



Town of Reading Meeting Minutes

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2024 JUL 16 PM 3:58

Board - Committee - Commission - Council:

Board of Library Trustees

Date: 2024-06-10

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; Andrew Gregory; Cappy Popp,

Members - Not Present:

Others Present:

Amy Lannon, Director; Michelle Filleul, Assistant Director; Meaghan Clemente, Administrative Assistant; Andrea Fiorillo, Head of Public Services; Albert Pless, Director of Equity and Social Justice; Joseph McDonagh, Financial Committee Liaison to Reading Public Library (remote)

Minutes Respectfully Submitted By: Andrew Grimes, Secretary

Topics of Discussion:

I. Call to Order 7:01 pm.

II. Public Comment

No public comments were made in person or remotely.

III. Summer Programming Update

Public Services Division Head Andrea Fiorillo presented a summer update on Library programming. Ms. Fiorillo summarized recent programs associated with the "What's the Big Idea" initiative. Attendees ages 12 and up enjoyed painting cherry trees during an intergenerational paint night. Three Taylor Swift fan sessions were held, with bracelet-making programs for children and teens and a trivia night for adults.

The Animal Extravaganza provided educational information about animals and adoption and featured an all-ages petting zoo with seven nonprofit partners. Over 300 people attended and donated 100 pounds of pet food to the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (M.S.P.C.A.).

The Coral Reef Crochet project featured five classes with 47 unique attendees. RPL distributed over 50 take-home kits with crochet hooks, yarn, and patterns and collected over 200 finished sea creatures. The sea creatures were incorporated into a display to

raise awareness about marine life and climate change. Ms. Fiorillo passed around examples of brain coral and a snail.

The Library is waiting to hear back about its application for the "Dig In! Growing Libraries with Gardens and Nature-based Learning Spaces" grant but anticipates focusing on gardening, plants, and green space for upcoming programming.

Summer reading will run from June 14 through August 16 this summer. The Children's "Stick with Summer Reading" program focuses on bookmarks with scratch-off challenges and vinyl sticker prizes. Spot, the 4-foot-tall giraffe, will be hidden in different weekly locations around Town, similarly to the previous Reado, the parrot mascot. Children who spot Spot can fill out a raffle ticket for a chance to win a handheld karaoke machine. Younger patrons are encouraged to start or continue the "1,000 Books Before Kindergarten" program.

The "Full S.T.E.A.M. Ahead" teen summer reading program focuses on science and art. Teens can earn raffle tickets by attending programs and writing book reviews. Adult Summer Reading Bingo features BINGO cards with fun activities, interesting resources, and diverse reading recommendations. Participants can win prizes, such as gift cards for Whitelam Books and Market Basket.

On July 1, the Library will offer half-hour time slots for children entering Grades K-6 to engage in an interactive learning experience inside the Whalemobile. The 25th annual Vehicle Day will be rain or shine in the Library parking lot on August 13. Teen programs include combat robotics and K-Pop crafting.

The popular after-hours "Summer Sizzlers: Booktalks & Mocktails" event on Friday, June 21, will feature speedy book reviews and cash-bar mocktails. Also, on Monday, June 24, R.P.L.'s summer concert will include numerous American Songbook hits performed by Les Sampou and the Dirty Martinis.

Ms. Fiorillo highlighted the Library's new annual subscription to the Library Speaker series, sponsored by the Friends of the Reading Public Library. All events last approximately one hour and are live with a Q&A session. Watch parties will be hosted at the Library. An entire back catalog with recordings of all past events is available to watch anytime, anywhere, with an internet connection. Three to four bestselling authors or thought leaders present each month. Upcoming author visits include Kate DiCamillo, Dan Santat, and Shelby Van Pelt. Past speakers include Amor Towels and Ruth Ware. Topics include parenting, nutrition, retirement, wealth inequality, management, and travel.

The Library's Book Bike recently visited the Reading Garden Club Plant Sale and the Lions Club Friends & Family Day. Upcoming Book Bike visits include the Y.M.C.A. Farmer's Market, Reading Recreation Family Concerts, and the Commuter Rail. It will also be part of the Sunset storytimes hosted in local parks.

The Board complimented the wide variety of programs and thanked Ms. Fiorillo for her presentation.

