



Town of Reading Meeting Minutes

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By Town Clerk GP at 9:16 am, Sep 10, 2024

Board - Committee - Commission - Council:

Board of Library Trustees

Date: 2024-08-12

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, Vice-Chair; Cherrie Dubois; Andrew Gregory; Monette Verrier

Members - Not Present:

Cappy Popp, Chair; Andrew Grimes, Secretary;

Others Present:

Amy Lannon, Director; Michelle Filleul, Assistant Director;
Meaghan Clemente, Administrative Assistant; Jamie Penney, Head of
Collection Services;

Minutes Respectfully Submitted By: Patrick Egan, Vice-Chair

Topics of Discussion:

- I. **Call to Order 7:00 p.m.**
- II. **Public Comment**

No public comments were made in person or remotely.

Mr. Egan expressed support for the Worcester Public Library after a librarian at the main branch was assaulted. Mr. Egan noted an outpouring of public support at a community event days later. However, unfortunate events like this underscore the importance of safety protocols.

- III. **State of the Collection Report**

Jamie Penney, Head of Collection Services, presented an update on the state of the Reading Public Library collection. She noted that the collection includes materials for different audiences, such as adults, teens, or children. These are organized by genre and format. Formats include print, DVDs, music CDs, audiobooks, streaming content, museum passes, and Library of Things items.

Ms. Penney showcased new Tonie box Children's audio devices by presenting examples of Roald Dahl characters. Each figurine sits atop a tissue-box-sized device and reads stories in the voice of popular characters.

RPL incorporates diverse and international materials into the collection. According to surveys from the local public schools, Portuguese and Spanish account for the most non-English languages spoken at home in Reading. Non-English collections include popular English materials translated into other languages and books originally written in different languages. Ms. Penney plans to conduct an official diversity assessment of the

entire collection. For now, librarians strive to be mindful of the availability of diverse content representative of the community.

Ms. Penney summarized the principles of collection management and the life cycle of Library materials. Librarians select and acquire materials and continuously evaluate the collection for condition, relevancy, and popularity. All librarians participate in collection development. Ms. Penney oversees the materials budget for existing and new collections. Librarians use professional journals, vendor analysis tools, popular media, and patron requests and suggestions to inform selection decisions. Ms. Penney noted that patrons can access more materials through interlibrary loans within the North of Boston Library Exchange (NOBLE) network and beyond.

RPL follows Continuous Review, Evaluation, and Weeding (CREW) guidelines to maintain quality throughout the collection. Librarians review usage statistics and regularly assess the collection. Ms. Penney noted that librarians assess the collection using several factors known as MUSTIE. This refers to materials that are misleading, factually inaccurate, ugly, worn, superseded by new editions, outdated, irrelevant to the community's needs and interests, or readily available elsewhere. RPL keeps track of other copies that are available in the NOBLE network. If patrons ask for items no longer in the collection, items are often available at other libraries, and comparable information can be found online.

RPL donates used materials to More than Words, a charity that provides educational training and support to at-risk youth.

Ms. Penney noted that Reading is an information-rich community where cookbooks, craft books, and gardening books are popular.

Ms. Penney presented a snapshot of July circulation and holdings statistics for print items. This report does include renewals. Miscellaneous items include museum passes and Library of Things items. Ms. Penney is working to develop a more comprehensive statistical report analyzing the collection. RPL is regularly one of the top circulating libraries per capita in NOBLE.

Ms. Penney explained that the publishing term "YA" stands for "Young Adult," which is often synonymous with "Teen." Young adults can range broadly in age and prefer printed titles over audiobooks. However, Playaways remain a popular format due to being self-contained audiobook devices and the lack of CD players in many modern vehicles. She noted that many titles are no longer released in DVD or CD format as streaming becomes more prevalent.

Ms. Penney regularly reviews lists of old hold requests from patrons who pick up materials in Reading. She carefully reviews holds that have gone unfulfilled for more than 30 days for various reasons, ranging from patrons with long overdue items to the need for additional copies to reduce wait times.

Ms. Penney clarified that digital OverDrive content is accessible through the Libby application. E-books and e-audiobooks are growing in popularity. Any Massachusetts resident can obtain a Boston Public Library card to access a broader range of materials. RPL cardholders also have access to collections from other Massachusetts library consortia.

Ms. Penney thanked the Board and excused herself at 7:39 p.m.

IV. Review: Meeting Room Policy

Ms. Filleul reviewed minor adjustments to the Meeting Room Policy. The policy now includes language elements of the new calendar and room booking software through Communico. Changes include handling potential credit card fees, which could begin in about six months using Stripe. The Town currently uses Stripe for tax payments and other bills. Like most governments and nonprofits, the Town charges processing fees directly to users, and the Library intends to do so initially. The Library will regularly monitor and evaluate usage and expenses associated with the credit card payment system and make necessary changes.

