



## Town of Reading Meeting Minutes

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### 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

Session: Open Session

Purpose: General Meeting

Version: Final

#### Attendees: **Members - Present:**

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

#### **Members - Not Present:**

#### **Others Present:**

Amy Lannon, Director; Michelle Filleul, Assistant Director;  
Meaghan Clemente, Administrative Assistant;

See attached sign-in sheets

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

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### Topics of Discussion:

- I. **Call to Order at 7:05 p.m.**
- II. **Public Comment**

Mr. Egan reviewed the procedures for public comment. Upwards of 45 minutes will be offered, with a two-minute limit per speaker. In-person and Zoom participants may speak and should kindly introduce themselves with their name and address. Mr. Egan will recognize each speaker and alternate between in-person and Zoom participants. Priority will be given to those who have not spoken. 1-minute and 30-second warnings will be presented. The audience should refrain from comments, interruptions, and applause.

Brian Curry of Haverhill Street in Reading introduced himself as the individual who filed the Request for Reconsideration of Materials (RFR) for *Tricks* by Ellen Hopkins due to inappropriate content surrounding rape, prostitution, and sexual acts. Mr. Curry feels that library staff should conduct a full audit of the collection to ensure that taxpayer dollars are not being wasted on materials that may be harmful to children's safety.

Rebecca Liberman of Pratt Street in Reading read aloud a letter from her daughter Amanda, who grew up visiting the Reading Public Library and read *Tricks* at the age of 14. The book had a lasting impact due to its portrayal of real-world issues. Ms. Liberman believes that the fear and prejudice driving people to ban this book are some of the very

issues the book itself discusses. Ms. Liberman credits the Library with providing the foundation for her later academic accomplishments, including award-winning HIV research at an international conference.

Tim Mathieu of Briarwood Avenue in Reading quoted reviews of *Tricks* and read aloud a passage from the book to emphasize its graphic nature. Mr. Mathieu believes that the horrors of sex trafficking could be conveyed without the graphic violence in this book, such as in the movie *Sound of Freedom* which was rated PG-13.

Kevin Lucey of Pearl Street in Reading read aloud a graphic passage from *Tricks* that he felt was uncomfortable even for adults. Mr. Lucey noted the harmful impact of pornography on children as cited in a scholarly study conducted by the American College of Pediatrics.

John Barrette of North Reading noted that distributing pornography to children under age 16 is a felony and suggested permission slips requiring parental consent to sign out Library materials with graphic content.

Joanne Miksis of Jackson Lane in Wakefield cited the legal definition of the transfer of obscene material to minors per Section 1470 of Title 18 of the United States Code. Ms. Miksis does not believe children should be reading harmful content containing rape, molestation, pedophilia, and other inappropriate topics.

Christopher Moriarty of Pearl Street in Reading believes *Tricks* is not in violation of obscenity laws. Mr. Moriarty believes that the book can help victims of sexual assault understand that they are not alone and that people should not make reading decisions for other people's children.

Cynthia Mathieu of Briarwood Avenue in Reading noted the obscenity exemption statute pertaining to law enforcement, medical professionals, educators, and libraries in certain instances. Ms. Mathieu believes exposure to pornographic material has a permanent negative impact on children.

Christine Hoag of Beaver Road in Reading believes political influences on the Left are oversexualizing youth as a means of exerting influence and control.

Lily Mitnacht of Cherry Lane Drive in Reading acknowledges that intense topics can be difficult to read about, but arm children with information to protect themselves from abuse. Ms. Mitnacht believes that failing to teach children about controversial topics does not keep them safer.

Lynn Dornick of Cherry Lane Drive in Reading is strongly opposed to banning the two books being considered, *Tricks* by Ellen Hopkins and *Assigned Male* by Sophie Labelle. Ms. Dornick believes that the books discuss important issues such as sexual exploitation and finding one's way as a transgender youth that reflects the reality of the world. Ms. Dornick suggested that future filings of requests for reconsideration require the signatures of verified Reading residents.

