



Town of Reading Meeting Posting with Agenda

Board - Committee - Commission - Council:

Board of Library Trustees

Date: 2023-08-14

Time: 7:00 PM

Building: Reading Public Library

Location: Community Room

Address: 64 Middlesex Avenue

Agenda:

Purpose: General Business

Meeting Called By: Patrick Egan, Chair

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.

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/j/86117297460>

The Trustees also accept public comments through email: rpitrustee@noblenet.org



Town of Reading Meeting Posting with Agenda

- I. Call to Order
- II. Public Comment
- III. Request for Reconsideration of Materials
 - a. "Tricks" by Ellen Hopkins
 - b. "Assigned Male" by Sophie Labelle
- IV. Collection Development Policy and Request for Reconsideration Form
 - a. Review of updates/changes discussed in July
 - b. Discussion and Vote
- V. Meeting Room Use Report
- VI. Meeting Room Policy and Fees Review
 - a. Minor operational updates and corrections
- VII. Library Landscape Committee
 - a. Adding Ex Officio (non-voting) members
 - b. Approval of funds for exploratory concept and design
- VIII. Financial Report
- IX. Director's Report
- X. Approval of July 10, 2023, Meeting Minutes
- XI. Future Agenda Items
 - a. Community DEI Assessment

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Library Mission Statement

The Reading Public Library is 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.

Core Values

- Education
- Equity
- Accountability
- Access

Collection Statement

An important role of the Reading Public Library is to provide library materials selected in response to the diverse educational, informational, and recreational needs of all community members of every age and literacy level.

Professional staff select and provide materials in a variety of formats; including but not limited to, print, media, and digital formats; and in a variety of community languages.

Selection Criteria

This policy is intended to provide direction and guidance to staff members in their roles as materials selectors. Staff select print and non-print library materials in accordance with one or more of these criteria.

- Relevance to the library's mission and core values
- Current usefulness, interest, and/or permanent value
- Popular demand
- Relevance to the existing collection
- Standards of quality in content and format
- Price

The selection process includes the use of authoritative professional reviews, popular reviews, publishers' catalogs, standard lists of basic works, firsthand examination, and patron requests.

The Library Gift Policy addresses donations of materials for the collection. The following collections are selected with additional criteria:

Children's Collection

This collection serves children from birth through sixth grade. Children's librarians also select materials and give special attention to books of value to parents, teachers, and other adults working with children.

Local History and Genealogy Collection

This collection includes material that relates to or advances our knowledge about the town of Reading, Massachusetts and its history, people, and institutions. The collection also provides genealogists with methodological aids with which to begin research and learn genealogical techniques.

Periodicals

Professional staff consider both content and accessibility of all periodicals. Magazine subscriptions are reviewed yearly prior to renewal.

Reference

The Reference collection is intended to serve adults and students in middle school and up. Materials selected for the Reference collection supply ready information on a certain subject, in an easy-to-use form, or are tools for bibliographic access.

Teen Collection

Professional staff select materials for teens to meet the needs, interests, and reading levels of young people in grades six through twelve.

Intellectual Freedom and Controversial Materials

The Board of Trustees of the Reading Public Library endorses the Library Bill of Rights ([see Appendix I](#)). The Board recognizes its right and responsibility to provide worthwhile materials of interest to its readers, including those on all sides of controversial issues.

The Library does not advocate particular beliefs or views. The selection of any given item is not an endorsement of the viewpoint expressed. Library materials will not be marked in such a way as to show approval or disapproval. Access to library materials shall be controlled only to the extent necessary to protect them from danger or theft.

Parents are responsible for determining what their children may read, watch, or listen to. Selection of materials is not restricted by the possibility that young people may obtain material their parents consider inappropriate.

Reading residents with serious objections to specific items in the Library should direct their complaints to a librarian. If the complaint is not resolved, the resident may file a “Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials” ([Appendix II](#)) form to the Director’s attention. The item and the form will be reviewed by the Board of Library Trustees. If materials meet the criteria of selection, they will not be removed from the collection because of pressure by any individual or group. **[Change #1] After issuing a decision on the Reconsideration, the Board of Library Trustees will not review additional Requests for Reconsideration of the title in question for one year.**

Scope and Limits of the Collection

The Library does not attempt to serve as a depository of record nor to purchase materials of a highly specialized or technical nature. It does not undertake to support individual research in any subject field except local history. When requests are received for material outside the scope of this collection, every effort will be made to borrow the material from another library or to direct the patron to an agency where the material may be found.

The Reading Public Library is cognizant of the resources of other public, academic, and special libraries and will not needlessly duplicate materials. Through cooperative agreements with other libraries, particularly the North of Boston Library Exchange (NOBLE), the resources of those libraries are readily available to Reading Public Library patrons.

This policy recognizes the differing functions of school and public libraries and establishes the responsibility of the school to supply materials needed in quantity to support the school curriculum. The Library undertakes to provide a general, comprehensive collection that will enrich the resources available to students and teachers.

Deaccessioning Practice

To ensure that the collection remains useful and reliable, it is evaluated on an ongoing basis, with decisions made whether to dispose of, repair, or retain items. Material is evaluated based on use, physical condition, currency of information, number of copies, inclusion in standard bibliographies, and availability in nearby libraries.

Materials that are withdrawn from the collection are disposed of at the discretion of the librarians responsible for the designated areas.

The library is not able to save materials for patrons or notify patrons when materials are withdrawn.

Budget

The acquisitions budget for each department or category is established by the Director at the beginning of each fiscal year.

Legal Responsibility

It is the responsibility of the Board of Trustees to approve policies for the selection of Library material, formulated by the Director. These policies are administered by the Director with the assistance of the staff. Responsibility for selection of specific materials rests with the Director, but the Director's interpretation of policy is subject to review by the Board.

Adopted: April 2021
Amended: May 2022,
August 2023

Appendix I

American Library Association Library Bill of Rights

The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

- I. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.
- II. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.
- III. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.
- IV. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.
- V. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.
- VI. Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.
- VII. All people, regardless of origin, age, background, or views, possess a right to privacy and confidentiality in their library use. Libraries should advocate for, educate about, and protect people's privacy, safeguarding all library use data, including personally identifiable information.

Adopted June 19, 1939, by the ALA Council; amended October 14, 1944; June 18, 1948; February 2, 1961; June 27, 1967; January 23, 1980; January 29, 2019.

Inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996.

Although the Articles of the *Library Bill of Rights* are unambiguous statements of basic principles that should govern the service of all libraries, questions do arise concerning application of these principles to specific library practices. See the documents designated by the Intellectual Freedom Committee as [Interpretations of the Library Bill of Rights](#).

Appendix II

Request for Reconsideration of Materials

Reading residents with serious objections to specific items in the Library should direct their complaints to a librarian. If the complaint is not resolved, the resident may file a “Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials” form to the Director's attention. This process is serious and can take time.

The item and the form will be reviewed by the library director and the Board of Library Trustees, using qualitative and quantitative data and assessments of the material. If the material meets the criteria of selection, it will not be removed from the collection because of pressure by any individual or group. [Change #2] After issuing a decision on the Reconsideration, the Board of Library Trustees will not review additional Requests for Reconsideration of the title in question for one year.

Requests for Reconsideration are reported to the Massachusetts Library Association (MLA) and the American Library Association (ALA). [Change #3] Pursuant to state law, all documents and emails received by a public employee or board are considered a public record unless the content falls within one of the stated exemptions under the Massachusetts Public Records Law. This may require releasing certain information, including identifying information such as your name.]

Intellectual Freedom and Controversial Materials

The Board of Trustees of the Reading Public Library endorses the Library Bill of Rights. The Board recognizes its right and responsibility to provide worthwhile materials of interest to its readers, including those on all sides of controversial issues. The criteria used by the professional staff when selecting materials are listed in the 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. Library materials will not be marked in such a way as to show approval or disapproval. Access to library materials shall be controlled only to the extent necessary to protect them from danger or theft.

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.

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.

Reading residents may request the Board of Library Trustees reconsider library materials.

Amended: May 10, 2022, August 14, 2023

Form to Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials

Date: _____
Full Name: _____
Address: _____
Email: _____
Telephone: _____

You represent: Self Organization: (Please Name) _____

MATERIAL FOR RECONSIDERATION

Format: _____
Title: _____
Author / Date: _____
Call #: _____

1. What brought this material to your attention?
2. Have you examined or read the entire item? If not, why?
3. What concerns you about the material? Please be specific.
4. Are there materials you suggest that provide additional information and/or other viewpoints on this topic?
5. What action are you requesting the Board of Library Trustees to consider?

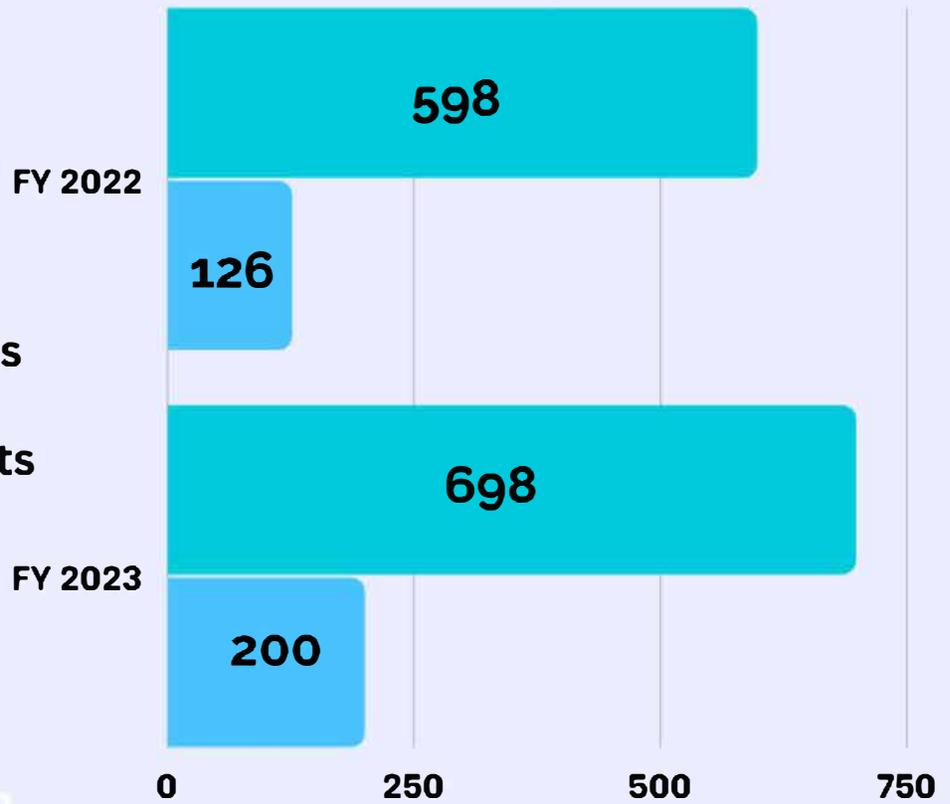
Signature _____ Date _____

Please return the completed form to a staff member at any service desk or email to rdgadmin@noblinet.org. You will be notified of when the Board is scheduled to review this request. Pursuant to state law, all documents and emails received by a public employee or board are considered a public record unless the content falls within one of the stated exemptions under the Massachusetts Public Records Law.

MEETING ROOM USAGE

■ Outside Organizations
■ Library Events

■ Library Events
■ Outside Organizations



MEETING ROOM POLICY

Statement of Policy

The Board of Library Trustees of the Reading Public Library subscribes in full to the Library Bill of Rights as set forth by the American Library Association.

The Board of Library Trustees has established this policy regarding use of the Library meeting and conference rooms, and is the sole authority in interpreting these rules and regulations. The Director is authorized to accept reservations for the use of these rooms in accordance with this policy, and to deny or immediately terminate permission to any group whose programs or policies are inconsistent with the best interest of the Library or that violates this policy. The Director's interpretation of these rules and regulations shall prevail subject to the final decision of the Board of Library Trustees.

The primary purpose for the Library meeting and conference rooms is to accommodate current and future Library programming needs. This includes use by Reading Public Library, the Board of Library Trustees, Friends of the Reading Public Library, and Reading Public Library Foundation. After these needs have been met, these spaces are available on equal terms to agencies of the Town, Reading not-for-profit groups and residents of Reading regardless of beliefs and affiliations, provided that the meetings are open to the public. Use of the Library's meeting and conference rooms does not imply endorsement of the group's or individual's policies, beliefs, or programs by the Reading Public Library, Board of Library Trustees, or the Town of Reading.

The Applicant signing for the organization or resident assumes responsibility for the conduct of participants and the protection of Library property in connection with the meeting, event or program. Signee must be at least 18 years old and be an active member of the sponsoring group or a Reading resident ~~with a valid Library card~~. The Trustees, the Library, and the Town of Reading will be not responsible for injury to persons or property while the building or grounds are used by any group.

Eligibility

Meeting spaces may be rented by Town/government agencies, nonprofits that serve Reading, or Reading residents ~~with a valid library card provided~~:

1. The meeting, event or program serves an educational, cultural, or civic purpose to the community.
2. Applicants do not charge any fees for registration or attendance, with the exception of Library fundraising activities which require permission from the [Board of Library Trustees](#). ~~Director~~.
3. Meetings, events or programs are open to the public and doors remain unlocked at all times.

4. The primary clientele are Reading residents.
5. Applicants do not offer sale of any goods or services.
6. Applicants agree to pay for any additional fees for special services as outlined in the “Fee Schedule.”
7. Use is limited to twelve (12) times per calendar year.

Library meeting room rentals are intended for occasional use. Clubs, groups or meetups that have membership fees may not use the library as a primary meeting location.

General Rules for Room Use

1. Meetings cannot conflict with regular Library services or programs.
2. The Library Trustees reserve the right to refuse the use of the Library meeting and conference rooms or cancel any reservation when they deem the action to be in the best interest of the Library and/or Town of Reading.
3. The Applicant requesting the reservation will be the primary contact and the ~~on-line~~-submission will signify understanding and acceptance of all rules and regulations, responsibility for payment of all designated fees, and the responsibility for all rules being followed by the participants in the program. Failure to follow regulations and/or make appropriate payments will affect requests by this individual’s organization in the future.
4. All rental applications must be submitted online ~~a minimum of at least~~ five (5) business days and maximum of three (3) months in advance of the date and time of the event. Rental applications are considered “Pending” until the Applicant receives electronic approval from library staff.
5. Payment is due with 48 hours of notification of approval. **Please note that “Approved” applications are not “Confirmed” until payment is received.** The Library may cancel the reservation due to non-payment if fees are not received one business day prior to the event.
6. Full refunds are issued to cancellations received one business day in advance of the event, if the Library is closed due to weather, or if the Library must cancel the event due to scheduling conflicts. Cancellations by the Applicant that are received less than one business day in advance may result in forfeiture of the fee.
7. If rental period or services exceed the initial agreed upon fee, the Applicant will be billed within seven (7) days.
8. The rental period is calculated by hour and includes any time for setup or breakdown.
9. Room rental does not include any custodial assistance with set up or break down, or general technology assistance. Each room comes with specified furniture and equipment. For additional services, please see the “Schedule of Fees.”

10. The Applicant may request technical assistance (fees apply) no less than seven (7) days in advance of the program.
11. Rates and fees are subject to change without prior notice.
12. All meeting rooms must be cleared 10 minutes before scheduled closing time to avoid incurring additional fees.
13. All publicity materials for non-Library meetings, events or programs must state that the program is not endorsed or sponsored by the Reading Public Library, The Board of Library Trustees, or Library staff. The Applicant may include the Library address and location, but may not use the Library telephone number or email as a contact point.
14. The Library reserves the right to send a representative to any event held in the facility in order to ensure that no unlawful action or action contrary to this policy or the Patron Rights and Responsibilities policy is occurring.
15. The Library reserves the right to cancel a reservation when the Applicant or their representative is not present within 30 minutes after the reservation start time.
16. Renters and attendees will adhere to the Reading Public Library Patron Rights and Responsibilities policy.
17. Facilities must be left neat and orderly. The Applicant is responsible for removing all food and beverages.
18. Library staff is not available to help with set up.
19. Nothing may be attached to the walls.
20. Damage to the facilities must be reported promptly.
21. Light refreshments in the form of beverages and finger foods may be served.
22. No smoking, vaping or alcoholic beverages.
23. Storage of material for groups is not permitted within the Library. The Library is not responsible for equipment, supplies, exhibit materials or other materials owned by a group or individual and used in the Library.
24. Any meeting that includes children or teens requires one (1) adult for every fifteen (15) individuals under the age of 14.
25. When the Library is open, non-handicapped individuals attending programs are requested to park on those portions of Middlesex Avenue, Deering or School Streets directly adjacent to Library property. The parking lot is available for use after hours.

Fee Schedule

<i>Room Rental Fees</i>	Government Agencies	Reading Nonprofit	Reading Individual
Community Room A/B (Max. capacity 120) Rental includes 50 chairs, 10 tables, podium w/ microphone*; access to projector and screen.	No Fee	\$20 / 3 hrs	\$40 / 3 hrs
Community Room A (60) Rental includes 30 chairs, 5 tables, 1 podium*; access to projector and screen.	No Fee	\$10 / 3 hrs	\$20 / 3 hrs
Community Room B (60) Rental includes 30 chairs, 5 tables.*	No Fee	\$10 / 3 hrs	\$20 / 3 hrs
Conference Room (25) Rental includes conference table and chairs; laptop/wireless access to screen.	No Fee	\$10 / 3 hrs	\$20 / 3 hrs

**Does not include set up of table and chairs.*

<i>Additional Fees</i>	Government Agencies	Reading Nonprofit	Reading Individual
Standard Custodial Monday-Friday 9am-8pm	\$38 / hr (1 hr min)	\$38 / hr (1 hr min)	\$38 / hr (1 hr min)
Weekend, Holiday Custodial	\$50 / hr (3 hr min)	\$50 / hr (3 hr min)	\$50 / hr (3 hr min)
General Technology Assistance *	No Fee	\$30 / hr (1 hr min.)	\$30 / hr (1 hr. min)
DVD/Blu Ray	No Fee	\$25 / 3 hrs	\$25 / 3 hrs
Additional Microphone / Wireless Microphones	No Fee	\$25 / 3 hrs	\$25 / 3 hrs

Piano Fee **	No Fee	\$25 / 3 hrs	\$25 / 3 hrs
Additional Tables	No Fee	\$5 / table	\$5 / table
Kitchen Access	No Fee	\$10 / 3 hrs	\$10 / 3 hrs

Technology Assistance must be requested seven (7) days in advance and is **only available during regular Library hours.*

***Piano use must be approved by Library Director.*

Adopted June 1998
Amended: August 15, 2016
Amended: February 11, 2017
Amended: February 1, 2019
Amended: July 12, 2021
Amended [September 11, 2023](#)

SUMMARY	Original \$\$	Rev/Adj	Expended	Encumbered	Balance	% Used
Municipal Salaries	\$1,698,150	\$0	\$122,900	\$0	\$1,575,250	7.24%
Municipal Expenses	\$143,200	\$0	\$8,389	\$0	\$124,811	5.86%
Municipal Materials	\$273,675	\$0	\$10,917	\$0	\$262,758	3.99%
Fines & Fees	\$12,791	\$545	\$1,122	\$0	\$12,213	N/A
State Aid	\$95,939	\$0	\$10,450	(\$510)	\$85,999	N/A
Gifts	\$329,118	\$239	\$6,039	\$3,300	\$320,018	N/A
Trusts	\$48,663	\$96,524	\$0	\$0	\$145,186	N/A
TOTALS	\$2,601,536	\$97,307	\$159,818	\$2,790	\$2,526,236	

Municipal Appropriation	Original \$\$	Rev/Adj	Expended	Encumbered	Balance	% Used
Salaries - Library Administration	\$446,950		\$36,122	\$0	\$410,828	8.08%
Salaries - Leave Buyback*	\$0		\$0	\$0	\$0	
Salaries - Collection Services	\$536,300		\$40,214	\$0	\$496,086	7.50%
Salaries - Public Services	\$714,900		\$46,564	\$0	\$668,336	6.51%
Expenses - General						
Library Maint Contract Supp	\$22,000		\$1,061	\$0	\$20,939	4.82%
Professional Development	\$14,000		\$986	\$0	\$13,014	7.04%
Library Programs	\$4,000		\$0	\$0	\$4,000	0.00%
Software/ Licenses	\$69,200		\$1,039	\$0	\$68,161	1.50%
Library Supplies	\$8,500		\$559	\$0	\$7,941	6.58%
Office Supplies	\$4,500		\$67	\$0	\$4,433	1.49%
Technology	\$11,000		\$4,677	\$0	\$6,323	42.52%
Equipment	\$10,000		\$0	\$0	\$10,000	0.00%
Materials	\$273,675		\$10,917	\$0	\$262,758	3.99%
Books			\$5,029	\$0		
Audio			\$44	\$0		
Video			\$251	\$0		
Periodicals			\$170	\$0		
Electronic Resources			\$1,445	\$0		
Databases			\$1,510	\$0		
Other Materials			\$2,468	\$0		
Overdrive (eBooks / eAudiobooks)			\$0	\$0		
TOTALS	\$2,115,025	\$0	\$142,206	\$0	\$1,972,819	6.72%

Fines and Fees	Original \$\$	Rev/Adj	Expended	Encumbered	Balance
Revenue (and Carryover)	\$12,791	\$545	\$0	\$0	\$13,336
Materials			\$0	\$0	
Supplies			\$1,122	\$0	(\$1,122)
TOTALS	\$12,791	\$545	\$1,122	\$0	\$12,213

State Aid	Original \$\$	Rev/Adj	Expended	Encumbered	Balance
Revenue (and Carryover)	\$95,939		\$0	\$0	\$95,939
Expenses					\$0
Office Supplies			\$158	(\$158)	\$0
Professional Development			\$0	\$0	\$0
Materials			\$165	\$0	(\$165)
Library Other			\$955	\$0	(\$955)
Library Equipment			\$9,173	(\$352)	(\$8,821)
TOTALS	\$95,939	\$0	\$10,450	(\$510)	\$85,999

Gifts & Donations	Original \$\$	Adj/Income	Expended	Encumbered	Balance
<i>Revenue (and Carryover)</i>	\$43,506	\$25	\$0	\$0	\$43,531
Professional Development		\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Recreational		\$0	\$46	\$0	(\$46)
Programs & Services Adults	\$29,522	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$29,522
Programs & Services Teens	\$24,265	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$24,265
Programs & Services OESJ	\$2,050	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$2,050
Programs & Services Childrens	\$88,755	\$0	\$4,800	\$0	\$83,955
Programs & Services- Local History	\$500	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$500
Studio	\$30,298	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$30,298
RPL Foundation	\$74,356	\$0	\$1,193	\$0	\$73,163
Other Gifts (Combined)	\$9,023	\$0	\$0	\$3,300	\$5,723
Materials	\$26,844	\$214	\$0	\$0	\$27,058
TOTALS	\$329,118	\$239	\$6,039	\$3,300	\$320,018

Trusts	Non-Expend	Avail/Int	Expended	Encumbered	Balance
Appleton / Mansfield	\$11,000	\$5,310			\$16,310
Edward Appleton	\$5,000	\$39,357			\$44,357
R/M Babcock	\$3,598	\$2,371			\$5,969
Stephen Foster	\$12,000	\$7,186			\$19,186
Charles Torrey	\$1,000	\$984			\$1,984
Donald Tuttle	\$500	\$884			\$1,384
Elaine & George Long	\$5,000	\$34,541			\$39,541
Barbara Hewitt	\$8,952	\$4,700			\$13,652
James Rawstron	\$1,613	\$1,190			\$2,803
TOTALS	\$48,663	\$96,524			\$145,186

Name	Purpose
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)

August 2023 Board of Library Trustees Meeting

IX. FINANCIAL REPORT

a) **FY24 Budget:** The warrant T2407 includes the annual NOBLE payments.

