

MINUTES: Fairfield Public Library Board of Library Trustees Special Meeting
HELD: October 11, 2022 7:00 pm
AT: Fairfield Public Library – 1080 Old Post Road, Fairfield CT 06824
Rotary Room
And Virtual (due to the COVID-19 pandemic)
Recording: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fcF5qzN83gk>

Present:

Trustees: Mr. Andrew Minea, Ms. Christina McGowan, Ms. Jill Brown, Mr. Chris Rogers, Ms. Erin Harrigan, Mr. Peter Willner

Library Staff: Mr. Scott Jarzombek, Town Librarian, Ms. Jan Fisher, Deputy Town Librarian

Absent: Ms. Nancy Sweeney, Branch Manager, Ex-Officio: Chris Tymniak (unexcused)

Members of the Public: Lori Kostopoulos

1. Call to Order

Meeting was called to order by Mr. Minea at 7:10 p.m.

2. Public Comment

Mr. Minea explained the procedure for public comment as follows: public comment would be a total of 30 minutes and would begin with two speakers in person and then two speakers on line until all comments were heard. The following members of the public spoke and were all in-person: Karen McCormack, Sharon Pistilli, Bill Gerber, Lori Quick, Nicole Stanton, Beth Paris, Sue Cronin, Marcy Spolyar. At the end of public comment, Mr. Minea thanked everyone for sharing their comments.

3. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the September 12, 2022 meeting were reviewed. Mr. Rogers made a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Willner seconded. Motion passed. The minutes of the Special meeting on September 19, 2022 were reviewed. Ms. Brown made a motion to approve the minutes. Ms. McGowan seconded. Motion passed.

4. Chairman's Report

Mr. Minea reported that he was very happy to see the engagement of the community with the library during the last month with the book challenge issue. The library is a valuable resource to the community and Mr. Minea reminded everyone that the library does a lot beyond books. On behalf of the Board, Mr. Minea thanked the library staff for their hard work and dedication to the library to maintain the enthusiasm for the library.

5. Library Updates

Operations

Mr. Jarzombek reported that brand new book clubs have been established at Main, Woods and as outreach to Bigelow in September. About 18 teens per day are participating in the Down Under program at Woods. Library visits are up 75% over this time last year. There were eight work orders started in September and seven are now closed. DPW has fixed the doors and entrances are now working except for one door which needs a motor. The staff is down by 3-4 people due to COVID or possible positive tests.

Staff Presentations

Tamara Lynn, Head of Children's Services. Ms. Lynn thanked the Board for allowing her to present. She spoke of the book in question, *Let's Talk About It: The Teen's Guide to Sex, Relationships, and Being a Human*, by Erika Moen and Mathew Nolan. She stated that this book is located in the teen room on the first floor which is away from the children's section which is located on the second floor. Ms. Lynn explained the Unattended Children's Policy which states that a child under 12 is not allowed in the Library without supervision of a parent or guardian. She stated "parents should be engaged in their child's book choices and parents should always decide what is best for their children." Her opinion is that the book is located in the correct place in the Library.

Philip Bahr, Head of Adult Services. Mr. Bahr thanked the Board for allowing him to present. He shared a story of how the book in question was chosen for the library. It replaced an outdated book that he was noticed in response to a patron's request for books on sex education. His opinion is the book is in the correct place in the library.

Ms. Jen Laseman, Teen Librarian. Ms. Laseman explained the process in choosing the book for the library. She read many reviews and acknowledged the requests from patrons when choosing this book. She believes it belongs in the teen collection and should continue to reside there. She mentioned that the book discussed domestic violence and consent which could be valuable information for the reader.

Board Process Updates

Mr. Jarzombek reported that an email should be set up for the Board so the community members can contact Trustees. This will be on the agenda for the November meeting. Public comment will stop at 3:00 p.m. on the date of the meeting. Notification of meetings will be on the website for the staff and library will link the agenda to the Town website.

Financial/Budget Report

Mr. Jarzombek reported that the budget is on pace with pre-pandemic years.

6. Policy Review (Unattended Child Policy)

Mr. Jarzombek reported that the Unattended Child Policy was adopted in 2018. There are no proposed changes to the policy at this time. The policy states that children 12 and under must be supervised by a parent or guardian and the children must adhere to a code of conduct while in the library.

7. Committee/Liaison Reports

Book Review Ad Hoc Committee: Ms. McGowan reported that she has read the book, *Let's Talk About It: The Teen's Guide to Sex, Relationships, and Being a Human*, by Erika Moen and Mathew Nolan in its entirety. Based upon the meetings in September and public comment as of today at 3:00 p.m., the majority of comments are in favor of keeping the book in the collection. Ms. McGowan referred to Fairfield Public Library's collection development policies, and also the principles that the Library endorses and operates under, specifically three key documents from the American Library Association, the Library Bill of Rights, the Freedom to Read

Statement, and the Freedom to Read Statement, and the Freedom to View Statement. Ms. Brown stated that she was impressed with the respectful behavior of the patrons during the public comment at the September meetings. Mr. Willner agreed with the comments made by Ms. McGowan and Ms. Brown. Mr. Minea thanked the Ad Hoc Committee for their hard work on this book challenge.

Space Planning: Mr. Rogers reported that the incorrect legs have been fixed on the furniture. The designer is coming to the library on Friday and soon Phase 3 will begin.

Fundraising: Mr. Willner reported that there are no updates at this time.

Friends of the Library: Ms. Donna Cahill was not in attendance. Ms. Cathy Scoville reported that the annual meeting was held in September with author Jane Rosen. A new board was elected. The October 3rd Food Truck Festival was a success but there were no financials available at this time. Next week is National Friends of Libraries Week and there are plans for outreach to increase the number of Friends.

8. Treasurer's Report

Ms. Harrigan reported that the Jennings and Memorial funds are down about 8% which is in line with the current market. The access for the First County account is almost complete.

9. Old Business

Town Librarian Annual Assessment – Mr. Minea will be setting up a meeting with the Trustees to discuss the one year evaluation for Mr. Jarzombek. This will be accomplished in Executive Session.

Book Challenge: Mr. Minea made a motion to remove *Let's Talk About It: The Teen's Guide to Sex, Relationships, and Being a Human*, by Erika Moen and Mathew Nolan from the collection. Mr. Rogers seconded. Mr. Willner stated the removal of any book from a library is a slippery slope and could lead to decisions being made that would harm our democracy. His personal opinion of the book is immaterial. Mr. Minea asked Board to vote. Motion failed by unanimous vote.

10. Adjournment

Mr. Willner made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:21 p.m. Ms. Harrigan seconded. Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,
Lori Kostopoulos for
Christina McGowan, Secretary, Fairfield Board of Library Trustees

Date and Location of next meeting:

November 7, 2022 at 7:00 pm

Webex & In Person

Fairfield Public Library – 1080 Old Post Road, Fairfield CT 06824 Rotary Room