



## Town of Reading Meeting Posting with Agenda

### Board - Committee - Commission - Council:

Board of Library Trustees

Date: 2023-06-12

Time: 7:00 PM

Building: Reading Public Library

Location: Community Room

Address: 64 Middlesex Avenue

Agenda:

Purpose: General Meeting

Meeting Called By: Michelle Filleul for Chair Monique Pillow Gnanaratnam

Notices and agendas are to be posted 48 hours in advance of the meetings excluding Saturdays, Sundays and Legal Holidays. Please keep in mind the Town Clerk's hours of operation and make necessary arrangements to be sure your posting is made in an adequate amount of time. A listing of topics that the chair reasonably anticipates will be discussed at the meeting must be on the agenda.

**All Meeting Postings must be submitted in typed format; handwritten notices will not be accepted.**

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### Topics of Discussion:

**This meeting will be held in-person in the Community Room at the Reading Public Library and remotely on Zoom. It will also be available streamed live through RCTV**

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86117297460>

Meeting ID: 861 1729 7460

One tap mobile

+13017158592,,86117297460# US (Washington DC)

+13052241968,,86117297460# US

Dial by your location

+1 646 876 9923 US (New York)

Meeting ID: 861 1729 7460

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/u/keny6p5GTY>

The Trustees also accept public comments through email: [rpitrustee@noblenet.org](mailto:rpitrustee@noblenet.org)

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# Town of Reading Meeting Posting with Agenda

- I. Call to Order
- II. Public Comment
- III. Ad Hoc Library Landscape Committee
  - a. Presentation
  - b. Discussion of Scope and Expectations
  - c. Trustee Vacancy
- IV. Election of Officers (VOTE)
- V. FY24 Meeting Schedule (VOTE)
- VI. CY24 Holiday Schedule (VOTE)
- VII. DEI Community Audit Liaison
- VIII. Financial Update
- IX. Director’s Report
- X. Approval of Minutes from May 8, 2023
- XI. Future Agenda Items
  - a. Considerations for revisions to the Collection Development Policy.
  - b. Friends of the Reading Public Library Liaison

The Board of Library Trustees may be contacted via email: [rp1trustee@noblenet.org](mailto:rp1trustee@noblenet.org)

**Upcoming Dates:**

July 10 – Trustee Meeting (expected)	Subsequent Town Meeting November 13,16, 20,27
August 14 – Trustee Meeting (expected)	November 14 – Trustee Meeting (expected)
September 11 – Trustee Meeting (expected)	December 11 – Trustee Meeting (expected)
October 10 – Trustee Meeting (expected)	

This Agenda has been prepared in advance and represents a listing of topics that the chair reasonably anticipates will be discussed at the meeting. However the agenda does not necessarily include all matters which may be taken up at this meeting.



# Library Landscaping Committee (LLC)



June 2023

# Library Landscaping Committee (LLC) Volunteers

**Cherrie Dubois** - LLC's Vice-Chair; Library Trustee

**Andrea Hogan** - Senior Library Associate, Reading Public Library

**Gena Pilyavsky** - LLC's Chair; Climate Advisory Committee Member

**Jake Soucy** - LLC's Secretary

**Elaine Stone** - Reading Community Garden Member

**Walter Talbot** - Conservation Commission Member

**Desirée Zicko** - Communications Specialist, Reading Public Library



**Figure:** Reading Public Library

# LLC Objective: Completion of the RPL's Landscape Vision

## Engage with the community and stakeholders

- Meet with BOLT and the Library Staff
- Guide public survey(s)

## Conceptualize outdoor environment

- Improve for learning activities & aesthetics

## Guide future development plans

- Raise funding for the effort
- Work with landscape architectural firms



**Figure:** Garden outside the Sahara West Library and Fine Arts Museum (NV)

# Current State

## No dedicated stage or power source

- E.g., extension cords used during Edgar Allan Poe event

## Limited seating for small groups

- Single picnic table and three granite blocks

## Steep slope limits accessibility

- Visitors must provide their own seating
- Lawn is in subpar state and requires maintenance



**Figure:** Reading Public Library outdoor event space

# Supporting RPL's Core Mission:

## Dedicated outdoor space for learning & engagement

- E.g., educational events about nature, plants & gardening, outdoors storytime, and other programs and events for all ages

## Space for small groups

- Study sessions, book clubs, discussions
- Improved accessibility

...A center and resource for learning and civic engagement. We provide a place and platform of, by, and for the people who can benefit as individuals as well as contribute to the well-being of the community.



**Figure:** Camden Library Amphitheatre, Maine

# Funding Sources and Activities

**Funding Goal:** Undertake the project without placing additional tax burden on the residents

## Explore outside funding

- Nonprofits, grants, plaques, etc

## Funding long-term maintenance (examples)

- Adopt an “island”, landscape maintenance
- Use low-maintenance, native plants for sustainability
- Establish an endowment



**Figure:** Outdoor seating at University of Newcastle

# What's Next?

- Introduce Library Landscaping Committee and our objectives to the Board of Library Trustees
- Compile funding opportunities
- Solicit (free) presentations from landscape architects firms, including firms that submitted proposals for other town projects
- Allocate funding for a full study, community survey, and engagement
- Evaluate results and make recommendations on the next steps in the project



**Figure:** Amphitheater at the Walterboro Discovery Center, SC

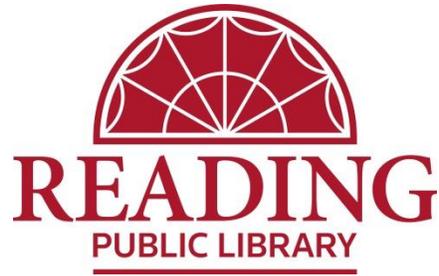
Photo By Paul Cheney Photography

# Library Landscaping Committee (LLC)



Thank you  
Questions?