IV. Community D.E.I. Assessment Update

Director of Equity and Social Justice Albert Pless presented an update on the Community Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (D.E.I.) Assessment. Mr. Pless recently celebrated his 8-month anniversary and is grateful for the support of the Library and the Town in facilitating learning and growth for the Office of Equity and Social Justice.

Opportunity Consulting conducted the Community D.E.I. Assessment and developed a detailed report and presentation based on qualitative and quantitative data collected over several months. Issues on marginalized and underrepresented communities were highlighted. D.E.I. implementation work has begun and is ongoing.

Internally, a municipal implementation team, including Town and Library staff members, has been formed. Partners and Allies for Inclusive Reading (PAIR) helps promote D.E.I. in the community. Community stakeholders include Select Board members, the Lions Club, the Reading Pastor's Association, the School Department, the Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunity (M.E.T.C.O.), the Reading Coalition of Prevention and Support, and the Unitarian Universalist Church of Reading. Mr. Pless has been actively presenting and engaging with various local groups.

Collaborative work with the Town's Planning, Public Health, and Community Services Departments is underway to develop action items and training opportunities for Town staff. Data from other assessments conducted by these departments is also being utilized. Mr. Pless emphasized the importance of collaboration rather than isolation in facilitating positive change in the community.

Sophia Ortins has been onboarded as the new Office of Equity and Social Justice intern. A rising sophomore at Wesleyan University, she found funding through her school to pursue her passion for D.E.I. work by volunteering 26 hours per week in the Office of Equity and Social Justice this summer. Ms. Ortins is actively participating in analyzing data and strategic planning.

The Massachusetts Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Coalition is growing to include more municipalities across the state. Mr. Pless acknowledged the challenging nature of D.E.I. work and is grateful for the networking, collaboration, and support available through this group. The coalition is working to develop a formal D.E.I. guide for onboarding D.E.I. directors.

Mr. Pless thanked the Board for supporting the needs of the Office of Equity and Social Justice, especially financially. Mr. Pless is working with a local consultant on developing a strategic plan for the Office of Equity and Social Justice. Opportunities and action items are being identified. Progress updates will continue to be shared.

Mr. Pless has participated in two Library storytimes. Mr. Pless also collaborated with a local Girl Scout Troop and local author, Sarah Samuels, to read and discuss *Braving Our Savings*, which focuses on financial literacy for girls. Mr. Pless enjoys diving into local programming and amplifying representative voices of diversity in the community.

Mr. Egan questioned the timeframe of the Office of Equity and Social Justice's strategic plan. Mr. Pless hopes to develop a 3-year plan, including action items and budgetary needs for planning purposes. Mr. Pless hopes to establish long-term sustainability for the Office of Equity and Social Justice beyond the Library.

Ms. Lannon hopes to establish a formal FY26 budget for the Office of Equity and Social Justice. She is working with the Town Manager and Town Accountant to introduce new budget lines that will serve the needs of Reading residents and employees. Although this is a moving target, future requests are being prioritized strategically. Mr. Pless hopes to lean on community partners through FY25.

Mr. Pless hopes to continue the implementation through further community engagement and work with PAIR. The Office of Equity and Social Justice is developing an Instagram account, and an email newsletter will also be relaunched soon.

Mr. Pless invited the Trustees to attend the upcoming Juneteenth Freedom Festival on Saturday, June 15, on the Town Common from 1:00 pm to 7:00 pm. BIPOC vendors and organizations, food and beverages, live musical performances, and a D.J. will be featured.

Mr. Pless thanked the Board again for their support and excused himself at 7:27 pm.

V. VOTE: Local History Room Policy

At the April meeting, the Board discussed the History Room Use and Access Policy in detail with suggestions for minor edits. These were briefly reviewed, and no additional changes were suggested.

*Motion: To approve the changes to the History Room Use and Access Policy as written.
(Popp / Gregory)
Vote: Approved 6-0*

VI. VOTE: Election of Officers

Mr. Egan noted that the Board must vote to elect officers and review the Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary positions. Mr. Egan has enjoyed his time as chair but looks forward to the next person taking on the role.