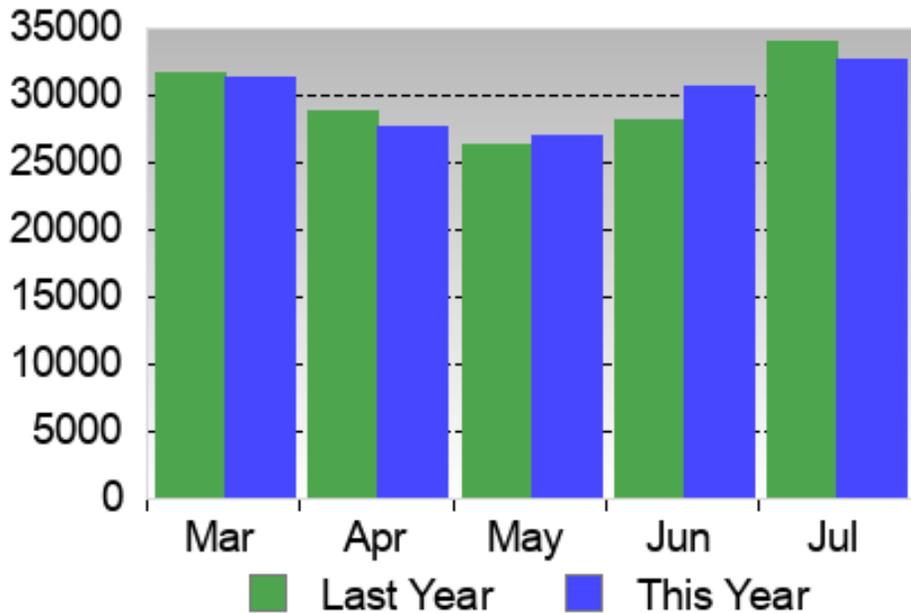
July Gifts:

DONOR	AMOUNT	PURPOSE
Cherrie Dubois	\$30.00	In memory of Neil Miksis
Cash Donations	\$24.00	General
Total	\$54.00	

X. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

a) **July Snapshot**

Circulation



Usage	July 2023	June 2023	July 22
Circulation	32,685	30,747	33,917
Locker Use	77	66	N/A
Meeting Rooms Rentals	13	13	8
Museum Passes	235	162	203
New Library Cards	130	132	124

Overdrive	4,954	4,438	4,117
Programs	52	33 ¹	31
Reference Questions	2,008	2,236	2,522
Visitors	14,333	N/A	15,588
Volunteer Hours	12	22.5	20

b) Facilities and Operations

i) Patio Use

The Trustees recently asked for staff recommendations and concerns in opening up the patio area on the second floor.

- Adults must accompany children' under age nine (9).
- Children's Room staff have the discretion to close the space due to inclement weather or overcrowding.
- Users are responsible for bringing in Library materials or equipment brought outside.
- Users are responsible for bringing in all rubbish and recycling.
- Access ends 30 minutes before closing.
- Planters should remain for programs such as the Plant Lab. They may need to be rearranged.
- The patio would be closed for Library programs like Plant Lab, including additional time for setup and breakdown of any equipment.
- Staff requests new, easy to move and arrange furniture for flexible setup. Including child-size seating would be appreciated.
- All furniture should be weatherproof from spring until fall (no cushions).
- Activity on the patio may disrupt use of the "Cloud Corner," a dedicated imagination space.
- Request to have the space clearly designated as children's and family space or open to everyone. Note: lone adults on the patio will have access to children via the windows.
- The discussion regarding cameras should be discussed in Executive Session as it pertains to security.

ii) Missing/hidden books:

Non-fiction LGBTQ+ books in the Teen area have been systematically hidden and moved. We have instituted measures in that space and with the collection to address this issue. This behavior is disappointing, interferes with others' use of the Library, and wastes both staff time and taxpayer money.

At present, there is no vandalism, damage, or theft of Library materials. Should that happen, we will involve the authorities.

iii) Signage

Check out the new Welcome signage above the elevator at the main entrance. This is an extension of RPL's ongoing work to around accessibility and aligns with the strategic plan focus on "Library as Space and Place." The audiobook collection also received a new sign that will help with general wayfinding for those who wish to use that collection.

iv) ARIS Report

The FY23 Annual Report Information Survey (ARIS) is ready for submission. ARIS and the Financial Report filed in October follow Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 78 and are required to receive State Aid to Public Libraries.

v) Tween Spot Bids

The Library issued a request for quotes for the fabrication and installation of the Tween Space millwork and shelving with a deadline of August 3. We received one submittal from David Michaud of Maker Woodworker and he has been awarded the contract. Mr. Michaud is the original designer and a Reading resident. The project is expected to come in on budget as discussed in both April and July. We expect the next phase of this project to finish up in late October and hope to launch the Tween Space in November.

vi) RMLD Level 3 Charger Update

c) Collections, Programs, and Services

- New Collections
 - Financial Fit: An interactive learning platform from EBSCO with approachable, unbiased lessons on personal finance to guide life's biggest financial decisions. Topics include everything from Building Credit to Living with Roommates to Setting up a Joint Household.
 - Spanish and Portuguese eBook Collection: A curated collection with over 9,000 titles on subjects such as:
 - Business and Economics
 - Computer Science
 - Fine Arts
 - History
 - Literature
 - Political Science
 - Science
 - Technology
- New Museum Pass

- Garden in the Woods Pass: RPL now offers a discount pass to Garden in the Woods (Native Plant Trust). Located in Framingham, MA, visitors can explore 45 acres of rare and common native New England plants in a naturalistic setting.
- This summer, Library programs and services (and signage) has focused on reaching new audiences and creating community partnerships.
 - Backyard of Books: Our weekly series of (mostly) outdoor storytimes including visits from community readers sharing stories in languages like Spanish and Czech.
 - Find Your Melody: Music Therapy for children, teens, and adults with disabilities, including autism spectrum disorder (ASD), and intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD).
 - Homeschool Curious: connecting with new segment of the Reading community.
 - LAB: Lendo, Aprendendo & Brincando: Stories, reading practice, and games aimed at making valuable connections with multilingual families and learners. The twelve-week series is led by Miss Angela, a Reading teen.
 - RPL on Wheels: Bringing the Library to busy commuters, local shoppers walkers, and curious cyclers at the Reading Depot.
 - Stuffed Storytime: This evening programming brings in new families and meets a need for those not able to attend our daytime sessions.

d) Horizons

- September 30: Community Read-In! Come to the Reading Public Library to participate in a Commonwealth-wide celebration of the freedom to read. Book bans and censorship are on the rise nationally, in New England, and right here in Reading. Celebrate the freedom to read as a community. And read whatever you wish with your neighbors on Saturday, September 30, 2023, from 10:00 am- 12:00 pm. We'll have cider and donuts, giveaways, and a storytime for the little ones.
- The English Conversation Group will start up in the fall after a two-year hiatus.
- RPL is a grant partner with the Discovery Museum and will be the recipient of a "Cause & Effect" exhibit in Spring 2024
- Banned Books Week planning is well underway with two confirmed events.
- Finalizing details with the Reading Coalition on a 3-month Mental Health First Aid Fall series around older adults, adults and individuals working/living with teens.

e) Personnel

Please welcome new Children's librarian Emma Heuchert to RPL! Emma has several years of experience working in schools and as an Events Coordinator for a speculative fiction convention. We are all excited to get to know Emma and for her to work with children and families of all ages at RPL.

Division Head of Public Services Allyson Dowds will leave RPL at the end of August. She has accomplished so much in her time here: "Reclaiming Your Voice" Civic Hub Grant, developing programming pillars, hiring/managing a talented Public Services

team, and too many more things to list here. Ally has been a positive presence and support for many of us. We wish her well in her journey and future adventures. The search for a new Division Head will start immediately.

Dr. Sudeshna Chatterjee has transitioned out of her role as Director for Equity and Social Justice. We will miss hard work, wisdom, and perspective.

Due to the unique nature of this position, the hiring team for this position is the Town Manager Fidel Maltez, Human Resources Director Sean Donahue, and Library Director Amy Lannon. Reading received over fifty applications in the first two weeks. After the initial screening, we have scheduled five first-round interviews for August 21 and 22. The first-round interviewers are Sean Donahue, Fidel Maltez, Amy Lannon, Lt Patrick Silva (RPD – Civil Rights Officer), and Jenna Fiorente (Community Services Director – Recreation, Elder and Human Services, Veterans' Services).

During this process, the hiring team has discussed the possibility of moving this position to be a direct report to the Town Manager. This change is not unexpected and could happen as early as November Town Meeting or come into effect in FY25 (July 2024).

- Changes to the organizational structure is at the discretion of the Town Manager with input from Departments Heads.
- Such a change would impact the cost center (budget line) for this position. We are discussing various options with the goal to maintain the MAR required for state aid eligibility.
- The Select Board plans to discuss this issue at their August 22, 2023 meeting.

f) Professional Development (selected)

- Civic Engagement in Uncivil Times
- Dementia Friends Training
- Designing for Diversity in Your Library's Communications
- Getting Started with OCLC Worldshare Record Manager
- Incident Command System Course 100 (FEMA)
- Opportunities to Close the Digital Divide
- Promoting Voter and Civic Engagement at Your Library
- Stories Beyond Borders: The Power of Art
- Strategies and Techniques to Foster Inclusion of Patrons with Disabilities
- Succession Planning: A Guide to Quiet Hiring
- The Fight Against Book Bans: How Do We Move Forward?
- Youth Mental Health First Aid

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Fang Lannon, Director (*she/her*)
August 10, 2023



Town of Reading Meeting Minutes

Board - Committee - Commission - Council:

Board of Library Trustees

Date: 2023-07-10

Time: 7:00 PM

Building: Reading Public Library

Location: Community Room

Address: 64 Middlesex Avenue

Session: Open Session

Purpose: General Meeting

Version: Final

Attendees: **Members - Present:**

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

Members - Not Present:

Andrew Grimes, Secretary

Others Present:

Amy Lannon, Director; Michelle Filleul, Assistant Director;
Meaghan Clemente, Administrative Assistant; Sudeshna Chatterjee, Director
of Equity and Social Justice; Joseph McDonagh, Financial Committee Liaison
to Reading Public Library;

Minutes Respectfully Submitted By: Monette Verrier, Vice-Chair

Topics of Discussion:

I. Call to Order at 7:00 p.m.

II. Public Comment

No public comments were made in person or remotely.

III. Programming Update (Summer)

TABLED

IV. Office of Equity and Social Justice Update

Director of Equity and Social Justice Dr. Sudeshna Chatterjee briefly reviewed the Office of Equity and Social Justice (OESJ) mission, which is focused on embracing diversity, equity, inclusion, and access in the Reading community. The OESJ seeks to carry out its mission through an advisory and supporting role in the community. The OESJ is a community resource facilitating collaborative engagement through respectful dialogue and behavior.

The OESJ offers events and programs that humanize and celebrate everyone and encourage civic dialogue and education around diversity, equity, and inclusion issues. Annual town-wide events celebrating Juneteenth, Native American Heritage Month, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, and Disability Inclusion have been the main focus in 2022 and 2023. Over 200 people attended the 2023 Martin Luther King Jr. Day celebration, and over 400 attended the 2023 Juneteenth Freedom Festival. These two events were

supported by grants from the Reading Cultural Council and Massachusetts Cultural Council, respectively.

The Office offers supplemental support for other community events, such as Reading Pride and the New Resident Open House, celebrating diversity, equity, and inclusion. Programming design and support to other departments and community stakeholders, such as the Coalition of Us (CATO) conversation program, is also provided. The Reading Reflect program serves as a model for community education, and a second installment is currently being planned. A second Disability Inclusion Workshop in collaboration with the Reading Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) is being planned, as well as the 2023 New Resident Open House, a Genocide Awareness Workshop/Forum, and a Martin Luther King Jr. Day 2024 celebration.

The OESJ seeks to support, guide, and empower community members and town leadership to create and sustain an inclusive organizational culture, processes, and spaces. Through the DEI Needs Assessment, the OESJ hopes to identify community needs further and communicate them to leadership and staff. The OESJ advises leadership and town stakeholders on the implications of policies, processes, and programs and designs staff and board training. The OESJ also assists with community outreach and broadening inclusive communication. The involvement of multiple stakeholders is essential as current issues evolve, and action items are developed. Dr. Chatterjee feels that the visible public work of her office is critical, as well as the many invisible behind-the-scenes efforts.

Dr. Chatterjee stressed the importance of building bridges to connect all voices in meaningful civic dialogue while strategically amplifying voices from traditionally marginalized communities. A system for confidentially documenting community input and concerns helps with the organization of operations. The Partners and Allies for Inclusive Reading (PAIR) group volunteers are working to establish bridges and trust throughout the community. Facilitating open dialog and connection spaces among community members, employees, key stakeholders, and future collaborators is essential. For example, support groups and resources are being formed for minorities, women, and older adults.

Dr. Chatterjee acknowledged that discrimination and bias do not have borders. Relationships with peer communities in neighboring municipalities such as North Reading, Wakefield, Winchester, and Stoneham have helped create community learning spaces, outside relationships, and expanded perspectives. The OESJ also represents Reading at the state level through participation in organizations such as the Massachusetts Municipal Association, Massachusetts Human Rights Coalition, Massachusetts DEI Coalition, and Metropolitan Area Planning Council. These exciting state-level conversations have helped form connections with national organizations such as the American Association of Access, Equity, and Diversity.

The upcoming DEI Community Needs Assessment seeks to identify community needs and gaps in programs, processes, and services that act as barriers in the local Reading community. An employee-driven steering committee featuring liaisons from various elected boards and departments will begin meeting in August. They will oversee a process that will include surveys, interviews, focus groups, and educational public forums to generate a wide range of feedback and involvement.

As the Director, Dr. Chatterjee has developed a public engagement process to create welcoming community events that reach all target audience members. She documents data regarding concerns, feedback, and ideas and identifies stakeholders. She examines situations for feasibility and interest in collaboration, identifying short-term and long-term outcomes. The next step is to plan and implement programs collaboratively.

She reviews feedback to reinforce success and create change when the process is repeated. Sustained goal building and thoughtful execution of action items in response to feedback received are essential to optimizing community impact.

Mr. Egan questioned the nature of any emerging themes Dr. Chatterjee may have realized from her community conversations. Dr. Chatterjee acknowledged many situational issues regarding new policies and noted the value of sharing resources and empowering people to discuss contentious and emotional topics. Dr. Chatterjee noted that many issues involve referrals to leadership in other Town departments.

Mr. Egan asked for clarification on OESJ outreach efforts surrounding controversial issues such as the holiday displays on the Town Common. Dr. Chatterjee noted that she has since organized a retreat and workshop in collaboration with an outside consultant for the Select Board to present resources on other municipalities' best practices and goals. Dr. Chatterjee acknowledged the difficulty of navigating conversations with elected boards as a paid employee but is open to communication.

Mr. Egan questioned the status of PAIR volunteers. Dr. Chatterjee reported approximately 70 members and strong attendance in meetings focused on community outreach and the DEI Community needs assessment. Ms. Pillow-Gnanaratnam complimented Dr. Chatterjee's hard work and inquired about her development and trajectory. Dr. Chatterjee acknowledged that no community is perfect and hopes to improve growth and collaboration through partnerships and community events continuously.

The Board thanked Dr. Chatterjee, who excused herself at 7:23 p.m.

V. Collection Development Policy Review (includes Request for Reconsideration forms and procedures)

Ms. Lannon presented a copy of the Library's current collection development policy, including a copy of the American Library Association Library Bill of Rights and the Library's Form to Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials. Ms. Lannon noted that the Board regularly reviews all policies to ensure their strength and applicability.

Ms. Lannon highlighted some proposed additional language to both the Collection Development policy and the Request for Reconsideration to make an item ineligible for further reconsideration for five years after a decision has been reached. Proposed language regarding the public nature of Requests for Reconsideration would inform filers of the potential release of particular identifying information per Massachusetts Public Records Law. Ms. Dubois questioned whether the information would need to be requested for release. Ms. Lannon clarified that the Library may exercise discretion, but there is no legal obligation to keep the information secret. Any public records request may result in the sharing of identifying information.

Ms. Lannon also suggested adding a note that the item will remain in circulation during the reconsideration process. Ms. Lannon noted that the best practice would be considering the proposed changes in preparation for potential amendments and motions in August. Ms. Dubois and Ms. Verrier questioned what materials are provided to patrons wishing to request reconsideration of an item. Ms. Lannon clarified that Library staff give patrons the two-page form and the full Collection Development policy. Ms. Verrier inquired about the nature of the Tween space collection. Ms. Lannon explained that the Tween space will be a special area within the Children's room.

Ms. Verrier and Mr. Popp suggested adding language regarding the potential release of the petitioner's full name. Mr. Egan noted a Reading residency requirement for completing the Form to Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials but no requirement to hold a library card.

Mr. Egan acknowledged that some libraries have a two-step process, where decisions made by a Library staff review committee can be appealed to the Board rather than just going directly to the Library Director and the Board. Ms. Lannon explained that an internal collection development committee review would not involve a public meeting or discussion but would include the same analysis process regarding usage, shelving locations, and surrounding communities. However, the current process allows for transparency through public meetings and public comment.

Mr. Egan expressed concern about the five-year reconsideration period. In most cases, there is no problem with analyzing the book as a whole and repeating the reasons for the recommendation. However, a material change in facts may affect research and usage over time. Ms. Lannon explained that the 5-year period is the result of surveying the practices of other libraries. Although Ms. Lannon has only personally experienced a handful of challenges in her 30 years of experience in the library field, the number of challenges is growing. There is a potential for repeat challenges on the same material, and a reconsideration period is meant to address this problem. Requests for reconsideration should be made with meaningful intent.

Ms. Verrier suggested scaling back the reconsideration period to one year. Ms. Lannon explained that circumstances might change and that the staff would review the book again. Ms. Lannon clarified that staff may adjust an item's placement in the library collection without filing a Request for Reconsideration.

Ms. Pillow-Gnanaratnam inquired about an intermediate method of discussing subsequent challenges of the same book. Ms. Lannon explained that the composition of the Board may change over time and could vote to approve different motions. Ms. Lannon will consult with Town Council, but the Board may decide to confirm its prior decision and not recognize additional requests for reconsideration in response to a specific item rather than having a blanket reconsideration period in the policy. Mr. Egan suggested that a different policy would need to address repeat requests. Mr. Egan believes that repetition in justifying the decision is acceptable as long as there are no substantial changes and the material is considered whole.

Ms. Lannon will develop proposed language for voting at the August meeting regarding the one-year reconsideration period. She will leave the current process as is rather than adopt a two-tier approach with an appeal of Library staff decisions to the Board. Ms. Lannon clarified that this policy would be scheduled for review in approximately one year. Other Library policies are expected to be reviewed throughout the year to ensure they meet the Library's needs.

VI. Charter Review Committee Appointment

Mr. Egan shared that Town Manager Fidel Maltez had reached out to the Board regarding having a Trustee or Representative on the Charter Review Committee, which is scheduled to begin meeting in the Fall. Every ten years, a committee is formed to review the Town Charter. The Town Charter establishes the Board and its responsibilities, among many other things. Ms. Lannon noted that despite his absence tonight, Mr. Grimes had expressed interest in the charter, and his background in finance may be beneficial.

Motion: To approve Mr. Andrew Grimes as the Charter Review Committee Appointee representing the Board of Library Trustees.

(Popp / Dubois)

Vote: Approved 5-0

VII. Ad Hoc Library Landscape Committee Appointment

Motion: Approve Mr. Cappy Popp as an Ad Hoc Library Landscape Committee member.
(Dubois / Verrier)

Vote: Approved 5-0

VIII. Discussion: Trustee Meeting Materials

Mr. Egan commented on the possibility of publicly posting meeting packets with the Town Clerk separately from meeting agendas for future meetings. Ms. Dubois questioned the practices of other local boards. Mr. Egan believes the Select Board and School Committee currently post meeting packets. However, only the agenda posting and official minutes are required. Everything else is voluntary. Ms. Verrier questioned whether packets would be available with the Town Clerk's Office at Town Hall or online. Ms. Lannon has been communicating with Town Clerk Laura Gemme and believes an electronic copy would be posted on the Town website and Laserfiche.

Mr. Egan and Ms. Verrier questioned the redaction process for the meeting packets. Per Ms. Lannon, public comment emails may not necessarily be included in the packets. Requests for reconsideration are separate, but the best practice would be to thoughtfully redact identifying information. For public comments included in the packets, library staff could remove contact information such as email addresses and phone numbers from members of the public to address privacy concerns. Some information may be legally required to be provided upon request.