Cherrie Dubois, Andrea Hogan, Gena Pilyavsky, James Soucy , Elaine Stone, Walter  
Talbot, Desirée Zicko



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Board of Library Trustees  
**FROM:** Amy Lannon, Library Director  
**DATE:** June 12, 2023  
**SUBJECT:** Meeting Dates for FY2024

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In keeping with our schedule of meeting at 7 p.m. on the 2nd Monday, with alternate dates listed to accommodate holidays and Town Meeting, a list of the proposed dates follows:

July 10, 2023

August 14, 2023

September 11, 2023

Tuesday, October 10, 2023 (*holiday*)

Tuesday, November 14, 2023 (*TM Conflict*)

December 11, 2023

January 8, 2024

February 12, 2024

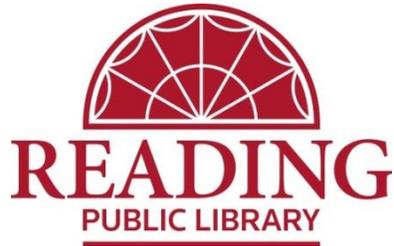
March 11, 2024

April 8, 2024

May 13, 2024

June 10, 2024

cc: Town Manager's Office  
Town Clerk's Office



## 2024 Library Closings

January 1, Monday	New Year's Day
January 15, Monday	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
February 19, Monday	Presidents' Day
March 31, Sunday	Easter
April 15, Monday	Patriots' Day
<i>Last Sunday Open May 19</i>	
May 25-27 (Saturday-Monday)	Memorial Day Weekend
June 19, Wednesday	Juneteenth
July 4, Thursday	Independence Day
August 31-September 2 (Saturday-Monday)	Labor Day Weekend
<i>First Sunday Open October 6</i>	
October 14, Monday	Columbus Day
November 11, Monday	Veteran's Day
November 27, Wednesday	<i>Close at 1 p.m.</i>
November 28, Thursday	Thanksgiving Day
December 24, Tuesday	<i>Close at 1 p.m.</i>
December 25, Wednesday	Christmas Day
December 31, Tuesday	<i>Close at 1 p.m.</i>

*Approved June 12, 2023 by the Board of Library Trustees*

SUMMARY	Original \$\$	Rev/Adj	Expended	Encumbered	Balance	% Used
Municipal Salaries	\$ 1,596,850	\$ 23,000	\$ 1,398,536	\$ -	\$ 221,314	86%
Municipal Expenses	\$ 149,500	\$ -	\$ 127,010	\$ -	\$ 22,490	85%
Municipal Materials	\$ 259,950	\$ -	\$ 230,785	\$ -	\$ 29,165	89%
Fines & Fees	\$ 13,495	\$ 7,893	\$ 9,422	\$ -	\$ 11,966	N/A
State Aid	\$ 81,228	\$ 52,743	\$ 23,406	\$ -	\$ 110,566	N/A
Gifts	\$ 394,437	\$ 28,915	\$ 77,699	\$ 15,140	\$ 330,514	N/A
Trusts	\$ 149,030	N/A	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 149,030	N/A
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$ 2,644,490</b>	<b>\$ 112,552</b>	<b>\$ 1,866,858</b>	<b>\$ 15,140</b>	<b>\$ 875,045</b>	

Municipal Appropriation	Original \$\$	Rev/Adj	Expended	Encumbered	Balance	% Used
Salaries - Library Administration	\$ 413,450	\$ 13,500	\$ 386,439	\$ -	\$ 40,511	90.51%
Salaries - Leave Buyback*	\$ -		\$ 1,700	\$ -	\$ (1,700)	N/A
Salaries - Collection Services	\$ 499,700	\$ 1,300	\$ 430,520	\$ -	\$ 70,481	85.93%
Salaries - Public Services	\$ 683,700	\$ 8,200	\$ 579,878	\$ -	\$ 112,022	83.81%
Expenses - General						
Library Maint Contract Supp	\$ 23,000		\$ 18,330	\$ -	\$ 4,670	79.70%
Professional Development	\$ 16,500		\$ 14,667	\$ -	\$ 1,833	88.89%
Library Programs	\$ 4,000		\$ 6,134	\$ -	\$ (2,134)	153.36%
Software/ Licenses	\$ 70,500		\$ 66,330	\$ -	\$ 4,170	94.08%
Library Supplies	\$ 9,000		\$ 8,302	\$ -	\$ 698	92.25%
Office Supplies	\$ 4,500		\$ 4,300	\$ -	\$ 200	95.56%
Technology	\$ 12,000		\$ 8,947	\$ -	\$ 3,053	74.56%
Equipment	\$ 10,000			\$ -	\$ 10,000	0.00%
Materials	\$ 259,950		\$ 230,785	\$ -	\$ 29,165	88.78%
Books			\$ 96,301	\$ -		
Audio			\$ 6,748	\$ -		
Video			\$ 3,938	\$ -		
Periodicals			\$ 22,448	\$ -		
Electronic Resources			\$ 32,569	\$ -		
Databases			\$ 16,487	\$ -		
Other Materials			\$ 12,070	\$ -		
Overdrive (eBooks / eAudiobooks)			\$ 40,225	\$ -		
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$ 2,006,300</b>	<b>\$ 23,000</b>	<b>\$ 1,859,380</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 272,969</b>	<b>91.63%</b>

Fines and Fees	Original \$\$	Rev/Adj	Expended	Encumbered	Balance
Revenue	\$ 13,495	\$ 7,893	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 21,389
Materials			\$ -	\$ -	
Supplies			\$ 9,422	\$ -	\$ (9,422)
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$ 13,495</b>	<b>\$ 7,893</b>	<b>\$ 9,422</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 11,966</b>

State Aid	Original \$\$	Rev/Adj	Expended	Encumbered	Balance
Revenue	\$81,228	\$52,743		\$ -	\$133,971
Expenses					\$0
Office Supplies			\$13	\$ -	(\$13)
Professional Development				\$ -	\$0
Materials			\$983	\$ -	(\$983)
Library Other			\$11,619	\$ -	(\$11,619)
Library Equipment			\$10,791	\$ -	(\$10,791)
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$81,228</b>	<b>\$52,743</b>	<b>\$23,406</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$110,566</b>

<b>Gifts &amp; Donations</b>	<b>Original \$\$</b>	<b>Adj/Income</b>	<b>Expended</b>	<b>Encumbered</b>	<b>Balance</b>
<i>Revenue</i>	\$ 34,193	\$ 13,125		\$ -	\$ 47,318
Professional Development		\$ -	\$ 847	\$ -	\$ (847)
Recreational		\$ -	\$ 1,831	\$ -	\$ (1,831)
Programs & Services Adults	\$ 32,802	\$ 3,350	\$ 6,630		\$ 29,522
Programs & Services Teens	\$ 27,787	\$ -	\$ 3,523	\$ -	\$ 24,265
Programs & Services OESJ	\$ -	\$ 2,350	\$ 500	\$ -	\$ 1,850
Programs & Services Childrens	\$ 91,083	\$ 7,520	\$ 9,848	\$ -	\$ 88,755
Programs & Services- Local History	\$ 500	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 500
Studio	\$ 30,298	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 30,298
RPL Foundation	\$ 144,122	\$ -	\$ 54,451	\$ 15,140	\$ 74,531
Other Gifts (Combined)	\$ 9,679	\$ -	\$ 70	\$ -	\$ 9,609
Materials	\$ 23,974	\$ 2,570	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 26,544
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$ 394,437</b>	<b>\$ 28,915</b>	<b>\$ 77,699</b>	<b>\$ 15,140</b>	<b>\$ 330,514</b>