Carolyn Johnson of Thorndike Street in Reading implored the Board not to give in to a small group of residents dictating what books should be available at the Library under the guise of protecting children. Ms. Johnson believes parents should determine if and when their own children are ready for certain books.

Marcy McCauley of Walden Road in Wakefield spoke about the prevalence of graphic violence and alternative ways of developing awareness about the threats of predators,

trafficking, drugs, and sex abuse. Ms. McCauley believes younger children could become victims of experimentation if exposed to age-inappropriate content.

Vanessa Alvarado of Mt. Vernon Street in Reading believes that a national campaign to ban books is taking place at a local level and is an embarrassing waste of taxpayer dollars.

Sherilla Lestrade of Gould Street in Reading believes that people use the First Amendment when it is convenient to advance their own purposes. Ms. Lestrade advocated for everyone's right to raise and educate their own children through conversations and trust and to not restrict other people's access to information.

Keith Chudyk of Echo Avenue in Reading is against banning books, especially in a public library where materials are available to everyone.

Chuck Silva of Fairchild Drive in Reading does not believe people should risk having children see problematic material at the Library.

Alfred Santosuosso of Rustic Lane in Reading is greatly opposed to the presence of upsetting materials available at the Library and believes that there is confusion for children growing up in today's world, which could negatively impact future generations.

Liz Whitelam of Gilmore Avenue in Reading and owner of Whitelam Books believes that book people care about the community. Ms. Whitelam vouched for the well-trained, qualified, and caring Library staff who carefully select materials to help users process challenging information.

Michelle from Arlington is deeply disturbed and concerned about the graphic content in *Tricks* that is accessible to children.

Erin O'Brien of School Street in Reading is opposed to any kind of book ban and actively monitors what her children read. Ms. O'Brien believes individual families should decide what is best for them.

Rebecca Liberman of Pratt Street in Reading spoke about her daughter Amanda's experience as a sexual violence counselor with the Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network (RAINN) and the high rates of suicidal thoughts among LGBTQ youth. *Tricks* features characters representing all walks of life, socioeconomic status, and family situations. Ms. Liberman suggested more rigorous standards and rationales for book challenges.

Kevin Lucey of Pearl Street in Reading suggested that the Library staff begin evaluating materials made available to children and establish Library cards with parental controls and restrictions to limit access to graphic materials.

Marcy McCauley of Walden Road in Wakefield spoke about a recent violent assault in the South End, as well as the underreported details of a man who helped rescue her. Ms. McCauley believes that children who learn about age-inappropriate content may inflict abuse upon younger children.

A virtual public commenter noted that children can learn sexual information online and that the Library should be a safe place for all people to find books they are interested in. The commenter monitors their own children's Library access and does not believe in limiting the access of others.

Brian Curry of Haverhill Street in Reading emphasized the emotional nature of public comment and the importance of protecting children and establishing a common ground.

Ann Marie Bernsten of Brook Street in Reading emphasized the importance of examining the merit of the books in question and providing resources for dealing with sexual assault and other difficult situations.

Mr. Egan thanked all online and in-person commenters for sharing their strong feelings and officially closed the public comment session.

**III. Request for Reconsideration of Materials**  
**a. "Tricks" by Ellen Hopkins**

Ms. Lannon noted that the June 23<sup>rd</sup> request for reconsideration regarding *Tricks* by Ellen Hopkins is not being considered because the Library was unable to verify that the requestor was a Reading Resident as required by the Collection Development policy. However, the substance of this request is being addressed by a second request made for the same title filed by Mr. Curry on July 10<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. Lannon reviewed key aspects of the Library's collection development policy, which is available in full on the Library's website. The selection of any given item is not an endorsement of the viewpoint expressed. The great diversity of the Library's customers means that the Library must do more than provide materials for the common denominator to be effective. It is deemed the responsibility of parents and caregivers to determine what their children may read, watch, or listen to. The selection process is not restricted by the possibility that young people may obtain material their parents or caregivers consider inappropriate. If materials meet the criteria of selection, they will not be removed from the collection because of pressure by any individual or group.

