



## Town of Reading Meeting Minutes

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### Board - Committee - Commission - Council:

Board of Library Trustees

Date: 2023-10-10

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; Andrew Grimes, Secretary;  
Cherrie Dubois; Monique Pillow-Gnanaratnam; Cappy Popp

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

### **Others Present:**

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

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

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### Topics of Discussion:

- I. Call to Order at 7:06 p.m.
- II. Public Comment

No public comments were made in person or remotely.

- III. **Financial Report**
  - a. **MBLC Financial Report and State Aid Application**

The Library submitted its annual State Aid to Public Libraries Application and Compliance form to the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) on September 20, 2023. The Library has met all FY24 certification requirements to be eligible for state aid funds. The Library is open to all residents of the Commonwealth and does not charge for regular library services. The Library employs trained library personnel and a certified Library Director. Materials expenditures, total appropriated municipal income, and service hours meet or exceed requirements. The Library lends books to other libraries in the Commonwealth and has reported FY23 nonresident circulation via the FY24 ARIS form.

The Library looks forward to receiving the first half of its state aid award payment in December 2023, with a second payment expected in March or April 2024. In FY23, Reading Public Library received approximately \$52,000 of state aid. This amount may increase slightly for FY24.

## **b. YTD Report**

The Library has received several generous donations in memory of Peggy White, a celebrated local quilter and long-time supporter of the Library. The FY24 salary budget is running approximately 4% under budget due to current vacancies.

## **IV. Director's Report**

### **a. Facilities**

On Sunday, October 8, 15 Girl Scouts planted 100 spring flower bulbs near the Library's main entrance. Ms. Lannon thanked Senior Library Associate Andrea Hogan for helping to clear and prepare garden beds for planting. Members of the Reading Garden Club were also available to demonstrate proper planting techniques. The Library provided informational bookmarks to each participant to help reinforce this positive community learning experience.

Sunday hours from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. resumed on October 1, 2023. Barring any weather events, the Library will be open 31 Sundays in FY24, with the last open Sunday scheduled for May 19, 2024.

Facilities have fixed several broken HVAC compressors. These repairs will help provide more comfortable temperatures in affected work areas in the spring.

### **b. Programs, Collections, and Services**

Ms. Lannon provided an overview of September usage statistics. Although usage has remained steady overall, meeting room rentals have been identified as an area of potential improvement. Town departments also use the Library meeting spaces for training sessions, department meetings, and community events.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, volunteer hours were approximately double their current levels. Library staff hope to become better organized in identifying volunteer opportunities and providing appropriate training. Ms. Verrier questioned whether the lack of volunteers was due to volunteer interest or staff time. Ms. Lannon noted recent staffing issues due to various transitions, as well as a shift in summer reading programming that reduced volunteer hours. Managing training and coordinating volunteer schedules can also be time-consuming. Ms. Filleul noted that a few new volunteer applications are received each month.

Ms. Lannon clarified for Mr. Popp that reference questions consist of phone, email, chat, and in-person questions asked at service desks. Staff track questions using Gimlet software, which helps the Library identify areas where more information is needed.

The recent Read-In event celebrating the freedom to read was a success, with many people attending to read both outside and inside. Donuts and cider were available. Children built blanket forts in the Reading Room. Head of Public Services Andrea Fiorillo was pictured in the *Boston Globe* at a similar Read-In event in Arlington the following day.

The New Resident Open House was held on October 3 at the Library. It provided an exciting opportunity for over 100 new residents to meet with local organizations while enjoying pizza and welcome bags. Ms. Filleul reported that the event will be held again next fall and hopes to open it up to the general public to generate more awareness of town services and local organizations. Pocket translators, a translation app, and a student translator helped make the event inclusive and welcoming. Ms. Filleul thanked the Town for their support throughout various departments in making the event successful.

Ms. Lannon reported that the new schedule of regular weekday story times has been successful, as well as drop-in story time programs on Fridays and Saturdays. Special guest story times on Fridays featuring visits from the Fire Department, Police Department, Town Manager, and the Speech Therapy Center have been very popular. Ms. Dubois noted how exciting it is for children to see the uniforms and equipment used by the Fire Department. A recent pride story time ran smoothly, with happy registered and walk-in attendees.

Teen Services Librarian Meghan McCabe recently met with middle and high school Media Specialists regarding the new school year and collaborative ideas to promote information literacy. Upcoming 6<sup>th</sup>-grade tours with Parker Middle School have been scheduled. The Library is hoping to host visits with Coolidge Middle School as well. Local History Librarian Jocelyn Gould is working with the Reading Historical Commission and Reading Antiquarian Society to collaborate on plans for the 250<sup>th</sup>-anniversary celebration of the American Revolution and bringing lesser-known stories to the forefront.

