



Shrewsbury
Public Library
INSPIRING LEARNING, EMPOWERING OUR COMMUNITY

BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES

June 20, 2023, 7:00 PM

7:00 PM Call to order of Board of Library Trustees Meeting:

Present in person: Deb Lebeaux, Jeff Billingham, Clare O'Connor, Barbara Trudel, Moe Boisvert, Noor Ali, April Jones Prince, Lisa Powers, and Library Director Priya Rathnam. Absent with notice: Poornima Tekumalla

Review and act to approve minutes of May 23, 2023, meeting:

Minutes were reviewed and approved with no changes. A motion to approve was made by Moe Boisvert, seconded by Noor Ali, and the minutes were unanimously approved.

Review and act to approve report of Director's activities of May 2023:

Director Priya Rathnam described her presentation at the New Hampshire Library Trustee Association Meeting on May 9, where she spoke about how to work with your Town government, boards, and community to plan and promote social justice initiatives.

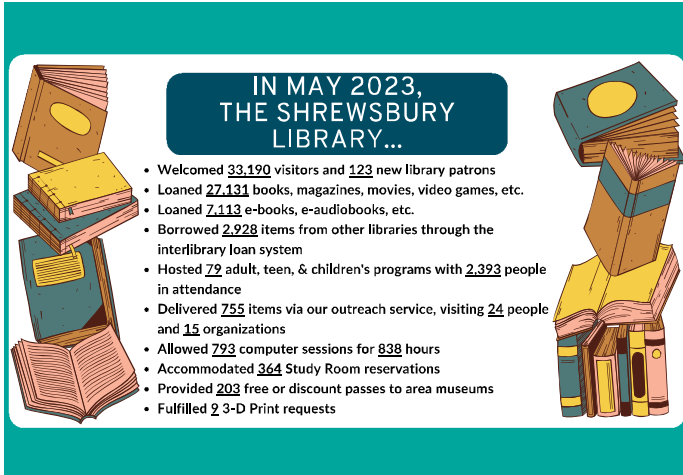
Priya and Trustees who attended the Distinguished Speaker event with Hank Phillippi Ryan on May 24 reported that the event was upbeat and successful. There were about 50 attendees.

A motion to approve the Director's activities was made by Noor Ali and seconded by Clare O'Connor, and the report was unanimously approved.

Programs and Services: Director's report of programs and services offered in May 2023:

Library Director Priya Rathnam shared that the new Spice Library has been well received, with the spice packets being "checked out" within a week. The Storywalk at Lake Ave. Park also continues to be popular. Children's staff has not repeated a book since it started the walks in May 2020.

The Trustees appreciated the robust-as-usual library usage statistics for the month:



Financial and Legislative:

- Review and act upon YTD report as of 6/16/23: We are on target for expenses and library materials at 99.6%. A motion to approve the YTD report was made by Barb Trudel and seconded by Noor Ali, and the report was unanimously approved.
- Review progress notes of FY'23 Action Plan: The Trustees agreed that the Plan looks terrific. A motion to approve the FY'23 Action Plan was made by Noor Ali and seconded by Moe Boisvert, and the report was unanimously approved.

Facility, Equipment and Grounds:

- Deb mentioned that the area by the outside stairs desperately needs weeding. Perhaps a community group could be enlisted to help, as a school or service project? We need to stay on top of the lack of lighting on the stairs as well. Priya and the Facilities sub-committee continue to reach out to people who might know where the control panel for the lights is so we can resolve the issue before the darker winter days arrive.

Gifts and Grants:

Nothing new to report.

Personnel

- Library Director Priya reported that for the 19 hours/week Technical Services Librarian position, the library received 19 applications, conducted six interviews, and hired our current, 16-hour Circulation Desk Assistant Tuyen Truong for the job.
- For the full-time Outreach and Marketing Librarian position, the library received 15 applications and is conducting interviews this week. Priya will keep the Board posted.

Shrewsbury Public Library Foundation:

Foundation Board member Moe Boisvert reported that:

- The Foundation Board recently welcomed new member Autumn Hotaling. There are still three openings on the Board, one of which needs to be filled by an attorney. A lawyer's expertise will be especially important when the Board starts accepting Legacy donations, which will allow the Foundation to build an endowment for long-term growth. The Foundation Board proposes calling the Legacy program the Ellen Dolan Society, in honor of previous Library Director Dolan.

- The Foundation Board will start working on the annual appeal letter in the fall, with the goal of increasing giving by 10% every year. Last year, the Annual Appeal increased giving by more than 10%, and the Board hopes to repeat that success.
- For the Distinguished Speaker series, the Foundation Board talked about bringing in physician, author, and educator Abraham Verghese (*Cutting for Stone; The Covenant of Water*). The Foundation is committed to bringing in speakers of stature. Trustees discussed the pros and cons of inviting Verghese or others in his fee range of \$50,000. The Foundation may be able to develop some synergies with Shrewsbury Public Schools, St. John's, local businesses, etc. to help fund the speakers and bring in attendees.
- In a discussion about establishing a joint committee of Friends, Trustees, and Foundation members to develop an Annual Report to educate the community about what each board does and has accomplished, Moe reported that two members of the Foundation Board have volunteered to participate. Deb Lebeaux will identify one or two volunteers from the Friends Board, and she volunteered to be part of the joint committee as a representative of the Trustees. Lisa Powers agreed to be the second Trustee member. Moe will help coordinate a meeting in August.

Friends of the Library:

- Shrewsbury High School senior Sydney Adams was awarded the Friends of the Library scholarship.
- The Friends are looking for volunteers to help sort books and staff the Friends' bookshop.