Ms. Lannon suggested that packets could still be distributed to the Board on Thursdays, with public postings on Mondays in case of any changes. Ms. Lannon will clarify the temporary nature of packets posted on the website versus permanent Laserfiche availability. The Select Board has meeting packets available dating back to 2005.

Mr. Egan noted that people have suggested posting meeting packets in the past and that it would be helpful to see and track this information over time. Ms. Lannon will continue distributing the packets to the standard distribution list and will begin working with the Town Clerk to facilitate public posting as well. Ms. Lannon will also review the protocol of other local elected boards for communicating and publicizing public comments. Ms. Lannon clarified that personal information from minors must be withheld.

IX. Financial Update
a. General Update

Ms. Lannon noted that the entire expense budget (L92) has been fully expended with the current warrant T2335. State aid has been used to purchase some recent library materials. However, the Library does anticipate returning \$45,646 of municipal salary funds due to several vacancies and transitions that have taken place throughout the year. One full-time Children's Librarian position is still open.

The Library received several gifts in June, including a Young Women's League of Reading donation supporting the EcoTarium museum pass. Members of the Abigail Book Club also made several generous donations.

b. FY24 Warrant Schedule

Ms. Clemente developed a schedule of warrants for FY24, including signature due dates with holidays noted. In general, warrants are available for signature on Thursday afternoons. Ms. Lannon thanked Ms. Pillow-Gnanaratnam for suggesting this helpful organizational tool to keep track of warrant dates.

c. FY24 Supplemental Spending Recommendations

Joseph McDonagh, Financial Committee Liaison to Reading Public Library, inquired about the budget summary line item for the Reading Public Library Foundation. Ms. Lannon and Mr. Egan clarified that the Foundation has invested funds and makes periodic gifts to the Library at the Trustees' discretion. The Library is now spending down a more significant donation from the Foundation given after the most recent renovation. After FY23 spending and encumbrances, approximately \$69,256 Foundation gifts are available in the Town's bank account. Ms. Lannon explained that only the Library's Trust accounts earn interest. Mr. McDonagh questioned the donation amounts required for tax purposes. Mr. Egan acknowledged the importance of tax requirements and noted that the Foundation's Treasurer is more familiar with them.

Ms. Verrier questioned the \$30,298 gift funds available for the Studio space. Ms. Lannon explained that the Library plans to use these directed gift funds to update the current iMacs in the Studio and explore the purchase of a large format printer for posters and maps or a vinyl cutter.

Mr. Egan inquired about State Aid awards. Ms. Lannon explained that the MBLC awards State Aid funds yearly and that the Town's auditors prefer prompt and regular spending to avoid surplus. Ms. Lannon has incorporated these funds into long-term budget spending and larger strategic planning capital projects to prevent requesting capital funds from the Town.

Ms. Lannon recommends \$187,800 in FY24 supplemental spending from funds received through gifts, trust income, and State Aid. This is just under 10% of the \$2.1 million municipal budget. \$187,800 will be for ongoing projects, including the Tween area, Health Nook, and Town-wide DEI Community Needs Assessment. \$99,000 will be for new projects such as a feasibility study to support the Library Landscape Committee,

marketing, equipment, and furnishings to optimize staff work areas, and supplemental funding for programs, staff development, and materials.

Gift revenue varies yearly but averages approximately \$9,000 in general donations outside bequests and more significant contributions. In FY23, gift funds of \$2,800 for the Health Nook and \$61,000 for the Tween Area were approved. Ms. Lannon recommends \$34,500 gift funds for general staff development, program support, and a Library Landscape feasibility study and concept design. General staff development includes staff meetings and a staff day for professional development and training. Ms. Lannon noted that FY23 program spending included a disability inclusion workshop, major author talks, the Juneteenth freedom festival, passive Children's programming supplies, and more. \$20,000 is being earmarked for the concept and design of the potential development of the School Street side of the Library. This is a generous estimate based on the \$25,000 cost of the study for the larger Birch Meadow project.

State Aid funds can vary from year to year but serve as a helpful reserve cushion for supplemental spending. \$92,882 of state aid funds were available for spending as of 6/30/2023. \$52,473 was awarded in FY23, but FY24 State Aid will not be awarded until December 2024. Ms. Lannon recommends FY24 State Aid spending of approximately \$84,000. Expenses include marketing and communication efforts such as printing and producing flyers, brochures, and Town Common signs. State Aid funds also help facilitate the purchase of library materials, including special items like microfilm and museum passes. Another recommended use for state aid funds is for ergonomic equipment and furnishings that promote accessibility at the Library's four public service desks. The FY24 municipal budget reduced spending for professional development. Ms. Lannon hopes to use State Aid to continue providing staff learning opportunities. The Public Library Association (PLA) Conference will be held in April 2024 in Columbus, Ohio. Ms. Lannon would like to send at least two staff members to this beneficial but expensive event. She also noted that the financial commitment for the DEI Community Assessment will generate helpful data for FY26-FY30 Strategic Planning.

The Library has nine trusts managed by The Commissioners of Trust Funds, a volunteer town board appointed by the Select Board that oversees trust investments to generate revenue and provide sustaining support outside the tax levy. Due to the economic downturn of FY22, the Library did not recommend spending any Trust income in FY23. However, with modest growth of \$5,873 in FY23, the Library recommends allocating \$5,500 further to support materials expenditures and improvements to staff workspaces.

Ms. Lannon noted that final FY23 amounts may vary slightly as the Year-End close process will be completed in August or September. Ms. Verrier requested an update on the outdoor patio space. Ms. Lannon noted that this space is used for Children's programming, including the Plant Lab series on gardening. However, Library staff have expressed concerns about safety and supervision issues. A glass wall around the railings helps to enclose the space, which unfortunately remains out of sight from the Children's desk. A heavy door is traditionally kept locked as a safety precaution. Ms. Verrier asked about outdoor tables for reading and studying. Ms. Lannon will review the policies on the space with staff and research age-appropriate seating to make the space more usable. Ms. Dubois acknowledged the risk and responsibility of monitoring children in the area. Perhaps supervision from parents or guardians should be required.

X. Director's Report

Ms. Lannon reviewed June usage statistics and featured a prior month and year comparison suggested by Mr. Grimes. Ms. Lannon noted an increase in the Overdrive circulation of e-books and ongoing issues with the visitor counter software. Volunteer hours have increased thanks to the generous service of both students and adults.

Ms. Lannon recognized Children's Librarians for successful elementary school outreach visits promoting the summer reading program to over 1,200 children. Children's Librarian Megan White led a Citizen Kids program that organized a trash pickup day on June 11 at the Town Forest with over 35 volunteers. This program series focuses on community government and hopes to continue in the fall.

Community events included the Juneteenth Freedom Festival, with over 400 attendees, and the Annual Pride Parade. Over 150 people visited the library booth at Friends and Family Day. Dr. Sudeshna Chatterjee is serving on the Town of Reading Public Health Audit.

About 100 people attended the Summer Concert with PanNeubean Steel. There was also a great turnout for the Summer Sizzlers book talk event featuring mocktails courtesy of the Friends of the Reading Public Library. Ms. Filleul reported on positive and practical programming suggestions from the ongoing programming survey. Future programming trends will include financial literacy and veterans' services.

The signage at the Teen Room entrance has been updated to remove the red "Stop" sign. All are welcome to use and browse the teen collection, although seating spaces are reserved for teens. Ms. Clemente and Senior Library Associate Valerie Gould-Heithaus recently celebrated work anniversaries. The second round of interviews for the Librarian I – Children's position has been completed. The position is expected to be filled by early August. Staff completed a wide variety of professional development, including attendance at the American Library Association (ALA) conference in Chicago by Children's Librarian Ashley Waring.

XI. Approval of Minutes from June 12, 2023

*Motion: To approve the minutes of the June 12, 2023, Trustee Meeting.
(Dubois / Pillow-Gnanaratnam)*

Vote: Approved 4-0

XII. Future Agenda Items

a. Meeting Room Use Report and Recommended Policy Updates

Mr. Egan reminded the Board of the next meeting on August 14 and reviewed availability. The Meeting Room Use Report will be presented along with recommended updates to the policy for review. Ms. Lannon welcomes any questions or comments about data. Mr. Egan noted one community member's concern about streamlining the reservation and deposit process when booking meeting rooms.

b. Request for Reconsideration: “Tricks” by Ellen Hopkins and “The Best of Assigned Male” by Sophie Labelle

Mr. Egan noted that two requests for reconsideration were filed within the past few weeks. One is for "Tricks" by Ellen Hopkins, and the other is for "The Best of Assigned Male" by Sophie Labelle. Ms. Lannon explained that Library staff are developing a report with qualitative and quantitative data about both books and advised consideration at the August meeting. Three copies of "Tricks" were provided for Trustee review, and copies of "The Best of Assigned Male" will be made available for review soon.

Adjournment 8:43 p.m.

Motion: To Adjourn (Dubois / Popp)

Vote: Approved 5-0

Respectfully Submitted,

Monette Verrier, Vice-Chair

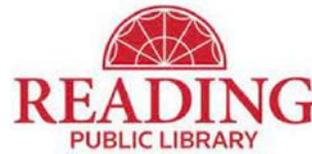


Office of Equity and Social Justice (OESJ)

Reading Public Library

RPL Trustee Presentation

July 10, 2023.



Today's Presentation

1. Office of Equity and Social Justice (OESJ): mission, approach, best practices
2. Areas of focus: events, advising, partnerships, networking
3. Updates and ongoing activities
4. DEI Needs Assessment
5. Public feedback and input



OESJ Mission

The Office of Equity and Social Justice is a town-wide shared service which provides education, support and resources aimed at making Reading an inclusive, diverse and accessible town for all.

- **Diversity-Embrace and celebrate all the ways we differ-** that includes but is not limited to age, national origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, language, and any other identifiers that make one individual or group different from another.
- **Equity-All having the opportunity to fully participate-** fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all people, while at the same time trying to identify and eliminate barriers that have historically prevented the full participation of some individuals or groups.
- **Inclusion/Belonging-All feel welcomed and valued-** creating environments in which any individual or group can be and feel welcomed, respected, represented, supported, and valued to fully participate.
- **Access-Of any and all abilities-** creating spaces and practices so everyone feels included regardless of physical, intellectual, linguistic abilities.



DEIA Approach in Reading

An advisory and supporting role to facilitate community education and best practices across the municipality

- Based on best practices, collaboration and optimization of resources
- Not enforcing, but encouraging awareness and education around DEIA
- Supporting other departments, boards, staff and leaders
- Community resource to learn and engage through respectful dialogue and behavior



Areas of Focus

- Educational Events and Programs
- Data, Resources and Advising
- Partnerships and Relationship building
- Networking and Professional Development



Educational Events and Programs

Offer events and programs that humanize and celebrate one another and encourage civil dialogue and education around issues of diversity, equity and inclusion

- **Four annual townwide events-2022/2023-** Juneteenth, Native American Heritage Month, MLK Day, Disability Inclusion
- **Provide supplemental support to other DEI themed OR community events** in and around town- Reading Pride, New Resident Open House
- **Design a model for community education-** Reading Reflect
- **Provide programming design and support** to other departments and stakeholders- CATO conversation



Events (January to June 2023)

Event	Collaborators	Attendees	Grants
Martin Luther King Day 2023	Reading Public Schools	200+	Reading Cultural Council
CATO Conversation-Bill Russell	OESJ was the collaborator	40 (capped)	N/A
Disability Inclusion Workshop 1.0	SEPAC	40 (capped)	N/A
Juneteenth Freedom Festival	Town Hall & Community Partners	400+	Mass Cultural Council



What's coming up next?

Event	Collaborators
New Resident Open House 2023	Chamber, Town Hall, RPL
Reading Reflect 2.0	TBD
Disability Inclusion Workshop 2.0	SEPAC
Genocide Awareness Workshop/Forum	PAIR & Community at large
Martin Luther King Day 2024	RPS, CATO



Resources & Advising

Support, guide, and empower community members and town leadership to create and sustain inclusive organizational culture, processes and spaces

- **Identify community needs and communicate to leadership and staff-** DEI needs assessment
- **Advise leadership and town stakeholders on implications of policies, processes and programs-** inclusive event planning; Bill Russell Day proclamation
- **Design staff and board training and/or program ideas** – RPL staff, Town Hall staff, Elder Services
- **Assist with community outreach and broadening communication to be more inclusive** to other departments and stakeholders- health needs assessment, family engagement models for RPS



Strategies	Issues/Items	Stakeholders involved
Identify Community Needs	Steering Town DEI Needs Assessment	Town Departments, RPL, PAIR
Advise Leadership <i>Help identify action items and/or share resources</i>	Inclusive Holiday Display Policy Honoring Bill Russell in Reading Inclusive Event Design and Planning Hate graffiti in RPS	Town Manager, Select Board, Community residents Town Manager, CATO Reading Recreation, Friends of Reading Recreation RMHS Principal and Leadership team



Strategies	Issues/Items	Stakeholders involved
Design and Develop Training & Workshop Ideas	<p>Disability Inclusion</p> <p>Talking about difficult topics as a board</p> <p>DEI focused onboarding training for RPL staff</p>	<p>Town Departments, RPL, RPS</p> <p>Town Manager, Select Board</p> <p>RPL Public Services Leadership</p>
Expanding community outreach and communication	<p>Health Needs Assessment- Health Inequity Focus Group</p> <p>RPS Family and Community Engagement Committee- inclusive models of engagement</p>	<p>Community disability and health inequity advocates</p> <p>RPS</p>

Partnerships and Relationship building

Build bridges to connect all voices in meaningful and civil dialog, while also strategically amplifying voices from traditionally marginalized communities

- **Creating bridges and trust-** Partners and Allies for Inclusive Reading (PAIR)
- **Open dialog with key stakeholders and future collaborators-** town departments; community organizations; residents and students, parent networks, sports community
- **Create connection spaces for community members and employees-** support groups and employee resource groups
- **Document concerns and establish transparent process**



OESJ/PAIR active collaborators

Town Departments

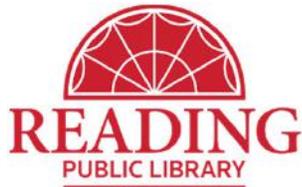
Pleasant Street Center
Reading Rec
Economic Development &
Planning Division
Reading Public Schools
Reading Police Department
Reading Public Library

Community Networks and Organizations

Special Education Parent
Network (SEPAC)
Reading Cares
Reading Clergy Association
Student Clubs at RMHS- GSA,
SOCA, Disabled Students Union
Coalition of US (CATO)
The Flourish Collective
Understanding Disabilities (UD)

Public Boards and Committees

School Committee
Select Board
Board of Health



Networking and Professional Development

Establish relationships and explore outside perspectives and acknowledge that discrimination and bias do not have borders

- **Connect with neighborhood towns and municipalities** –North Reading Human Rights Group, Winchester Social Justice Network, Wakefield and Stoneham Human Rights Commissions
- **Connect and represent Reading at state level networks** through peer associations- Mass Municipal Association, Mass Human Rights Coalition, Mass DEI Coalition, MAPC
- **Connect the Office of Equity and Social Justice to national professional DEI organizations**-American Association of Access, Equity and Diversity



DEI Community Needs Assessment 2023-2024

- **Objective-**

- ❖ a. to identify community needs
- ❖ b. identify gaps in programs, processes and services that act as barriers

Eg: Staff Hiring & Retention; Community Events; Community Services and Human Services; Facilities and Spaces

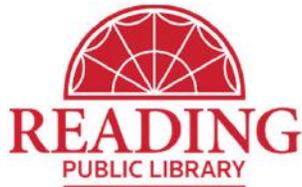
- **Steering Committee-** employee driven (department representatives)

- **Timeline-** kick-off meeting August end; 8/9month process

- **Format and Process-**

- ❖ Surveys, interviews, focus groups
- ❖ Accompanying educational public forums

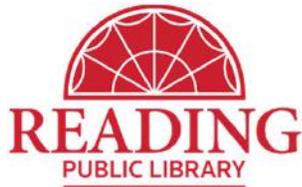
- **Communication and Outreach-** Town/RPL Communication Strategy; also via Outreach working group/PAIR



Public Engagement: Emerging Process

Systematic documentation, and follow-up

- Document concerns/feedback/ideas as data
- Identify existing Stakeholders
- Examine feasibility for undertaking and/or interest in collaboration
- Identify short-term and long-term outcomes, share DEIA best practices
- Collaboratively develop plans and programs
- Implement
- Gather feedback and review
- Repeat process with results to reinforce successes and create change



THANK YOU!



COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Library Mission Statement

The Reading Public Library is 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.

Core Values

- Education
- Equity
- Accountability
- Access

Collection Statement

An important role of the Reading Public Library is to provide library materials selected in response to the diverse educational, informational, and recreational needs of all community members of every age and literacy level.

Professional staff select and provide materials in a variety of formats; including but not limited to, print, media, and digital formats; and in a variety of community languages.

Selection Criteria

This policy is intended to provide direction and guidance to staff members in their roles as materials selectors. Staff select print and non-print library materials in accordance with one or more of these criteria.

- Relevance to the library's mission and core values
- Current usefulness, interest, and/or permanent value
- Popular demand
- Relevance to the existing collection
- Standards of quality in content and format
- Price

The selection process includes the use of authoritative professional reviews, popular reviews, publishers' catalogs, standard lists of basic works, firsthand examination, and patron requests.

The Library Gift Policy addresses donations of materials for the collection. The following collections are selected with additional criteria:

Children's Collection

This collection serves children from birth through sixth grade. Children's librarians also select materials and give special attention to books of value to parents, teachers, and other adults working with children.

Local History and Genealogy Collection

This collection includes material that relates to or advances our knowledge about the town of Reading, Massachusetts and its history, people, and institutions. The collection also provides genealogists with methodological aids with which to begin research and learn genealogical techniques.

Periodicals

Professional staff consider both content and accessibility of all periodicals. Magazine subscriptions are reviewed yearly prior to renewal.

Reference

The Reference collection is intended to serve adults and students in middle school and up. Materials selected for the Reference collection supply ready information on a certain subject, in an easy-to-use form, or are tools for bibliographic access.

Teen Collection

Professional staff select materials for teens to meet the needs, interests, and reading levels of young people in grades six through twelve.

Intellectual Freedom and Controversial Materials

The Board of Trustees of the Reading Public Library endorses the Library Bill of Rights ([see Appendix I](#)). The Board recognizes its right and responsibility to provide worthwhile materials of interest to its readers, including those on all sides of controversial issues.

The Library does not advocate particular beliefs or views. The selection of any given item is not an endorsement of the viewpoint expressed. Library materials will not be marked in such a way as to show approval or disapproval. Access to library materials shall be controlled only to the extent necessary to protect them from danger or theft.

Parents are responsible for determining what their children may read, watch, or listen to. Selection of materials is not restricted by the possibility that young people may obtain material their parents consider inappropriate.

Reading residents with serious objections to specific items in the Library should direct their complaints to a librarian. If the complaint is not resolved, the resident may file a “Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials” ([Appendix II](#)) form to the Director's attention. The item and the form will be reviewed by the Board of Library Trustees. If materials meet the criteria of selection, they will not be removed from the collection because of pressure by any individual or group. [PROPOSED – Once a decision has been reached on a Request for Reconsideration, the title in question is ineligible for further Reconsideration for 5 years. To be added to the Request for Reconsideration policy as well.]

Scope and Limits of the Collection

The Library does not attempt to serve as a depository of record nor to purchase materials of a highly specialized or technical nature. It does not undertake to support individual research in any subject field except local history. When requests are received for material outside the scope of this collection, every effort will be made to borrow the material from another library or to direct the patron to an agency where the material may be found.

The Reading Public Library is cognizant of the resources of other public, academic, and special libraries and will not needlessly duplicate materials. Through cooperative agreements with other libraries, particularly the North of Boston Library Exchange (NOBLE), the resources of those libraries are readily available to Reading Public Library patrons.

This policy recognizes the differing functions of school and public libraries and establishes the responsibility of the school to supply materials needed in quantity to support the school curriculum. The Library undertakes to provide a general, comprehensive collection that will enrich the resources available to students and teachers.

Deaccessioning Practice

To ensure that the collection remains useful and reliable, it is evaluated on an ongoing basis, with decisions made whether to dispose of, repair, or retain items. Material is

evaluated based on use, physical condition, currency of information, number of copies, inclusion in standard bibliographies, and availability in nearby libraries.

Materials that are withdrawn from the collection are disposed of at the discretion of the librarians responsible for the designated areas.

The library is not able to save materials for patrons or notify patrons when materials are withdrawn.

Budget

The acquisitions budget for each department or category is established by the Director at the beginning of each fiscal year.

Legal Responsibility

It is the responsibility of the Board of Trustees to approve policies for the selection of Library material, formulated by the Director. These policies are administered by the Director with the assistance of the staff. Responsibility for selection of specific materials rests with the Director, but the Director's interpretation of policy is subject to review by the Board.

Adopted: April 2021
Amended: May 2022

Appendix I

American Library Association Library Bill of Rights

The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

- I. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.
- II. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.
- III. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.
- IV. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.
- V. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.
- VI. Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.
- VII. All people, regardless of origin, age, background, or views, possess a right to privacy and confidentiality in their library use. Libraries should advocate for, educate about, and protect people's privacy, safeguarding all library use data, including personally identifiable information.

Adopted June 19, 1939, by the ALA Council; amended October 14, 1944; June 18, 1948; February 2, 1961; June 27, 1967; January 23, 1980; January 29, 2019.

Inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996.

Although the Articles of the *Library Bill of Rights* are unambiguous statements of basic principles that should govern the service of all libraries, questions do arise concerning application of these principles to specific library practices. See the documents designated by the Intellectual Freedom Committee as [Interpretations of the Library Bill of Rights](#).

Appendix II

Request for Reconsideration of Materials

Reading residents with serious objections to specific items in the Library should direct their complaints to a librarian. If the complaint is not resolved, the resident may file a “Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials” form to the Director's attention. This process is serious and can take time.

The item and the form will be reviewed by the library director and the Board of Library Trustees, using qualitative and quantitative data and assessments of the material. If the material meets the criteria of selection, it will not be removed from the collection because of pressure by any individual or group. [PROPOSED – Once a decision has been reached on a Request for Reconsideration, the title in question is ineligible for further Reconsideration for 5 years. To be added to the Collection Development Policy as well.]