<b>Trusts</b>	<b>Non-Expend</b>	<b>Avail/Int</b>	<b>Expended</b>	<b>Encumbered</b>	<b>Balance</b>
Appleton / Mansfield	\$ 11,000	\$ 5,284			\$ 16,284
Edward Appleton	\$ 5,000	\$ 39,083			\$ 44,083
R/M Babcock	\$ 3,598	\$ 2,339			\$ 5,937
Stephen Foster	\$ 12,000	\$ 7,224			\$ 19,224
Charles Torrey	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,027			\$ 2,027
Donald Tuttle	\$ 500	\$ 887			\$ 1,387
Elaine & George Long	\$ 5,000	\$ 35,662			\$ 40,662
Barbara Hewitt	\$ 8,952	\$ 6,600			\$ 15,552
James Rawstron	\$ 1,613	\$ 2,263			\$ 3,876
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$ 48,663</b>	<b>\$ 100,367</b>			<b>\$ 149,030</b>

<b>Name</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
Appleton / Mansfield	"...for the purchase of books other than those listed as fiction" (NONFICTION BOOKS)
Edward Appleton	"Purchase of books, paintings, engravings, works of art or other suitable useful furnishings"
R/M Babcock	"Books on literary subjects and self-government" (BOOKS)
Stephen Foster	"Books ... to be inscribed 'Stephen Foster Fund'" (BOOKS)
Charles Torrey	"Books on non-fictional subjects" (NONFICTION BOOKS)
Donald Tuttle	"Books"
Elane & George Long	"Books or Equipment"
Barbara Hewitt	"Books"
James Rawstron	"Books on tape& furniture to house books on tape" (AUDIOBOOKS)

# June 2023 Board of Library Trustees Meeting

## DIRECTOR'S REPORT

### a) May Snapshot

Circulation	27,077
Overdrive	3,845
Programs	52
Reference Questions	481
Museum Passes	124
New Library Cards	106
Visitors	*Door Counter Down

### b) Facilities

Nothing to report.

### c) Collections, Programs, and Services

#### Community Events

- Pride Parade: The Town of Reading Pride Parade will be held on Saturday, June 17<sup>th</sup> beginning at 3 pm in the library parking lot.
- Juneteenth: Join the Town of Reading for the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Juneteenth celebration on Saturday, June 24<sup>th</sup> from 1-7 pm on the Town Common.

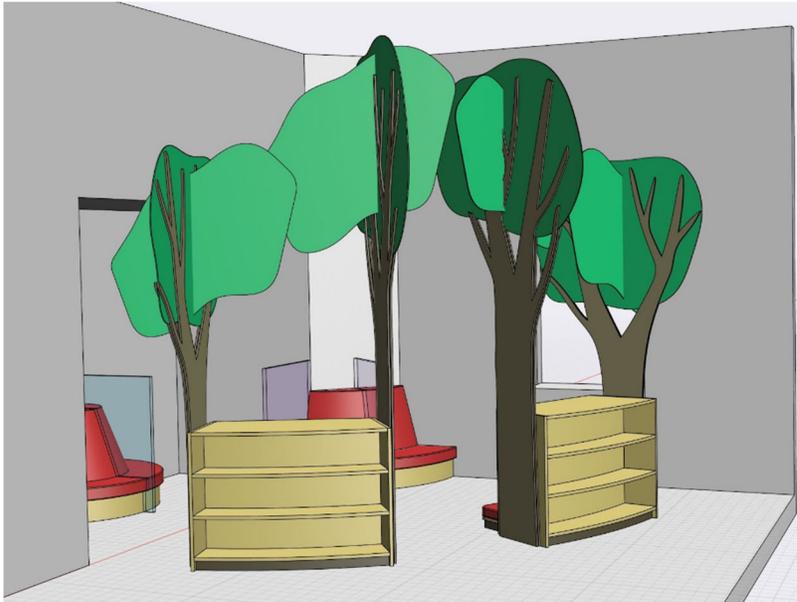
#### Collections Highlights

- Self-Check-Out: Some of the RFID pads at self-check-out stations will be replaced as they are showing signs of use and are now 7 years old.
- Lockers: There has been an increase in locker usage, we've had up to 33 interactions with them.

#### Program Highlights

- The "Find Your Voice" Summer Reading program begins for all ages on Tuesday, June 20<sup>th</sup>.
- The Tragedy of the Coconut Grove Fire program was great! 30 people, lots of questions, and the speaker did a really good job.
- We wrapped up Toddler Time, Preschool Storytime, Babytime, and Jumping Beans for the summer! Lots of happy little customers. And Children's Librarian Cate Zannino's fan club grows bigger by the day (lots of thank you flowers).

The Tween space is moving forward to the next stage. 11 tweens with lots of strong opinions helped with the design. Here is a preliminary image of what the space will look like. The trees help define the area in the Children's Room.



The RMHS' Multilingual Learners class visited the teen area with students, and Teen Services Librarian Megan McCabe has continued plans to collaborate with the teachers.

To strengthen our connections with Pleasant Street Center, our new Elder Services Librarian Elizabeth Weilbacher went on an outreach tour of PSC, Sawtelle Hospice, and Sanborn Place, including conversations with Chris Kowaleski, Elder and Human Services Administrator and Kerry Valle, Reading Case Worker. This will help us to continue to work across departments to serve this population.

### Other



The Locker Wrap was installed by Wrap Solutions. Special thanks to the Reading Public Foundation for funding the locker wrap. It adds a pop of color to the lockers and the instructions make it even easier for users.

Staff members responded to two separate public records requests totaling just under 30 hours of work to complete the required tasks.

#### **d) Personnel**

- RPL has one vacancy for a full-time Librarian I – Children's Services focusing on tweens.
- Two of our pages graduated from RMHS on June 2<sup>nd</sup>: Nemaya Wickramasinghe and Class Valedictorian Althea Culaba.

#### June Anniversaries:

- Andrea Fiorillo (11 years)

*Thank you for your continued dedication and service!*

#### **e) Horizons**

- Be on the lookout for the Book Bike this Summer!
- OESJ: Reading Reflect 2.0: Concept planning – sometime in early Fall. The probable theme is around mental health, civic engagement, and inclusive dialogue.
- An RPL Summer Survey on programming is currently being conducted. The results will be used to help create community-curated programming.