Professional librarians engaged in the selection process consult authoritative resources such as professional and popular reviews, publishers' catalogs, standard lists of back works and core collections, firsthand examinations, patron requests, and patron requests in making decisions. Selection criteria including relevance to the library's mission and core values, current usefulness and interest, permanent value, popular demand, relevance to the existing collection, standards of quality in content and format, and price are also considered.

The Board was notified of Mr. Curry's July 10<sup>th</sup> request for reconsideration regarding *Tricks* by Ellen Hopkins. The Collection Services team assessed the book, which is a 640-page novel in verse originally published in 2009. This book has received positive reviews from reputable sources such as Booklist and School Library Journal and has also won several awards.

The Library first acquired the print and digital audiobook versions of the book in 2010. The Library's two copies of the book have circulated steadily since then. Ms. Lannon noted that the circulation of the book has increased in the past month due to the publicity of this issue. Mr. Egan clarified that there a total of six copies are available in the North of Boston Library Exchange (NOBLE) network, two of which are available at the Reading Public Library. Ms. Lannon noted that additional copies are ordered for multiple reasons, including demand or returned copies of overdue missing copies.

The Library reports that the book conforms to the Library's Collection Development Policy, is shelved appropriately, and should remain in the Teen collection. Removal from the collection based on the Request for Reconsideration is considered censorship by the American Library Association.



Ms. Verrier believes that caregivers should guide their children in making suitable choices at the Library, which may vary from family to family and child to child. Ms. Verrier also clarified that *Tricks* is located in the Teen collection and supports the book's presence there. Mr. Grimes agreed with Ms. Verrier and expressed respect for the Library staff and the collection development policy. Ms. Dubois supports the book's current placement in the Teen collection. Ms. Pillow-Gnanaratnam expressed her agreement and appreciation for the important conversations surrounding these controversial issues.

Mr. Popp expressed his full support for the Library staff, the collection development policy, and the book's current placement in the Teen collection. Mr. Popp believes that the book provides a realistic portrayal of teen issues such as addiction, sexuality, exploitation, and other stressful issues that should be discussed to inspire action and change. Mr. Popp noted that teens can easily access harmful materials online.

Mr. Egan expressed his faith and trust in the well-trained, educated, and dedicated professional Library staff. Mr. Egan believes that the book satisfies the requirements of the Library's collection development policy. Parents and guardians should continue to decide what content is appropriate and accessible in their own homes. People should feel free to avoid certain books and talk about why they find them objectionable.

Mr. Egan noted that the original request for reconsideration, which was later disqualified due to the non-residency status of the requestor, contained a word count of offensive words and other language substantially similar to online resources discussing objectionable content. There is a wealth of informational resources available to help adults with the analysis of appropriate books for children in their care. However, there is a difference between arming oneself with information and advocating for the full removal of the general public's access to materials from public libraries.

*Motion: Upon consideration of the July 10, 2023 Request for Reconsideration of Materials, to accept the Library's recommendation to keep Tricks by Ellen Hopkins in the Library's Teen collection.*

*(Verrier / Dubois)*

*Vote: Approved 6-0*

#### **b. "Assigned Male" by Sophie Labelle**

The Board was notified of a June 28<sup>th</sup> request for reconsideration regarding *The Best of Assigned Male* by Sophie Labelle. The Collection Services team assessed the book, which is a 351-page graphic novel anthology of an ongoing Canadian webcomic started in October 2014. The book has received positive reviews and recommendations from reputable sources, including Stonewall-Award-winning author Alex Gino.

The Library ordered a copy of the book in 2021 and it has circulated over 37 times since acquisition. The Library owns one of two copies within the NOBLE network. The Library reports that the book conforms to the Library's Collection Development Policy, has adequate circulation, and that complete removal from the collection based on the Request for Reconsideration is considered censorship by the American Library Association.