*Motion: To nominate Mr. Cappy Popp as Chair of the Trustees.
(Grimes / Verrier)
Vote: Approved 5-0-1 with Mr. Popp abstaining*

Ms. Verrier noted that she would like to step back as vice chair. Mr. Egan said he is ready, willing, and able to step in unless someone else is interested.

*Motion: To nominate Mr. Patrick Egan as Vice-Chair of the Trustees.
(Popp / Grimes)
Vote: Approved 5-0-1, with Mr. Egan abstaining*

Mr. Grimes is happy to continue as secretary.

Motion: To nominate Mr. Andrew Grimes as Secretary of the Trustees.

(Gregory / Verrier)

Vote: Approved 5-0-1 with Mr. Grimes abstaining

Mr. Egan and Ms. Verrier have overseen the Board's email account for several years and suggested rotating these responsibilities. Although the Board's email is mostly quiet, significant issues should be brought to the full Board's attention during public comment. The person checking the email should sign their name when acknowledging receipt of messages from the Board's email account for clarification. Mr. Gregory is willing to take on these responsibilities and will contact Mr. Egan for further details.

VII. VOTE: FY25 Trustee Meeting Dates

Ms. Lannon noted that the schedule for upcoming Board meetings follows the schedule for the second Monday of the month. However, Monday, November 11, is the Veterans Day holiday, and Tuesday, November 12, is the Town Meeting. The Board could meet on Wednesday, November 13, or Tuesday, November 19, to avoid potential conflicts with subsequent Town Meeting dates. Alternatively, the Board could skip the November meeting. The timing of the election on November 5 and the Thanksgiving holiday on Thursday, November 28, were also clarified.

Mr. Popp and Mr. Gregory are Town Meeting members and may be impacted by late meetings on several nights. However, both were willing to meet on either proposed date. Ms. Verrier suggested meeting on Wednesday, November 13, because Tuesday, November 19, is only three weeks away from the December meeting.

Motion: To approve the FY25 Trustee meeting dates as reflected on the June 10th memo from Ms. Lannon, with Wednesday, November 13, 2024, as the November meeting date. (Egan / Verrier)

Vote: Approved 6-0

VIII. VOTE: CY25 Holiday Schedule

Ms. Lannon noted that the Library's holiday closings should be set for the following calendar year. Traditionally, the first and last Sundays open are also established, as are early closures on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, and New Year's Eve. Ms. Lannon noted that employees must be paid double-time wages for hours worked on holidays. Ms. Verrier clarified that the proposed schedule is similar to prior years. Once approved, Ms. Lannon will send the schedule to the Town Hall.

Ms. Verrier inquired about the annual professional development day, which Ms. Lannon noted will take place on October 4, 2024.

Motion: To approve the CY25 Library Holiday Closings as presented. (Dubois / Egan)

Vote: Approved 6-0

IX. Financial Report

Ms. Lannon noted that FY24 municipal expenses are being closely tracked and spent down. Materials spending in accordance with state aid requirements is a priority. Due to various staff transitions throughout the fiscal year, some municipal salary funds will be returned to the Town. A schedule for FY25 warrants is being developed. There will likely be one week where both FY24 and FY25 warrants are prepared, as invoices dated before and after the July 1st cutoff for the fiscal year are received.

Ms. Lannon noted several recent donations, including a donation from the Reading Lions Club for braille or visually impaired library resources. These funds often benefit story walks and large print collections.

Mr. Popp questioned the red negative items for State Aid expenses. Ms. Lannon explained that funds are not budgeted for individual costs and are debited against the overall revenue account. State Aid is primarily a savings fund, but lines can be added for other items as needed.

X. Director's Report

Ms. Lannon noted that the exterior Library pickup lockers are finally working. Staff is developing a soft relaunch with additional training, new signage, and software updates underway.

The **Tween Space in the Children's Room is complete with new bookcases and furnishings.** The Tween Space project started in 2022 with the simple idea of painting a wall and rearranging existing furniture. The generous support of the Helen A. Nigro Foundation and others in the community has enabled the Library to create a cozy space that meets the literary, sensory, and social development needs of young people in grades 4 through 7. Mr. Egan complimented the quality and durability of the furnishings and the refreshing lack of technology in the space.