Requests for Reconsideration are reported to the Massachusetts Library Association (MLA) and the American Library Association (ALA). [PROPOSED - Pursuant to state law, all documents and emails received by a public employee or board are considered a public record unless the content falls within one of the stated exemptions under the Massachusetts Public Records Law. Please be aware that this may require releasing certain information, including identifying information such as your name.]

Intellectual Freedom and Controversial Materials

The Board of Trustees of the Reading Public Library endorses the Library Bill of Rights. The Board recognizes its right and responsibility to provide worthwhile materials of interest to its readers, including those on all sides of controversial issues. The criteria used by the professional staff when selecting materials are listed in the 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. Library materials will not be marked in such a way as to show approval or disapproval. Access to library materials shall be controlled only to the extent necessary to protect them from danger or theft.

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.

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.

Reading residents may request the Board of Library Trustees reconsider library materials.

Please return the completed form to a staff member at any service desk or email to rdgadmin@noblenet.org. You will be notified of when the Board is scheduled to review this request.

Amended: May 10, 2022

Form to Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials

Date: _____
Name: _____
Address: _____
Email: _____
Telephone: _____

You represent: Self Organization: (Please Name) _____

MATERIAL FOR RECONSIDERATION

Format: _____
Title: _____
Author / Date _____
Call #: _____

1. What brought this material to your attention?
2. Have you examined or read the entire item? If not, why?
3. What concerns you about the material? Please be specific.
4. Are there materials you suggest that provide additional information and/or other viewpoints on this topic?

5. What action are you requesting the Board of Library Trustees to consider?

Signature _____ Date _____

Please return the completed form to a staff member at any service desk or email to rdgadmin@noblenet.org. You will be notified of when the Board is scheduled to review this request. **[PROPOSED - Pursuant to state law, all documents and emails received by a public employee or board are considered a public record unless the content falls within one of the stated exemptions under the Massachusetts Public Records Law. Please be aware that this may require releasing certain information, including identifying information such as your name.]**

FY24 Supplemental Spending

Summary

The FY24 Library' municipal operating budget is \$2,105,025 with the following breakdown:

- \$1,698,150 (81%) Salaries
- \$273,675 (13%) Materials
- \$115,200 (5.4%) Supplies, licenses, equipment, maintenance
- \$14,000 (0.4%) Professional Development
- \$4,000 (0.2%) Programs

The Library receives supplemental funds through gifts, trust income, and State Aid. FY24's recommended supplemental spending budget is **\$187,800**, or just under 10% of the municipal budget. The total includes \$99,000 in **new** spending and \$88,800 for three **ongoing FY23** projects. These funds will:

- complete installation and launch of a new Tween area. ¹
- complete installation of Health Nook furniture and equipment. ¹
- complete the Town-wide DEI Community Needs Assessment. ¹
- support a feasibility study to further develop the School Street side of the Library.
- supplement and expand program funding.
- support staff development.
- supplement the materials budget.
- fund marketing and communications.
- purchase general equipment and furnishings to improve staff work areas.
- begin the FY26-FY30 Strategic Planning Process.

¹*Continued from FY23*

Gifts: Description and Details

The Library receives directed and unrestricted financial gifts. Examples of directed gifts range from donations "for a new Tween Area in the Children's Room" to requests to purchase specific items for the collection. Please see the [Library's Gift Policy](#) for more information.

Unrestricted gifts include cash donations and bequests.

The Reading Public Library Foundation (RPLF) regularly gives money to the Library to be used at the discretion of the Board of Library Trustees, provided the funds are not used for operational salaries or expenses that are the responsibility municipal budget.

Financial gifts are recorded and reported to the Board of Library Trustees. Donors receive a card or letter of acknowledgment in thanks and for tax-deduction purposes. If requested, the Library also sends acknowledgments of gifts to third parties.

FY23 Gifts Summary

Starting Balance July 1, 2022	\$394,438
Revenue	\$29,604
Expended	(\$100,023)
FY23 Approved: Health Nook	(\$2,800)
FY23 Approved: Tween Area	(\$61,000)
Net Available June 30, 2023	\$260,219

Revenue in the form of gifts varies from year to year. Outside of bequests and larger donations (e.g. the RPL Foundation), the Library receives an average of \$9,000 in general donations each year. Sixty-five percent (\$63,800) of the recommended gift spending is for three projects approved in FY23 that will carry over into FY24. The recommended new spending for FY24 is \$34,500 or 13% of the remaining gift funds of \$260,219.

FY24 Recommended Gift Spending (\$98,300)

Purpose	New FY24	FY23 Approved
General Staff Development (staff meetings, training, etc.)	\$3,500	
Programs and Services (Community, Adult, Teen, Children's) ²	\$11,000	
Library Landscape Feasibility Study & Concept Design	\$20,000	
Health Nook Equipment and Furnishings (FY23)		\$2,800
Tween Area (FY23)		\$61,000
Totals	\$34,500	\$63,800

²FY23 Programs and Services examples include:

- *Town-wide Disability Inclusion Workshop with Lisa Drennan*
- *Author Event: Isaac Fitzgerald, "Dirtbag Massachusetts"*
- *Author Event: Stories to Tell with Kyle L. (Kyle Lukoff)*
- *An Evening with Claudia Foxtree*
- *Juneteenth Freedom Festival*
- *Passive Programming supplies for children*

State Aid: Description and Details

The Library maintains all certification standards and requirements to receive State Aid. State Aid funds may be used for any purpose. The Library uses State Aid for marketing and communications costs, purchasing or replacing equipment and furnishings, and supplementing various municipal operations budget lines. Please visit the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners for more details on the funding and disbursement of state aid to public libraries. Spending expectations in FY23 were based on the FY22 award of \$43,240

State Aid “Reserves”

The Library maintains a portion of the State Aid awards as “reserves” for planned large projects or emergency capital expenses. Past uses of State Aid include the FY19 website design services (\$23,900) and professional consulting services for the FY21-FY25 Strategic Plan (\$23,727). In FY23, the Board voted to contribute \$25,000 to the town-wide DEI Community Needs Assessment.

FY23 State Aid Balance (7/1/2022)	\$81,228
Expended (<i>maximum \$43,240</i>)	(\$41,089)
FY23 State Aid Award	\$52,743
FY24 State Aid Balance (6/30/2023)	\$92,882

FY24 Recommended State Aid Spending (\$84,000)

The State Aid award varies from year to year. Spending for FY24 is based on the award from FY23 (\$52,743) and anticipates using an additional \$31,257 from the accumulated State Aid reserves for a total of \$84,000. We will not know the FY24 State Aid award until December 2024. However, a conservative estimate for the FY24 award is \$48,000.

Purpose	FY23 Award	Reserves
Marketing and Communications: Examples of expenses include brochures, advertising, and signage.	\$13,000	
Materials: Supplemental spending for new collections and to expand unique collections such as the museum pass program and microfilm digitization, and the Library of Things.	\$5,000	
Equipment and furnishings: Improve the Children’s and Borrower Services workspace areas.	\$9,000	
Professional Development and Tuition Assistance	\$6,000	
Supplies: Consistently underbudgeted and to be spent as needed	\$1,000	
DEI Community Assessment (Approved FY23)	\$18,743	\$6,257
FY26-FY30 Strategic Planning: Due October 2025 (expended FY24-FY25)		\$25,000
TOTAL	\$52,743	\$31,257

Commented [AL1]: Microfilm, digitization, Museum Passes

Trusts: Description and Details (\$5,500)

Town meeting establishes trust funds at the request of the Board of Library Trustees or community members. The Commissioners of Trust Funds, a volunteer town board appointed by the Select Board, oversee trust investments to generate revenue and provide sustaining support outside the tax levy. (<https://www.readingma.gov/325/Commissioners-of-Trust-Funds>)

The Library has nine (9) trusts managed by the Commissioners. Due to the economic downturn of FY22, the Library did not recommend spending any Trust income in FY23.

Starting Balance July 1, 2022³	\$90,470
Revenue/Depreciation	\$5,873
Expended	\$0
Net Available June 30, 2023	\$96,343

³Expendable funds only

FY24 Recommended Trust Spending (\$5,500)

In FY23, Trust income increased by \$5,873. With this modest growth, the Library recommends allocating \$5,500 further to support materials expenditures and improvements to staff workspaces.

Purpose	FY24
Materials: Supplemental spending for new collections and to expand unique collections such as the museum pass program, microfilm digitization, and the Library of Things.	\$3,000
Equipment and furnishings: Improve the Children's and Borrower Services workspace areas.	\$2,500
Totals	\$5,500

Commented [AL2]: NONFICTION

Respectfully submitted,

Amy F. Lannon, Library Director
July 6, 2023

NOTE: FY23 totals are not final until the Year-End close in August/September. Final amounts may vary slightly from what is noted in this document.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Amy Lannon, Library Director; Board of Library Trustees
FROM: Jamie Penney, Head of Collection Services
DATE: July 27, 2023
RE: Recommendation for RFR of “Tricks” by Ellen Hopkins

On Friday, June 23, 2023, the Reading Public Library (RPL) and the Board of Library Trustees received an email Request for Reconsideration of Materials (RFR) of the book “Tricks” by Ellen Hopkins with the requested action to remove the book from the library or move it out of the Teen collection. On Monday, July 10, 2023, RPL received a second RFR for the same book and same request for action. RPL staff notified the Board. The Collection Services team assessed this title.

RECOMMENDATION

This title conforms to RPL’s Collection Development Policy, is shelved appropriately, and should remain in the collection.

BACKGROUND

As a reminder, the RPL [Collection Development Policy](#) states “[t]he-selection of any given item is not an endorsement of the viewpoint expressed.” The RPL selection process includes the use of authoritative professional reviews, popular reviews, publishers’ catalogs, standard lists of basic works, firsthand examination, and patron requests. Additionally, print and non-print materials meet one or more of these criteria.

- Relevance to the library’s mission and core values
- Current usefulness, interest, and/or permanent value
- Popular demand
- Relevance to the existing collection
- Standards of quality in content and format
- Price

REVIEWS

Source: Jill Heritage Maza. *School Library Journal*, vol 55, issue 10, p128. Oct 1 2009.

<https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=cookie,ip,cpid&custid=rdg&db=afh&AN=44598916&site=ehost-live&scope=site>

Excerpt: “Gr 9 Up— Five teens desperately seek to find their way through the darkness in Hopkins’s latest epic novel in verse. ... As they near rock bottom, their narratives begin to intersect. It is only when their paths converge that a glimmer of redemption appears out of the hopelessness. From the punch delivered by the title, to the teens’ raw voices, to the visual impact of the free verse, Hopkins once again produces a graphic, intense tale that will speak to mature teens.”

Source: Carton, Debbie. *Booklist*, vol 105, number 22, p62. Aug 1 2009.

<https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=cookie,ip,cpid&custid=rdg&db=afh&AN=44154200&site=ehost-live&scope=site>

Excerpt: Grades 10-12 Five teenagers from all over the U.S.—three girls, two boys, some straight, some gay—end up as prostitutes in Las Vegas in this multiple-voiced novel in verse. ... Hopkins has never shied away from tough subjects; descriptions of sex, while not overly graphic, are realistic and will likely provoke controversy. A master of storytelling through free verse, she uses multiple poetic devices to construct well-defined, distinctive voices for the five teens.”

AWARDS

Rainbow award 2010

RPL AND NOBLE COLLECTION HOLDINGS

- Level assigned by publisher: Young Adult
- Print copy ordered February 9, 2010
- Digital Audiobook acquired January 13, 2010
- Circulation data

Copies RPL	2	Copies NOBLE	6
Current Year circ RPL	1	Current Year circ NOBLE	7
Total circ RPL	28	Total circ NOBLE	123

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

COMMUNIUTY	COPIES	LOCATION
Andover	0	
Lynnfield	0	
North Reading	0	
Peabody	0	
Stoneham	0	
Wakefield	0	
Wilmington	0	
Woburn	1	Young Adult

Board of Library Trustees
 Reading Public Library
 Tricks - Public Comment Emails Received as of 12:00 PM Thursday, August 10, 2023

#	Subject Line	Last Name	Date Received	Time Received
1	REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF MATERIALS	REDACTED	6/23/2023	6:34 PM
2	Fwd: Tricks - Request for Reconsideration	REDACTED	7/10/2023	9:49 PM
3	Fwd: future Agenda item	Docktor	7/10/2023	9:34 AM
4	Fwd: Monday Meeting	Cloney	8/8/2023	12:15 PM
5	Banning of Books	Tolman	8/9/2023	10:55 AM
6	Attempt to ban books in Reading	Rienzo	8/9/2023	11:00 AM
7	Tricks	Theo	8/9/2023	11:05 AM
8	Banning books	Hersey	8/9/2023	11:05 AM
9	Book Ban	Bacon	8/9/2023	11:06 AM
10	Please reject any attempt to ban Tricks from our library!	No Name	8/9/2023	11:09 AM
11	Please reject any attempt to ban Tricks from our library	Deb	8/9/2023	11:09 AM
12	Please reject any attempt to ban Tricks from our library	Mosier	8/9/2023	11:11 AM
13	Book ban	Rimkunas	8/9/2023	11:20 AM
14	Book ban	Heinemann	8/9/2023	11:21 AM
15	Reject the book challenge	Scola	8/9/2023	11:33 AM
16	Tricks and other books	Baker	8/9/2023	11:37 AM
17	(no subject)	Madden	8/9/2023	11:39 AM
18	Book Ban	Stephens	8/9/2023	11:50 AM
19	Another book banning?	King	8/9/2023	11:51 AM
20	Book ban? NO!	Mosier	8/9/2023	11:56 AM
21	Book Bans	Galiza	8/9/2023	12:07 PM
22	No Book Banning Please	Myatt	8/9/2023	12:14 PM
23	Banned Book Target - Tricks	Curtin	8/9/2023	12:31 PM
24	Please reject banning attempt for Tricks	Estes	8/9/2023	12:40 PM
25	Please Reject Book Ban Attempt	Whiting	8/9/2023	12:55 PM
26	Support for keeping "Tricks" at the library	King	8/9/2023	12:59 PM
27	Tricks	Harrington	8/9/2023	1:11 PM
28	Books in the Library	Mathieu	8/9/2023	1:17 PM
29	Censorship threatens democracy	Woods	8/9/2023	1:27 PM
30	Ban Attempt	Magoon	8/9/2023	1:44 PM
31	Book ban attempt yet again	Maughan	8/9/2023	2:05 PM
32	Against banning Tricks	Mayberry	8/9/2023	2:14 PM
33	Please, no banning of books	Harrington	8/9/2023	3:07 PM
34	Tricks	Conti	8/9/2023	3:12 PM
35	Tricks	Michele	8/9/2023	4:19 PM
36	Book Banning	Collins	8/9/2023	4:49 PM
37	Please reject any attempt to ban Tricks from our library	McSweeney	8/9/2023	4:52 PM
38	Tricks	Quinn	8/9/2023	5:08 PM
39	Book Ban Redux	Lenart	8/9/2023	5:27 PM
40	Banning books	Harrington	8/9/2023	6:25 PM
41	Please do not ban any books	Baker	8/9/2023	7:02 PM
42	Please reject any attempt to ban Tricks from our library	Cuffe	8/9/2023	8:14 PM
43	Please Do NOT Ban Tricks	Flynn	8/9/2023	8:14 PM
44	Book Banning Tricks	McEachern	8/9/2023	8:15 PM
45	book ban	Bennett	8/9/2023	9:21 PM
46	Tricks	Wallace	8/9/2023	9:46 PM
47	Banning books	Moore	8/9/2023	10:44 PM
48	In support of Tricks	Tucci	8/10/2023	9:29 AM
49	Book bans	Lindemer	8/10/2023	11:03 AM
50	Stand strong against attempts at censorship	Loscalzo	8/10/2023	11:29 AM
51	book banning & August 14th meeting	Clopper	8/10/2023	11:33 AM



Admin, Reading <rdgadmin@noblenet.org>

Re: Fw: REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF MATERIALS

1 message

Admin, Reading <rdgadmin@noblenet.org>

Wed, Jun 28, 2023 at 9:40 AM

To:

Cc: rpltrustee@noblenet.org

Thank you for your email. It has been received and forwarded to the Library Director.

On Tue, Jun 27, 2023 at 10:31 PM wrote:

Can you confirm you received my email below sent 06/23/2023?

Sent: Friday, June 23, 2023 at 6:34 PM

From:

To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org, rdgadmin@noblenet.org

Subject: REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF MATERIALS

I could not type text into your form (it is not a fillable PDF) so I pasted all text from your form, with my responses, into this email.

REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF MATERIALS

Reading residents with serious objections to specific items in the Library should direct their complaints to a librarian. If the complaint is not resolved, the resident may file a "Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials" form to the Director's attention. This process is serious and can take time.

The item and the form will be reviewed by the library director and the Board of Library Trustees, using qualitative and quantitative data and assessments of the material. If the material meets the criteria of selection, it will not be removed from the collection because of pressure by any individual or group.

Requests for Reconsideration are reported to the Massachusetts Library Association (MLA) and the American Library Association (ALA).

INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM AND CONTROVERSIAL MATERIALS

The Board of Trustees of the Reading Public Library endorses the Library Bill of Rights. The Board recognizes its right and responsibility to provide worthwhile materials of interest to its readers, including those on all sides of controversial issues. The criteria used by the professional staff when

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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.

Reading residents may request the Board of Library Trustees reconsider library materials.

Please return the completed form to a staff member at any service desk or email to rdgadmin@noblenet.org. You will be notified of when the Board is scheduled to review this request.

Amended 5/10/2022

Request for Reconsideration of Materials 2022

FORM TO REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS

Date: 6/23/23

Name:

Address:

Email:

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Title: Tricks

Author: Ellen Hopkins

Call #: ISBN: 9781416950073

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Profanity Count in this book

Ass 4

Bitch 6

Dick 1

Fuck 16

Shit 5

Below are the page numbers and text that are objectionable.

Page 6 ...Why would God need a pecker, anyway?

29 Swollen with desire. Demanding. Lips still locked to mine, she murmured, What if I give you this...? Her hand found my own, urged it along her body's contours, all the way to the place between her legs, the one I had never asked for. ...In the heat of the moment, I even got hard, especially when Janet touched me, dropped onto her knees, lowered my zipper, started to do what I never suspected she knew how to do. Yes...

48 ...considering how buzzed we got. Okay, it wasn't the first time I'd smoked weed, but I'd rarely smoked myself so close to outer space before.

50 We were making out hot and heavy. He started to unbutton my blouse. I let him. And when he unzipped my jeans, I helped him help me out of them. Snared by the heat of his kiss, I barely noticed when he slipped out of his own Levis. Skin urgent against skin, only panties and boxers between us, I was ready to shed that final thin barrier, allow him access to the most private part of me,...

53 Too much booze. Too many smokes. Way too many pills. Speed. Downers. Everything in between.

58 "...then all they're after is free booze and an easy lay."

74 Let alone given me an up-close view of those tasty-looking tits. Something twitches behind my zipper. Glad I'm standing behind the counter. ...Ronnie takes a deep breath, rounding the mounds I can't quit staring at. ...Only one thing was really good between us.... That twitch again.

75 Ronnie dips even lower, giving me a quick nipple shot before drawing back and straightening. ...Thinking with my dick. That's for sure. So what is Ronnie thinking with? That makes the dick in question think even harder.

76 We can keep the refreshments in my car. And as for dessert...Stop that!

77 I have to admit I have thought about boinking her more than once, while taking solo care of a hard-on. Oh yeah, the big M. I probably do it more than I should, and Ronnie is definite boner bait, at least when I'm left to my own imagination instead of Internet porn. Viva la webcams!

83 By the Time we reach Frozen

75, we've def gotten high together. This guy I work with scores really good bud, and he's not above dealing a little to me. "So what do you think about the smoke?" ...It's awesome. Then she reaches over, touches my leg. Tonight will be fun. Thanks for taking me. Her hand strokes my thigh gently.

93 "And I want to make love with you soon." My body aches with wanting that very thing. 97 My Hand, Disguised as Andrew's hand, moves lightly down my neck, over collarbone, breastbone. Goose bumps rise in unusual places, and my body tingles in a completely foreign way. Because of Andrew. But he's not here. I pretend he is and let "his" hands explore the rounds of my breasts, move in tighter and tighter orbits, and now fingers circle the hard center nubs, raised like it's cold in here. It's not. I'm burning up. Delirious Page Content with raw need. My hand wants to slide lower, to a place I know nothing about except what they call it in books. And suddenly it comes to me how completely inept I'll be when Andrew and I finally share that warm feather bed, with comfy quilts and pillows we can fall into. I Turn on the Light Go to the computer, try to avoid looking at the Calvary screen saver. Jesus, hanging on the cross, staring down at his poor crying mother. Mama downloaded that, no doubt specifically to deter the kind of Internet exploration I have in mind

108 Sex that is more than mutual masturbation. ...individual masturbation was the bulk of my sexual experience. There were a few short chapters of "touch here, I'll touch you there" in my very slim book of adolescent sexual escapades, but nothing more.

110 Who's on top and who's not means nothing when you aren't completely positive that you belong in either position. But that night, one kiss and need struck with enough force to erase all

doubt, all hesitation. I didn't wait for Loren to say it was okay, didn't ask him to show me what to do. Pure animal instinct led me just where I wanted to go. It wasn't tender. ..."But I want to do it again." It was a long few minutes before I could. Wasn't pretty. It was a raw, naked joining, energized from years of dreaming about what it could be like, or should be like. I gave, he took, and when it was over, like Adam, I shook at the forbidden taste of new awareness.

139 Wonder how hot his monkey is.

128 Guess he has fuck buddies, though.

137 Besides, maybe Iris would stop tricking for the right guy.

150 ...I suspected, Alyssa is not very happy about Ronnie jumping my bones...

150 ...I thought she'd shit on the spot. We were sitting together (okay, like glued together, front to front, Ronnie in my lap) on the grass at school. ...I'm not sure if she was talking to Ronnie or me, but Ronnie jumped right down her throat. What does it look like we're doing, Alyssa? Having tea?

151 We Had Sex The very first night we went out together... Pissed off a bunch of people...

153 But he is a partier. Drinks like no serious athlete should... ...Vince and I Have Shared A bottle or two, a fistful of doobs, pipes and pipes and pipes. Tonight, we'll pass around all three at his regular Friday poker game. ...Suppose it could be because I'm usually the one supplying the weed. ...Booze isn't his only bad habit, though. Pot. Pills. Crack. Probably other stuff...

