation forward in a constructive, intentional and productive manner.

Our social justice work is multidimensional. We hope this work will improve the BPL experience for all residents, with special attention focused on addressing racism, sexism, ageism, heterosexism, genderism, classism, religionism, sizeism, ableism and socioeconomics with the awareness that many barriers people are facing are intersectional in nature.

We are working on breaking down barriers to access everyday, and this work includes but is not limited to: external communication and branding, customer-service aimed at non-users, going fine free, updating the collection, creating a safe and purposeful space that can accommodate the various needs of our public and increasing the number of library card holders in town.

Approved by the Board of Trustees of the Bloomfield Public Library on 7/27/21

DRAFT
The Bloomfield Public Library Board of Trustees
Conference Remote Meeting
<https://youtube.com/live/IOAwDYYiFhs?feature=share>
December 9, 2025

Attendance: Elizabeth Lane (*Library Director*), Erin Corbett (*Chairperson*), Beverlee Merritt, Sherry-Ann Chance, Harvey Frydman, Claudia Gwardyak, Penny Pearson (*Friends of the Bloomfield Public Libraries*), Christopher Siloac (*Assistant Director*), Allison Wilkos (*Assistant Director*)

Absent: Patrick DeLorenzo

Quorum present? Yes, 5 of 6

E. Corbett called the meeting to order at 6:03 PM.

Roll Call – P. DeLorenzo was noted as absent.

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

The *Report from the Friends of the Bloomfield Public Libraries* was moved after the *Director's Report*, due to technical difficulties.

Chairperson's Report

Chair Overview – E. Corbett has been spending a significant amount of time in BPL's libraries and noted the professionalism and high level of service at Bloomfield Library. She said she is proud to be associated with this staff and this board. E. Corbett expressed excitement about bringing new ideas to BPL that align with the updated strategic plan. She wants to find ways for each trustee to talk to the Bloomfield community about the library, its staff, and the board itself. She thanked the library team for all the work they've done getting the new libraries going, despite many challenges with the buildings.

Director's Report

Health District – The West Hartford-Bloomfield Health District, a valued community partner, set up a wellness table at Prosser Library on a recent Saturday. 36 people stopped by to receive flu shots, screenings, and resources.

School Visits to Prosser – BPL continues to work closely with the schools. The entirety of the 5th and 6th grade classes visited the library in the past week. Among the anecdotes gleaned from the students during their visits: "I'm so happy, I'm going to come back to this place," "This library is really making me want to read more books," and "They are open 10-2 on Saturday. I'm coming here." Library staff was energized by the visits.

CBLT at Prosser – The town-wide leadership team, the Community Building Leadership Team (CBLT), met at Prosser on November 24. The Emerging Leaders Group, an initiative of the town manager, did a

presentation in the community room. E. Lane noted that it was nice to share space with other department heads and leaders.

University of Hartford Visit – The University of Hartford is another key player that BPL likes to partner with. Recently, students from the Department of Mechanical, Aerospace, and Acoustical Engineering, led by Professor Bob Celmer, toured the new Prosser Library. Earlier in the building project, Bob Celmer and his students, as a class project, made recommendations on how to diffuse sound at Prosser Library, and the tour gave them an opportunity to see how their recommendations played out. This shows how much detail and attention went into designing Prosser Library and is another example of the benefits of strong community partnerships.

Weather Impacts on Prosser Library – E. Lane admitted that it was a mistake to not close the library, as she had originally planned, during the first winter weather event at Prosser. The bridge's ice melt system did not perform as expected. The architect and construction team are working to make sure it performs better for the next event. The front plaza was closed off to make it easier to treat essential pathways to the library. Not treating the entire property will help the library be open during weather events. BPL leadership and public works are monitoring and working on preparation for the next storm. E. Lane will work on finding a more visually appealing option for the caution cones.

Town Charter – The town charter has been added to the library's website. E. Lane explained how to find the governing documents on the library board's page, and thanked A. Wilkos for cleaning up that page.

New Library Pages – The library is in the process of onboarding four new pages, which is the last phase of bringing staff back to previous levels. It has been years since the library has had pages. Pages are important, visible positions in the library, entrusted with putting items back on the shelves where they belong. The first two pages that BPL is excited to welcome are Leilani McGuire and Isabelle (Izzy) Stole.

Employee Service – Two longtime library employees, Diah Seccareccia and Brooke Lyman, are celebrating 12 years of impactful service in the library.