Upon further review, the Library recommends that the book would be better located in the Teen collection rather than the Children's collection. The book is an anthology that starts with a middle school experience and progresses through young adulthood which is reflected in the story, fluency, and reading level.

Ms. Lannon clarified for Mr. Egan that the Library only holds the *Assigned Male* anthology rather than individual editions of the comic. Mr. Grimes, Ms. Dubois, and Ms. Pillow-Gnanaratnam agreed that *The Best of Assigned Male* by Sophie Labelle conforms to the Library's collection development policy and agree with the Library's decision to move the book from the Children's collection to the Teen collection. Mr. Egan acknowledged that content and vocabulary evolve as children age and that concerns about suitability can be discussed directly with librarians rather than through time-consuming requests for reconsiderations.

*Motion: To reject the June 28, 2023 Request for Reconsideration for Assigned Male by Sophie Labelle and uphold the Library's decision to maintain the book in the Library's Teen collection.*

*(Verrier / Popp)*

*Vote: Approved 6-0*

Mr. Egan declared an official meeting break at 8:23 p.m.

#### **IV. Collection Development Policy and Request for Reconsideration Form**

##### **a. Review of updates/changes discussed in July**

The Trustee meeting reconvened at 8:26 p.m. Ms. Verrier thanked the Library staff for their hard work in preparing for this meeting.

Ms. Lannon reviewed revisions made to the Collection Development Policy and Request for Reconsideration form as discussed at the July meeting, including a one-year moratorium on the review of additional Requests for Reconsideration of the same title. A note regarding the public nature of all documents and emails received was also added to the policy and the form.

##### **b. Discussion and Vote**

Ms. Verrier noted various points that arose during the evening's public comment session. A more rigorous reconsideration process requiring petition signatures from multiple residents may be considered. Ms. Lannon and Mr. Egan confirmed that non-residents are legally allowed to speak at public comment, despite the policy requiring that only Reading residents are allowed to file Requests for Reconsideration. Mr. Egan acknowledged that further changes and research regarding additional layers to the policy could continue to be explored.

Mr. Egan suggested changing "may" to "will" regarding the release of identifying information of the requestor. Although Mr. Egan believes that requests for reconsideration should be judged on the content of the books and library policies, public requests for removal should be public records and may be included within public meeting packets. Contact information such as telephone numbers and email addresses may be redacted to protect individuals. Public records may be made available upon request.

Ms. Dubois and Ms. Verrier agreed with changing "may" to "will" to clarify the public nature of filing a request for reconsideration of library materials. Ms. Lannon suggested a grammatical rewording to "will require releasing certain identifying information". Mr. Grimes clarified that the policy should state "requestor's name" while the form should state "your name".

Ms. Verrier mentioned that a five-year moratorium period had originally been considered before being changed to one year. Ms. Dubois suggested compromising with a three-year moratorium period. Ms. Pillow-Gnanaratnam agreed that three is a good number to

consider. Ms. Verrier explained that librarians could use their professional expertise and judgment to catch any changes needed during moratorium periods. Ms. Lannon confirmed that librarians make changes as new information and circulation data become available in accordance with the collection development policy.

Ms. Verrier suggested adding two lines for addresses to accommodate requestors who may live in apartment buildings. Ms. Dubois proposed adding "unit #" or "apartment #" to the address line. Ms. Verrier requested that once updated, a fillable pdf version form be available to accommodate users.

Mr. Popp briefly left the meeting at approximately 8:40 p.m.

*Motion: To accept the changes to the Collection Development Policy and Request for Reconsideration Form as presented.*

*(Grimes / Pillow-Gnanaratnam)*

*Vote: Approved 5-0*

## **V. Meeting Room Use Report**

Ms. Filleul reported that community usage of meeting room space has reached 75% of pre-pandemic levels in comparison to 2019. Usage has increased steadily since the pandemic began. In FY22, 126 outside organizations used the space. In FY23, 200 outside organizations used the space. Library events rose from 598 events in FY22 to 698 events in FY23. Ms. Filleul reported that this level of usage will be maintained in FY24. Meeting room availability will be more heavily publicized over the next year.