Policies:

- Review and approve revised Child Safety Policy: The revised policy raises the age at which young people can be at the library without being continually supervised by a parent or caregiver from grade five to grade seven. The Trustees are reluctant to make this change because the library is, by nature, a welcoming place for all. However, the change is necessary for safety reasons, especially after school on Fridays and early release days, when large groups of middle school students visit the library. The fire code limit in the Teen room is 35 people. Deb has written a letter about the change and the reasons behind it to be included in the August SPL newsletter. Dr. Sawyer will write a letter to families in the fall; perhaps we could also ask the schools to spread the word via the phone tree system? A motion to approve the revised Child Safety Policy was made by Clare O'Connor and seconded by Lisa Powers, and the revised policy was unanimously approved.
- Review and approve revised Meeting Room Policy to bring it in line with the updated Child Safety Policy. A motion to approve the revised Meeting Room Policy was made by Moe Boisvert and seconded by Noor Ali, and the updated policy was unanimously approved.
- Review and approve revised Collection Development Policy to update it for 2023. A motion to approve the revised Collection Development Policy was made by Clare O'Connor and seconded by Jeff Billingham, and the updated policy was unanimously approved.

Miscellaneous

- Deb Lebeaux provided an update on the meeting with School Administrators on June 8 to discuss the number of middle schoolers visiting the library after school: Present were Library Director Priya Rathnam; Trustees Deb Lebeaux, Moe Boisvert, Noor Ali, and April Prince; Teen Librarian Annie Lee King; middle school principals Jonathan Kelly (Sherwood) and Hallie Burak (Oak); and Shrewsbury Public Schools' Superintendent Dr. Joseph Sawyer. Police Chief Kevin Anderson and Recreation Director Laurel Rossiter were unable to attend. Dr. Sawyer, Mr. Kelly, and Ms. Burak were very supportive of the library's efforts to keep all patrons safe and comfortable in the library but are somewhat limited in what they can do to help to diminish the number of middle schoolers and any ramifications of the poor choices a minority of students make. Deb shared the measures the library

has taken thus far to help mitigate the situation. Some additional ideas discussed include SPS issuing physical ID cards to Oak Middle School students; creating more partnerships between the library, schools, and the Recreation department; offering Food Trucks outside Town Hall on early release days; adding bicycle policing on Maple Ave. as kids walk from school; developing a Town-wide task force to help determine ways to engage the middle school population; and Trustees' review of the library's Child Safety Policy (see above).

- Approval of State Aid funding for Beanstack license: The Board approved this expenditure at the May meeting but the numbers were incorrect. The total fee is \$2694.78 to renew the license for three years, or \$1048.50 for one year. A motion to approve funding for a three-year license was made by Noor Ali and seconded by Lisa Powers, and the license renewal was unanimously approved.
- Approval of State Aid funding for new hire (Outreach and Marketing Librarian) for four weeks: Priya is hoping to complete second interviews soon and hire for this position by mid-July so the new employee can be trained by Deb Mayo before Deb leaves on August 9. The amount requested is \$4168.50. A motion to approve funding for four weeks of salary was made by Clare O'Connor and seconded by April Prince, and the funding was unanimously approved.
- For the Materials budget, Library Director Priya would like to move funds from State Aid in case bills arrive before the end of the month. She requested \$10,000, including \$4,095 to renew the Headspace meditation app license for one year. Priya will inform the Board in September how much money was actually spent. A motion to approve the transfer was made by Moe Boisvert and seconded by Barb Trudel, and the funding was unanimously approved.
- Priya requested \$3000 from State Aid to purchase another steel cabinet to accommodate the growing Library of Things. A motion to approve the purchase was made by Clare O'Connor and seconded by Lisa Powers, and the funding was unanimously approved.
- Priya would like to have some copies of the Strategic Plan printed; \$1000 from State Aid should cover it. A motion to approve funds for printing was made by Jeff Billingham and seconded by Lisa Powers, and the funding was unanimously approved.
- Approval for authors to sell their books at the Local Author Showcase on June 22 as part of the Summer Reading Kickoff: a motion to approve book sales was made by Lisa Powers and seconded by Barb Trudel, and permission was approved. April Prince, a local author attending the showcase, abstained from the vote.
- Donation of Braille books: Someone in the community reached out to Library Director Priya and said he'd like to have Braille books available for browsing and loaning and was wondering if the library could purchase them. Priya reached out to several other library directors, and the director of the Perkins Library called to say that Perkins is the Braille resource for the entire state and can mail Braille books directly to patrons. When Priya discussed this with the community member, he said he felt patrons should have access to Braille books at their own/local library. The Perkins director said she would loan the SPL 10-15 books on a rotating basis, refreshing the books every quarter. The books could be a browsable collection, or if we want them to be loanable, we'll need to create our own bar codes. (Perkins is not part of the CW MARS system.) The books should be ready to display and check out in July. The Trustees will send the Perkins director a thank you note in September to acknowledge this above-and-beyond gesture to enrich our community and our library offerings.
- Deb followed up regarding the Land Acknowledgement Statement. The Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) Committee reached out to Cheryl Stedtler of the Nipmuc Nation and are waiting to connect with her before determining when/how the statement might be used Town-wide.

A motion to adjourn was made by Clare O'Connor, seconded by Noor Ali, and was unanimously approved.

Next meeting: Next monthly meeting on September 26, 2023

Remaining Board meetings in 2023: October 24, November 28, December 19

Respectfully submitted by Trustee and Secretary April Jones Prince