The English Conversation group has made a successful return with about a dozen different languages represented. The Library continues to work with the Pleasant Street Center to develop and host programming for older adults, including a Memory Café program that has returned for the first time since 2020.

In the fall of 2022, the Library installed a credit card-enabled print and mobile print system with new kiosks, scanning software, and a copy bed. Despite the installation costs, the reporting features and ease of use benefits have proven successful. Between September 2022 and August 2023, the monthly average of printed pages was 2,719, and the monthly average of scans was 1,102. Faxing and scanning to email, USB, or cloud services such as Google Drive are free. For printing, users are charged \$0.20 per black-and-white page and \$0.25 per color page. These fees accumulate in a revolving fund to help cover printing supplies and software maintenance updates for the current equipment.

### **c. Personnel**

Ms. Filleul will be attending the upcoming New England Library Association conference in Springfield along with three other members of the library staff. Ms. Filleul is currently serving as the president of the Massachusetts Library Association.

The Finance Committee expects to vote on FY25 budget guidance for the draft Level 1 budget for Board approval in November. Ms. Lannon will present the Level 1 budget to the Select Board in December. After that, she will submit the final draft (Town Manager's

Budget) to the Finance Committee next February. There should be nothing related to the Library on the November Town Meeting warrant.

The Library will be closed on Friday, October 20, for an annual staff development day. Ms. Lannon expects over twenty library staff members to attend. Topics include team building, health practices, ergonomics, and other activities that facilitate a happy and healthy work environment. The programs are provided by the Massachusetts Interlocal Insurance Association (MIIA), the Town's insurance provider. The Friends of the Reading Public Library are generously supporting meal costs.

Community Health Librarian Susan Beauregard has reached 30 years of service, including many as a Teen Librarian. Collection Services Librarian II Kathryn Geoffrion Scannell is celebrating 15 years of service. Head of Collections Services Jamie Penney is celebrating her 23<sup>rd</sup> work anniversary. Ms. Lannon is celebrating 20 years of service and believes this longevity speaks positively of the Library.

New Director of Equity and Social Justice Albert Pless will begin on Monday, October 16. Mr. Pless held a similar position in Andover and lives locally. Andrea Fiorillo has been promoted to Head of Public Services. The hiring process is underway to fill Ms. Fiorillo's former Librarian II – Adult & Teen position. Three new student pages will also begin work this month.

The Library is working with the Reading Memorial High School Transitions Specialist to create a post-grad paid internship program for students ages 18 to 22 focusing on independent living, social, and vocational skills. The Library hopes to have a program in place by the fall of 2024 using student page pay rates, which may impact FY25 budgeting.

Town Manager Fidel Maltez has accepted a new position as Chelsea City Manager and has yet to finalize an end date with the Town of Reading. Despite prior discussions of a transition to Town Hall, the Office of Equity and Social Justice will remain budgetarily and physically at the Reading Public Library for now. Ms. Lannon and Mr. Pless will work on short- and long-term goals around the position's sustainability.

#### **d. Professional Development**

Library staff engaged in a broad array of continuing education, including strategies to support executive function, heritage responders, understanding teen behavior, and trauma-informed services.

#### **V. Approval of September 11, 2023 Meeting Minutes**

*Motion: To approve the minutes of the September 11, 2023, Trustee Meeting.*

*(Grimes / Popp)*

*Vote: Approved 6-0*

#### **VI. Future Agenda Items**

Ms. Lannon noted there are no changes to the Gift Policy. The Board will review any recommended change to the Borrowing Policy and the Fines and Fees Policy next month.

Mr. Egan encouraged Board members to provide liaison updates at future meetings: DEI Community Audit Liaison (Ms. Pillow-Gnanaratnam), Ad-Hoc Library Landscape Committee members (Ms. Dubois and Mr. Popp), and Charter Review Committee (Mr. Grimes). Ms. Dubois noted she would attend a kick-off meeting with Landscape Architectural firm Activitas regarding the Library Landscape project and will provide an update at the November meeting.

Ms. Verrier inquired about the status of the Tween space project. Ms. Lannon reported that she is still working on the request for quote documents for custom fabrication and installation of millwork and shelving. She noted the importance of finding and funding the right vendor while satisfying insurance and safety requirements. Ms. Lannon and Ms. Clemente recently attended the Massachusetts Higher Education Consortium (MHEC) expo in Worcester to meet with designers and view stock furniture that might work in the Tween space. The mural artist will work on the painting in phases between Thanksgiving and New Year's. The Board and Ms. Lannon discussed various logistics and safety concerns regarding the mural painting.

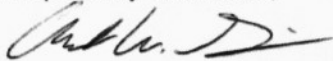
Adjournment 7:36 p.m.

*Motion: To Adjourn*

*(Popp / Verrier)*

*Vote: Approved 6-0*

Respectfully Submitted,



Andrew Grimes, Secretary