Mr. Popp returned to the meeting at approximately 8:45 p.m.

The Library is working with the Town's Information Technology department to upgrade technology in both the community and conference rooms to allow for more streamlined hybrid meeting options. Equipment is available from prior upgrades to Town Hall and the Police Department. Communications with an AV company previously used by the Town have begun to start the installation within a projected six-month timeframe. Ms. Filleul reported that the Library will be paying for the costs of the installation. Ms. Filleul is also working with the Town Treasurer to implement secure procedures for credit card meeting room payments and hopes to have this available within six months as well.

Ms. Verrier inquired about continued usage by organizations compared to pre-pandemic. Ms. Filleul reported that most organizations have returned and virtual meeting spaces continue to be an option.

## **VI. Meeting Room Policy and Fees Review**

### **a. Minor operational updates and corrections**

Ms. Filleul noted several minor edits to the Meeting Room policy. Language has been changed to allow all Reading residents to rent meeting space, removing the need to have a Library card. A Reading address is required when making a reservation and the Library is working on a way to verify addresses. Reading residents can sponsor outside organizations.

Fees and fundraising requests must be approved by the Board, rather than the Library Director. The placement of donation boxes in the Library must also be approved by the

Board. Ms. Verrier noted a recent example where the Board had a collective discussion allowing the Girl Rising Club to use Library meeting space, sell concessions, and raise funds for charities benefitting women in need during a showing of the movie *Brave*.

The word "online" was removed regarding reservations, which can also occur over the phone or with Library staff. The wording was also changed to clarify that reservations must be submitted at least five business days in advance of the event. Initial agreed-upon fees may be subject to change if additional support or services are requested after the fact. Ms. Verrier suggested that technical assistance must be requested five business days in advance as well. Ms. Filleul thanked Senior Library Associate Louise Hetherington for her help in revising the policy. Ms. Lannon noted that rental fees remain unchanged, despite rising costs due to inflation.

**VII. Library Landscape Committee**  
**a. Adding Ex Officio (non-voting) members**

Ms. Lannon and Ms. Dubois recently met with Town Manager Fidel Maltez, Community Development Director Andrew MacNichol, and Economic Development Director Benjamin Cares regarding the progress of the Ad Hoc Library Landscape Committee. It was suggested that the Committee include language about adding Ex Officio employees as consultants to keep them informed. This would help legitimize their time spent attending meetings and assisting the Committee. Ms. Dubois noted that Mr. Maltez, Mr. MacNichol, and Mr. Cares expressed interest in being included as members to help the Committee generate suggestions, form connections, and streamline progress on the project.

*Motion: To allow the Chair of the Ad Hoc Library Landscape Committee to add associate and non-voting members as they deem fit or necessary.*

*(Grimes / Pillow-Gnanaratnam)*

*Vote: Approved 6-0*

**b. Approval of funds for exploratory concept and design**

Ms. Lannon noted that an estimate of \$20,000 of gift funds designated for the Committee's Feasibility Study and Concept Design was included in the supplemental spending report presented at the July meeting. This study would help establish the magnitude and scope of the project. Ms. Dubois explained that a preliminary conceptual design would help clarify the possibilities and opportunities for the space while giving the Committee a clear direction to move forward in. Town community surveys are still being planned to help generate ideas within the realm of possibility.

**VIII. Financial Report**

Ms. Lannon noted that the Library is doing well financially. The most recent warrant was unusually large due to the inclusion of invoices for annual membership dues to the North of Boston Library Exchange (NOBLE). NOBLE provides automated library network services and access to resources such as Wowbrary, OverDrive, EBSCO, and other databases and electronic resources. Mr. Egan noted the value of the Library's NOBLE membership, which he believes is well worth the price.