#### **f) Professional Development (selected)**

- Basic Library Techniques – Cataloging, Collection Development
- CoxNet Webinar - Overview of WTCox's interactive website
- First Amendment Audits: How to Keep Calm and Respond
- How to Craft and Utilize an Elevator Speech to Prove Your Library's Value
- Immigration Law for Libraries workshop
- Kicked Out: How to Safely Ask Someone to Leave (Without Calling the Police)
- Meet Me at the Corner of Cat and Circ
- MLA 2023
- NOBLE Collection Management Roundtable and NOBLE Holds Annual Meeting
- NoveList Plus Advanced
- Open Meeting Law and Public Records Training
- Optima Sorting Facility Tour
- Plan a Campaign to Draw People into Your Libraries
- Proactive Planning for Library Staff Transitions
- Revenue Recognition: A Nonprofit's Guide to the Rules for Recording Gifts and Grants
- Serving the Neurodiverse in Your Library
- Soft Skills Can Be Hard – Interpersonal Skills in Your Library
- Support Your Users with Answers to Libby's FAQ
- Weeding the Print Collection
- Why So Rude? Incivility in the Workplace

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Filleul, Assistant Library Director (*she/her*)  
June 8, 2023



# Town of Reading Meeting Minutes

## Board - Committee - Commission - Council:

Board of Library Trustees

Date: 2023-05-08

Time: 7:00 PM

Building: Reading Public Library

Location: Community Room

Address: 64 Middlesex Avenue

Session: Open Session

Purpose: General Meeting

Version: Draft

Attendees: **Members - Present:**

Monique Pillow-Gnanaratnam, Chair; Monette Verrier, Vice-Chair;  
Andrew Grimes, Secretary; Cherrie Dubois; Patrick Egan; Cappy Popp

**Members - Not Present:**

**Others Present:**

Amy Lannon, Director; Meaghan Clemente, Administrative Assistant;  
See attached sign-in sheets

**Minutes Respectfully Submitted By:** Andrew Grimes, Secretary

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## Topics of Discussion:

**Call to Order at 7:04 p.m.**

### I. Public Comment

Ms. Pillow-Gnanaratnam reviewed the procedures for public comment. 45 minutes will be offered, with a two-minute limit per speaker. In-person and Zoom participants may speak and should kindly introduce themselves with their name and address. Ms. Pillow-Gnanaratnam will recognize each speaker and alternate between in-person and Zoom participants. Priority will be given to those who have not spoken

Mike Monahan introduced himself as the individual who filed the Request for Reconsideration of Materials (RFR) for *Gender Queer* by Maia Kobabe due to alleged images of child pornography that he believes are not congruent with the community standards of Reading and detailed specific areas of concern. Mr. Monahan feels that some publications are effectively banned by not being included in the Library collection. Other publications offer value to the LGBTQ+ community. Mr. Monahan believes that the Library should hold itself to a higher community standard than the world wide web.

Eileen Litterio expressed concerns over the potential negative impact of sexually explicit images in *Gender Queer* on students' social, emotional, and intellectual health and safety. Ms. Litterio suggested removing the book from the teen section due to its age-inappropriate content.

Liz Whitlam introduced herself as a resident and owner of Whitlam Books. Ms. Whitlam complimented the professionalism and expertise of librarians in creating a

welcoming environment for all and believes that books can provide windows into different life perspectives and provide a safe place to explore experiences, identity, and ideas.

Alicia Modestino described the award-winning graphic novel memoir *Gender Queer* and the author's day-to-day journey with gender identity struggles in a heteronormative world. Ms. Modestino referenced a single controversial panel in the book and provided examples of other books found in the Teen Health section that explore gender and sexuality.

Erin Calvo-Bacci expressed her support for literature and the right to read books, especially those that are banned, to facilitate an open and thoughtful discussion. Ms. Calvo-Bacci suggested placing a disclaimer on *Gender Queer* due to the uncomfortable nature of the subject matter.

Nancy Docktor, a resident who is also a mental health clinician, urged the Board not to ban *Gender Queer*. She also urged the Library to order more books and have a book club for adults in Reading to read and discuss the book.

John Sullivan shared his opinion that *Gender Queer* can provide valuable perspective and insight for youth who may be struggling with gender issues themselves or supporting peers who are. Mr. Sullivan expressed his enjoyment of the hoopla digital service he used to read the book.

Jay Wallace expressed his support for *Gender Queer* and discussed the ironic effect of book bans building interest in books despite depictions of violence, sex, or other offensive material. Mr. Wallace noted that six of the ten most banned books of 2022 featured LGBTQIA content, although they can provide valuable learning experiences and opportunities to develop empathy.

Brian Curry spoke about the importance of protecting children from pornography and described examples of sexual content present in other Teen books.

Sherilla Lestrade questioned the right of parents to decide what library materials other families want to educate and support their children with. Ms. Lestrade expressed her belief that *Gender Queer* can facilitate conversations and understanding as children navigate the realities of their lives.

Chris Moriarty pointed out that *Gender Queer* has not been found in violation of any federal or local child pornography statutes and is widely available on Amazon.com, as well as other bookstores and libraries. This suggests that it does not meet the definition of child pornography.

Carolyn Johnson shared her belief that *Gender Queer* would have provided support and answers to questions that her transgender daughter had if it had been available while she was in Middle School, especially around age 11 or 12 during the onset of puberty.

Kevin Lucey noted that materials are available to children in any part of the Library, including R-rated movies and mature-rated videogames that are not available to them at commercial retailers. Mr. Lucey suggested establishing two sets of library cards with and without parental restrictions. Mr. Lucey read aloud explicit passages from *Gender Queer*.

Tim Matthew believes the discussion should be centered on the explicit content of the book rather than transgender rights, which are supported through other public and private resources and initiatives. Mr. Matthew referenced the Library's Internet Access Policy, which prohibits access to material harmful to minors, as well as limited adult

access to the Teen section when not accompanying a minor or actively searching the collection.

Johnny Russo acknowledged that there are many different types of people in the world, but questioned the educational value and appropriateness of *Gender Queer*.

Helena Johnson expressed her position against removing or restricting access to *Gender Queer*, which she views as an attack on freedom of speech, First Amendment rights, and the rights of the LGBTQI community.

Vanessa Alvarado recognized the Library staff and the Board for creating a warm, inclusive, and inviting space for the community.

Brian Paulson stated that he would not want his children to pick up *Gender Queer* and called attention to other books in the Teen Section that he believes are problematic and damaging which describe rape, drug and alcohol use, violence, and adult-child prostitution.

