

Phillips Public Library Board of Trustees
Regular Meeting Minutes
July 26, 2022

Members present (in person or via zoom):

Becky Steinbach, Meredith Hueckman, Galen Azbell, Bruce Marshall, Brittany Weisrock, Jenny Markle, Laura Tomaszewski

Members absent:

Rick Morgan

Staff present:

Rebecca Puhl, Jody Eckert

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:

Julie Olson--encourages the board to make sure books on all topics are available to everyone, with characters people can relate to. Shared an experience from her past that she believes would have gone better if she had read a book about the experiences of others so that she could better relate to a girl at school.

Lynn Boers--says the 2 novels are not appropriate for children as they deal with issues of transgender and non-binary characters and themes. She noted demographics for Phillips school district in relation to the number of LBGTQIA students and the abundant number of library books on this topic. She asks the library to consider the book needs of the majority of children in our district.

Joe Fox--*George* contains elements like porn, clearing internet browsing history, lying to parents, etc. Many area libraries don't have all of these titles. Why are these books being purchased by our library in the first place? Why have so many books been miscategorized--in children's instead of YA, for example?

Communication and Correspondence

--One letter was received and emailed out to the board. It has to do with the book discussions so does not need to be discussed here.

--An email for Trustee training has been sent out. Please take a look. Becky will record sessions and make them available, and we can consider viewing any sessions of interest together as a board.

Approval of 06/28/2022 minutes

Motion made by Bruce

Seconded by Brittany

To approve June 28, 2022 minutes

All ayes; motion carried.

Reports:

1. Treasurer's Report

A six-month report, complete with transaction details, was provided. Accounts are in good shape. No action needed.

Prevail Bank is changing their status to a Mutual Holding Company, but this should have no bearing on our accounts. If anyone wishes to oppose this change, see Becky for informational paperwork in the next two weeks. Otherwise, Bruce will pick up the papers in two weeks (August 9th) to complete the paperwork with the bank. Action is needed by the bank by August 27th.

2. Director's Report

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

3. Staff Meeting Minutes.

Written minutes provided. No questions. No action needed.

Old Business:

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

Becky presented no changes to the current, approved policy. No changes suggested by the board. No action needed.

2. Discussion/Action on Library building project

Down payment made on YA materials. Waiting for items. No action needed.

New Business:

1. Discussion/Action on challenged Library materials

General comments:

Jenny--proposes a parent resource section for sensitive materials to make the library a safe space for all children in our community. (Read prepared comments)

Meredith--Eau Claire has a juvenile parenting section in their children's stacks

Becky P.--less concerned with creating that category than with what books should be there

Bruce--(comments had previously been sent out) read portions of his written statement, advocating for parental rights and materials as agenda free as possible.

Becky S.--Within the school district, we have far more than 6 students who identify as LGBTQIA. These books save lives by representing these at-risk children. The benefit of having these books outweighs the parenting issues. A lot of adults think "this can't happen in our home," but it is. These books don't tell children what to think; they help children by showing characters going through the same things.

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

Discussion--

Meredith notes that only 1 patron checked this book out since Jan. 2021. The main theme is Ana's discovering she is nonbinary, and the kids are 12-14 in the story. Maybe kids aren't finding it. Rasmussen report shows that the majority of parents don't want kids under 16 exposed to LGBT lifestyles.

Becky P. is very against stickering. We aren't categorizing anything else. She does not want to put novels into the parent resource section. Becky offered a list of books for parents as a tool.

Bruce--wants a parent resource section. It's not the library's role to enable kids to get books against parental consent. He disagrees with Becky about spine labels. It would be a tool. It's the parents' right to control what their children are reading. Parent shelving and stickering do not affect First Amendment issues.

Jenny--what tools will you give parents if we don't use spine stickers?

Galen--doesn't see utility a sticker could add. Thinks parents should read the back of the book. A sticker could be seen by others and bring about ridicule. What do you want the library to do? Perhaps a sticker could help, but the risk is probably greater. One other idea--compromise: what about a sticker on an inside page?

