

Phillips Public Library Board of Trustees
Regular Meeting Minutes
October 27, 2022

Members present (in person or via zoom):

Becky Steinbach, Meredith Hueckman, Galen Azbell, Brittany Weisrock, Jenny Markle (zoom), Marc Peterson, Laura Tomaszewski (zoom)

Members absent:

Bruce Marshall

Staff present:

Rebecca Puhl, Jody Eckert (zoom), Evelyn Azbell

Call to order/establishment of a quorum

Meeting opened by Becky S. at 5:06 p.m.

Public Comments

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

Lynn Boers--no comments to the public or board. Prayed aloud for the meeting.

Patty Nutt--The responsibility of protecting children is huge. Shared verses regarding sins of the heart that defile people. Referred to an article that connected homosexuality, adultery, and divorce to the fall of the Roman empire. Warns that sin will affect our country, too. Questions the wisdom of pursuing these things with our children who are impressionable.

Julie Olson--Four of the books define family as a group of people who love each other--this is a powerful message. All different types of families are represented in our school district. Kids need to see themselves represented. *Love, Violet* and *From Archie to Zach* are about a friendship--kids looking for a relationship. Who hasn't experienced that?

Joe Fox--The library is purchasing and promoting books that groom children. The director and the board are not working to protect children. The LGBTQ agenda is more important to this library than protecting children. Why does the library want to encourage the sexualization of children? Adults should protect children, not groom them.

Shirley Smith--*Everything You Say about Me . . .* is a book about dogs who love all kinds of people. Children are not at risk from these books. Children are in no danger from books that vigilant parents will protect them from. This is a hate-based attack on marginalized people. The library does not have too many books on these topics; the number of books available compared with the number of children with library cards is entirely reasonable.

Comments on questions from the public submitted at the September meeting

a) How long is a board member term?
*3 years. Exception--school superintendent (or proxy).

b) Is the challenge form on the Library website?
*Yes. It is downloadable to print, fill out, and drop off at the library. Paper copies are at the front desk as well.

c) Are the meetings recorded? Does the public know that they might be on the radio?
*Meetings are recorded via zoom. Comments are public records and may be shared with the radio or with any individual who requests a copy. When the radio asked for comments, Becky checked with an attorney to be sure it was legal before sharing. Anyone may have access to the minutes and the audio file.

Communication and Correspondence

All letters were sent out via email; board members received them prior to the meeting

Approval of 09/29/2022 minutes

Motion made by Brittany

Seconded by Marc

To approve September 29, 2022 minutes as presented

Motion passed

Reports:

1. Treasurer's Report

Board balances through June provided. No new report to share. No action needed.

2. Director's Report

Becky gave an oral expansion of her written report. Foot traffic is increasing. Smoky Bear came--25 people were there. Wacky Wednesday is moving to Thursday--new name needed. Two author visits went well. Kim Lasee is doing a social work internship from December to the summer. No action needed.

3. Staff Meeting Minutes.

Written minutes provided. Most libraries still have the sneeze guards in place; some staff think it would be nice to leave it up until after flu season is over. No action needed.

Old Business:

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

No changes made. No action needed.

2. Discussion/Action on Library building project

The public like the YA furniture. No action needed.

New Business:

1. Discussion/Action on 2023 Budget

Becky advocated for her staff to receive the wages of Budget A. We could put board money into the book budget to bring the book budgets up if needed.

The subcommittee discussed the desire not to cut the book budgets in half and so recommends the full/part time budget rather than budget A.

Meredith--Thanked Becky for her hard work on budgets. She offered an option. We could use the part/full time budget as a base; workers would stay the same, but Becky's raise could be less in order to keep the book budgets higher. Because the staff were below living wages, they should have the larger raises recommended in the budget. A 3-4% raise on Becky's salary is still a lot of money and is a higher raise than the last two years and similar to raises around the country. A high percentage of our budget goes to salaries.

Her main consideration is the book budget. Books are the backbone of the library, so she is not comfortable cutting the book budget so much. She wants to keep the quality of materials high and include books that the public can't afford, not just "cheaper" books.

Becky P. --is upset that her wages alone would be lowered in Meredith's proposal. Could the board make up the money instead of taking it out of Becky's wages?

Brittany--concerned that we are buying too many books and they are being weeded and money wasted. Books can be chosen more carefully and kept longer with a lower book budget and less crowding on our shelves.

Becky P.--the city will not be raising our income in the foreseeable future; the county might possibly be a source of higher income.

Becky S.--the book budget was too high already, so it is a win-win to put book money into the wages and salaries. This is an appropriate way to use the money.