An Exam Cram program for high school students is being held tonight and tomorrow night. Ms. Lannon briefly highlighted the upcoming Juneteenth Freedom Festival on Saturday, June 15, and the Summer Sizzlers: Booktalks & Mocktails event on Friday, June 21.

Community Health Librarian Susan Beauregard and Elder Services Librarian Elizabeth Weilbacher attended the Pleasant Street Center Health Fair. The Reading Coalition for Prevention and Support recently hosted a book discussion on *The Emotional Lives of Teenagers* by Lisa Damour. Outreach will continue throughout the community, including at the Y.M.C.A. and Solstice House.

Ms. Lannon welcomed Sophia Ortins as the new summer Office of Equity and Social Justice intern. Ms. Ortins is a 2023 Reading Memorial High School graduate who will start her sophomore year at Wesleyan University this fall.

Ms. Lannon expressed good wishes to children's librarian, Emma Heuchert, who is moving on. The Librarian I – Children's job posting will be publicized this week. Ms. Fiorillo clarified that the Library has been fully staffed since December.

Ms. Lannon summarized various professional development opportunities that Library staff have recently participated in. Multiple staff members sometimes participate in the same educational opportunities. For example, approximately ten staff members recently attended the Massachusetts Library Association (M.L.A.) Conference. Continuing education is a culture and a model encouraged for Library staff at all levels.

Ms. Verrier complimented the number and variety of professional development topics but expressed concern that expenses have exceeded the anticipated budget. Ms. Lannon noted that the FY25 municipal professional development budget is similar and will be supplemented by state aid or gifts as necessary. Several other municipal expense lines,

such as office and library supplies, are currently running under budget, meaning extra municipal funding is available for professional development and other expenses. It is sometimes difficult to anticipate when each expense line will run out.

However, professional development expenses will likely be lower in FY25 because the Public Library Association (P.L.A.) conference, which is part of the American Library Association, only occurs every two years. Ms. Fiorillo and Collections Services Librarian Kathryn Geoffrion Scannell attended the P.L.A. conference in FY24 and found it useful and informative.

Ms. Lannon submitted all annual employee reviews to Town Hall by June 1 to ensure that staff will receive appropriate steps and COLA raises on July 1.

XI. Approval of May 13, 2024, Meeting Minutes

Mr. Popp and Ms. Dubois complimented the detail provided in the May minutes, especially regarding the R.M.L.D. E.V. Charger Update.

Motion: To approve the minutes from the May 13, 2024, Board of Library Trustees meeting as written.

(Egan / Verrier)

Vote: Approved 6-0

XII. Future Agenda Items

In July, Maura Deedy will present the Library's FY26-FY30 strategic plan. Meetings are currently being held to review and finalize the content of the strategic plan. The plan can be voted on in July or August, incorporating any changes or suggestions.

Mr. Popp welcomed suggestions for additional future agenda items.

Adjournment 7:56 pm

Motion: To Adjourn at 7:56 pm

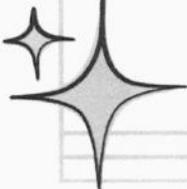
(Gregory / Dubois)

Vote: Approved 6-0

Respectfully Submitted,



Andrew Grimes, Secretary



PUBLIC SERVICES UPDATE



Summer 2024



WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA WRAP UP

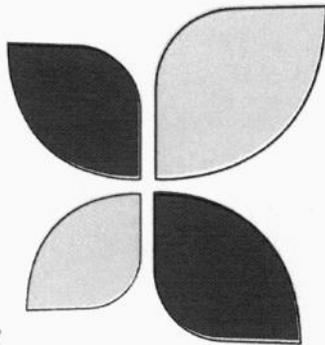
INTERGENERATIONAL PAINT NIGHT

Ages 12 & up had a blast
painting cherry trees



ANIMAL EXTRAVAGANZA

All ages petting zoo + charity
fundraiser, + animal education +
adoption event

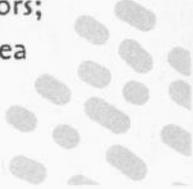


SWIFTIE SESSIONS

Bracelet making for teens and
children, Taylor Trivia for adults
with lots of music videos and a
seven foot tall Taylor cut out