155 Fucking meds. ...Talk about jumpy. Freakin crack is famous for that.

156 I have to be careful not to let my own toking get so out of hand. I swear I never had a clue she had made friends with the pipe. Best thing about it is what a little horndog she turns into when she's smoking. Boo frigging yah! Whatever I want. Page Content

159 Except this time he smells like cheap brew. Thirteen! How did he even get hold of the stuff? Ripped it off, no doubt.

161 The Game Hasn't Started Yet Four or five guys are drinking. Smoking. Snorting something off the glass-topped coffee table.

161 You brought some of that good green, didn't you? As I suspected, the key to my invite. ...Six of us belly up to the table, and I light a big fat one.

163 My head is Tilt-A-Whirling with substance abuse, but more because of finishing off the evening as a winner. I won at poker. And I'm about to win at something even better. Ronnie comes to the glass, opens it, lets me inside. Her room smells of roses, and she has nothing on but a thigh-length shirt. She puts a finger to her lips, but there's no need for words once we fall together into her bed. Night slips away.

178 Andrew stops kissing me, and his eyes ask what he's afraid to, and my eyes answer in the same way, so he takes my hand, leads me down the hall to the bedroom that I would have picked as his without analyzing. It has a big feather bed, with massive quilts and pillows I have to fall into. With Andrew. ...But when he kisses me, I'm shaking, and there are tears in my eyes. We don't have to, he whispers. "I know. I want to. I'm just..." Unsure. I'm completely unsure about my body. What if he hates it? But now he touches me. His hands are tentative, and I remember that this is new for him, too. Is this okay? he asks. Tell me what you like. He kisses me as he picks me up, lays me gently on the bed. A slow, mutual exploration begins. As we learn together, the fear falls away,

and sheer exhilaration-- like standing on the very edge of a cliff, with the wind in your face-- replaces it. He likes my body, and I love his, and there are only a few seconds of pai, before waves of pleasure. Wave after swelling wave of everything right. Wave after wave of love.

186 Hetero couples wander the sidewalks. Looking for a threesome?

187 Then it all became about sex. More sex. Better sex. Unusual sex. Like most couples, I guess.

196 The price tag is regular sex.

206 What's in the Baggie Is a half-dollar-sized chunk of something yellowish white. It sparkles in the sunlight. Lucas slices off a thin section and tells me, Cocaine, clean as you can find anywhere. My brother knows the importer. Wait until you try it. ...Weed is one thing. Cocaine is another.

206 You've done coke before, right? No? Oh, baby, you're gonna love it. You're totally gonna fly. Don't worry. He grins like a leprechaun. You're safe flying with me. Mostly anyway. I Watch Lucas Suck two long, thin, sparkly yellowish lines up his nose. Then he hands the picture to me. Not too hard or you'll sneeze. I inhale gently, one line up the right nostril, the other up the left. Immediately, both sides of my nose go cold and numb. Now, just like that, my heart is racing and the hairs on my arms rise, sending little chills throughout my entire body. OMG. No wonder people like this drug. I look at Lucas, who's watching me carefully. "More, please." He laughs. Careful now. A little of this goes a long way. But he indulges me, and himself, with two more. Every nerve jumps to attention. I can't feel my mouth or nose, but other parts of my body are begging to be touched. Lucas indulges them, too, with his hands and his mouth. I love how he kisses, love how Page Content his fingers move over my body. Everything is hard. Everything is warm. No, cold. No, warm. I've never felt so alive. Never felt so in love. I glance at the clock. Not even one. We have plenty of time. But I don't want to do it here on the couch. "Let's go to my bedroom, okay?" I Don't Have to Ask Twice Lucas scoops me up into his toned arms, carries me down the hall, like a groom clutching his bride. The thought makes me blush, and I have no clue why. I rest my head against his chest for the entire ten-second journey. Then he lays me gently on the bed, unbuttons my shirt, peels back the blue satin, stares at what he has uncovered. I am totally exposed, totally flying high, and yet I do, in fact, feel safe with Lucas, even as he lowers himself over me. Every ounce of me wants what he's about to do, and yet for just an instant, regret stings and I say, "Wait." He pauses. What? You don't want me to stop, do you? Because I don't think I can. I need you. See? He lowers my hand to feel his need, and my heart screams, "Hurry!" Still, my brain whispers, "You can never take this back." I look up into Lucas's eyes. "I don't want you to stop. But please don't go too fast. I'm afraid..." Afraid it will hurt. Afraid it will change me. Afraid... afraid... the word humps in time with my heartbeat, even as Lucas soothes, I'll go easy. And he does. And I'm ready. And it does feel good, despite the pain, because it also hurts. And then, it's just over. Still Buzzed And yet also drained, we lie together for a while. I don't know if it was good for Lucas or not. I want to ask, but I don't want to ask because if I do and he says no, it will leave a scar. I don't even know if it was good for me, because I'm not sure what "good sex" is. Your first time probably isn't so good, right?

212 And you might want to wash your sheets. You're not on your period, are you? "No, not for..." Now I notice how the front of him is splashed red, and the crimson stain flowering on my bed. My face burns. "It's not my period." How could he not know that the first time can make a girl bleed? Or did he maybe not believe...?

216 ...another of Iris's badass lays, one I can't forget. I do my best never to think of him, what he did. Try never to remember that place in my childhood, but sometimes it pops into view despite all my efforts o keep it hidden. I was almost ten, and we lived in Pahrump, the butthole of Nevada.

Iris worked at a cathouse, making money her usual way, only without walking the streets. Walt was a miner, and though he was a regular paying customer at Mimi's, he had an appetite for younger meat. Iris was younger then too, but even at twenty-six, she was way too old for Walt. Still, he paid for her, then he followed her home. She let him move in for a while. I remember his sour sweat, coming in after working backhoe. I remember how he touched Iris, and how she didn't care that her kids could see. I remember his Marlboro breath falling all down around me when he said, Let me show you something. On Another Day It wouldn't have happened, couldn't have happened. Too many witnesses around. But for some odd reason, that particular afternoon, Iris had taken the other kids to play in the park. You stay and start dinner, she said. We won't be gone very long. I didn't mind. I was too old for swings, and I've always liked spending time by myself. But it wasn't more than ten minutes before Walt came through the door. He didn't ask where Iris was, or why the house was so quiet. He didn't say one word. I opened a can of refried beans, spooned them into a pot. I had no real reason to be Page Content afraid. So why did my hands shake? I kept my back to him but could feel his eyes, carving into me. Finally, he started toward the living room. Bring me a beer, sweets. I dug one from the fridge. But he wasn't on the couch, as expected. Back here, he called from Iris's room. He was already out of his jeans. I didn't know much then, but I knew there was something very wrong about that. Still, I took him the beer, holding my breath against his stench. He grabbed my hand, jerked me hard against him. Let me show you something. I tried to run, but he was faster. Tried to fight. He was stronger. Tried to scream. He choked my cries. When He Finished (Thank God it didn't take long), he rolled off me with a grunt. Reached for his beer. Slammed it. Ripped and pried, swallowed up by the shame of what that meant, I crawled into the bathroom to scrub away the evidence. Not that I'd dare tell anyone Not when he followed me, stood in the doorway, watchin me, finally said, Tell a soul, I'll do your sister too. He knew that was a bigger threat than saying he'd hurt Iris or some other TV kind of shit. Because I knew he would come back for Mary Ann. She was only eight. If he did this to her, she'd die for sure. It had almost killed me. I'll probably always link sex with pain.

222 Not Sure If Harry is tuned in to how Iris earns her booze and pill money.

224 "Yeah, well, least I'm not a whore! Wait. 'Whore' is too good a word for you and what you do. 'Hooker' works much better."

227 There is no more, no "let's have sex," which leaves me both content and confused. I think you need a drink, she says.

230 Only booze goes down and stays.

231 A little bouillon (takes care of the protein requirement, right?) watered down with vodka. And for dessert, stiff megashots of gin. Hey, someone besides Cory should drink it.

232 Like staying alive just one more fucking day. So Cory Drinks Way too much. Pickling his brain, and much too young to end up relish. But how can I say anything when I drink? And more. I smoke. Snort. drink? And more. I smoke. Snort. When Cory and I finish off Jack's dwindling booze stash, scoring more won't be a problem. Vinnie will happily buy. At least as long as I keep bringing bud to the Friday night games.

246 We have learned a lot about each other. How to touch. Where to kiss. I have taught him as much as he has taught me, all through mutual experimentation. Mad sex scientists, that's us. There have been clumsy moments, yes. But they are rare. Few. The worst was when it suddenly came to us that, swept downstream by a flood of desire we hadn't used protection the first time. But either I'm sterile or the timing was right, because three days later I started my period. ...we don't have to have sex every time we see each other, do we?

255 Her voice drips icicles. I believe you're confusing love and desire. Do you really think that man is in love with you? What he wants... Once again, her eyes travel over me, trying to look under my clothes to the sin she intuits beneath them. He wants your innocence. I Page Content will not let you succumb to temptation. She is past Papa, hands moving toward me. They fall. I don't dare try to defend myself. I've been here before. Tears sting my eyes. From the pain of her blows. And from the heartbreak tomorrow holds. ...Face bruised, eyes swollen almost shut from crying, no way can I go

257 Let me see what she did. His hands are kind as they soothe the bruises... ...How could anyone do something like that to their child? he demands.

268 What's calling is a stiff shot of good old' Kentucky bourbon. Maybe Loren left a little behind.

273 The first drink is on me. What's your pleasure?

275 A gulp of bourbon clears it, raises a nice, warm buzz.

277 Four courses of French cuisine and two bottles of wine later, my stomach is churning with rich food, my head buzzing with alcohol.

287 "Let's go find the alcohol." I don't wait for Paige's response, just push through the crowd, into the house. ...I work my way through the human knot, stopping twice to take a hit off lit blunts. By the time I reach he kitchen, I've got a nice little pot buzz going on, something to mellow the fog of anger.

290 First I Pour A hefty shot (okay, more like four) of Cuervo Gold. No need to bother with salt or limes, no worries about tequila burn going down. It feels good.

291 I totally wanted to pop your cherry. You were my first virgin, and you'll probably be my last. Because...sorry, but virgin sex really isn't very good. ..."F-fuck you!..." ...One more gulp and I repeat, "Fuck you!"

303 They'll be home soon. Not like ice cream takes forever. Only longer than rape. Fuck!

310 ... Alex and me in back, sipping rum from a water bottle...

314 Ronnie rises on her tiptoes, lifts her slick, honey-sweet lips to meet mine. It's the sweetest kiss ever, but it soon becomes more. I lock the door, guide her to my bed, and for maybe the very first time, sex is more than getting off. This time, sex feels like love. ...She undulates seductively, the rise and fall of her body like salty waves beneath my own. Another first, this time no faking climbing higher and higher, until she finishes with an amazing gush and tears of satisfaction. I love you, too, she exhales softly. We lie, tangled together, unmoving, unspeaking. And we both know this is what sex should be.

316 I've never had a girl in here. He probably thinks I'm taking care of business, solo. ...I kiss Ronnie's face, her neck, lick the shimmer of sweat from the deep fold between her breasts. She sighs, and that makes me want more.

319 The three of us get drunk together...

321 A big, fat joint is calling my name. ...Bud and Booze May not exactly cure what ails ya, but partner 'em up and they'll definitely make you forget it for a while.

324 The Pot Buzz Should make me feel better, but all it does is combine with the alcohol to make loneliness hit like a freight train. Page Content

332 He creeps toward me, baiting, pallid tongue circling his mouth suggestively. Because I like you. He puts a berry to my lips. And because you're beautiful. Instinctively I suck the fruit onto my tongue, crush it against the roof of my mouth, go weak at the intense rush of pleasure. "Thank you." It comes out a whisper. "I promise not to tell." Jerome Isn't Quite Finished He takes my hand, caresses it gently before placing the other two berries on my palm. If you're really good at keeping secrets...His eyes bore into mine. Something feral pacing there. We could have a little fun. If you be good to me, I'll be really good to you. Strawberries are just the beginning. Cheese. Meat. Chocolate. Maybe even some shampoo to use instead of that vile soap. He touches my hair. I bet it's pretty when it's clean. I bet it smells like rain. Here now. What did I say? Don't cry. ...Pain throbs. No, not pain, not even agony. Something there is no word for. Something I can't fight. Can't fight. Can't. All I can think to do is say, "S-sorry." My head spins. My legs go numb. Jerome catches me as I collapse, and my tears soak into his bleached white shirt. Okay, baby, he soothes. Go ahead and cry. I should jerk away, out of his arms, but his gentle rock cradles my loneliness. There is nurturing here, and it comes to me, with a whoosh like sudden wind, that there just might be a way out after all. And that way could very well begin and end with Jerome. So When He Kisses The top of my head, I stay perfectly still against him. And when his hands begin a slow journey over the landscape of my body, I grit my teeth. Do not protest. Will not complain. Forgive me, Andrew. Please understand. It's my only way back to you. But I won't give him everything. I go as far as to let him open my blouse, touch beneath my bra. Now he kisses down my neck, to the skin he has just exposed. Drawn tight up against him, I feel him grown hard against my thigh. Now it's he who shakes. Shivers with hunger, and just like that, I am in control. I push him away, but tenderly, like a mother convincing the infant at her breast that he's had enough. I make my voice light. "That's all you get for three strawberries." He is pliable. Clay. He smiles, clearly into the game this has unmistakably become. Fair enough. Father would probably miss me now anyway. Just one question...He helps himself to a final taste. What will you give me for ice cream? I back away, closing buttons. Reach down deep for the "inner whore" Father claims all women harbor inside. I smile. "Haagen-Dazs or store brand?" The Door Locks Behind Jerome, who promised to see what I can do about Cherry Garcia. Dirtied, I drop to the floor, tuck my back into a corner, as if walls could protect me. Lord, please forgive this sin. What I've done. What I may do, though I'm not exactly sure what that might be. All I know is I have to escape this place, run far, far away. From here. ...Hungry. I glance at the bowl on the table, oatmeal grown granite cold inside it. I want pancakes. An omelet with sausage. I want the key to this unbarred cell. Jerome has perhaps offered it, if I will only reach for it. I close my eyes. Think of Mary Magdalene. What was her prison? And how far did she go to get the key? ...Sorry, Mama. Making love with Andrew didn't make me a whore. But sending me here might very well do exactly that. I have nothing to lose. You've already stolen everything Page Content important. Made me an outcast. Tossed me into this wilderness prison. And now the question becomes: How far will I go to get the key? To Know That I need to find out what Father has in store for me. We meet every afternoon except on Sunday (no work on the Sabbath), for "prayerful counseling." So far, it's the only time I'm allowed out of my room, into the sunlight, the sage-tainted air. There are two long, low buildings, with rows of doors just like mine. I'm not the only one here. Once in a while, I see other kids, working alone in the garden or shoveling manure from the chicken coops. Punishment? My guess is reward. ...A large house looms in the distance. Father's, no doubt.

347 Thinking of Loren Makes me want liquor. ...there's usually beer in the fridge, and the afternoon is hot for June. A cold brew sounds pretty damn fine.

348 ...now it's Miller time! I reach into the fridge, find a frosty can, pop the top, take a long swallow.

357 ...I've decided if being a real man means smashing someone in the face or turning your back on a person because of their sexuality, I'll just stay a girl.

370 Getting high. "You don't happen to have any pot, do you?" Bryn has never offered to get high with me. ...I do have some Valium, if you're a little nervous. In there. He points at the center console. Valium? Why not? "I'm not exactly nervous. But a good buzz never hurt anyone, right?" I pop one, wait for it to kick in, watching the ocean's heave. By the time we reach Bryn's chosen location, I'm feeling pretty darn fine.

371 He unpacks his gear, then checks me out, all up and down. Take off the bra and panties, okay? We want a glimpse--a hint-- of what's under all that white. I do as instructed, allow Bryn to position me exactly the way he wants. He sits me, skirt tucked provocatively between my bent legs, and when he goes to move my arms, his hand brushes against the fabric covering my breasts. My nipples go hard immediately. Lovely, he says, assessing. Exactly what I'm after. Then he kisses me sweetly. Exactly what I'm after He makes me feel like a real model--beautiful, every man's desire. When he's finished with his camera, he lays me back on a thick blanket. You are exceptionally lovely, he says, brushing sand from my hair. He settles beside me, props himself on one elbow. Bryn's free hand begins a slow exploration of my body, over the sheer fabric, tracing each curve. You don't mind, do you? Eyes closed to the lowering sun, brain suspended on a Valium cloud, I sigh, lift my head. "Kiss me." He does, and then he lowers his mouth to other, much more intimate places. So this is making love! Well, not quite. I want to know the rest. "Make love to me." You're sure? he asks, but there can be no doubt I'm very, very sure. Bryn guides me to a place Lucas has no idea exists. Okay, It's Kind of Disturbing That, immediately after learning the meaning of "orgasm," I think of Lucas. Maybe it's because I need to know, "Was that okay?" Oh, darling. Bryn kisses across my face. That was more than okay. That was Page Content extraordinary. With just a little practice, you will become perfection. And I so want to be...want to be your coach.

379 See, for a while Lydia worked as a stripper in a fairly nice club near the Stratosphere. I made pretty good money. Most of it went to the house, which took a big cut for keeping the girls safe. I did all the work, they reaped sixty percent of the bennies. Hard to swallow. So Lydia got smart, started her own business--Have Ur Cake Escorts. Now she takes a cut from he girls (and guys) whose "dates" she sets up. I still strip for fun once in a while. All on my own terms.

381 Okay, here's the deal. Both of you are pretty girls. Great bods, with that fresh look guys (especially old ones) appreciate. You could make boatloads taking off your clothes. The clubs are careful about underage girls, but work for me, no one will check your IDs.

382 Sooner or later, Lydia said, you'll have to deal with a jerk who won't want to hear "no touching allowed," if you decide to stick to that. With two of you, you've got a fighting chance, or at the very least, a witness. ...Our two-for-one fee is three hundred an hour (a bargain!) plus tips for straight dancing. Private lap dances are twenty dollars per song. Girl-on-girl action adds another hundred to the tab.

383 As for the actual stripping, Lydia gave us some pointers. Turns out I'm a better dancer than Alex. Her boobs are bigger, though, and really beautiful.

384 The men we perform for like when we dance with each other, breast-to-breast or bellyto-ass, tan skin against pale, ebony hair on blue-streaked blond, fingers touching hidden places we won't let "clients" touch. Powerful! That's how I feel, seeing how helpless we make them. I so enjoy reducing them to masturbation. It's like they are masturbating for me, and I can control when they come by how I move my body, what I let them see.

385 And when there's a crowd in the room, the dicks mostly stay hidden.

386 We decline and he escorts us inside, where a half dozen guys are ogling cable porn.

387 How much for head? ...We don't do head, except on each other, and that will cost an extra hundred.

389 I glance at Alex, who nods, meaning she'll do it for him. She knows I never could. After a little girl-on-girl rubbing, she goes to take care of it. He sits very still in his chair, staring as she strips free of her bra. Suddenly his hands are all over her. "Hey. Cut it out. Absolutely no touching allowed." ...Okay, man, we're out of here. She tries, but the creep snakes his arms around her waist, squeezes like a hungry boa constrictor. All I want is a hand job. Give it to me, I'll let you go. You, over there, play with yourself. So much for control. Good thing it doesn't take long He finishes with a loud, Aaaagh!

391 Later, After Several Shots Of whiskey (Lydia buys it for us, as long as we drink it postbusiness only), Page Content

393 She's a total bitch, not to mention a tease. ...Lately she hasn't even half-ass grinned at me. ...The Belmont fucked me good.

402 I need Ronnie to ding my dong.

409 Forgive me, he whispered, and he meant that, even as he stripped, lowered his ghostly white nakedness over me. I swallowed the building scream. Opened my legs. Wept as he plunged inside. Choked on his Listerine-flavored tongue, wielded like a weapon. His kiss was, in fact, harder to accept. Sex is sex. A kiss means love.

411 But now Jerome wants other things. Let me watch you touch yourself. Creepy things. Did you know guys like to use vibrators too? Like this. Downright disgusting things. Your period? I like the taste of blood. How I wish I could say no. But even if I thought he'd leave me alone, saying yes is how I have convinced him to make Father believe I am fit for small freedoms. Like working in the yard, pulling weeds and picking vegetables.

414 Make the best of it... Guys like vibrators too. ...Plan C Means courting Jerome's affection, pretending to enjoy his deviant sex. Tonight that means letting him call me "Mommy" as he sits on my lap and "nurses." I stroke his hair as a mother would, dig deep inside for the words, "Mommy loves you, Jerome." That excites him, as I guessed it would. I love you, too, Mommy. See how much? ...I hold stubbornly to the dream that he will, as Jerome turns his belly to "Mommy's." Love or no, Jerome wants to punish Mommy. The sex is rough, but it doesn't hurt nearly as bad as the pretense. And it's even faster than usual. When he finishes, I lay my head on his knobby chest.

416 I roll on top of him, look up into his eyes. "What if we..." Soft kiss. "Never mind." He shivers. Is much too easy. I feel almost evil when he whispers, What? almost evil when he whispers, What? Together." ...I lean forward, cup my breasts, rub them over his face. Confusion seeps into his eyes, and like it or not, his muscles relax. All but one. I rock back gently, invite him inside. "I'd be all yours and take such good care of you." The second time takes longer, but when he's finally done, he says, I'll think about it.

421 He lifts my arms, pulls my shift up over my head. I'm in need of your special brand of lovin'. Help me special brand of lovin'. Help me As He Pokes And pinches, I concentrate on ways to not reach Salt Lake City. Afterward, he takes me in his arms, like in some awful romantic movie.

433 they ask if you'll talk dirty to them, preferably on the phone. Masturbators. Every now and

then, you come across married guys who want to meet for real, with or without their wives, usually the former. Cheap thrill seekers. I haven't played in the flesh, but I don't mind getting someone off telling dirty stories. There's a certain sick kind of power in that.