Monthly Metrics – E. Lane reviewed the new monthly metrics document with the board. One new metric is total new library cards added. November saw a large uptick to 214 new library card sign ups. E. Lane stated that every single resident in Bloomfield is entitled to a library card, and that library cards are free for all. In November, there were 81 programs with 2,055 attendees and 2,385 uses of BPL Online resources, including a doubling in Consumer Reports usage. There were 6,888 physical items circulated, a big jump from the months prior, due to Prosser being open. This increase speaks to the need for pages. Digital circulation of ebooks and audiobooks remains strong. E. Lane noted that McMahon visits seem to be coming down and leveling off now that Prosser is open. There were about 3,200 Prosser visits and 3,100 for McMahon. BPL staff will continue to monitor those numbers. The overall library usage number for November was just over 20,000, another increase from the months prior. E. Lane expects these numbers to continue to rise as the library expands hours and Prosser is finished.

Town Manager's Report – E. Lane reviewed the monthly town manager's report with the board. She noted the time that BPL's leadership team is putting in each day towards documenting and resolving

issues on the master completion list for Prosser. Outstanding issues include HVAC performance and balancing issues, which impact the way sound is perceived in certain spaces, such as the tween space and community room. Door issues, including the ground floor door in the garage, are an ongoing problem. The library building committee, the construction team and architects, public works, the building official, and fire marshal are all working together to finish this project. The current temporary certificate of occupancy expires on December 12. E. Lane hopes it is extended again and will keep the board in the loop. The library is now looking at a tentative grand opening for Prosser Library sometime in early spring 2026. We are going to have a string of events to showcase the best of Bloomfield Public Library, including some other really great milestones.

One of those milestones has to do with the library's new strategic planning process. The current strategic plan expires this December. As of today, the first full draft of the new strategic plan is finished, and the planning team is looking to get feedback from consultants at the Connecticut Library Consortium. When ready, the new strategic plan will be dropped with fanfare and will include the community and key partnerships.

One issue that continues to affect the library is the \$116,000 cut to the part-time staffing budget line. This cut dictates some decisions made around operating hours. The library intends to ask for those funds back in FY27, as well as for additional staffing funds.

On the IT front, the library is waiting for the IT department to formally roll out its privileged access management solution, which we hope will help meet library needs, while satisfying IT security requirements. Assistant Director Chris Siloac has always played a major leadership role in the library's IT infrastructure and operations. One area of improvement has come from the library's partnership with the Connecticut Education Network (CEN) and the federal E-Rate process, which allows BPL to have high-speed internet in both buildings, where the library only pays 10% of the cost and the other 90% is paid through a federal reimbursement. E. Lane thanked C. Siloac for his leadership on this front. The library is considering a partnership with the IT department to take advantage of the hardware and infrastructure discounts through E-Rate. The library wants to ensure transparency, clear roles, and outline shared financial obligations before moving forward with IT on this front. E. Lane thanked C. Siloac again for his leadership and commitment to cost savings in this area., which has been hugely beneficial to everyone in town for many years now.

E. Lane also noted the increased administrative demands from town hall. When combined with the increased administrative demands that the building project puts on library leadership, the library leadership team is working a lot of hours. E. Lane spoke about the importance of prioritizing and being intentional, but stated that it sometimes feels like all we are doing is putting out fires. It is important to understand this heavy workload in light of requests from the public and partners for additional programs and services. Another huge administrative demand is the number of Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests that are coming in, as well as other time-sensitive requirements. This work is consuming more staff time than in past years and reducing our capacity to get things done.

Town Manager's Return – The town manager is back as of today. He is currently working remotely, but he'll be back in town hall probably by the end of December. E. Lane will meet with him to catch up next week.

Collection Development – E. Lane revisited the disruption caused by Baker & Taylor shutting down during the last year. It was a seismic shift for libraries and the book industry. Other book providers are struggling to keep up with the high demand, leading to months-long delays in receiving materials. This was bad timing for the opening of Prosser Library. When new books do finally come in, they go out quickly. E. Lane was pleased to note that BPL had all of the top 10 books on New York Times's 100 books of the year, as well as award winners. She gave a shout out to the librarians and library assistants who help with collection development.

Prosser Elevator – E. Lane notified the board that just before the meeting commenced the elevator at Prosser Library stopped functioning. This is an example of what library staff is dealing with.

Board Questions/Comments – E. Corbett asked why the additional administrative burden from FOIA requests is a burden being placed upon the library. E. Lane explained that some requests involve the library. Finding information requires more than a word search. She often needs to refine searches to try and capture everything. There are currently over 120 open FOIA requests. E. Corbett asked how many requests deal with the library. E. Lane estimated that less than 1 in 4 pertain to the library. E. Corbett anticipates that FOIA requests will increase. E. Lane emphasized the commitment the library has to transparency. As an example, she talked about how seriously the library documents the board minutes, including having all minutes back to 2019 on the library's website. Members of the public can always reach out to library staff for more information.