CORAL REEF CROCHET PROJECT

5 classes, 47 unique attendees, 50
take home kits, 75 contributors;
ages 8-80! = 200+ finished sea
creatures in the studio



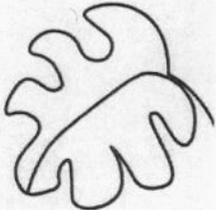
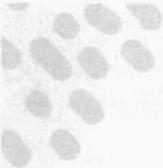


SUMMER READING



June 14-August 16

- 
- Stick with Summer Reading for Children
 - Full S.T.E.A.M Ahead for Teens
 - Bingo for Adults
- 



JUNE-AUGUST AT A GLANCE



CHILDREN

Author Kate DiCamillo!

Whalemobile!

Vehicle Day!

TEEN

Combat Robotics!

Author Dan Santat!

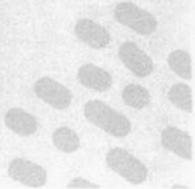
K-Pop Crafting!

ADULT

Summer Sizzlers
Booktalks & Mocktails!

Les Sampou & the Dirty
Martinis Concert!

Author Shelby Van Pelt!



FRIENDS SPEAKERS SERIES LAUNCH

3-4 bestselling authors/
thought leaders per month

Past speakers & topics: authors
Amor Towles and Ruth Ware,
sessions on parenting, nutrition,
retirement, wealth inequality,
management, and travel advice
(with Rick Steves)



All events last one hour, are
live with Q&A but available
to watch anytime thereafter

The entire back catalog is
available to watch anytime,
anywhere there's an internet
connection.

BIKE WEATHER



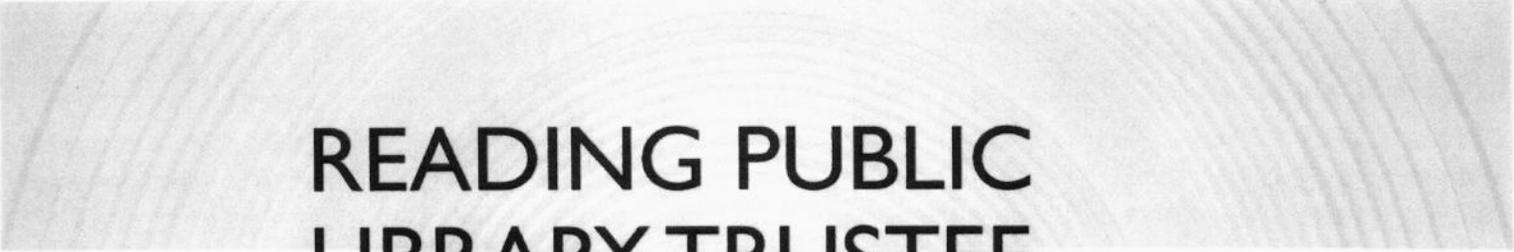
- Lions Club Friends & Family Day
- Reading Garden Club Plant Sale
- YMCA Farmers Market
- Reading Recreation Family Concerts
- Commuter Rail
- At Sunset Storytimes





THANK
YOU





READING PUBLIC LIBRARY TRUSTEE UPDATE

JUNE 10, 2024

ALBERT PLESS

DIRECTOR, DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION



MAY/JUNE UPDATES

- **DEI Implementation work**
 - **Community- PAIR**
 - **Municipal- Implementation Team**
- **Community Stakeholder**
 - Select board members
 - Lions
 - Reading Pastor's Association
 - School department
 - METCO
 - Reading Collation of Prevention and Support
 - Unitarian Universalist

UPDATES CONT'

- **Municipal Stakeholder**

- Collaborative work with Planning, Public Health and Community Services' Department's

- **External Projects**

- MA Diversity, Equity, Inclusion Coalition (formalization process)

- **OESJ Strategic Planning**

- Onboarded OESJ Intern Sophia Ortins
- 

LIBRARY

- Two Storytime Reads
- Library staff joined the DEI Implementation team
- Collaborated with the local Girl Scout Troup and local author Sarah Samuels to read *Braving our Savings*



NEXT STEPS

- Continue the Implementation process
- Continued work with PAIR around Community Engagement
- Create an IG account
- OESJ newsletter- June 12th