Rebecca Ward reported that *Gender Queer* was considered one of the best medical graphic novels of 2019. Ms. Ward expressed surprise at the level of exposure to questionable content teens have through TikTok and friends, and noted that *Gender Queer* provides a more full-picture experience and context.

Marion Growney agrees that everyone should parent their own children and encourages reading the full book to understand the context of the author's experiences, which represents a healthy and consensual relationship between two young people. Ms. Growney stated that this book is worth it if it prevents one child from committing suicide.

Christina Eckenroth spoke about raising awareness for child prostitution, abuse, and human trafficking situations and experiences through books and other resources.

Ms. Pillow-Gnanaratnam thanked the audience for their participation and concluded the public comment session at 7:50 p.m.

## **II. Request for Reconsideration of Materials: *Gender Queer* by Maia Kobabe**

Ms. Lannon began a presentation developed in cooperation with the Head of Collection Services and Collection Services Librarian on information regarding *Gender Queer* by Maia Kobabe. Ms. Lannon summarized the Request for Reconsideration of Materials submitted to the Board and the Library administrative email accounts on March 6, 2023, alleging graphic depictions of child pornography, which is a federal felony crime to possess or distribute.

Ms. Lannon reviewed the guiding principles of the Library's collection development policy. The selection of any given item is not an endorsement of the viewpoint expressed. The great diversity of the Library's customers means that the Library must do more than provide materials for the common denominator to be effective. It is deemed the responsibility of parents and caregivers to determine what their children may read, watch or listen to. The selection of materials is not restricted by the possibility that young people may obtain material their parents and caregivers consider inappropriate.

Ms. Lannon noted that *Gender Queer* is an award-winning memoir in the form of a graphic novel. The Library purchased a physical and digital copy of the first edition of the book in 2019, as well as a physical and digital copy of the second edition in 2022.

Based on circulation, demand, and a missing copy, the Library obtained three more physical copies of the first edition and one physical copy of the second edition in 2023. Four physical copies are located in the Young Adult collection. One physical copy, is in the Health Nook, with an additional copy in processing. The Health Nook is a generic collection of health-related materials in the turret near the Teen Spot. A digital copy is available on Overdrive and through the digital hoopla service.

The Library considers factors such as condition, related programs, number of holds, long overdue items, and missing items when purchasing new or replacement copies. It is common practice to increase and decrease the number of copies of a title over time. Examples of this include the management of both hardcover and paperback bestsellers and titles added or deleted to the Reading Public School summer reading lists. The Library seeks to minimize wait times for items on hold that are highly in demand and provide access to additional copies of book club materials.

The Library is a member of the North of Boston Library Exchange (NOBLE), which is a consortium of 23 public and academic libraries in the area. Cardholders of all member libraries can access digital copies of Overdrive materials, including *Gender Queer*, from other library consortia systems through reciprocal lender arrangements. 11 NOBLE communities have access to digital hoopla titles, including *Gender Queer*. Reading has multiple copies of *Gender Queer* in addition to a copy in processing. 18 other libraries have at least one physical copy of the book. Regular and consistent circulation of this book demonstrates a steady demand since its acquisition. The Library has had 29 digital circulations and 52 physical circulations, with 145 total physical circulations in the NOBLE system.

Ms. Lannon reported that shelf location refers to where the item is in the library collection. Most titles are found in one shelf location, although some titles may be found in multiple collections such as the popular *Harry Potter* series. 67% of libraries with physical copies of *Gender Queer* have this title in their Young Adult (YA) or Teen area. Six libraries have the item in their “Graphic Novel” shelving location due to its status as a memoir in the form of a graphic novel. With no “Teen” or “YA” modifier, it is assumed these graphic novel shelf locations are adult or non-age-specific collections. Publishers and authors typically determine the appropriate audience for materials. Librarians also reference age recommendations in journal reviews and descriptions provided by the distributor.

The physical holdings of surrounding communities typically visited by Reading residents were also examined. Digital copies of the book, available via Overdrive/Libby and hoopla, were not taken into consideration. Lynnfield shelves the book as YA. Wilmington and Andover have both YA and Adult shelving locations for the book. *Gender Queer* is also included in Andover’s summer reading. Wakefield, North Reading, and Woburn have adult shelving locations for the book.

Ms. Lannon provided samples of journal review excerpts about *Gender Queer* and reviewed the physical holdings of surrounding communities. Ms. Lannon clarified that the Library’s Children’s room is generally considered to be for birth through grade six and the Teen Area is for grade six through high school and young emerging adults. Ms.

Pillow-Gnanaratnam noted that public comment has ended and the Board will be focusing on their presentation and discussion.

Ms. Lannon reported that Gender Queer meets or exceeds the Library's collection development standards and has adequate circulation to remain in the current YA and Health collection locations. The number of physical copies should be added or reduced according to the usual standards such as condition or demand. Circulation of the book increased after the RFR, but existing copies demonstrated enough demand through circulation to remain part of the collection before that. The complete removal from the collection based on the RFR is considered censorship according to the American Library Association. Moving the book to a different collection can also be seen as a form of censorship, adding an access barrier for the intended audience. After reviewing the legal definition of pornography, Ms. Lannon declared that there is also no evidence that the book meets the definition of pornography or child pornography.

*Motion: To begin discussion of the March 6, 2023 Request for Reconsideration of Materials regarding the removal of Gender Queer by Maia Kobabe from the Library collection.*

*(Grimes/Egan)*

*Vote: Approved 6-0*

Mr. Egan noted that no children were harmed in the creation of this book, which was not a recording. The PROTECT Act statute was cited but is only applicable to depictions of minors engaging in prohibited sexually explicit conduct. The context and content of the book as a whole should also be considered when determining the appropriateness for the community. Mr. Egan believes the specific drawings referenced were of adults engaged in sexual activity rather than minors. Standards of political, artistic, and scientific merit have been met per professional reviews. There have been no prosecutions against publishers, libraries, or bookstores regarding this book. When viewed as a whole, Mr. Egan does not believe that this coming-of-age story is harmful to minors as the author navigates issues of gender and sexual identity over time from a rather conservative view overall. Per Mr. Egan, there is both appropriate qualitative and quantitative data to support the inclusion of the book in the Library collection per the collection development policy. Mr. Egan understands that there are strong feelings and a wide range of community interests and backgrounds. Mr. Egan noted that everyone may find something objectionable in the Library and that it is up to parents to decide what should be available for their own families.