Ms. Lannon recognized a donation from Ms. Dubois in memory of Neil Miksis, the husband of long-time Librarian Kathy Miksis. Ms. Lannon noted that Fiscal Year 2023



will be formally closed within the next month or so, with final numbers being reported to the state.

## **IX. Director's Report**

Ms. Lannon reviewed July usage and circulation statistics. While comparable to July of 2022, overall Library usage is trending upward. OverDrive usage has continued to grow. An average of almost two Library programs per day are offered.

Ms. Lannon shared recommendations and concerns from Library staff regarding the use of the outdoor patio area on the second floor. Safety is a priority and all children under age nine should always be accompanied by an adult per the Library's Safe Child policy. A clear line of sight should be maintained for the patio, which would be designated as a space for children and families. Lone adults unaccompanied by children have other options for outdoor seating on the Library grounds, such as benches and the outdoor picnic table. The Library Landscape Committee hopes to improve outdoor seating options in the future. Detailed discussions regarding supervision and camera usage may require an Executive Session.

Discretion may be exercised to close access to the patio space due to inclement weather or overcrowding. Mr. Grimes questioned the lighting on the patio and suggested closing the area at sunset if necessary. Users would be responsible for bringing in Library materials and equipment, as well as any rubbish and recycling. Staff will research new weatherproof furniture that will provide comfort and flexibility for both casual seating and programs. Planters will remain in place for educational Plant Lab programs. Staff hopes to continue conversations on patio usage for implementation in the spring. Policies and procedures for patio usage will be developed as necessary.

Ms. Lannon reported that non-fiction LGBTQ+ books in the Teen area have been systematically hidden and moved. The authorities will be notified if this "Hide the Pride" behavior escalates to vandalism, damage, or theft of Library materials. Collection and staffing measures have been instituted to address this issue. Ms. Lannon noted that the staff feels very upset, disappointed, and frustrated by this behavior. Ms. Dubois asked if the staff have a sense of who may be doing this. Ms. Lannon reported that staff supervision of the area has increased and investigations are ongoing. Despite these emotional challenges, staff are attempting to reduce barriers, create a welcoming space for all patrons, and ensure consistent access to materials.

Ms. Lannon reported that new Welcome signage has been installed above the elevator at the main entrance to promote accessibility and the strategic plan focus on "Library as Space and Place." The audiobook collection is now marked by a new sign that will improve general wayfinding for the collection. The FY23 Annual Report Information Survey has been signed by Mr. Egan and is ready for submission as part of the Library's application for state aid.

David Michaud of Maker Woodworker was the sole respondent to a request for quotes for the fabrication and installation of the Tween Space millwork and shelving and has been awarded the contract. Mr. Michaud is the original designer and a Reading

Resident. Ms. Lannon clarified for Ms. Verrier that the mural painting will be interwoven into the millwork and shelving installation.

Ms. Lannon reported that the Reading Municipal Light Department (RMLD) will complete the installation of a Level 3 Charger on an upcoming Thursday depending on the weather. Ms. Verrier asked about usage. Ms. Lannon noted that the current charger is often utilized multiple times per day and hopes usage will increase with this new installation.

Ms. Lannon highlighted new additions to the collection. The new Financial Fit learning platform from EBSCO provides access to approachable, unbiased lessons on personal finance and financial literacy. A curated collection of over 9,000 Spanish and Portuguese e-books on various subjects is now available. A new Museum Pass for Garden in the Woods located in Framingham, MA is now available through the Native Plant Trust.

On Saturday, September 30<sup>th</sup>, a Community Read-In event will be held on the Library lawn from 10 AM to 12 PM. Patrons and community representatives alike are invited to read whatever they like in a community celebration of the freedom to read and First Amendment rights. Ms. Dubois clarified that the event will be right before the 2023 Banned Books week held October 1<sup>st</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Lannon confirmed that events will be held for Adults and Young Adults, as well as other various displays.