443 He photographs me, too. Lately, the pics have all been naked.

445 It's a dope-sized plastic bag with some brown substance inside. "What's that?" But I suspect his response: Smack. One of the girls turned me on to a little. Thought you might like to share a taste. Heroin. I've never even thought about trying it. "I don't know...That shit is scary as hell." Way past meth, which is scary enough. ...Oh, I see. You can do cocaine with your other boyfriends, but you won't try this for me? ...Not if you only do a little, once in a while. And the places it will take you! I want to see you there. Page Content OMG. I can't believe I'm saying okay to heroin. But I am. Except, "No needles! No way will I shoot up anything." I wait for his reaction. No problem. We'll just chase the dragon, okay? He means heated tinfoil and a rolled-up bill to grab the smoke, draw it up my nose. I've seen people at parties do meth the same way. Even before Bryn creases the foil into a deep V, my heart starts racing. Fear is exhilarating, all on its own. I watch him drop a pinhead of H into the makeshift bowl, and goose bumps cover my arms. I have no idea what to expect when the smoke lifts into the dollar bill "straw." Ugh. It tastes like rotten ketchup. Bitter and harsh in my throat. I start to choke Bryn's warning is rough: Don't you dare cough it out! He checks out my eyes. Looking for pupil dilation, no doubt. It takes a while. If you shoot up, you feel the effects instantaneously. Smoking it might take ten or fifteen minutes. Patience. Meanwhile, I have another surprise. It takes all of ten minutes before I begin to feel kind of tingly. Euphoric. Like everything in my life just fell into place. The sensation is gentle, not at all like the overwhelming buzz I thought it would be. I can handle this. What's all the hype about, anyway? Bryn has finished setting up the second surprise-- a webcam, hooked up to his laptop. I thought it would be fun to put ourselves in the movies. America's Sexiest Home Videos. Come here. Let's get nasty. The tone of his voice lets me know disagreeing is not an option. But I don't want to disagree. Every nerve in my body screams to make love with Bryn, who responds by taking "nasty" to a whole new level. It is only afterward, floating on a sensual fog, in an uneasy state of half sleep, that it comes to me: Bryn didn't join in the dragon chase. ...A Week After My first sweet-bitter taste of smack, Bryn has talked me into indulging again four or five times. I don't want to get hooked, and I'm sure I won't, as long as all I do is smoke a little every now and again. I have to admit I like the way it makes me feel-- like I'm on top of the world. Bryn never indulges. I can't get it up if I do, and I want this to be all about you. So why does he keep asking me to do things that seem mostly all about him? Things like performing dirty acts on pay-per-view webcam? It won't be forever, I promise.

450 Some guys like to watch girls getting off all by themselves. Make it look good for the camera. I was never into touching myself, but it isn't so bad, especially when I'm high. Besides the occasional H, Bryn supplies me with bud-- mediocre seeded Mexican-- and prescription downers. Not sure where he gets them, and I really don't care. As long as I'm buzzed, the things he asks of me are easy to do, and hey, anything's better than wasting way in Santa Cruz. ...You're right, Bryn. She's very pretty. Tight little body, too. Yes, she'll do. His hands slide over my front, reach up under my blouse. The skin of his fingers, seeking my nipples, is calloused. Cold. "No, wait. I can't. You're not serious... Bryn?" He can't want me to do this! I jerk away from Oscar, turn to Bryn. Search his eyes. They are deadly serious, and so is Bryn when he says, Yes, you can. And if you love me, you will. You do love me, don't you? "Of course I love you! But this isn't..." Isn't right, is what I want to say. But what is right, anymore? is this really what loving him means? Bryn's hands press down on my shoulders. Do this for me, Whitney. Do this for us. He kisses me. But it is the kiss of a stranger. I Beg for a Buzz First Pot won't do. It has to be smack, and three long pulls of the acrid smoke

barely take me to the place I need to be. Oscar watches. Waits impatiently for the H to kick in. You should use a needle. Smoking the Lady is a waste of good dope. Fearqueasy, I stumble down the hall, into the bedroom. Oscar follows, shedding clothes. His Page Content body is lean, muscular. Another time, another place, I might find him attractive, but attraction is about choice. I have no choice here but to I have no choice here but to is he has paid to do. I hate you, Bryn. I hate you. Within Seconds I hate Oscar, too. He breathes beer, sweats onion, and there is no beer, sweats onion, and there is no beer, sweats onion, and there is no move when he bites my neck, and lower. I'll wear his teeth marks for days. "Stop. You're hurting me." "You think that hurts? You ain't seen nothing yet. His teeth close even harder and his hand squeezes my arms like a vise and now my arms like a vise and now my arms like a vise and now Bruising pain. I give myself to he morphine shroud, denying the pounding between my thighs. Something makes me look toward the door. Bryn stands there, staring.

458 It's not such a big deal, as long as they use condoms. The thing is, Lydia wouldn't have to know. I could do it on the side, and not give her a cut We could save up enough money to blow this city. Go somewhere pretty, like Portland or San Francisco.

460 Maybe that bastard who raped me made me pregnant and God was gracious enough to let me miscarry.

466 My guess is no way, or if he does happen to be her father, it's a definite case of incest. ...Is Every Girl In this nasty, stinking city turning tricks? Young, old, at least as old as you can get without dying of some incurable sex disease?

468 It's more than a little bit obvious that the day's "business" included more than stripping. The smell of sweat and sex hangs in the air, a storm cloud. ...You're not turning tricks like some hooker, are you?" ...I mean, the sex isn't good, but it's fast, and all things considered, the pay scale isn't bad. Fifty bucks for under ten minutes' work? Three hundred an hour! Shit, girl, that's attorney Shit, girl, that's attorney "Stop it! We don't need money that bad. I'll get off the rag and we'll go back to stripping.

475 Chris still had a sleeve or two left of his shirt, and while he was busy losing those, I invited Misty to smoke some bud. We got to talking, and the more we smoked, the more I confessed, which made her open up to me. Yeah, money sucks, but you can't live without it. I'm paying my way through UNLV with a little sex-on-the-side. ...I mean, if you're going to have sex anyway, why not earn a little extra cash, you know? She took a big drag. ...You interested in a little paid action? I can introduce you to Lydia if you want. ...Sex for money. I still hadn't considered the possibility of it meaning having sex with men

479 Sometimes Misty and I Do have "two-fers" with confused guys. ...I hang up, pop a Valium, "borrowed" from a bottle in Ronnie's medicine cabinet. Fuck. Stealing pills. I suck. ...Twenty bucks for a backseat blowjob? ...if someone would have told me two months ago I'd be selling myself to men, I'd have said they were full of shit. Necessity is a motherfucker. And if they would have said I might even like it, I'd have kicked their ass.

483 You can take me around the world. He reaches for his wallet. One fifty, right? He tries to sweeten the pot. Dan will He reaches for his wallet. One fifty, right? He tries to sweeten the pot. Dan will pay extra to go without a sleeve. No condom? It's not the first time I've had the request. I'd kill for the extra cash, but I'm not taking a chance on AIDS "Sorry. No can do. Cover up, I'll take care of you." I pull my T-shirt over my head, watch him strip off his jeans. His waist is narrow, his hips straight. Beautiful. Stop it! What's wrong with me? He's down to his skivvies. I should have charged more. He's built like a fucking bull. "Holy crap, dude, I don't know...." What's wrong, kid?

Never done it with a real man before? His voice falls, cold and heavy as hail. You want me wrapped? Do it for me! He pushes me to my knees, comes around in front of me. My heart thuds in my chest. I open the foil pouch, remove the thin latex protection. You ever seen a ramrod like Dan's? I shake my head as I roll the condom down over it. No, of course you haven't. Let's see just how good you are. I close my eyes, fight not to gag at the taste of lubricant, not to choke on his thrusts against my throat. ...Dan decides he's done with Europe. He pulls me to my feet, moves behind me, drapes my back with his chest. His muscles are thick cables, but his skin is smooth and cool as snake skin. Check it out. he little boy likes that. He reaches down between my thighs. Look how hard he is. No! How could something so messed up turn me on? Whatever he does, I won't...His lips brush the back of my neck His lips brush the back of my neck me toward the bed, urges me facedown. The sheets smell of bleach. ...Down go my boxers. Oh my. What a sweet little bottom. Dan's hands, moving over my skin, are soft, and when he lowers himself over me, a cloud of cloves and apple sinks around me. ...Dan is in for a real treat, isn't he? He presses up against me. I brace and he pauses. Do you think it will hurt? Let's see. He pushes, but only a little. A test. Oh yes, I'm afraid it might. And after Dan, nothing else will do. I Bite Down On a strange metal taste--a metal taste of emotions. An odd blend of fear and... excitement. For some fucked-up reason, I'm excited. I can't want his! Adrenaline firecrackers through my body. Blood pulses in my temples. You make Dan happy now, hear? Pain! Oh my God! Nothing has ever hurt like this. I tense, beg him to stop. But he doesn't stop. Doesn't slow. Can't take it. Can't. Through the rhythmic pain, apple. Pressure. Pressure, deep. Oh! Nothing has ever felt so good. Exquisite. Exquisite. No! I won't. No matter what, I won't. This isn't me. ...But I do. And when I do, it's over the top.

502 Mr. So-not-nice trucker issues an ultimatum: Oral sex or a very long walk to Vegas.

508 He grins. What? Did I flash you or something? Hope it wasn't offensive. Most guys seem to like it well enough.

516 Before I Can Answer He is all over me. Hands. Mouth. Ugh. Tequila. I push him away. "Wait just one fucking second...." I step back, look at Carl... ...No need to be rude to our guest. He's here by invitation. Understand? "Invi--" Carl wants me to be with this creep? What happened to our "exclusive relationship"? "No. I don't understand." ...He pushes me, and not gently, toward Brett. Now apologize to my friend as I hope you would apologize to me. He Does Not Mean With words. And he doesn't exactly mean solo. They move in unison, and I am sandwiched between them, Carl behind me, moving sensuously, while Brett dares kiss me again. I hold my breath against the assault of gin at Page Content my back, tequila in my face. A strange tongue in my mouth. Now Brett rests his chin on my shoulder, and he and Carl are kissing. t's a cobra dance, and despite what it means, I am charmed. Seduced by sensual motion. Behind me and in front of me, both men grow hard, and for some horrifying reason, I respond in like manner. I Have Never Considered Three-way sex. How would...? Oh. No way will I let one of them take me like that. ...My rule: hands or mouths only. He stops kissing Brett, but neither man quits moving, writhing like mating hooded serpents. We're playing by my rules, remember? But don't worry. I only expect you to give. For now. From somewhere, he extracts a condom, hands it to me, keys to the kingdom. Don't rush, he orders, and don't you dare close your eyes. I want to see how much you like it. He moves in front of me, strips Brett from the waist down, pushes him onto his hands and knees. Then he drops his own trousers. Come on, he urges, positioning himself inches from Brett's face. Shaking, I move behind Brett, grab his shoulders. Carl's hands cover mine. Brett moans as I...Oh my God! I am damned. But I don't stop and I don't rush. Carl's eyes never once leave mine. Finally I beg his permission. "Now? Please?" He nods and I do. We all do.

521 Sometimes he comes, rewards them like he rewards me, with junk and beautiful sex.

Sometimes other men come. That sex is never beautiful. It is selfish. Needful. Fueled by sick desire to get off. Get even. Get over someone who has hurt them by symbolically impaling someone else. So Bryn's zombie girls stay stoned. Out of our heads messed up. Eyes closed, we can be anywhere.

524 Poor baby. Don't worry. Daddy has presents for his beautiful little girl. He comes over, sits beside me. Pulls a dime bag from his pocket like it's made of gold. Clean rigs, too. Let Daddy fix it for you. He cooks up a perfect spoon, loads it, plunges it between my toes. Bryn gives me wings. The sting is luscious, the awful rush all I need. No, not all. I need Bryn. And he's here, all mine right now. His lap is warm, inviting. I climb into it, slip my arms around his neck. Thank you. Better now. Oh, so much better. Soaring. Up here in the clouds, the air is dry. I kiss him, Oh, so much better. Soaring. Up here in the clouds, the air is dry. I kiss him, suck his tongue into my mouth, seeking moisture. It curls over my own tongue, sensuous as smoke. Time slows. ...Want him to take me higher. Want sex as it was meant to be, as only Bryn can ever give it to me. "Make love to me." He pushes me to the floor. My head spins, dizzy with anticipation. My brain screams, kiss me! Kiss all those special places, just like you used to. I know he will, but... But what? Why is he stopping? He reaches into a back pocket. What is that? A rubber? No. We don't need that. ...Finally he says, Never know what kind of gift one of your customers might have left. What? My face flushes, hot from the skag, hotter still with an overdose of anger. Always, with no exceptions, "My customers use condoms." I Try to Push Him Away But even if I were perfectly straight, my stick-figure body would be no match for his toned physique. And I'm not straight. My vision is blurred, like looking through a fishbowl, and my muscles feel like steel cables--much too heavy to drag around. And the weirdest steel cables--much too heavy to drag around. And the weirdest vanishes. So hell, he can screw me, if that's all it means to him. He boosts himself up over me. Page Content ...That's it, he soothes. No need to waste a perfectly good boner In. Out. In. Out. I close my eyes.

528 Stay a while, watching pole dancers and cocktail waitresses, shaking their boobs for tips. Boys come out, horny as hell. Some go home to beat off or bug their wives.

532 I Swear Until This Moment I never even noticed his hand creeping up my leg, ever closer to my semi-exposed crotch. ...I give the guy a quick feel before pushing his hand away. "Oh, I for sure know how to have fun." Game on. ...All I can think about is a syringe full of magic. How fast can I do this guy? ...Cost? You want me to pay for it? He pushes me inside. I don't pay for sex. Even if I did, I wouldn't pay for you, you junkie bitch. He is all predator now, and on me. Scream! But his hand is already over my mouth. I shake my head, look into his eyes. This wolf has mayhem on his mind. He takes me down. So okay. Give it to him. I go limp. No! he screams. Fight, you goddamn whore! Fight, or I'll kill you. No fight left in me. Fuck me. Kill me. Don't care. He wants both. His penis stabs me, his hands lock around my throat. Air. No air. Black...Air! My lungs grab it suddenly. I float up into gray light, roll onto my side, vomit. Only nothing comes out. Noise. Someone's screaming. Get the fuck out of here, you son of a bitch. I'm calling the cops right now, so you'd better run.

546 Since the revelation about Iris sicking her snarling dogs on me, other faces--other mutts--materialize when I least want to recognize them, often just as I sink into an alcohol fueled stupor, praying it will let me sleep, dreamless. I was so young the first time, I didn't know what it meant, only that nothing had ever hurt so bad. Walt tore me up and I bled and bled and when I screamed, nobody came. And he laughed. That's it, little baby. Scream for your daddy. Only he wasn't my daddy at all. My daddy was a brave soldier, fighting far away. Iris told me so. I still believed the stuff she told me then. When I told her about the man, not my daddy, she said, He was only making you into a real girl. I didn't understand. But I made myself believe her. I was a real

girl now. But what was I before? Walt Was the First There were others. Nameless. Faceless. I figured out how to close off my brain when they did it to me, to withdraw into a dark little room inside my head, where I couldn't see them. Couldn't smell their sweat, their stagnant breath. Couldn't taste the tobacco coating their tongues, or the beer tainting the spit they left in my mouth. Couldn't feel what was down between my legs. But now they revisit me. Is it because of what 'm doing?

550 Bastard screwed me, then robbed me.

551 We both have a date with some sexually confused out-of-towner. Three-ways aren't quite so bad. Misty isn't the brightest girl. But she's got a killer body to focus on. It's okay to be turned on by that. The evening's little snort party will help me out too.

565 I do, find her already mostly naked. The guy, who's a totally forgettable middle-aged nothing, is completely naked. ...The dude, who isn't much down there either, despite it being at full mast, turns his attention away from Misty, focuses on me. What are you waiting for? Time is money, you know. Like it's going to take him much time at all. But whatever. It is his money. And less time is better. Misty distracts him with her yummy boobs and I start to pull my Tshirt over my head Suddenly the door explodes behind me. What the...? Something-- bear or bulldozer--knocks me face forward to the floor, forcing my breath into the Page Content carpet. knocks me face forward to the floor, forcing my breath into the carpet. Yells, What the fuck, as my right kidney takes two massive punches. My shirt is still over my head and I can't see a damn thing as I fight for air. But I hear crack-crack-crack. And the room goes silent, except for strained breathing, right above me. And the room goes silent, except for strained breathing, right above me. And You fucking whore. It is Chris's voice. You promised... no more... you said... and you... he means me. aid... and you... he means me.my God. Is he going to kill me? ...Snap! Lightning? White-hot. Electric. Shattering. My back. Pieces. Bone. Shattering. My back. Pieces. Bone. Suck air. Where? Can't... No, please. Ronnie? Sorry. So sorry. Ron...

570 I've managed four or five showers, when the man of the hour wanted a motel room. More often, it's the seat of his car. Quick and easy, five minutes or less. No emotion.

572 "...I mean except to tell me to suck harder, or..."

587 "I was just hoping maybe you had a little something in your pocket." I run my knee up over his bulging groin. "Something besides that, I mean, and something to take me down." ...He wants to get off, not an easy thing, high on meth. I hate doing guys on meth. Takes too long. But hey, this was my deal. ...You wanna pay for one and fuck for one, or what? We start to walk. ...You never seen black tar? Baby, it's the best. Believe me, those boys in Mexico know their shit. Now come over here. Take a taste of this. ...Never tried it, but guess I'm gonna. Ol' Lorenzo gets a ride around the world. Doesn't take as long as I thought.

599 How much to do the two of you? ..."Three hundred for all you can eat." Right on. Bermuda reaches into his back pocket.

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Administrative Services

Get a weekly dose of our events and services

Reading Public Library

64 Middlesex Avenue

Reading, MA 01867

781-942-6709

rdgadmin@noblenet.org



Admin, Reading <rdgadmin@noblenet.org>

Re: Fw: Tricks - Request for Reconsideration

1 message

Tue, Jul 11, 2023 at 9:48 AM

To: "Admin, Reading" <rdgadmin@noblenet.org>

Hello,

Thank you for letting me know.

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)

On Tuesday, July 11, 2023, 9:46 AM, Admin, Reading <rdgadmin@noblenet.org> wrote:

Thank you for your email. It has been received and forwarded to the Library Director.

On Mon, Jul 10, 2023 at 9:49 PM wrote:

Hello,

See attached request for reconsideration regarding Tricks by Ellen Hopkins.

Thank you for your consideration.

Regards,

--

Administrative Services

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Reading Public Library

[64 Middlesex Avenue](#)

[Reading, MA 01867](#)

781-942-6709

rdgadmin@noblenet.org

FORM TO REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS

Date: July 10, 2023
Name: _____
Address: Reading
Email: _____
Telephone: _____

You represent: Self Organization: (Please Name) _____

MATERIAL FOR RECONSIDERATION

Format: Teen Fiction Hop
Title: Tricks
Author / Date: Ellen Hopkins
Call #: Not Sure

1. What brought this material to your attention?
A concerned parent who wants to know why books containing raping children, child molestation, child prostitution and other sexually explicit content are in our town public library?
2. Have you examined or read the entire item? If not, why?
The book is over 600 pages and I have not read it cover to cover, but have read several sections and excerpts.
3. What concerns you about the material? Please be specific
Book contains sexually explicit content involving minors including child rape, abuse, illegal drug use, violence, underage drinking and adult and child prostitution. It is not appropriate for the library and certainly not appropriate for children to read in the teen section
4. Are there materials you suggest that provide additional information and/or other viewpoints on this topic?
Content involving minors including child rape, abuse, illegal drug use, violence, underage drinking and adult and child prostitution does not belong in our public town library and is not appropriate for children to read.
5. What action are you requesting the Board of Library Trustees to consider?
Would like the book removed from the town library. Would like the book removed from the teen section. Would like an audit performed to ensure other books like this are not allowed.
Dr. Seuss books have been removed but books like this are appropriate for our children?

Signature _____

Date July 10, 2023

Please return the completed form to a staff member at any service desk or email to rdgadmin@noblinet.org. You will be notified of when the Board is scheduled to review this request.



Clemente, Meaghan <mclemente@noblenet.org>

Fwd: future Agenda item

Trustee, Reading <rpltrustee@noblenet.org>

Mon, Jul 10, 2023 at 9:12 AM

To: Michelle Filleul <filleul@noblenet.org>, Meaghan Clemente <mclemente@noblenet.org>

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Nancy Docktor**

Date: Mon, Jul 10, 2023 at 7:24 AM

Subject: future Agenda item

To: <rpltrustee@noblenet.org>

RE: b. Request for Reconsideration: "Tricks" by Ellen Hopkins and "The Best of Assigned Male" by Sophie Labelle

Dear Library Board Members

I am writing in support of ALL the Reading Library books in circulation. It is upsetting that attempts to restrict and ban material that one individual has concerns with impinges on everyone else's right to education. The practice of book banning is a threat to education and democracy itself. Please do not cater to the whims of such extremism.

Might I suggest a Town wide reading and discussion of Fahrenheit 451?

Nancy Docktor
371 Pearl St



Clemente, Meaghan <mclemente@noblenet.org>

Fwd: Monday Meeting

1 message

Trustee, Reading <rpltrustee@noblenet.org>

Wed, Aug 9, 2023 at 9:08 AM

To: Meaghan Clemente <mclemente@noblenet.org>, Michelle Filleul <filleul@noblenet.org>

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Jodi Cloney**

Date: Tue, Aug 8, 2023 at 12:15 PM

Subject: Monday Meeting

To: <rpltrustee@noblenet.org>

Hello

I am writing in support of the book Tricks. I think it is important for kids to have access to all kinds of stories through the library.

I am a resident of N. Reading but please let me know if there is any way I could be of support because I have heard a number of folks are planning to attend the meeting on Monday who are opposed to the book.

Thanks,
Jodi

From: Geraldine Tolman
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 10:55 AM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Banning of Books

Please do not give in to any attempts to ban books.

Thank you,
Geri Tolman
547 Summer Ave
Reading, MA

From: Mary Rienzo
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 11:00 AM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Attempt to ban books in Reading

Book bans are censorship and all public library's should be free from such. Please do not succumb to the hate and fear of subjects that pervades some people to request books be banned.

I support all book access in our town.

Your work is hard. Please know you have my support.

Mary Rienzo
150 High St
Reading

From: Steve Theo
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 11:05 AM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Tricks

Please do not ban Tricks, or any books for that matter.