Mr. Grimes appreciates Mr. Egan's legal perspective and agrees that the content of the book should be considered as a whole. Although some pages push the limits of acceptability, there are often similar instances of questionable content on television. Mr. Grimes described how the book enhanced his understanding of people who are questioning their gender or transitioning and believes the book provides important insight and perspective to society as a whole on these issues. Acknowledgment of these issues has evolved throughout the years. Mr. Grimes stated that more than half of the book focuses on puberty, which starts at age 11, and supports the Library's inclusion of the book in the Teen collection.

Mr. Popp acknowledged the evolution of current contemporary community standards and the importance of considering the book as a whole rather than taking certain pages out of context. Mr. Popp believes that the book offers incredible value to people who may need it, including readers with family members and friends going through similar

issues. Mr. Popp found the book to be a very enlightening view of the author's life. When considered in context, Mr. Popp found the sexual images to be anti-sex in most cases, showcasing the author's discomfort with their body and identity, rather than being offensive for the sake of being offensive. Mr. Popp believes that the book presents opportunities for important discussions and deserves to remain in the Teen collection.

Ms. Dubois has spent over 50 years as a public school and college teacher and has personally witnessed students experiencing confusion about their identities and undergoing gender transitions. Ms. Dubois believes that parents have a right to make choices about what their children read. If parents do not personally assist their children in selecting books, perhaps they should review choices at home. However, it is not appropriate to decide for everyone what to read and not read. Ms. Dubois believes that *Gender Queer* has literary merit and presents an intelligent and enlightening perspective on the confusion of puberty that can enhance reader understanding.

Ms. Verrier thanked the community for their thoughtful considerations and comments, which have helped the Board consider the issue from different angles. Ms. Verrier believes that the book does not meet the definition of pornography. Ms. Verrier cited an email the Board received from the Massachusetts Library Association regarding the importance of individuals making their own decisions about what to read and believe for their own families, not other people's children. Ms. Verrier acknowledged that everyone wants what is best for their children and that each child needs to be supported uniquely. Ms. Verrier believes that the Library should provide choices for the community and supports keeping the book in the Library collection.

Ms. Pillow-Gnanaratnam thanked the community and the Board for their participation in the discussion of this issue. Ms. Pillow-Gnanaratnam's background in education and student affairs has provided insight into the experiences of students navigating complex emotions during times of crisis and the exploration of gender identities. Ms. Pillow-Gnanaratnam stated that the suicide rate among transgender students is extremely high and discussed the importance of providing support services nationwide. Ms. Pillow-Gnanaratnam does not support banning access to *Gender Queer*.

*Motion: Upon consideration of the March 6, 2023 Request for Reconsideration of Materials, to reject the request to remove Gender Queer by Maia Kobabe from the Library collection.*

*(Egan/Dubois)*

*Vote: Approved 6-0*

Ms. Pillow-Gnanaratnam thanked the audience for holding their applause until the end and declared an official meeting break at 8:27 p.m.

### **III. Financial Update: FY23 and FY24**

The Trustee meeting reconvened at 8:38 p.m. with a financial update on FY 23 and FY 24. All audience members excused themselves during the meeting break. Ms. Lannon reported that the Library finances are running smoothly according to the municipal budget. The FY24 Library budget of \$2,105,025 was formally approved at the April, 27<sup>th</sup> Town Meeting without any questions or discussion. Ms. Lannon briefly reviewed the "FY24 Spending Scorecard" for the total municipal budget. The Library makes up 1.6% of the total budget (\$135,045,333).

Mr. Popp inquired about the meaning of encumbrances. Ms. Lannon and Mr. Grimes explained that this is a governmental accounting term representing unfulfilled purchase order commitments for larger items that can be carried over between fiscal years. Ms. Lannon noted that the new exterior wrap design for the Library lockers is part of an encumbrance using Foundation funds.

Ms. Verrier inquired about the lack of questions and discussions regarding the Library budget at Town Meeting. Ms. Lannon explained that this is typical and that questions were posed at other points in the budget process by the Finance Committee and the Select Board. In past years, questions were asked regarding the Director of Equity and Social Justice position and the reduction of Sunday Library hours.

The Library received \$22 in gifts in April.

#### **IV. Director Report**

Ms. Lannon reviewed a general snapshot of April statistics. Physical circulation and Overdrive usage demonstrated strong circulation of both physical and digital library resources. 56 Library programs were held and 1,819 reference questions were answered. Visitor levels remain strong, though not at pre-COVID levels due to health concerns at large programs. However, more specialized programs are now offered in more intimate settings. The slowest time of day is between approximately 11:30 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. most days. Midday closures would be impractical and would not help save money.

In April, the Board approved \$1,350 to pay for three Aunt Flow Model E feminine product dispensers and supplies, with funds to come from the Foundation gift account. However, the vendor offered a 15% discount on the cost of the dispensers for five units. These units have been installed in all women's, family, and gender-neutral restrooms in the building. When reviewing the gift accounts, Ms. Lannon discovered \$1,864 remaining from an FY2009 Life Health Access Grant, which will cover the new cost of \$1,770 for the five dispensers and supplies for the Period Equity Initiative.

Ms. Lannon thanked Senior Computer Technician Patrick McLaughlin for his assistance in updating and setting up the technology necessary to conduct tonight's hybrid meeting and facilitate an RCTV broadcast. Ms. Lannon noted the human cost to technology, as significant staff time has been devoted to setting up a new technology cart, logistics planning, troubleshooting, and updates to make this hybrid setup successful. Town IT is working to install and improve meeting technology in both the Conference Room and Community Room at the Library.

Ms. Lannon confirmed that gifts from the Reading Public Library Foundation are funding the locker wrap design. The locker wrap design is being completed by a local vendor, Wrap Solutions, in May. A local vendor is also working on designs for custom benches and bookcases for the new Tween space.

Town Counsel has confirmed that the Reading Public Libraries complies with all Massachusetts State Laws, including Chapter 6, section 172H, regarding the conduction of CORI checks. Accordingly, the Library will continue with its current procedures for planning and implementing programs. The Library performs CORI checks on employees and volunteers who work at the Library. Library staff will be working on a contract

document for vendor services to better outline expectations regarding services and commitments and may include an optional question about the vendor's CORI check policy for its employees. Ms. Lannon explained the difficulty of negotiating with some due to being unable to pay advance deposits. Mr. Popp expressed concerns about the sensitive nature of the information collected during the CORI check process. Ms. Lannon clarified that the Town's Human Resources department currently handles CORI checks for employees and volunteers.