Galen--how many employees? (3 full time and 3 part time, plus 1 janitor) So the percentage of our budget that goes to salaries makes sense based on how many employees we have. Maybe we are behind, even. Also, how does the county funding work? Is it matching funds?

Becky P--No, it is a formula (explanation given). The county has realized they are paying less than others in the area and might be willing to increase their funding in the future.

Brittany--staff knows that the wages might be settled at this new level for a while. We are also trying to prevent weeding and then re-buying materials when they come back into popularity. She and Jenny tried to find a way to compensate workers for all they do.

Other areas of the budget could perhaps be trimmed--such as advertising, for example. Also, the purchasers will be more selective going forward.

Becky P--included Budget A to show what the staff is worth. The part/full time budget is a compromise. She could ask the board for more money if shelves look bare part way through the year. She would like a chance to try this budget because it lines up better to what other libraries are spending. Could we reassess after the first quarter?

Galen--What if the board makes up the difference--if the difference is even needed.

Becky P--suggests that the board accepts the subcommittee's budget and then offers up to \$5000 of board funds to supplement the book budgets.

Brittany--Jenny and I also thought of using board funds to purchase inexpensive tablets for check out as e-book readers. That way, we get some credit for ebook checkouts by counting the tablet as an item (even though the ebooks themselves don't get counted yet).

Motion made by Brittany

Seconded by Marc

To approve the full/part time budget for 2023 with the stipulation of evaluating the book budget in 3 months (March), with good record-keeping by Becky. If more book money is needed, Becky will ask the board for up to \$5000 for books.

Roll call vote:

Marc--yes

Meredith-no

Becky--yes

Brittany--yes

Galen--yes

Laura--yes

Jenny--yes

Motion passed

2. Discussion/Action on challenged Library materials

Calvin by JR and Vanessa Ford

Becky P--this book should have been on last month's list for the gender section on the Family Discussion shelf.

Motion made by Brittany

Seconded by Meredith

To move *Calvin* to the gender subsection of the family discussion section

Roll call vote:

Marc--yes

Meredith--yes

Becky--yes

Brittany--yes

Galen--yes

Laura--yes

Jenny--yes

Motion passed

Different Can Be Great by Lisa Bullard

Motion made by Meredith
Seconded by Jenny
To move this book to the Family Discussion shelf

Roll call vote:

Marc--no
Meredith--yes
Becky--no
Brittany--no
Galen--no
Laura--no
Jenny--yes

Motion failed

Meredith--no real story line; has parent "checks" that indicate the book is meant to teach something. The book is a guide. Referenced Bruce's notes. It is controversial to the public.

Becky P--thinks this book is appropriate for all ages; it is about families. It is simple enough for children to understand without a parent.

Brittany--Read some of the discussion questions in the book. The book is not primarily about LGBTQ characters. There are all kinds of families. That's what this book is about. The book is stickered. That is a compromise.

Becky S--this debate is not about the parent guide. Otherwise all of the books with guides would be requested to be put in the discussion section.

Galen--the guide is more about teaching literacy (bold, table of contents, etc.) than the content of the book. Not every book with a discussion guide belongs in the family discussion section.

Motion made by Galen
Seconded by Brittany
To leave the book where it is.

Roll call vote:

Marc--yes
Meredith--no
Becky--yes
Brittany--yes
Galen--yes
Laura--yes
Jenny--no

Motion passed

Dress Up Day

by Lisa Bullard

Becky P wants to move this book to a new section under "Ourselves" titled "identity" (not regarding gender identity) to include heritage and other forms of identity.

Motion made by Meredith

Seconded by Brittany

To put this book in the section Ourselves (possibly with a new subcategory, title pending)

Roll call vote:

Marc--yes

Meredith--yes

Becky--yes

Brittany--yes

Galen--yes

Laura--yes

Jenny--yes

Motion passed

Everything You Say about Me That's Wonderful Is True

by Dr. Casey

Motion made by Galen

Seconded by Marc

To leave the book where it is

Roll call vote:

Marc--yes

Meredith--no

Becky--yes

Brittany--yes

Galen--yes

Laura--yes

Jenny--yes

Motion passed

Meredith--asks why this book was purchased? Bruce asked this, too. The picture of a drag queen was strange. She is interested in parent tools and properly categorizing books.

Becky P--This is an alphabet book with lots of things people can be. It was on a list. Jake probably thought it was cute. People like pet books. The ALA recommends not judging a book by a single page or picture.

Becky S--In my family, drag queens are not something to hide. Accepting people for who they are is a core value. The public library is here to serve all families and the community as a whole.

Brittany--It is not a queer book, but it does have a sticker in it to inform parents who would like to know what the content includes.