Thanks,
Stephen Theodoridis
22 Union St. #1

From: Lynda Hersey
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 11:05 AM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Banning books

Stop the banning of all books. Let parents decide what's appropriate.

From: Kelli Bacon
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 11:06 AM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Book Ban

Good morning,

I am (almost) a lifelong resident of Reading and have just purchased a house to move back to town after a year away from Reading.

I was so sorry to hear of a potential book ban - the teen book Tricks. As a parent (and a librarian by training) I soundly reject the idea of any book ban at the Reading Public Library.

Please let me know if there is anyone else I should contact with my concerns.

Thank you for all you do to support the greatest suburban library I know.

Kelli Bacon

From:
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 11:09 AM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Please reject any attempt to ban Tricks from our library!

Please reject any attempt to ban *Tricks* from our library!

From: Deb
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 11:09 AM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Please reject any attempts to ban Tricks from the library.

Sent from my iPhone

From: Beth Mosier
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 11:11 AM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Please reject any attempt to ban Tricks from our library

Or any other book. Do not take away citizens right to choose what to read or right.
Thank you!
Beth Mosier

Sent from my iPad

From: v rimkunas
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 11:20 AM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Book ban

Please reject any attempt to ban *Tricks* from our library.

From: Eric P. Heinemann
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 11:21 AM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Book ban

Do not ban any books including Tricks from our library

From: Samantha Scola
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 11:33 AM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Reject the book challenge

Please reject any attempt to ban *Tricks* from our library. My six year old son and I love and appreciate the hard work of the librarians and library staff.

Thank you,

Samantha Scola
Francis Drive, Reading, MA

From: Janice Baker
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 11:37 AM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Tricks and other books

My husband Ted and I are strongly against banning books in our library. Fully understand if you determine some books should have age or other restrictions.

Thank you so much for all the wonderful work you do for our community!

Janice and Ted Baker
15 Tamarack Rd
Reading, MA 01867

Sent from my iPhone

From: Katrina Madden
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 11:39 AM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org

Dear Reading Public Library Board of Trustees,

I understand that there will be a meeting on Monday regarding possibly banning the book Tricks by Ellen Hopkins at our library. Please do not ban this book. Books need to be available for those who want to read them.

Thank you for all that you do to make our library a welcoming space for all members of our community.

Sincerely,
Katrina Madden
109 Prescott Street
Reading

From: Amy Stephens
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 11:50 AM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Book Ban

I understand there is an ongoing attempt to ban another book, *Tricks*, from the Reading Public Library. I wanted to write to urge the Board of Library Trustees to reject any attempt to ban this book from the library.

Thank you,
Amy Sane

From: Linda L. King
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 11:51 AM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Another book banning?

Please OPPOSE any effort to ban the book "Tricks."

Thanks you.

Linda King
836 Main Street
Reading

From: Al Mosier
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 11:56 AM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Book ban? NO!

Please protect our first amendment rights by refusing to ban the book TRICKS. Parents should decide whether the book is suitable for their OWN children, not someone else's.

Al Mosier
30 Taylor Drive

Sent from my iPhone

From: Carolyn Galiza
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 12:07 PM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Book Bans

Board of Trustees,

As a long time resident of Reading, I am strongly against banning any books. People who do not want to read a book can choose not to read it. They should not be able to make that decision for everyone else.

Please keep *Tricks* available to all residents who want to read it.

Sincerely,
Carolyn Galiza MD
38 Temple Street
Reading, MA 01867

Sent from my iPhone

From: Kim Myatt
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 12:14 PM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: No Book Banning Please

Please reject any attempt to ban *Tricks* from our library.

Thank you,
Kim Myatt

From: Christine Curtin
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 12:31 PM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Banned Book Target - Tricks

To Whom it May Concern:

I strongly urge the Board of Trustees to reject the idea of banning the book Tricks by Ellen Hopkins, or really any book. It is our place as parents to decide what our children are ready to read. It is outside our rights to determine what all children should read.

Thank you,

Christine Curtin
Reading Resident

From: Travis Estes
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 12:40 PM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Please reject banning attempt for Tricks

Board of Library Trustees,

Given the upcoming meeting to consider the banning request for Tricks, I want to express my opposition to this request as a Reading resident and parent. **Please reject the banning request** and uphold the integrity and community value of our amazing library.

Thank you,

Travis Estes

From: Carolyn Whiting
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 12:55 PM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Please Reject Book Ban Attempt

Hi Reading Public Library Trustees,
I am writing to urge you to please reject any attempt to ban the book "Tricks" from our wonderful library.

I appreciate you and the work that you do in support of our library.

Thank you!

Carolyn Whiting
17 Chestnut Road
Reading MA 01867

From: Brandy King
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 12:59 PM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Support for keeping "Tricks" at the library

Dear Board,

Here is an email I just wrote to the RPL librarians, wanted you to see it too:

"Dear Librarians,

Wanted to send you some support as you face another attempted book ban for Tricks. Just yesterday I was in the teen section looking for books with LGBTQ characters for my son who is part of that community. A librarian helped me find some and he was so excited when I brought them home. It is so important to me that he have access to books with characters he can relate to, and more broadly, for him to have access to books with characters from ALL kinds of backgrounds so he can develop his sense of empathy for people who are different from him. Thank you for all you do to make a diverse collection of books available and to protect the freedom for families and individuals to choose books appropriate for themselves.

Best,

Brandy King, MLIS"

From: Peggy Harrington
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 1:11 PM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Tricks

Hello,

I am a Reading resident of 29 years. My husband and I have raised two children who went through the Reading Public school system. We have enjoyed the Reading Public Library and appreciate the hard work of the staff.

We are totally against banning the book Tricks. Please allow parents and families make that decision themselves.

Thank you

Peggy Harrington

12 Franklin Terrace, Reading, MA 01867

From:
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 1:17 PM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Books in the library

Dear Amy Lannon, Michelle Filleul and Dr. Sudeshna Chatterjee

The Reading Public library is exposing children to PORNOGRAPHY with books like Tricks, Gender Queer and others. This is wrong! This damages the child's mind. They should be concerned about being children and playing not exposed to how to give blow jobs and seeing different positions to have sex. Would you like your child or grandchild having sex at 11 years old? Wouldn't you rather see them having fun outdoors, swing on a swing set or playing a game of kickball, swimming at the beach or pool, riding their bike - All things I did as a child.

Please let children be children.

Thank you,
C. Mathieu

From: Susan Woods
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 1:27 PM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Censorship threatens democracy

Dear board,

I am a 60 year old former Reading business owner and 23 year resident of Reading whose 3 children attended and graduated from the Reading public school system and used the public library from the time they were preschoolers. Never was there a time when the library board dictated to me which books my children could or could not read. That decision is a personal one and the viewpoints of individual library board members should not have any bearing on what citizens choose to read. Censorship limits freedom and deprives students of the right to knowledge.

Please fight against banning "Tricks" or any other book.

Sincerely,

Susan Woods

12 Benton Circle

Sent from my iPhone

From: Christy Magoon
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 1:44 PM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Ban Attempt

Dear Library Board Trustees,

It's come to my attention that there is a request to ban and/or remove another title from our local library. As a high school librarian and former English teacher, I fully support the right to read as well as the first amendment. I support the inclusion of this text (Ellen Hopkin's *Tricks*) as well as all Young Adult literature and ask that you please reject any attempts to ban *Tricks* from our library. I do not support banning books in any form.

Please refer to the American Library Association and their Freedom to Read statement, if you need additional support:

The Freedom to Read Statement
ala.org



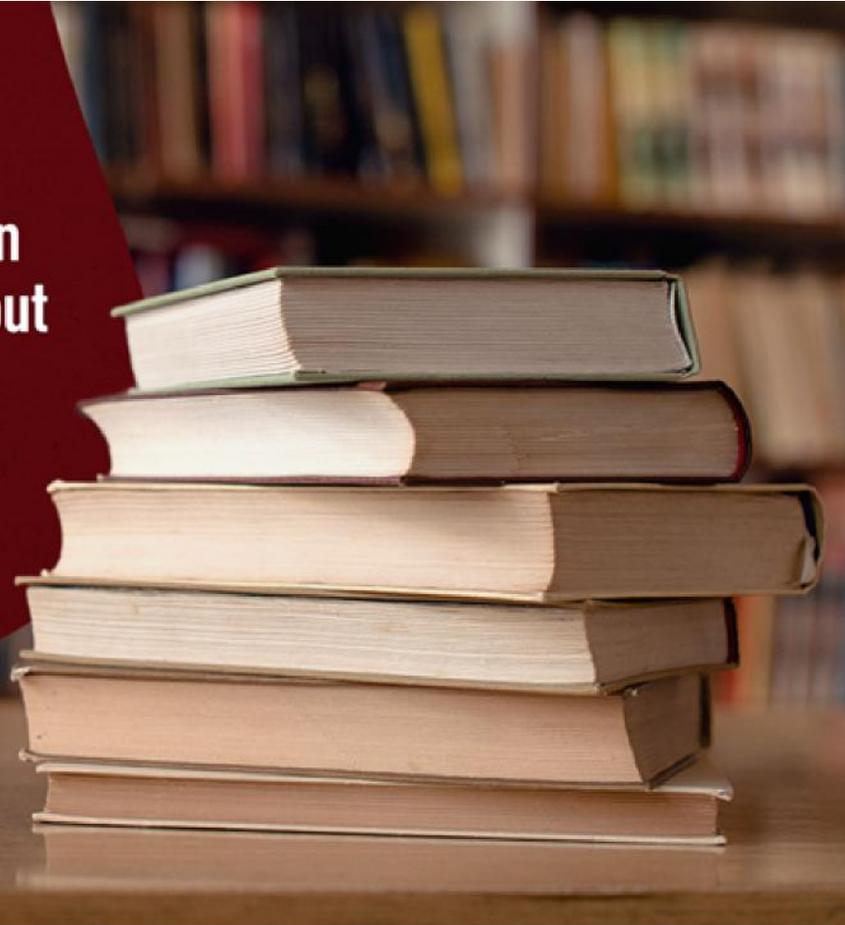
Thank you for your time and service.

Best regards,
Christy Magoon
350 Franklin St.
Reading

The Freedom to Read Statement

On June 25th, 1953 we said that
**we trust the people of this nation
to make their own decisions about
what they read and believe.**

*70 Years later, we still trust
them to make their own
decisions.*



On the 70th anniversary of the Freedom to Read Statement, we are asking for individuals, authors, organizations, and associations to sign on to support the freedom to read.

TAKE ACTION: SIGN YOUR NAME! (<https://uniteagainstbookbans.org/freedomtoread/>)

The freedom to read is essential to our democracy. It is continuously under attack. Private groups and public authorities in various parts of the country are working to remove or limit access to reading materials, to censor content in schools, to label "controversial" views, to distribute lists of "objectionable" books or authors, and to purge libraries. These actions apparently rise from a view that our national tradition of free expression is no longer valid; that censorship and suppression are needed to counter threats to safety or national security, as well as to avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as individuals devoted to reading and as librarians and publishers responsible for disseminating ideas, wish to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read.

Most attempts at suppression rest on a denial of the fundamental premise of democracy: that the ordinary individual, by exercising critical judgment, will select the good and reject the bad. We trust Americans to recognize propaganda and misinformation, and to make their own decisions about what they read and believe. We do not believe they are prepared to sacrifice their heritage of a free press in order to be "protected" against what others think may be bad for them. We believe they still favor free enterprise in ideas and expression.

These efforts at suppression are related to a larger pattern of pressures being brought against education, the press, art and images, films, broadcast media, and the Internet. The problem is not only one of actual censorship. The shadow of fear cast by these pressures leads, we suspect, to an even larger voluntary curtailment of expression by those who seek to avoid controversy or unwelcome scrutiny by government officials.

Such pressure toward conformity is perhaps natural to a time of accelerated change. And yet suppression is never more dangerous than in such a time of social tension. Freedom has given the United States the elasticity to endure strain. Freedom keeps open the path of novel and creative solutions, and enables change to come by choice. Every silencing of a heresy, every enforcement of an orthodoxy, diminishes the toughness and resilience of our society and leaves it the less able to deal with controversy and difference.

Now as always in our history, reading is among our greatest freedoms. The freedom to read and write is almost the only means for making generally available ideas or manners of expression that can initially command only a small audience. The written word is the natural medium for the new idea and the untried voice from which come the original contributions to social growth. It is essential to the extended discussion that serious thought requires, and to the accumulation of knowledge and ideas into organized collections.

We believe that free communication is essential to the preservation of a free society and a creative culture. We believe that these pressures toward conformity present the danger of limiting the range and variety of inquiry and expression on which our democracy and our culture depend. We believe that every American community must jealously guard the freedom to publish and to circulate, in order to preserve its own freedom to read. We believe that publishers and librarians have a profound responsibility to give validity to that freedom to read by making it possible for the readers to choose freely from a variety of offerings.

The freedom to read is guaranteed by the Constitution. Those with faith in free people will stand firm on these constitutional guarantees of essential rights and will exercise the responsibilities that accompany these rights.

We therefore affirm these propositions:

1. *It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those that are unorthodox, unpopular, or considered dangerous by the majority.*

Creative thought is by definition new, and what is new is different. The bearer of every new thought is a rebel until that idea is refined and tested. Totalitarian systems attempt to maintain themselves in power by the ruthless suppression of any concept that challenges the established orthodoxy. The power of a democratic system to adapt to change is vastly strengthened by the freedom of its citizens to choose widely from among conflicting opinions offered freely to them. To stifle every nonconformist idea at birth would mark the end of the democratic process. Furthermore, only through the constant activity of weighing and selecting can the democratic mind attain the strength demanded by times like these. We need to know not only what we believe but why we believe it.

2. *Publishers, librarians, and booksellers do not need to endorse every idea or presentation they make available. It would conflict with the public interest for them to establish their own political, moral, or aesthetic views as a standard for determining what should be published or circulated.*

Publishers and librarians serve the educational process by helping to make available knowledge and ideas required for the growth of the mind and the increase of learning. They do not foster education by imposing as mentors the patterns of their own thought. The people should have the freedom to read and consider a broader range of ideas than those that may be held by any single librarian or publisher or government or church. It is wrong that what one can read should be confined to what another thinks proper.

3. *It is contrary to the public interest for publishers or librarians to bar access to writings on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author.*

No art or literature can flourish if it is to be measured by the political views or private lives of its creators. No society of free people can flourish that draws up lists of writers to whom it will not listen, whatever they may have to say.

4. *There is no place in our society for efforts to coerce the taste of others, to confine adults to the reading matter deemed suitable for adolescents, or to inhibit the efforts of writers to achieve artistic expression.*

To some, much of modern expression is shocking. But is not much of life itself shocking? We cut off literature at the source if we prevent writers from dealing with the stuff of life. Parents and teachers have a responsibility to prepare the young to meet the diversity of experiences in life to which they will be exposed, as they have a responsibility to help them learn to think critically for themselves. These are affirmative responsibilities, not to be discharged simply by preventing them from reading works for which they are not yet prepared. In these matters values differ, and values cannot be legislated; nor can machinery be devised that will suit the demands of one group without limiting the freedom of others.

5. *It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept the prejudgment of a label characterizing any expression or its author as subversive or dangerous.*

The ideal of labeling presupposes the existence of individuals or groups with wisdom to determine by authority what is good or bad for others. It presupposes that individuals must be directed in making up their minds about the ideas they examine. But Americans do not need others to do their thinking for them.

6. *It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians, as guardians of the people's freedom to read, to contest encroachments upon that freedom by individuals or groups seeking to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large; and by the government whenever it seeks to reduce or deny public access to public information.*

It is inevitable in the give and take of the democratic process that the political, the moral, or the aesthetic concepts of an individual or group will occasionally collide with those of another individual or group. In a free society individuals are free to determine for themselves what they wish to read, and each group is free to determine what it will recommend to its freely associated members. But no group has the right to take the law into its own hands, and to impose its own concept of politics or morality upon other members of a democratic society. Freedom is no freedom if it is accorded only to the accepted and the inoffensive. Further, democratic societies are more safe, free, and creative when the free flow of public information is not restricted by governmental prerogative or self-censorship.

7. *It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians to give full meaning to the freedom to read by providing books that enrich the quality and diversity of thought and expression. By the exercise of this affirmative responsibility, they can demonstrate that the answer to a "bad" book is a good one, the answer to a "bad" idea is a good one.*

The freedom to read is of little consequence when the reader cannot obtain matter fit for that reader's purpose. What is needed is not only the absence of restraint, but the positive provision of opportunity for the people to read the best that has been thought and said. Books are the major channel by which the intellectual inheritance is handed down, and the principal means of its testing and growth. The defense of the freedom to read requires of all publishers and librarians the utmost of their faculties, and deserves of all Americans the fullest of their support.

We state these propositions neither lightly nor as easy generalizations. We here stake out a lofty claim for the value of the written word. We do so because we believe that it is possessed of enormous variety and usefulness, worthy of cherishing and keeping free. We realize that the application of these propositions may mean the dissemination of ideas and manners of expression that are repugnant to many persons. We do not state these propositions in the comfortable belief that what people read is unimportant. We believe rather that what people read is deeply important; that ideas can be dangerous; but that the suppression of ideas is fatal to a democratic society. Freedom itself is a dangerous way of life, but it is ours.

This statement was originally issued in May of 1953 by the Westchester Conference of the American Library Association and the American Book Publishers Council, which in 1970 consolidated with the American Educational Publishers Institute to become the Association of American Publishers.

Adopted June 25, 1953, by the ALA Council and the AAP Freedom to Read Committee; amended January 28, 1972; January 16, 1991; July 12, 2000; June 30, 2004.

A Joint Statement by:

American Library Association (/)

Association of American Publishers (<http://www.publishers.org/>)

Subsequently endorsed by:

American Booksellers for Free Expression (<http://www.bookweb.org/abfe>)

The Association of American University Presses (<http://www.aaupnet.org/>)

The Children's Book Council (<http://www.cbcbooks.org/>)

Freedom to Read Foundation (<http://www.ftrf.org>)

National Association of College Stores (<http://www.nacs.org/>)

National Coalition Against Censorship (<http://www.ncac.org/>)

National Council of Teachers of English (<http://www.ncte.org/>)

The Thomas Jefferson Center for the Protection of Free Expression

From: Emily Maughan
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 2:05 PM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Book ban attempt yet again

Please refuse to ban the book Tricks! And please consider instituting a policy whereby there are reasonable repercussions for book ban petitioners who waste valuable librarian time with their bigoted, ignorant, and foolish attempts to ban books that they fear. Thank you. Emily Maughan

From:
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 2:14 PM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Against banning Tricks

Dear Board of Library Trustees,

Please reject any attempt to ban *Tricks* from our library."
Please join in and keep our library books open and free for all.

Sincerely,

Jill Mayberry

Reading resident

From:
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 3:07 PM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Please, no banning of books

Respectfully, as a resident of Reading, I ask that the Board reject any attempt to ban *Tricks* from our library.
Thank You,
Joe Harrington

From: Lindsay Conti
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 3:12 PM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Tricks

Dear Board of Trustees,

Please reject any attempt to ban *Tricks* from our library. It's not up to a few people to decide what others can read. Nor can others decide what my children can read.

Best,
Lindsay Conti

From:
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 4:19 PM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Tricks

Good Afternoon,

I am writing to encourage you to refrain from banning the book Tricks. The topic may not be appropriate for some teens. However, please continue to support the inherent right to choose.

Thank you.
Michele

Sent from my T-Mobile 4G LTE Device

From: Eileen Collins
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 4:49 PM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Book Banning

Please do not let this happen here. I support the Library Trustees to uphold free speech in Reading and to refuse to ban books v

Eileen C. Collins

From:
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 4:52 PM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Please reject any attempt to ban Tricks from our library

I plan to attend the meeting this coming Monday. I am thoroughly opposed to book bans.

R. Michael McSweeney

15 Orchard Park Drive

Reading

Sent from my iPad

From: William Quinn
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 5:08 PM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Tricks

Please do not remove this novel from the shelves of Reading Public Library.

From:
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 5:27 PM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Book Ban Redux

Dear RPL Board of Trustees-

I am so sorry to hear of another attempt to ban a book at RPL. I have not read *Tricks* myself- hadn't even heard of it until now. This is not surprising since it is a YA novel published in 2015. It is not a new book with a current advertising campaign. Well, not until this latest ruckus began. Now it will have a revival.

Why is the book being challenged now? It's eight years old. Are we looking at a variation on Book of the Month Club? Is there a list of titles somewhere that will be used to mount a challenge every few months?

I did read multiple reviews of the book and agree it is not for younger teens. It is a disturbing book about disturbing topics involving vulnerable youth. It's about more than the sex scenes. How why those came about is the point of the book. The fact that it is written in free verse means, in my opinion, that the reader really wants to read it.

Surely parents in Reading are capable of supervising their own children, deciding what materials are appropriate reading. Do Reading parents really need a group of unrelated adults telling them what is suitable?

I am more concerned about cyberbullying, real life bullying, depression and the stresses of the pandemic on our youth than about a book. A book is inert. It won't attack anyone.

Long story short, please don't pull *Tricks* from the collection.

Thank you for your dedicated hard work. Please convey to all the Library staff that they are also admired for their dedication and knowledge.

Best regards,
Ellen Lenart
Reading resident

From:
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 6:25 PM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Banning books

Any effort to ban a particular book is allowing someone else to determine what is appropriate for everyone else. It cannot be allowed. Please once again reject any effort to remove a book from the library.

Kate Harrington
Reading resident

From: Steve Baker
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 7:02 PM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Please do not ban any books

To whom it may concern

I am not sure why we are again at this place of banning books. There is no place in our society for others to choose what we can and cannot write. Why can't there be a parents signature required section. Or must be accompanied by someone over 18? Banning is not a solution. It's enforcing your beliefs on others. I would think we are past this. Please stop the insanity.

Steve Baker

Sent from my iPhone

From: Susan Cuffe
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 8:14 PM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Please reject any attempt to ban Tricks from our library.

Sent from my iPad

From: Kelsey Flynn
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 8:14 PM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Please Do NOT Ban Tricks

I am writing to encourage the Reading Public Library to keep *Tricks* by Ellen Hopkins on your shelves and available to patrons. Please do NOT ban this book.

