

Phillips Public Library Board of Trustees  
Regular Meeting Minutes  
June 28, 2022

**Members present (no zoom, all in person):**

Becky Steinbach, Meredith Hueckman, Galen Azbell, Bruce Marshall, Brittany Weisrock, Jenny Markle, Rick Morgan

**Members absent:**

Laura Tomaszewski

**Staff present:**

Rebecca Puhl, Jody Eckert, Jake W.

**Call to order/establishment of a quorum**

Meeting opened by Rick at 5:05 p.m.

**Public Comments**

7 Individuals signed up ahead of time to speak for 3 minutes each. The original list of names is available. Brief summaries below:

Joe Fox--asking the board to come to a compromise.

Jason Enderle--spoke on CRT and its proselytizing nature. Concerned by these books placed in front of small children without the parents' knowledge. Not asking for banning books.

Rebecca Trimner--encourages the board to leave the books on the shelves in the children's section. Do not remove books simply because they do not fit one ideology. Don't restrict her family from finding and reading the books they choose.

Shirley Smith--books being challenged are the ones that children need in order not to be racist. We cannot allow censorship.

Tammy Hastings--Mexican by heritage. Christian. Wishes she could go back to teach her children about how to love in a way that has nothing to do with skin color.

Christian Markle--here as a law enforcement chaplain. Officers want to help--all colors, ethnicities, etc. Children need to know officers are safe and helpful. A book that demonizes police to children is damaging to our community. Police brutality book should be put in YA and balanced with one on the opposite side.

Jake W.--works in all kinds of community events and with people of all ages. He is asking the board not to make exclusionary decisions with these books. People in our community do hold many differing values and appreciate having these books.

## **Communication and Correspondence**

Several letters were received and emailed out to the board. All have to do with the book discussions so do not need to be discussed here.

## **Approval of 05/26/2022 minutes**

Motion made by Meredith

Seconded by Galen

To approve May 26, 2022 minutes

All ayes; motion carried.

## **Reports:**

### **1. Treasurer's Report**

No formal report. A six-month report will be given next month. No action needed.

### **2. Director's Report**

Becky gave an oral expansion of her written report. No action needed.

### **3. Staff Meeting Minutes.**

Written minutes provided. No action needed.

## **Old Business:**

### **1. Discussion/Action on Library Hours/COVID-19/Mask Requirements**

Becky presented no changes to the current, approved policy. She continues to monitor COVID numbers in the county. No changes suggested by the board. No action needed.

### **2. Discussion/Action on Library building project**

Payments made on YA materials. Waiting for shipment. No action needed.

## **New Business:**

### **1. Discussion/Action on challenged Library materials**

## **General comments:**

Bruce is concerned with the CRT and propaganda in all of the books. He is concerned with anti-police books in a children's section. The library does not exist to display, promote, or confront children with social, political, or religious views. The library should offer fun and entertaining programs and materials. New materials cannot overwhelm older books in the collection, giving the appearance of an agenda. Library materials and resources should be as neutral as possible and not promoting any agenda.

Galen does not want agendas to be pushed, but he feels every book does that to an extent. Be careful about moving books.

***Use of Force and the Fight Against Police Brutality*** by Elliot Smith

Motion made by Brittany

Seconded by Becky S.

To move the book to YA nonfiction section

Comments--Jenny says we need to add books to balance the collection and show other views (will email Becky)

Bruce feels this book should not have been purchased.

Galen liked the book and feels it was narrow but not agenda-driven. The reading level is middle school, rather than children's.

Becky S.--Her son read this book and still wants to be a police officer.

Meredith--got the opposite view. It read like a list of police shootings without case details. Read quotes and stated that kids need to review this material with an adult or be more mature.

Vote by roll call: **Motion passed**

Meredith--yes

Bruce--yes

Brittany--yes

Becky--yes

Rick--yes

Jenny--yes

Galen--yes

***Not My Idea: A Book About Whiteness*** by Anastasia Higginbottom

Motion made by Brittany

Seconded by Becky S.