Ms. Lannon reported positive feedback from parents of children participating in the Citizen Kids Series and Bouncing Broomsticks Book Club. Patrons also found the Job Search series to be helpful and informative and requested similar future programming. Community Health programming highlights include Mindful Meditation, Narcan Training, McFarlane Therapeutic Arts sessions, *Drink: The Intimate Relationship Between Women and Alcohol* Book Discussion, and a Postpartum Depression program. Ms. Lannon emphasized the library's understanding and concern in supporting community members of all ages with substance use and mental health issues. Non-library room bookings for user and community events in April included the Reading Antiquarian Society, the Reading Garden Club, RPS Multilingual Learners: Community Supports Fair, Understanding Disabilities, and Reading Neighbors Network: Board Games.

After reviewing multiple Request for Proposal (RFP) submissions, the Town has selected Opportunity Consulting to complete the Community, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Audit. The project is funded through a \$40,000 Community Compact Grant and \$25,000 from the Library's state aid funds. Funding and facilitating the Community DEI Audit touches on all RPL core values and Strategic Plan focus areas.

Mr. Egan inquired about the nature of the community's participation in the project. Ms. Lannon explained that the Trustees and Select Board are stakeholders in the project and will receive progress updates. Focus groups, surveys, town hall events, and other activities are planned for both in-person and online formats. Community needs will be assessed through a qualitative and quantitative analysis.

Ms. Dubois complimented Reference Librarian Rebecca Bailey's appearance on the popular game show Jeopardy on Thursday, April 27. Ms. Lannon announced that Olivia McElwain has accepted a leadership role as Librarian II – Children's and will coordinate programming, desk coverage, and services to children ages birth through 12, as well as their parents, caregivers, and teachers. Ms. Lannon looks forward to seeing Ms. McElwain bring her positive energy and boundless creativity to a new level in this role.

Ms. McElwain's former Children's Librarian I position is now vacant and will primarily focus on serving tweens. Ms. Verrier asked whether this was a new focus for this position. Ms. Lannon clarified that this position would focus mainly on tween programming, but would assist with programming for other age groups as well. After two rounds of interviews with hiring teams composed of Library staff from multiple levels of professionals, paraprofessionals, and departments, Elizabeth Weilbacher has accepted the Librarian I – Reference and Elder Services position.

Due to various staffing changes since the Fall as well as extenuating circumstances in the personal lives of several key employees, staff coverage has been a challenge in the past few weeks. Ms. Lannon thanked the staff for their continued dedication in assuming extra responsibilities and hours to make sure that Library services and operations

continued smoothly. Caroline Betcher and Lucy Lee have been hired as Substitute Library Associates to provide additional coverage for future absences.

A “Grand Army of the Republic” book is being digitized from the Local History collection. Local History Librarian Jocelyn Gould is assisting the Reading Antiquarian Society and the Historical Commission to plan the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the American Revolution in December. Head of Research and Reader Services Andrea Fiorillo is working with the Massachusetts Library Association to develop an asynchronous Intellectual Freedom course. Librarians are preparing for upcoming school visits to promote the 2023 Summer Reading Program “Find Your Voice”. Ms. Lannon described staff summer reading T-shirts and offered to make them available for interested Trustees.

Ms. Lannon highlighted selected professional development recently completed by Library staff and reminded the Board about Conflict of Interest training mandated by the State. Ms. Verrier discussed the learning opportunities presented by the recent Request for Reconsideration and suggested a review of the Library’s collection development policy. Library staff will review and make recommendations. Policy changes can be presented at one meeting and fully discussed by the Board, who will vote to approve a finalized, updated copy of the policy at the subsequent meeting.

**V. Approval of Minutes from April 10, 2023**

Mr. Egan clarified the context of comments made on pages 2 and page 5. Ms. Dubois pointed out a typo on page 9.

*Motion: To approve the minutes of the April 10, 2023, Trustee Meeting as amended.  
(Dubois/Verrier)*

*Vote: Approved 6-0*

**VI. Other Business**

Mr. Egan reported on other public comments received by the Trustees unrelated to the request for reconsideration that will be fully shared with the Board. One email pertained to a Craftivism embroidery program sponsored by the Friends of the Reading Public Library. The commenter raised concerns about the potential political bias of the presenter due to some samples of their work found online. The commenter suggested a broader and avoiding politicized embroidery especially when focused on middle and high school students. A second email pertained to the 2023 pride parade which will be co-sponsored by the Library, the Office of Equity and Social Justice, and Reading POP Huddle. This email raised concerns about the Library co-sponsoring an event with a political group.

Ms. Verrier pointed out that she has followed up with past public commenters who have not provided their full name and address to verify their Reading residency per the Board’s policy on public comment.

Adjournment 9:19 p.m.

*Motion: To Adjourn (Verrier / Popp)*

*Vote: Approved 6-0*

Respectfully Submitted,

Andrew Grimes, Secretary

# BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES MEETING SIGN-IN SHEET



Meeting Date: May 8, 2023

Meeting Time: 7:00 p.m.

Place/Room: Reading Public Library Community Room

Name	Address
PLEASE PRINT NAME	
Johnny Russo	32 Granger Ave Reading
PAT Drummer	20 California Rd Reading
MARCEL BOIS	16 willa ST. Reading
Alicia Modestino	47 Withrop Ave Reading MA
Cathy Zeek	8 Sanborn St #4002 Reading
Kai & Ashley	24 clove Cir.
Martha Moore	102 Sanborn Lane
Bruce Mackenzie	102 Sanborn Ln.
Nancy Zemplak	15 Orchard Park Dr
Michael McSorvey	15 Orchard Park Dr
Laura Monahan	47 Bancroft Ave
Michael Monahan	47 Bancroft Ave
Rita Robertson	9 Elm St.
Christine Hoag	4 Beaver Rd.
Susan Cuffe	Johnson Woods.
Jamie Penny	RPL
Kathryn Gestrin Scannell	RPL

# BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES MEETING SIGN-IN SHEET



Meeting Date: May 8, 2023

Meeting Time: 7:00 p.m.