Brittany--the parents need to go with the kids to the library and look at the book up front in order to control the situation. Does your child read a book that does not interest them? 10 year olds won't do that. She is against the stickers and the parental shelf for novels.

All like Galen's idea of placing a sticker inside the book.

Motion made by Meredith

Seconded by Jenny

To use Demco LGBTQ spine stickers inside the front cover of *Ana on the Edge* as well as the rest of the LGBTQIA+ genre chapter books and easy chapter books so that parents have a tool to choose what they want their children to read.

Vote by roll call: **Motion Passed**

Becky--yes

Brittany--yes

Bruce--yes

Galen--yes

Jenny--yes

Laura--yes

Meredith--yes

Melissa's Story by Alex Gino

Discussion

Becky P--would anyone let their children read *Ana* but not *George*?

Mer--maybe! *George* deals with more adult topics than *Ana*. Other libraries put it in YA.

And it's not being checked out much. Maybe it needs to be in a different place? Could we try putting it in YA--then put it back if it doesn't work? What is the weeding time frame?

(Becky P--usually 1 year, unless it's an award winner or has another reason to be kept)

Mer--What about putting it in a parenting section because of the hormone therapy, puberty blockers, and surgeries the book references

Galen--check out numbers don't reflect kids who are reading the book in the library. What does success look like if we move it?

Bruce--questions the purchase of the book in the first place. It would be better to have novels more like *Ana* and not *George*. He prefers an actual parental resource regarding these topics rather than a book like *George*. But we have it, so we have to choose what to do with it.

Motion made by Brittany

Seconded by Galen

To leave this book where it is with the addition of a sticker inside the cover

Vote by roll call: **Motion passed**

Becky--yes

Brittany--yes

Bruce--yes

Galen--yes

Jenny--no
Laura--yes
Meredith--no

You Be You by Jonathan Branfman

Discussion:

Brittany--designed for kids, but it has no story or fun material. It is very informational based. It could be okay in a parental section. But it shouldn't be moved to YA

Motion made by Brittany

Seconded by Bruce

To create a parenting section (title to be determined by the director) within the children's nonfiction section and then move the entire Dewey section regarding puberty or changing bodies into the parenting section.

Vote by roll call: **Motion passed**

Becky--yes

Brittany--yes

Bruce--yes

Galen--yes

Jenny--yes

Laura--yes

Meredith--yes

Titles for Discussion in August:

Pride by Rob Sanders

Sewing the Rainbow by Gayle E. Pitman

This Day in June by Gayle E. Pitman

Two Grooms on a Cake by Rob Sanders

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

Becky asked to table discussion until she hears back from TJ. Board agrees.

3. Discussion/Action on open Library Board position

Discussion: We need a resident anywhere in the county, including in the city. So we need to open the suggestions back up. Becky talked with John from IFLS to gain more understanding. She must talk with the mayor to find out how involved he wants to be. We can send out a questionnaire or ask if the applicant is willing to commit to regular board

meetings (not just challenged books)--3 year terms. Bruce suggests getting everything in writing to the board members before talking to anyone (including the mayor and the county board chairman). Also, take the trustee board president along for the meetings with these officials to avoid any accusation of lack of integrity because a new board member is essentially Becky's "boss."

4. Discussion/Action on subcommittee to categorize books/preview challenges

Bruce asked for this action item but would like to table it until next month when he can present the idea more fully and in writing. He is trying to avoid future book challenges filling board meeting times by addressing books at the point of purchase.

5. Approve July 2022 bills

Motion made by Jenny

Seconded by Brittany

To approve July 2022 bills "above the line" in the amount of \$1699.35 and "Below the line" in the amount of \$1016.77

All ayes. Motion carried.

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

Discuss day of the week for future meetings--Tuesday or Thursday

7. Set date and time for next meeting

The next meeting will be held Tuesday, August 30, 2022, at 5:05 p.m., at the old elementary lunchroom/meeting room. A zoom link will be provided.

Adjournment:

Becky S. adjourned the meeting at 7:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Jennifer Markle