S. Chance asked E. Lane for more detail about the additional administrative burdens, besides FOIA requests, coming from town hall. As an example, E. Lane pointed to the library working with a town consultant on establishing standardizing operating procedures across the town. A key area of these procedural changes involves social justice initiatives, which the library has already focused on for many years. In addition to working with the consultants, E. Lane noted how procedural changes in the past year by the IT department, payroll staff, and the finance office have impacted library workloads and operations. She explained that it can be difficult for a larger department like the library, with more than 30 employees, to absorb intensive changes. Additionally, E. Lane, C. Siloac, and A. Wilkos have to attend weekly meetings with leadership in all town departments every Monday morning. These time commitments and changes might be easier to handle during normal times, but with the demands of the building project, it represents a heavy load for library leadership.

S. Chance asked if there are people who specifically handle FOIA requests. E. Lane answered that most of them are administrative in nature and require her direct involvement in order to capture and gather the information appropriately. S. Chance thanked E. Lane for the reports she included as part of the meeting packet. S. Chance and P. DeLorenzo will meet and give feedback, along with other trustees, on the format and information to include in reports.

S. Chance said that she received questions over the weekend about whether or not the library is open. The people who asked had not heard anything and were expecting a mailer. E. Lane explained that the library currently shares information in its newsletter every Friday, on the digital signs in town, and in The Yankee Flyer and Bloomfield Messenger. E. Lane thanked S. Chance for the feedback and has heard similar feedback from others. She would like to send a mailer, with hours and information, when the grand opening occurs, but with so many current unknowns around hours, the time has not seemed right for taking on the expense of postcards. She talked about the importance of something visible on the building, such as a banner, to indicate the library is open. S. Chance noted that not everyone checks online for information, so other modes of communication can be helpful. E. Lane said that this is good feedback to consider as we prepare a budget for the grand openings, and that the library will do its best to get the word out, possibly even a mailer. C. Gwardyak suggested a flagpole at the library that indicates when the library's open. It wouldn't help those at home but would provide a good external indicator.

Report from the Friends of the Bloomfield Public Libraries

Early Literacy – The Friends are pleased to have provided \$2,500 for literacy supplies for children. These funds cover the purchase of 100 baby bags, which are filled with toys and books and given out to parents with babies. The funds also cover board books for children up to the age of 5. These books can be give aways at BPL Everywhere outreach events, such as Trunk and Treat. P. Pearson is very pleased with these initiatives and hopes supplies come in soon.

Friends Bookstore – The Bookseller's Cellar at Prosser opened on 12/2, and will be open three days per week going forward. It is off to a good start. Library staff went out of their way to let people know. The Friends are looking forward to increased visits as people become more aware.

E. Lane thanked the friends for the treats they brought to promote the new bookstore. She also talked about the new intercom system at Prosser, which was used to promote the opening of the Bookseller's Cellar. S. Chance noted that she strongly endorses the Friends baby bags and recounted how much it meant to her to receive one along with a library card for one of her own children.

Old Business

Discussion of Library Building Committee project timeline and impact to library services – Most of this old business was covered in the *Director's Report*. E. Lane reiterated that she hopes the temporary certificate of occupancy is extended so the library can remain open, and that things continue to move along, despite delays. She thanked the public for going on this journey with the library.

Discussion of Future Strategic Plan – A draft of the new strategic plan was submitted to the consultants today. E. Lane hopes to have something for the board to peruse in January.

New Business

Consider and Take Action Regarding Regularly Scheduled 2026 Library Board Meeting Schedule – The board reviewed the proposed schedule and briefly discussed the possibility of changing the meeting

time. **Motion by S. Chance to accept the 2026 schedule as presented;** seconded by C. Gwardyak and accepted unanimously.

Consider and Take Action Regarding Staff Appreciation – E. Lane explained that BPL has an annual celebration of the previous year in January with a staff appreciation event. The request for this year's event is for a total of up to \$2,540, which will include a BPL blanket for all staff members. The blanket is a nod to the building project, as well as general wellness. **MOTION by B. Merritt to allocate up to \$2,540 in funds for staff appreciation day and BPL blankets;** seconded by H. Frydman and passed unanimously.

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

Board Comments –There were no additional board comments.

Approval of the Minutes

MOTION by H. Frydman to accept the minutes of the November 18, 2025 meeting; seconded by B. Merritt and approved as submitted.

Next Meeting –The next meeting is January 13, 2026 at 6:00 PM.

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Christopher Siloac
Assistant Director