Ms. Lannon reported that the new Children's Librarian Emma Heuchert is off to a great start. Public Services Division Head Allyson Dowds has given a one-month notice and will leave the Library at the end of August. Ms. Dowds has been a positive presence and support for library staff, developing programming pillars and hiring and managing a talented Public Services team. The search to fill Ms. Dowd's position will begin immediately.

Dr. Sudeshna Chatterjee has transitioned out of her role as Director for Equity and Social Justice. Although Dr. Chatterjee has begun a new full-time job, she will remain working on contract to continue work on the Community DEI assessment. A search committee has been formed and five first-round interviews will begin next week. Ms. Lannon noted the possibility of moving this position to become a direct report to the Town Manager. Mr. Egan expressed concern about the Library's state aid eligibility being potentially affected by the loss of this position. Ms. Lannon clarified that this potential change in the organizational structure is at the discretion of the Town Manager with input from Department Heads. Ms. Lannon will work with Mr. Maltez to ensure continued state aid eligibility during the planning process for the FY25 budget. Mr. Grimes acknowledged that there are pros and cons to reclassifying the position.

Ms. Lannon shared various professional development opportunities completed by Library staff. Mr. Egan thanked the Library staff for their professionalism in continuing to support the community amidst increased scrutiny and negative press during recent challenging situations. Mr. Egan wished to extend the community's general appreciation to all library staff.

**X. Approval of July 10, 2023 Meeting Minutes**

*Motion: To approve the minutes of the July 10, 2023, Trustee Meeting.*

*(Grimes / Popp)*

*Vote: Approved 6-0*

**XI. Future Agenda Items**

**a. Community DEI Assessment**

Ms. Lannon noted the importance of future agenda items, which serve as a placeholder for future topics of discussion. Progress on the Community DEI Assessment will be discussed. Mr. Egan also noted the potential for a future executive session discussing security concerns on the upstairs patio space.

Adjournment 9:26 p.m.

*Motion: To Adjourn (Grimes / Verrier)*

*Vote: Approved 6-0*

Respectfully Submitted,



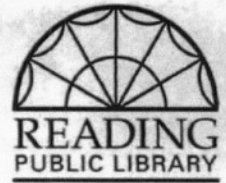
Andrew Grimes, Secretary

# BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES MEETING SIGN-IN SHEET

Meeting Date: August 14, 2023

Meeting Time: 7:00 p.m.

Place/Room: Reading Public Library Community Room



Name	Address
PLEASE PRINT NAME	
Leigh Aird	<del>158</del> 158 Howard St
Patricia McCarty	43 Pinevale Ave
Amanda Liberman	50 Pratt St
Rebecca Liberman	50 Pratt St
Tom Mathies	20 Briarwood Ave
Cynthia Mathies	20 Briarwood Ave
Christine Hoag	Rustic Lane
Linda McCarriston	Gloucester
Kelly Secrest	Gloucester
Ann Ward	14 Bancroft Ave Reading MA
Staci Fleury	20 Echo Ave
Brian Curry	
Donna O'Connell	118 Red Gate Ln Reading
Sharon Petersen	25 Holly Road
Linda Mitropoulos	112 Summer Ave Reading
JOANNE HARMER	106 SUMMER AVE READING
Carolyn Johnson	18 Thorndike St., Reading

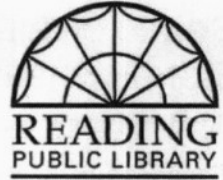


# BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES MEETING SIGN-IN SHEET

Meeting Date: August 14, 2023

Meeting Time: 7:00 p.m.