The Board discussed additional corrections, clarifications, and consistency. For example, "48 hours" was changed to "two (2) business days." The intent of the text remained the same. The Board discussed the flexibility of "may" versus the firmness of "will" regarding cancellations for nonpayment.

The Board expects to review these edits and vote on the policy at the September meeting.

V. Review: Tutoring Policy

Ms. Filleul reviewed minor changes to the Tutoring Policy that clarify that tutors are responsible for monitoring and communicating with their students. The policy now correctly references the new Responsibilities Regarding Minors Policy, and Ms. Filleul recommended removing language regarding the use of library space as a classroom or place of business for tutors as it is difficult to enforce.

She noted that sentences within the seventh and eighth points should be separated into multiple points for clarity and emphasis. The Board expects to review these edits and vote on the policy at the September meeting.

VI. Discussion and Vote: FY26-FY30 Strategic Plan

Maura Deedy from Local Librarian Consulting, LLC incorporated revisions discussed at the July meeting into the FY26-FY30 strategic plan. Language regarding the Library landscape project and staff and board diversity was softened, emphasizing investigating feasibility rather than firm action and commitment.

The Board discussed the intent behind broadening the Meeting Room Policy, determining that RPL should be open to opportunities to expand the number of reservations and make other Library spaces available. Other changes could include for-profit groups reserving Library spaces or meeting as yet unidentified community needs. Library staff will review and analyze meeting room usage to increase usage by both the public and the Town. The Board discussed current meeting room use. Ms. Filleul noted that rental rates have stayed the same but could change. RPL plans to promote meeting room space further once the room reservation software and hybrid technology upgrades are complete. Ms. Lannon noted that by FY30, the duration of this strategic plan, the Town may have made decisions on the potential community center project that may make new community meeting spaces available.

Ms. Verrier suggested translating RPL policies, documents, and website content into other languages to improve accessibility and inspire a better understanding of Library offerings.

The Board discussed the fourth Community Learning and Engagement goal regarding young adult transition strategies. Members noted the importance of navigating life transitions such as from child to tween, tween to teen, and teen to young adult. The

Board asked to broaden this goal beyond the 13-20-year age range. Ms. Lannon will work to improve the draft language for this goal.

The Board discussed the status of the Library Landscape Committee (LLC) and related project plan recommendations. They will review and prioritize the LLC recommendations based on budget requirements. Ms. Lannon noted that including the project as a strategic and focused goal may help obtain future grant funding and donations. Mr. Gregory suggested restructuring the goal to focus on improving the overall outdoor space rather than the Committee's project.

Mr. Egan asked the Board to clarify the use of "Data" in Goal Two of the Library Space as Space and Place. The Board agreed that this included town census data with community demographics.

The Board expressed concerns about the item specifying the development of a more diverse board. The item could be interpreted as influencing the results of public elections, and overall, the current Board has no control over election results. They critiqued the item using the Superintendent as an example. The Superintendent has no control over the members of the School Committee but has discretion regarding teachers and staff. This goal should be rephrased to remove the Board specifically and encompass all volunteers to improve and expand community engagement.

The Board further discussed strategies to engage community members representing diverse groups and improving engagement with volunteers could help facilitate a greater sense of belonging at RPL.

The Board will review and vote on the FY26-FY30 strategic plan in September.

VII. Financial Report

Ms. Lannon reported that the first month of FY25 spending is off to a good start. The FY25 materials budget has been reviewed and allocated across various content and format categories. 86% of this week's warrant is for the Library's annual payments to the North of Boston Library Exchange (NOBLE) for automated library network services and the renewal of Wowbrary, OverDrive, EBSCO, and other digital resources.

The Unitarian Universalist Church of Reading gave a generous donation to benefit the Office of Equity and Social Justice and future Juneteenth celebrations.

VIII. Director's Report

Data shows an increase in the usage of the exterior Library lockers after several months of service disruptions, as has the use of OverDrive content.

The Library recently submitted the Annual Report Information Survey (ARIS) to the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC).

The MBLC recently awarded RPL a \$20,000 "Dig In" grant, which will launch one year of programming and services to establish the Library as a horticultural hub for the Town of Reading. This library-wide grant will complement the long-term projects being reviewed by the Ad Hoc Library Landscape Committee and the recent short-term beautification and maintenance efforts among volunteers, the Department of Public Works, and the Facilities Department.

Ms. Filleul reported that the Library will launch a completely new mobile application later this month, requiring users to do a new install and delete the old app. Access to the old app has been extended for one month during the transition. Despite some software and

privacy challenges, RPL and Communico have made progress with the Google and Apple versions of the app. RPL will promote the upcoming transition online, on social media, Google Play, and the Apple App Store to build awareness.