To leave this book where it is shelved.

Discussion:

Brittany--written for 4-6th grades. Shelved with children's nonfiction.

Becky S.--owns this book. It has led to many great conversations. It's fantastic. It helps kids understand other children.

Bruce--disagrees. This book requires supervised discussion. He's concerned that any child can pull it off the shelf. It never should have been purchased. Civic duty, honesty, and kindness should be the "agenda" in a children's section.

Meredith--disagrees as well. Filling the shelves with this kind of book (CRT) is wrong. Save room for childhood, fun, books. Has a problem with books that call children to social activism and protest. (We have fantastic books on diversity! 70+ titles. Jenny displayed some and commented.) These controversial books are scattered throughout the section. These books should be accurately categorized as social activism in nonfiction and fiction. Says the book is controversial because it contains elements that disagree with our collection development policy.

Galen--disagrees with the idea that we don't need certain books because we have some already. Cautions not to avoid books just because we have something like that in our collection. This particular book comes from a series called Ordinary Horrible Things. Galen thinks this book is helpful for kids to read without a parent. He wants the book to be kept and to stay in its place.

Becky P.--says we are buying more books than Park Falls, so that's why we have more controversial books. She says we are heading into an inventory period to see what we actually have. Use is the biggest criteria for how many books we have and how long books stay on the shelf.

Rick--observes that we have close to a unified feeling here. The real question is how to display these books properly. This discussion allows us to have this conversation with our community. Our decisions tonight are important. This process is one that affects the future, too. Fears a feeling of angst regarding the library could continue.

Vote by roll call: **Motion passed**

Meredith--yes

Bruce--no

Brittany--yes

Becky--yes

Rick--yes

Jenny--yes

Galen--yes

**Call and Response: the Story of Black Lives Matter** by Veronica Chambers

Motion made by Jenny

Seconded by Brittany

To move this book to the YA nonfiction section

Bruce--Who can check out books from what section?

Becky P.--Everyone can check out materials from all areas of the library. No restrictions.

Vote by roll call: **Motion Passed**

Galen--yes

Jenny--yes

Rick--yes

Becky S.--yes

Brittany--yes

Bruce--yes

Meredith--yes

***When We Say Black Lives Matter*** by Maxine Beneba Clark

Motion made by Meredith

Seconded by Jenny

To Create a section called "Social Activism" under the Community section of the picture books and move this book and others like it into it.

Galen--doesn't like this idea. It's a hard line to draw. What about recycling, for example? What is activism and how would we decide?

Becky S. and Becky P. are fine with this idea. It's good for kids to find these books.

Bruce--put on the agenda for upcoming meetings the idea of a community or staff or board committee representing opposing views to comb through these ideas regarding specific books and their placement. He wants community input rather than just the ideas of other libraries or the ALA.

Vote by roll call: **Motion Passed**

Galen--no

Jenny--yes

Rick--yes

Becky S.--yes

Brittany--yes

Bruce--yes

Meredith--yes

***Race Cars: A Children's Book About White Privilege*** by Jenny Devenny

Motion made by Jenny

Seconded by Meredith

To reshelve this book in the nonfiction section at CH 305.8 Dev (like Ladysmith has it).

This book could be reshelved in the picture section under Social Activism if it is in danger of being weeded.

Jenny-recommends that this book move to nonfiction due to its confusing format versus it's actual content (not about race cars, about racism).

Becky P.--concerned about the reading level being so much lower than the other book (*Not My Idea*). Concerned it might not get checked out in nonfiction.

Brittany--book is intended (as per the publisher) as a nonfiction book and as a book to be discussed with a grown-up.

Vote by roll call: **Motion passed**

Meredith-yes

Bruce-yes

Brittany-yes

Becky S.-yes

Rick-yes

Jenny-yes

Galen-yes

***Antiracist Baby*** by Ibram X. Kendi

Motion made by Meredith

Seconded by Becky S.