Place/Room: Reading Public Library Community Room



Name	Address
PLEASE PRINT NAME	
Aymon E Langlois	86 Pine Ridge Road
Stephen Langlois	"
Ludie Raymond	"
R Michael McSweeney	15 Orchard Park Drive
VANESSA ALVARADO	MT VERNON ST
H.A. Gethin Samuel	114 Middlesex Ave
Cathy Zeek	Sanborn St.
David Zeek	Sanborn St.
Megan Coram	31 Ridge Road
Keith Chudk	20 Echo Ave
Kevin Woe	745 Pearl St
Marcy McCauley	32 Walden Road
Joanne Miksis	15 Jackson Lane
Gena Pilyavsky	3 Hurst Ave
Eileen Collins	88 Carnation Circle
Lynn Dornink	18 Cherry Lane Dr.
Lily Mitnigt	18 Cherry Lane Dr.

**BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES MEETING  
SIGN-IN SHEET**

**Meeting Date:** August 14, 2023

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

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



Name	Address
PLEASE PRINT NAME	
Talia Karhem	21 Shackford Rd
Nancy Dockett	371 Pearl St
Kane Flynn	16 Lothrop Rd

**BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES MEETING  
SIGN-IN SHEET**



**Meeting Date:** August 14, 2023

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

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

Name	Address
PLEASE PRINT NAME	
Ailly Dows	RA
Amberntzen	Reading MA





## Public Comment

ALL IN-PERSON ATTENDEES  
PLEASE SIGN IN

### TONIGHT'S PROCEDURES

7:05 – 7:50 p.m. (45 minutes)

In-person and Zoom participants may speak

2 minute limit per speaker

Please introduce yourself with your name and address

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

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

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

Priority will be for those who have not spoken

## Guiding Principles Collection Development Policy

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

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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**

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

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

## Selection Process

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### Resources

authoritative professional reviews

---

popular reviews

---

publishers' catalogs

---

standard lists of back works

---

firsthand examination

---

patron requests

---

## Selection Process

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### 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

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## “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
- The requested action was 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.
- “Tricks” is a 640-page novel in verse (poetry) originally published in 2009.

## REVIEWS

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**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.” (School Library Journal)

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**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.” (Booklist)

**AWARDS**

Reading Public Library

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Goodreads Choice Award, 2009,  
Nominee, Young Adult Fiction

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Poetry Picks, 2009

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Pure Poetry, 2009

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Rainbow List, 2010 Fiction

**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

<b>Copies RPL</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Copies NOBLE</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Current Year circ RPL</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Current Year circ NOBLE</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Total circ RPL</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>Total circ NOBLE</b>	<b>123</b>



## RECOMMENDATION

- Meets or exceeds collection development standards
- Adequate circulation
- Removal from the collection based on the RFR is censorship according to the American Library Association.

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

## "The Best of Assigned Male" by Sophie LaBelle

- On Wednesday, June 28, 2023, the Reading Public Library (RPL) received a Request for Reconsideration of Materials (RFR)
- The request action was to remove the book "Assigned Male" by Sophie Labelle from the collection.
- RPL staff notified the Board. The Collection Services team assessed this title.
- Assigned Male is a webcomic started in October 2014 and is ongoing. The RFR item in question is a 351-page graphic novel anthology "Best of Assigned Male"

## REVIEWS

**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." (Comics Alliance)

**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." (Waterloo Region Record)

**Excerpt:** "Hurray for Stephe 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!" (Alex Gino, Stonewall-Award winning author)

## RPL and NOBLE Collection Holdings

- Print copy ordered June 16, 2021
- Circulation data

Copies RPL		Copies NOBLE	
	1		2
<b>Current Year circ RPL</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>Current Year circ NOBLE</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Total circ RPL</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>Total circ NOBLE</b>	<b>49</b>

## ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATION

- Meets or exceeds collection development standards
- Adequate circulation
- Removal from the collection based on the RFR is censorship according to the American Library Association.
- This is an anthology that starts with a middle school experience and progresses through young adulthood which is reflected in the story, fluency, and reading level.

This title conforms to RPL's  
Collection Development Policy.  
Upon further review, the reading  
level of the text suggests this  
would be better located in the  
Teen Spot collection.