Ms. Lannon noted that a new EBSCO Home Improvement Source DIY database will provide access to full-text content from leading home improvement magazines and reference books, as well as a unique collection of images and information on home improvement and repair projects including gardening, design, painting, and decorating.

The Library's 25th annual Vehicle Day will take place in the Library parking lot on Tuesday, August 13. The Library will be closed on Friday, November 1, for the staff's annual professional development day. A new children's librarian is scheduled to begin on Monday, August 26. The Library hopes to hire two more part-time high school pages this fall.

IX. Approval of July 8, 2024, Meeting Minutes

Motion: To approve the minutes from the July 8, 2024, Board of Library Trustees meeting as written.

(Dubois / Gregory)

Vote: Approved 4-0

X. Future Agenda Items

In September, the Board will vote on the FY26-FY30 strategic plan. Head of Public Services Andrea Fiorillo will present an update on fall programming and summer reading. The Ad Hoc Library Landscape Committee will also present an update on the exterior library landscape project.

Ms. Filleul will let the Board know when the Library's new mobile application will be available for previewing and beta testing.

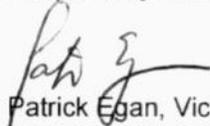
Adjournment 8:32 p.m.

Motion: To Adjourn

(Gregory / Verrier)

Vote: Approved 4-0

Respectfully Submitted,



Patrick Egan, Vice-Chair

Reading Holdings by ARIS statistical categories				
Format	Adult	YA	Child	Total
Audio	7,547	8	420	7,975
Books	33,548	5,086	28,113	66,747
Materials in electronic format	238	66	18	322
Miscellaneous	248	0	943	1,191
Print Serials	1,658	101	222	1,981
Video	9,712	0	541	10,253
TOTAL	52,952	5,261	30,257	88,470
Reading Circulation by ARIS statistical categories.				
Format	Adult	YA	Child	Total
Audio	593	0	479	1,072
Books	9,941	2,180	17,091	29,212
Materials in electronic format	120	17	24	161
Miscellaneous	96	0	204	300
Print Serials	646	9	23	678
Video	1,770	4	492	2,266
TOTAL	13,166	2,210	18,313	33,689

READING PUBLIC LIBRARY

STRATEGIC PLAN
2026 - 2030

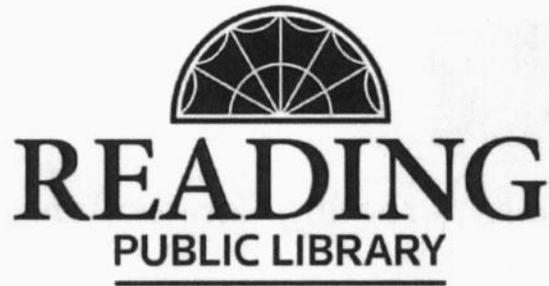


PLAN SUMMARY

Reading is facing the challenges of many communities in Massachusetts and beyond, with high-cost housing, an aging population, and divisive local politics. What sets Reading apart is active civic engagement, a community poised to embrace the challenges and welcome new residents, and a public library that models impactful municipal partnerships. Reading Public Library is a high performing organization, with established and refined core library services delivered by a professional and innovative staff. Reading Public Library serves a desirable and affluent community known for its good schools and proximity to both urban and green spaces. With its charm and amenities, Reading attracts newcomers, inspires community participation and provides aspirations to age in place.

How does the library meet the needs of all the community members, ensuring the core values are centered in decision making? How does the library continue to sustain and innovate core services, while expanding outreach and services to community members who are underserved by the library? How does the library plan for the future during uncertain times?

Through the planning process, community members and library staff engaged in deep thinking and thoughtful conversation. The result is a plan that builds on previous strategic priorities, and includes a new mission statement that captures the essence of the work: Building Community, Creating Connections. These connections, to each other, technology, information, and services are all essential for building community.



Library Board of Trustees and Governance

Christian "Cappy" Popp, Chair

Patrick Egan, Vice Chair

Andrew Grimes, Secretary

Cherrie Dubois

Andrew Gregory

Monette Verrier

Amy Fang Lannon, Library Director

Strategic Planning Committee

Michelle Filleul

Amy Fang Lannon

Olivia McElwain

Jamie Penney

Monette Verrier

Consultant

Maura Deedy, Local Librarian Consulting

**August 12, 2024 | approved by the
Reading Public Library Board of Trustees**

MISSION

Building Community, Creating Connections.

Reading Public Library's mission is to connect all people with opportunities to grow and learn, and to provide resources to support a welcoming and engaged community.

VISION

Evolving together to strengthen communication, equity, collaboration, and learning.