Place/Room: Reading Public Library Community Room

Name	Address
PLEASE PRINT NAME	
Rebecca Ward	21 Kingston St.
Helena Johnson	21 Orchard Park Dr.
Karen Prefon	86 West St.
Jay Wallace	82 Forest St.
Kathy Kinner	28 Highland St.
Monica Sateriale	32 Grand St.
Margaret Connor	1 Charles St. S
Brian Holmes	77 Red Gate
Michele Catalano	4 Evergreen Rd
Kara Schmitt	46 Sunset Rock Ln
Cynthia Eckert	249 Woburn St Reading
VANESSA ALVARADO	MT VERNON ST.
Etain O'Dea	526 West St.
Kaithyn Mercurio	13 A St.
Ialia Karchem	21 Shackford Rd
JOANNE HARMEN	106 SUMMER AVE
LIZ WHITEUM	7 GIUNOBE AVENUE

# BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES MEETING SIGN-IN SHEET



**Meeting Date:** May 8, 2023

**Meeting Time:** 7:00 p.m.

**Place/Room:** Reading Public Library Community Room

Name	Address
PLEASE PRINT NAME	
Sara Ortins	60 Winthrop Ave,
Carolyn Johnson	18 Thorndike St.
Marina Johnson	18 Thorndike St.
Lori Hayes	59 Forest St.
Michelle Goldner	459 Lowell St
Geoffrey Coram	31 Ridge Rd
DENISE Gagnon	38 Warren AVE
Kevin Way	Pearl St



# Board of Library Trustees

May 8, 2023

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## Agenda

I. Public Comment

II. Request for Reconsideration of Materials: To remove Gender Queer by Maia Kobabe from the Library Collection

III. Financial Update: FY23 and FY24

IV. Director Report

V. Approval of Minutes from April 10, 2023

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## Public Comment

ALL IN-PERSON ATTENDEES  
PLEASE SIGN IN

### TONIGHT'S PROCEDURES

7:05 – 7:50 p.m. (45 minutes)

In-person and Zoom participants may speak

2 minute limit per speaker

Please introduce yourself with your name and address

**In-Person:** Form a line at the microphone

**Zoom:** Use the Raise Hand feature (phone \*6 to unmute, \*9 to raise/lower hand)

Chair will recognize you and alternate between in-person and Zoom participants

Priority will be for those who have not spoken

3

## Request for Reconsideration (RFR) of Materials

4

## Guiding Principles Collection Development Policy

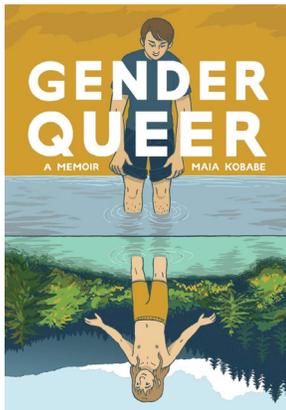
**The Library does not advocate particular beliefs or views. The selection of any given item is not an endorsement of the viewpoint expressed.**

**The great diversity of the library's customers means that the library must do more than provide materials for the common denominator in order to be effective**

**It is deemed the responsibility of parents and caregivers to determine what their children may read, watch or listen to, and selection of materials is not restricted by the possibility that young people may obtain material their parents and caregivers consider inappropriate.**

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## Gender Queer: A Memoir by Maia Kobabe



Lion Forge Comics, May 2019

### AWARDS

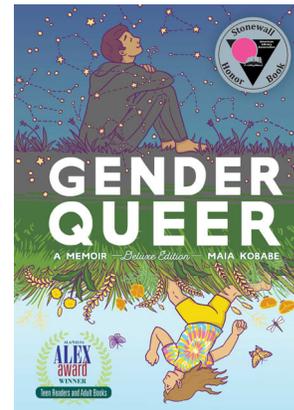
[Alex Award: 2020](#)

[Rainbow Lists: 2020](#)

[Stonewall Honor: 2020](#)

[YALSA Great Graphic Novels for Teens: 2020](#)

[School Library Journal Best Graphic Novels: 2019](#)



Oni Press, July 2022

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## PURCHASE HISTORY

Reading Public Library

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Lion Forge published the first edition of *Gender Queer* in 2019. RPL purchased a digital copy in July 2019 and added a physical copy in December 2019.

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Oni Press released a second edition in 2022. RPL purchased both a physical and digital copy of this edition in July 2022 and September 2022 respectively.

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Based on circulation, demand, and a missing copy, RPL ordered three more physical copies of the first edition in January 2023 and one physical copy of the second edition in April 2023.

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Four physical copies are in the Young Adult Collection and one physical copy is in the Health Nook. Another copy for the Health Nook is in processing. A digital copy is available on Overdrive and through the RPL hoopla service.

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## CONSIDERATIONS

Ordering new or replacement copies

Condition

Related Programs

Number of Holds

Long Overdue

Missing

8

## Reading Public Library (RPL) & NOBLE

### HOLDINGS

- RPL Digital Copies <sup>1</sup> 2
- RPL Physical Copies 4
- NOBLE Physical Copies<sup>2</sup> 25

### CIRCULATION

- Total RPL Digital Circs 29
- Total RPL Physical Circs 52
- Total NOBLE Physical Circs 145

<sup>1</sup> *hoopla is available in 11 communities*

<sup>2</sup> *22 available and 3 on order or in processing.  
18 of 23 libraries own or have ordered the book.*

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## SHELF LOCATION (NOBLE)

69% of physical copies

- Teen
- Young Adult (YA)

The author, publisher, review journals,  
and distributors classify the title

- Young Adult (YA)
- 16+
- Grades 9 – 12

YA/Teen

13

Adult (Graphic Novel, Health)

9

On Order

3

10

## Shelf Location: Surrounding Communities

### NOBLE

- Wakefield            Adult
- Lynnfield            YA

### MVLC

- North Reading      Adult
- Wilmington        YA, Adult
- Andover<sup>4</sup>            YA, Adult

<sup>4</sup>Included in Summer Reading

### Minuteman

- Woburn              Adult

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## REVIEWS (Excerpts)

### School Library Journal:

*/\* Starred Review \*/ Gr 9 Up— ... E describes common situations from the perspective of someone who is asexual and nonbinary: starting a new school, getting eir period, dating, attending college. ... It's also a great resource for those who identify as nonbinary or asexual as well as for those who know someone who identifies that way and wish to better understand*

### Booklist:

Vulnerable and honest, *Gender Queer* grapples with issues of identity and sexuality in ways that highlight how messy and painful but ultimately vindicating the process of understanding and valuing yourself can be. ... Highly recommended reading for those on their own journey of exploration or those supporting the explorers in their own lives. *Gender Queer* exists so a new generation can see the words and experiences to help them feel whole and seen.

### Publishers Weekly:

This heartfelt graphic memoir relates, with sometimes painful honesty, the experience of growing up non-gender-conforming. From a very young age, Kobabe is unsure whether to claim a lesbian/gay, bisexual, or even transgender identity: "I don't want to be a girl. I don't want to be a boy either. I just want to be myself."

...

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## ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATION

Leave the title in the current collection locations (YA and Health), adding or reducing the number of physical copies according to usual standards such as condition and demand.

- Meets or exceeds collection development standards
- Adequate circulation
- Removal from the collection based on the RFR is censorship according to the American Library Association
- There is no evidence that the book meets the definition of pornography or child pornography.