

TOWN OF NEWBURY



NEWBURY PUBLIC LIBRARY
Tel. (603) 763-5803

NEW HAMPSHIRE
INCORPORATED 1778

P.O. Box 245
NEWBURY 03255

MINUTES OF TRUSTEE MEETING: 10/10/23

PRESENT:

TRUSTEES

Lynne Touhy
Eric Boyer
Todd Maily
Paul Sullivan
Elizabeth Courant

ALTERNATES

Pat Sherman
Jeanne Palleiko

STAFF

Lea McBain
Emma Brown

FOUNDATION

Ken Tentarelli
Helen Wright
Lynne Touhy
Jeanne Palleiko
Elizabeth Courant

Meeting started at 5:14 pm

1. Approval of the minutes of the September 12 trustee meeting, Todd moved, Eric seconds, unanimous
2. Librarian's report -
 - Approval of the librarian's report – Lynne moved, Betsy seconds, unanimous.
3. Report from Treasurer –

- Approval of 230.26 of unanticipated income, Paul moves, Betsy seconds, unanimous.
 - Lynne moves to approve librarian's report, Betsy seconds, unanimous.
4. Requests for Reconsideration – there are requests for reconsideration for four books:
- “I am Jazz” by Jessica Herthel and Jazz Jennings
 - “Born Ready: The True Story of a Boy Named Penelope” by Jodie Patterson
 - “Being You” by Jessica Ralli & Anne/Andy Passchier
 - “Jack, Not Jackie” by Erica Silverman
- Bob Wilkonski of the Newbury Conservative Coalition spoke to concerns about books concerning issues of gender being accessible to young children on low shelves in the children's reading room. The request from this group is that these books be moved to the “Parenting” section of the Children's Room.
 - Stephanie Spaulding of the NCC spoke next about moving the books to the parenting section, so that children will not be able to access these books without parental supervision.
 - Dick Wright spoke about the book “Gender Queer”, noting that he believes the contents of this book are inappropriate for young readers.
 - Denise Mitchell spoke to Library policy regarding unattended children in the library – because parents are accompanying children in the library, she does not believe that children will read these books without parental supervision. She spoke to the difficulty of having some of the conversations regarding gender, and the role that libraries play in being a safe space for these conversations.

- Todd Maily spoke to the library borrowing privileges policy, noting how children under the age of 11 must be accompanied by an adult or older teen, and children under the age of 18 cannot get their own library card without parental consent.
- Polly Lowe spoke to the possibility that curious children or young teens could be exposed to books regarding gender issues.
- Discussion ensued on policies regarding managing the library's collection, including authority for ordering books and the criteria by which book selections are made. Denise Mitchell noted the difficulty in placing books so that patrons can find what they are looking for while also limiting the possibility that children will come across age-inappropriate material.
- Ken Tentarelli noted the need for specific criteria regarding when to move or restrict books. He proposed three – 1) if the book is obscene as defined by New Hampshire law, 2) if the book is hateful, 3) if the book advocates for something illegal.
- Dick Wright spoke to concerns that these books can have a negative impact on young readers, citing concerns that the authors may be pedophiles attempting to groom young readers.
- Liz Tentarelli spoke to her many years as a teacher and noted that the intention of the authors of these books is self-acceptance and celebrating difference.
- Eric Boyer spoke to concerns that books will be moved to a section that makes them difficult to find for parents, thereby limiting the rights of parents to access materials they choose for their families.
- Betty Cruikshank spoke to the role that these books can play in creating acceptance in families, particularly situations in which older siblings may not understand issues faced by younger siblings.

- Janice Reilly spoke to her experience in the world of publishing. Janice noted that these books are published by reputable publishers, who put thought into the age categories that they put their works into. Janice spoke to previous books that challenged gender norms, like the Ramona series.
- Jane Moss, the previous children’s librarian for the Newbury Public Library, noted the dedication of the library staff to the needs and wellbeing of children. Jane noted that no one associated with the library would doubt the role played by parents in choosing appropriate materials for their families, and expressed hope that a spirit of cooperation and understanding would prevail in these discussions of controversial materials.
- Circulation data for the challenged books was discussed.
- Linda Porter spoke to difficulties parents face when talking to their children about sex. Linda noted that public libraries serve an important role in helping to foster conversations on these issues.
- Stephanie Spaulding spoke to her concerns about these books being anti-science because they do not discuss biological sex.
- Helen Wright spoke to the goals of the group being parental consent, making sure that parents are involved in decisions about what materials their children read. Lynne re-iterated that children under the age of 18 cannot get their own library card without parental consent.

5. Expansion Report -

- Pat noted that by the end of this month the goal is to have the expansion totally closed in. The next step will be the plumbing and the wiring. The project is on-time and on-budget.
- Issues involved with the flooding have been completely resolved, and Milestone has picked up the entirety of the Servpro bill.

6. Foundation Report –

- This meeting served as the joint meeting between the Library and Foundation Board of Trustees. Jeanne discussed the upcoming fundraising appeal, including a \$5,000 match from an anonymous donor that will be attached to Giving Tuesday.
7. Board discussed possibility of setting a new meeting to discuss book reconsideration requests. Given the need to discuss library budget and the turnover of a new Town Administrator, the Board decided to set a new meeting to discuss and vote on reconsideration requests. Board decided to set the meeting for Tuesday November 7th at 5:15 pm.

Meeting adjourned at: 6:51 pm

Minutes submitted by Eric Boyer