CORE VALUES

Education
Equity
Accountability
Access



STRATEGIC AREA OF FOCUS: CUSTOMER CONVENIENCE AND PERSONALIZATION

Goal 1: Engage with the community as co-creators in library programs, services and designs

- Accessibility assessment with direct involvement from patrons with disabilities to evaluate library programs, services, and technology
- Multi-language programs and services, organized with input from community, town departments, partners schools about event specifics
- Operationalize the translation of library publications, documents and communications

Goal 2: Explore library service points outside the library building

- Develop pilot programs for satellite library services in various community locations, those already existing and those being planned
- Investigate the feasibility of increasing self-services, including library lockers, vending kiosks and returns

Goal 3: Expand collections and access for multi-language residents

- Build robust collections of print and digital materials in languages spoken by Reading residents
- Advocate to the library network to improve integrated library system capabilities to support multi-language resources and findability
- Support English language learning goals with print and digital material and services at various proficiency levels

Goal 4: Continue to deliver, improve, and evaluate core library services

- Support lifelong learning for all residents at all ages by providing collections that inspire, inform and bring joy through personalized services
- Maintain a welcoming, fun, engaging environment
- Continue to support non-traditional or low-literacy library users

STRATEGIC AREA OF FOCUS: COMMUNITY LEARNING AND ENGAGEMENT

Goal 1: Support ESL community with programs and services that build community connections

- Develop partnerships and programming with community organizations
- Explore other programmatic offerings relevant to ESL learners

Goal 2: Position Reading Public Library as a space to address community needs and connect with other municipal services

- Strengthen existing relationships and partnerships with municipal departments and organizations
- Support municipal departments and initiatives with library staff participating on town-wide committees and task forces
- Continue to grow partnership with Reading Public Schools to support curriculum, encourage a routine use of library services, and foster a positive relationship with reading

Goal 3: Continue to offer programming to build new community connections across background, age, or identity

- Assess the impact of library programs through feedback and demographic studies to ensure they are meeting the evolving community needs
- Explore a variety of programming formats that can include passive, meet-up, virtual, hobby based

Goal 4: Develop transition strategies for young adults (ages 13-20) to grow into library services

- Continue to foster relationships with tweens and caregivers through programming and enhancement of tween space
- Engage with teens as co-creators of teen room programs, services and collections
- Assess usability of existing teen room to meet the evolving needs of teens

STRATEGIC AREA OF FOCUS: LIBRARY AS SPACE AND PLACE

Goal 1: Adapt library spaces that are open to all, ensuring everyone can explore information and resources with ease.

- Assess the feasibility of broadening library meeting room policy outside of reservations and internal use
- Audit of library spaces for accessibility of library patrons, and implementation of results

Goal 2: Implement strategies to increase diversity among library staff and board members

- Develop a succession plan that includes the strategic recruitment and retention of diverse staff members
- Create a process for assessing board composition and use data to support the development of a diverse board

Goal 3: Plan for the future

- Position the library as a community resource that is open to all, with a commitment to inclusion and equity, meeting library users where they are when they enter the building
- Adapting and anticipating changes in community trends by reviewing library services to ensure RPL is proactive, flexible and providing relevant services with appropriate funding
- Respond to and prepare for climate change and other environmental concerns
- Investigate the feasibility of completing the Sustainable Libraries Certification program

Goal 4: Continue the Library Landscape Project

- Investigate the Ad Hoc Library Landscape Committee recommendations for implementation feasibility
- Support the Ad Hoc Library Landscape Committee fundraising efforts

METHODOLOGY

When it came time to start the strategic planning process for the next plan, library leadership reflected on the framework and structure of the FY21-25 plan. The strategic priorities were evergreen, and there were also opportunities to continue the work and develop new goals to meet the evolving needs of the Reading Community.

The planning process began in spring 2024 with a review of recent municipal surveys, including Town of Reading Community Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Needs Assessment, Youth Risk Behavior Survey 2023, ReImagine Reading Survey, RECALC Summary report, and various library related surveys including the work of the Library Landscape Project. The library was a full partner in the Town of Reading Community Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Needs Assessment and several of the recommendations in that report are reflected in the goals. These surveys provided rich insight into the aspirations and needs of Reading's residents pulling from various perspectives and community needs.

These insights provided the framework for community engagement sessions which were held with older adults, Partners and Allies for Inclusive Reading members (PAIR), multi-language learners, municipal stakeholders, trustees and library staff in the spring of 2024. Stakeholders were asked questions about the needs of Reading residents, and explored where the library could make an impact. Staff work groups worked on exercises to develop a new mission statement. They spent time thinking about the strategic priorities and what success would look like when the plan was realized. The Library steering committee finalized the documents.

Together, these insights brought forth the strategic goals to shape the focus of library staff in the next several years. This plan is the culmination of insights and thoughtful dialogue about the needs and aspirations of Reading's residents and the Reading Public Library's ability to make an impact.