To move this book to the Social Activism section under Community in the picture book section.

Becky S.--could see this book in the newly created social activism section

Brittany--designed as a picture book for the children's section. Not opposed to where it is now.

Becky P.--comfortable with moving this to the new section

Vote by roll call: **Motion passed**

Galen-no

Jenny-yes

Rick-yes

Becky-yes

Brittany-yes

Bruce-yes

Meredith-yes

***Beauty Woke***: by Noniequa Ramos

Motion made by Becky

Seconded by Jenny

To keep this book where it is shelved.

Vote by roll call: **Motion passed**

Meredith-yes

Bruce-yes

Brittany-yes

Becky-yes

Rick-yes

Jenny-yes

Galen-yes

***Our Skin: A First Conversation About Race*** by Megan Madison

Motion made by Brittany

Seconded by Becky

To move this book to its suggested categorization of CH 305.8.

Vote by roll call: **Motion passed**

Meredith-yes

Bruce-yes

Brittany-yes

Becky-yes

Rick-yes

Jenny-yes

Galen-yes

Galen-the end is a picture of protesting, but the vast majority is about skin color--the science of melanin. It's about self-acceptance and bullying. The end is about coming together to do something positive.

Becky S.-This book could help families who are struggling. This is a book about what is going on in the world. It's about validating how a child might feel.

Meredith-feels this is about grouping people into groups by skin color. And the second half is about activism--pickets, shouting, etc..

Bruce-this is a book calling out for parental guidance. The end is what puts it into the Social Activism section.

Titles for Discussion in July:

*Ana on the Edge* by A.J. Sass

*Melissa's Story* by Alex Gino

*You Be You* by Jonathan Branfman

## **2. Discussion/Action on asking the city to ban weapons inside the Library**

Becky talked to the Sheriff's office regarding a panic button. It requires extra equipment and set-up and would cost about \$2000. Asks to table this until we have a more firm price quote.

Motion made by Bruce

Seconded by Brittany

To table this until we have more information from TJ

Motion passed.

## **3. Discussion/Action on open Library Board position**

Discussion: We need a county resident.

Bruce-are all 18 people adults, alive, out of jail, can read? Pull names from a hat because we will not come to a clear consensus about which person we prefer.

Becky S.- Two people (Mia and Kerry) live in the city, so they don't qualify. For this position.

Motion made by Bruce

Seconded by Jenny

To place all 16 names into a hat/bag and draw out one at a time to decide who fills this position.

Becky P. and Becky S. are concerned with some of the people on this list. Becky S. wants this to be a closed session. Some of these people have advocated for throwing a book away or not supporting the director. Galen is also concerned with this problem. Bruce says we likely have no legal basis for a closed session regarding potential board members. Meredith doesn't know all of these people and would like more information about them. Can we ask for resumes? Can we ask them to fill out a questionnaire? Bruce says we can't legally discuss the answers. Becky P. will talk to John at IFLS for more information and advice.

**\*Motion withdrawn by Bruce.**

Motion made by Bruce

Seconded by Galen

To table this discussion for one month while we seek legal counsel and IFLS input regarding what we can ask and discuss regarding candidates and how we should update our existing policy.

All ayes. Motion Carried.

**4. Approve June 2022 bills**

Motion made by Becky S.

Seconded by Meredith

To approve June 2022 bills “above the line” in the amount of \$5944.84 and “Below the line” in the amount of \$1596.44.

All ayes. Motion carried.

**5. Other new business to add to the agenda for the next meeting.**

\*Board agrees to delay the regularly scheduled review of the director.

\*Bruce wants a discussion regarding a staff/board/community advisory committee to help with book categorization to be added to the agenda.

**7. Set date and time for next meeting**

The next meeting will be held Tuesday, July 26, 2022, at 5:05 p.m., hopefully at the old elementary lunch room.

**Adjournment:**

Rick adjourned the meeting at 8:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jennifer Markle