Thank you,
Kelsey Flynn

From:
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 8:15 PM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Book Banning Tricks

Please reject any attempt to ban *Tricks* from our library.

Thank you,
Tiffany McEachern

From:
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 9:21 PM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: book ban

Hello,

Please reject any attempt to ban *Tricks* from our library.
We don't need to narrow the worldview of our teens because someone else wants to decide what is best for everyone.

Thank you for your support on this matter.

Lauren Bennett

From: Jay Wallace
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 9:47 PM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Tricks

Greetings RPL Board of Trustees,

Please reject any attempt to ban "Tricks" from our library.

Thank you,
Jay Wallace
Forest St., Reading

From: Martha Moore
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 10:44 PM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Banning books

Dear Board of Library Trustees:

I am concerned to hear that there is another attempt to ban a book from the library.

I am also concerned that the hearing on this is on August 14. I have requested a copy of the book to review, but there are none now available in the Noble network. Please do not vote to ban a book that is not available in time for the public to form an informed opinion on this matter. If the hearing about the last book banning attempt is any indication, people at that hearing were reading out loud descriptions of a book they had actually never read themselves and taking excerpts of the book out of context.

Though I would prefer that the Library Board of Trustees not be in the business of banning any books, I would at least ask that you move to continue the hearing to a month later to allow time for people to read the book in question before they speak at the hearing.

Thank you,
Martha Moore
102 Sanborn Ln, Reading, MA 01867



Clemente, Meaghan <mclemente@noblenet.org>

Fwd: In support of Tricks

Trustee, Reading <rpltrustee@noblenet.org>

Thu, Aug 10, 2023 at 9:35 AM

To: Meaghan Clemente <mclemente@noblenet.org>, Michelle Filleul <filleul@noblenet.org>

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Paula Tucci**

Date: Thu, Aug 10, 2023 at 9:29 AM

Subject: In support of Tricks

To: <rpltrustee@noblenet.org>

Dear Board of Trustees,

I understand there is another attempt to ban a book from Reading Public Library.

I hope your board will continue to offer all books at our library, which of course is a public library. Offering a full spectrum of materials, including *Tricks*, is important for a public library to do so that learners who wish to more fully understand the world and to think on their own behalf can do so.

If a parent deems a book inappropriate for their child, the parent is free to act as a parent and say no. It is, however, inappropriate for the parent to ask the public library to be in the business of doing their parenting.

I thank you for your attention to this matter and for serving in this important library function.

Paula Tucci
8 Buckskin Drive



Clemente, Meaghan <mclemente@noblenet.org>

Fwd: Book bans

1 message

Trustee, Reading <rpltrustee@noblenet.org>

Thu, Aug 10, 2023 at 12:15 PM

To: Michelle Filleul <filleul@noblenet.org>, Meaghan Clemente <mclemente@noblenet.org>

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Emily Lindemer**

Date: Thu, Aug 10, 2023 at 11:03 AM

Subject: Book bans

To: <rpltrustee@noblenet.org>

Hi,

I am a resident of Reading, and I am writing to ask that the Board of Library Trustees reject any attempt to ban *Tricks* from our library.

Banning books is a bad road for our town to go down!

Thank you,

Emily Lindemer



Clemente, Meaghan <mclemente@noblenet.org>

Fwd: Stand strong against attempts at censorship

1 message

Trustee, Reading <rpltrustee@noblenet.org>

Thu, Aug 10, 2023 at 12:16 PM

To: Michelle Filleul <filleul@noblenet.org>, Meaghan Clemente <mclemente@noblenet.org>

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Liam Loscalzo**

Date: Thu, Aug 10, 2023 at 11:29 AM

Subject: Stand strong against attempts at censorship

To: <rpltrustee@noblenet.org>

Dear Board of Trustees,

I recently learned that there is yet another attempt to have a book, *Tricks*, banned from our library, and I wanted to voice my strong opposition to this effort. I was proud to see the Board unanimously reject the last attempt to remove a book from the collection, and hope to see the same again.

Thank you,
Liam Loscalzo
59 Federal St



Clemente, Meaghan <mclemente@noblenet.org>

Fwd: book banning & August 14th meeting

1 message

Trustee, Reading <rpltrustee@noblenet.org>

Thu, Aug 10, 2023 at 12:17 PM

To: Michelle Filleul <filleul@noblenet.org>, Meaghan Clemente <mclemente@noblenet.org>

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Michele Clopper**

Date: Thu, Aug 10, 2023 at 11:33 AM

Subject: book banning & August 14th meeting

To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org <rpltrustee@noblenet.org>

Hello,

I would like to voice my support for no book banning in Reading. Tricks should be able to remain on the shelves of the Reading Public Library and individuals should be given to make their own decisions about book selection.

Sincerely,

Michele Clopper she, her

MEMORANDUM

TO: Amy Lannon, Library Director; Board of Library Trustees
FROM: Jamie Penney, Head of Collection Services
DATE: July 27, 2023
RE: Recommendation for RFR for “Assigned Male” by Sophie Labelle

On Wednesday, June 28, 2023, the Reading Public Library (RPL) received a Request for Reconsideration of Materials (RFR) with the requested action to remove the book “Assigned Male” by Sophie Labelle. RPL staff notified the Board. The Collection Services team assessed this title.

RECOMMENDATION

This title conforms to RPL’s Collection Development Policy. Upon review, the reading level of the text suggests this would be better located in the teen (young adult) collection.

BACKGROUND

As a reminder, the RPL [Collection Development Policy](#) states “[t]he Board recognizes its right and responsibility to provide worthwhile materials of interest to its readers, including those on all sides of controversial issues” and that “[t]he Library does not advocate particular beliefs or views. The selection of any given item is not an endorsement of the viewpoint expressed.” The RPL selection process includes the use of authoritative professional reviews, popular reviews, publishers’ catalogs, standard lists of basic works, firsthand examination, and patron requests. Additionally, print and non-print materials meet one or more of these criteria.

- Relevance to the library’s mission and core values
- Current usefulness, interest, and/or permanent value
- Popular demand
- Relevance to the existing collection
- Standards of quality in content and format
- Price

REVIEWS

Source: Marie, Tara. Dream of Brighter Tomorrows: Should You Be Reading ‘Assigned Male?’ in Comics Alliance, Sept 7, 2016.

<https://web.archive.org/web/20210125114147/https://comicsalliance.com/assigned-male-reading-guide/>

Excerpt; “Imagine if the gang of Peanuts were queer-friendly and talked about the trials of being queer youth, while still maintaining the lightness and softness that are synonymous with those strips. That’s what this comic is. Most stories that deal with trans people have them, at youngest, in their teenage years. But trans youth --- who are out, living proud --- are real, and it’s wonderful that there’s a comic that can represent them.”

Source: At the Library: “The Best of Assigned Male,” by Sophie Labelle. In Waterloo Region Record, Jan 28, 2022. https://www.therecord.com/entertainment/books/at-the-library-the-best-of-assigned-male-by-sophie-labelle/article_19bc6b2b-7499-5449-87db-65935618926d.html

Excerpt: “Graphic novels provide a unique opportunity to explore topics in a way that can be highly engaging. Sophie Labelle’s “The Best of Assigned Male”, is also educational, and would be an excellent entry point for anyone over age 10 who wants to learn more about transgender experiences.”

Source: Alex Gino, Stonewall-Award winning author of Melissa's Story (a.k.a. GEORGE)
<https://us.jkp.com/products/the-best-of-assigned-male>

Excerpt: “Hurray for Stephie and her friends in The Best Of Assigned Male! Labelle's comics are wonderfully sharp, with all the wry humor and hearty indignation that transgender, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming kids deserve, and her written narrative provides valuable context. Get all the lip gloss!”

RPL AND NOBLE COLLECTION HOLDINGS

- Print copy ordered June 16, 2021
- Circulation data

Copies RPL	1	Copies NOBLE	2
Current Year circ RPL	10	Current Year circ NOBLE	14
Total circ RPL	37	Total circ NOBLE	49

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

COMMUNIUTY	COPIES	LOCATION
Andover	0	
Lynnfield	0	
North Reading	0	
Peabody	0	
Stoneham	0	
Wakefield	1	Adult Graphic Novels
Wilmington	0	
Woburn	0	

LIBRARY SERVICES COMMENT FORM

Date: 6/28/23
Name: * _____
Street: * _____
City, State, Zip: * Reading PA 01867
Email: * _____

*Required if you wish to receive a response to you comment.

Book: Assigned Mate - children's section

COMMENT:

my daughter found a book in children's section
that has content that is
instructing kids to use "lube"
if sex hurts. It is also
encouraging and advocating (vs educating)
inappropriate topics for small children

REQUESTED OR SUGGESTED ACTION

- 1) remove book
- 2) provide me w/ the stated criteria
for accepting books in circulation
- 3) reach out to me to discuss

comment
and part
revision

Thank you for your feedback! Please return the completed form to a staff member at any service desk.

Received ___/___/___ Response ___/___/___

REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS

Role of Reading Public Library

As stated in the Collection Development Policy (which is attached) the "Board of Trustees of the Reading Public Library endorses the Library Bill of Rights. The Board recognizes its right and responsibility to provide worthwhile materials of interest to its readers, including those on all sides of controversial issues. The criteria used by the professional staff when selecting materials are listed in the policy.

The Library does not advocate particular beliefs or views. The selection of any given item is not an endorsement of the viewpoint expressed. Library materials will not be marked in such a way as to show approval or disapproval. Access to library materials shall be controlled only to the extent necessary to protect them from danger or theft.

It is deemed the responsibility of parents 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 consider inappropriate.

If materials meet the criteria of selection, they will not be removed from the collection because of pressure by any individual group.

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.

Patron Name _____ Date 6/28/23
Address _____

Title Assigned Mate Author Sophia LeBelle
Format text: graphic novel

(over)

1. What brought this title to your attention?

title

2. What is it about this work that concerns you?

instructing children to use "lube" if sex hurts
references to "chick-w. the a-dick"

~~is~~ advocating sexual exploration

3. Did you read/listen/view it in its entirety? Yes No
If not, what parts?

4. What do you believe is the purpose or theme of this work?

~~advocacy~~

activism, advocacy of behavior, well beyond raising awareness

5. To what audience do you think it is aimed?

~~not for~~ it's clearly directed at kids
as many people as will buy it.

6. To whom would you recommend it?

mid teens @ best.

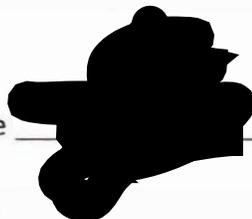
7. Are you aware of reviews of this work? Yes No

8. The library's collection development policy is attached. Do you think this work is in keeping with that policy?

Yes No

9. What resources would you suggest to provide additional information on this topic?

Signature _____



Date

10/28/23

Thank you.

The Director will review this complaint and respond.

Hey Frank!
I heard you're dating that freak?

When you kiss a
chick-with-a-dick, does it
taste like a boy?

Doesn't that make you gay, though?

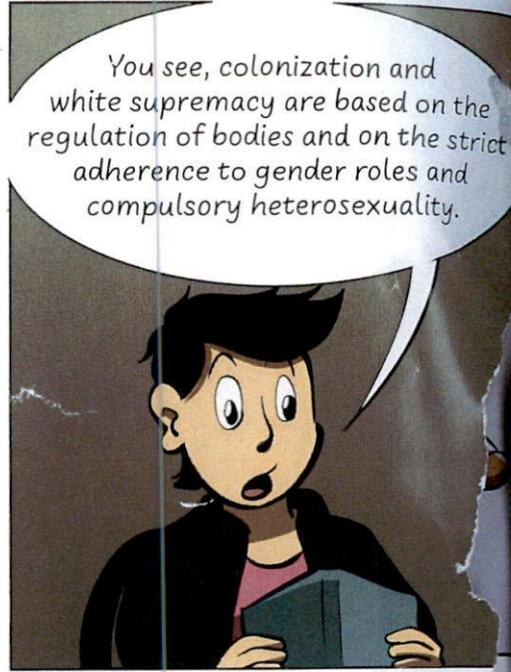
Did it let you
see its penis?

It's disgusting!

Frank...we've been
hugging for five minutes.

What's wrong?

Nothing. I love you.



nization and
are based on the
s and on the strict
ender roles and
eterosexuality.

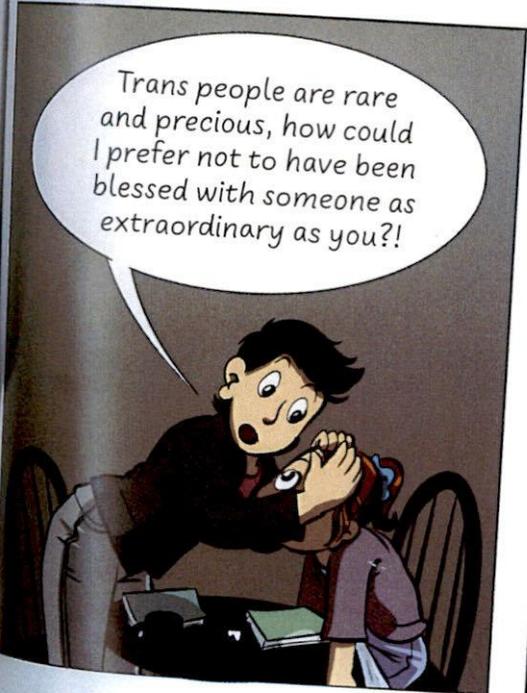


Mom, would you have preferred if I **wasn't** transgender?



WTF how dare you ask me that?!

t was really thanks Mom.
n sorry, weetie.

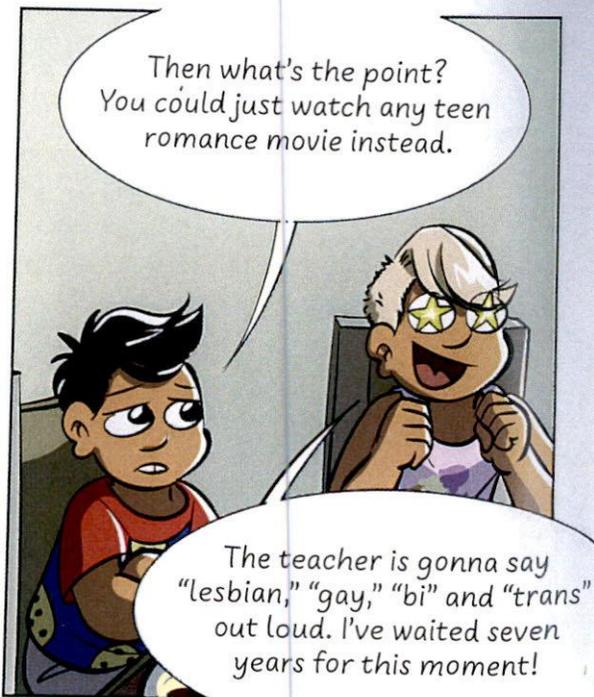
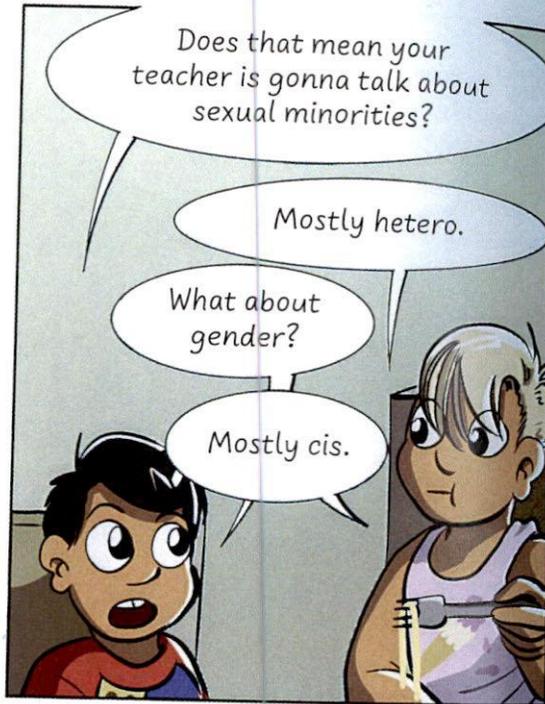
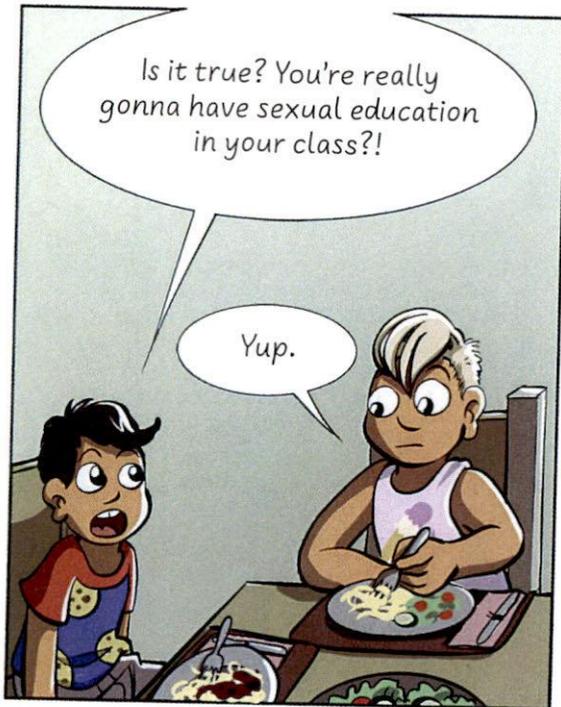


Trans people are rare and precious, how could I prefer not to have been blessed with someone as extraordinary as you?!



Aww thanks, Mom!

Don't **ever** ask me that again.



ans youth,
stress that
igma as we do
alth problems
communities.
nment issues
ose sight of
for you.



communicating
and expectations
important thing
remember.



ctly!

Consent means giving permission for something to happen or agreeing to do something.



And it's super important!

Being in a couple with someone doesn't automatically give you or your partner consent about anything.

You still have to ask!



Also, you're totally allowed to change your mind and take back your consent at any time.



Even if you're already half naked or something!

It's not consent if someone feels forced to give it.



It has to be an enthusiastic yes!

not fitting in,
g. I don't want
to **single me**
en more.



My friends often ask:
"Is sex supposed to
be painful?"



Well, I don't know what
they're doing, but if they
haven't agreed to some kind of
kinky pain, it's **not supposed**
to hurt and they probably
need **more lube.**



uly say that
nselves? That
ched the **pure**
f their being?
dreadful?



re me
mes.

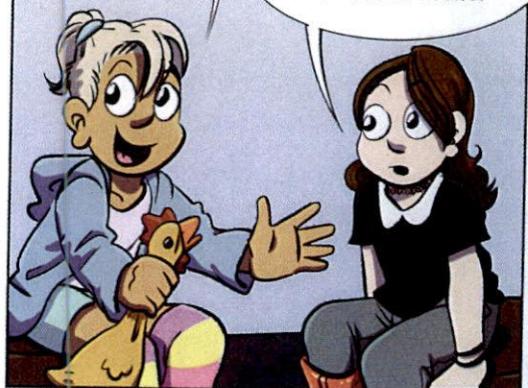
So...more lube.

Yup.



That's actually my advice
for so many things in life!

I wasn't prepared
to hear that.





Clemente, Meaghan <mclemente@noblenet.org>

Fwd: future Agenda item

Trustee, Reading <rpltrustee@noblenet.org>

Mon, Jul 10, 2023 at 9:12 AM

To: Michelle Filleul <filleul@noblenet.org>, Meaghan Clemente <mclemente@noblenet.org>

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Nancy Docktor**

Date: Mon, Jul 10, 2023 at 7:24 AM

Subject: future Agenda item

To: <rpltrustee@noblenet.org>

RE: b. Request for Reconsideration: "Tricks" by Ellen Hopkins and "The Best of Assigned Male" by Sophie Labelle

Dear Library Board Members

I am writing in support of ALL the Reading Library books in circulation. It is upsetting that attempts to restrict and ban material that one individual has concerns with impinges on everyone else's right to education. The practice of book banning is a threat to education and democracy itself. Please do not cater to the whims of such extremism.

Might I suggest a Town wide reading and discussion of Fahrenheit 451?

Nancy Docktor
371 Pearl St

From: Geraldine Tolman
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 10:55 AM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Banning of Books

Please do not give in to any attempts to ban books.

Thank you,
Geri Tolman
547 Summer Ave
Reading, MA

From: Mary Rienzo
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 11:00 AM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Attempt to ban books in Reading

Book bans are censorship and all public library's should be free from such. Please do not succumb to the hate and fear of subjects that pervades some people to request books be banned.

I support all book access in our town.

Your work is hard. Please know you have my support.

Mary Rienzo
150 High St
Reading

From: Lynda Hersey
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 11:05 AM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Banning books

Stop the banning of all books. Let parents decide what's appropriate.

From: Eileen Collins
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 4:49 PM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Book Banning

Please do not let this happen here. I support the Library Trustees to uphold free speech in Reading and to refuse to ban books v

Eileen C. Collins

From:
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 6:25 PM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Banning books

Any effort to ban a particular book is allowing someone else to determine what is appropriate for everyone else. It cannot be allowed. Please once again reject any effort to remove a book from the library.

Kate Harrington
Reading resident

From: Steve Baker
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 7:02 PM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Please do not ban any books

To whom it may concern

I am not sure why we are again at this place of banning books. There is no place in our society for others to choose what we can and cannot write. Why can't there be a parents signature required section. Or must be accompanied by someone over 18? Banning is not a solution. It's enforcing your beliefs on others. I would think we are past this. Please stop the insanity.

Steve Baker

Sent from my iPhone

From: Martha Moore
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 10:44 PM
To: rpltrustee@noblenet.org
Subject: Banning books

Dear Board of Library Trustees:

I am concerned to hear that there is another attempt to ban a book from the library.

I am also concerned that the hearing on this is on August 14. I have requested a copy of the book to review, but there are none now available in the Noble network. Please do not vote to ban a book that is not available in time for the public to form an informed opinion on this matter. If the hearing about the last book banning attempt is any indication, people at that hearing were reading out loud descriptions of a book they had actually never read themselves and taking excerpts of the book out of context.

Though I would prefer that the Library Board of Trustees not be in the business of banning any books, I would at least ask that you move to continue the hearing to a month later to allow time for people to read the book in question before they speak at the hearing.

Thank you,
Martha Moore
102 Sanborn Ln, Reading, MA 01867