From Archie to Zach by Vincent Kirsch

Becky P.--It is a nice story. It has a sticker for parents who want it. The material about a crush is not over the heads of children of this age. It is not inappropriate.

Brittany--the first tag is "friendship", the second is "LGBTQ+ book"

Meredith--read Bruce's review stating that the book should be separately shelved. Also, she thinks our books should focus on whimsical, fun children's books. It should not focus on any agenda. The innocence of children is important.

Becky S--Conservation is an agenda. Are those books whimsical and fun? This is an attack on queerness.

Becky P--this is not a teaching book. It's just a story. If parents don't want their children to read it, the sticker is there.

Galen--even literacy is an agenda to some degree.

Brittany--If Archie were named Annie, would it still be a problem?

The book publishing world is focused on inclusion and diversity. Books without these are rejected. We will see more. These are the whimsical books the publishers are offering.

Meredith--both homosexuality and heterosexuality are best discussed with a parent. LGBTQ is a whole genre and should have its own section

Motion made by Meredith

Seconded --none

To put this book in the family discussion section

Motion failed

Motion made by Galen

Seconded by Brittany

To leave the book where it is

Roll call vote:

Marc--yes

Meredith-no

Becky--yes

Brittany--yes

Galen--yes

Laura--yes

Jenny--abstain

Motion passed

Heather Has Two Mommies by Leslea Newman

Motion made by Galen

Seconded by Brittany

To leave the book where it is

Roll call vote:

Marc--yes

Meredith--yes

Becky--yes

Brittany--yes

Galen--yes

Laura--yes

Jenny--yes

Motion passed

Love, Violet

by Charlotte Sullivan Wild

Meredith--read Bruce's statement.

Motion made by Galen

Seconded by Marc

To leave the book where it is

Roll call vote:

Marc--yes

Meredith--yes

Becky--yes

Brittany--yes

Galen--yes

Laura--yes

Jenny--abstain

Motion passed

Papa, Daddy, and Riley

by Seamus Kirst

Meredith--read Bruce's statement. She agrees that this is a discussion book because of the difficulty for a child to understand biological sex v. two dads and "the birds and the bees." It's better understood with parents.

Becky P.--it doesn't have discussion materials.

Galen--thinks the same. Kids understand all books better with parents.

Jenny--This book brought up a dilemma of having two dads. It's more realistic than some that make it seem too easy. This book made me sad, but I don't think it needs to be moved.

Motion made by Galen
Seconded by Laura
To leave the book where it is

Roll call vote:

Marc--yes
Meredith-no
Becky--yes
Brittany--yes
Galen--yes
Laura--yes
Jenny--yes

Motion passed

Stella Brings the Family by Miriam B. Schiffer

Becky S--this book is very relatable for many kids, including my stepdaughter.

Brittany--this book helps kids feel seen and understood.

Motion made by Galen
Seconded by Laura
To leave the book where it is

Roll call vote:

Marc--yes
Meredith-no
Becky--yes
Brittany--yes
Galen--yes
Laura--yes
Jenny--abstain

Motion passed

Titles for Discussion in November: *It's Perfectly Normal* by Robie H. Harris

Becky P. notes that staff has suggested to move the book to YA. The board is concerned that such a move does not prevent the challenge from being heard by the board according to the current policy. (1 challenger suggested moving it; 2 challengers suggested removing the item.) A copy of the book will be available behind the counter for the next month

Any other books of concern may be added if official challenge forms reach the director at least one week prior to the next meeting.

3. Election of Officers

Becky S nominates Brittany as President. Bruce refused being president but agreed to stay treasurer. He suggested Jenny or Becky. Jenny is willing to be president or remain secretary. Meredith is willing to be secretary if Jenny switches. Becky S is willing to remain Vice President but does not want to be President.

According to RRO, we cannot discuss the choice of candidates amongst ourselves. We have to put up a slate of officers and call for objections three times. Perhaps we should wait for Bruce?

Motion made by Galen
Seconded by Brittany
To table the election until next month.
Motion carried

4. Approve October 2022 bills

Motion made by Brittany
Seconded by Galen
To approve October 2022 bills "above the line" in the amount of \$7,899.83 and "Below the line" in the amount of \$0.00
All ayes. Motion carried.

5. Reading of questions from the public for comment at the November meeting

None offered

6. Other new business to add to the agenda for the next meeting

None offered

7. Set date and time for next meeting

The next meeting will be held *Tuesday, November 29, 2022*, at 5:05 p.m., at the city council room. A zoom link will be provided if possible.

Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn made by Laura
Seconded by Galen
Motion passed.
Becky S. adjourned the meeting at 7:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Jennifer Markle