

**Trustees of the Southwick Public Library**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**June 14, 2022**  
**Hybrid -In Person & Remote**

**Roll Call:**

Michael McMahon, Maria Gallo, Tammy Ciak-Bissaillon, Jennifer Belden, Cindi Warner, Lynn Blair, Heather Dunfee

**Public Comments:**

None.

**Communications:**

Summer Reading Program - LB announced that the library is getting ready for the Summer Reading Program Opening Day June 25th 10-12:30pm. Everyone is invited to join and the welcome is not just for kids but for adults too. There will be Ed the Wizard doing balloon animals, a pony, popcorn. This will kick off summer reading.

Other programs - There were lots of requests for daytime programs. Several daytime programs are booked to test the water, see what kind of attendance, interest we get.

(There was a glitch in the "OWL" zoom broadcast. Everyone marked themselves present again.)

Continuing actions - LB is working on getting the budget lines spent down for the end of the fiscal year. She is working with Pioneer Valley Library Collaborative for climate preparedness week 24-26 September. She is going to try to get together with other local area libraries to join in bringing attention to this event.

Emergency Procedures - LB sent the Library's emergency procedure (30 page) draft to the Police Department a couple months ago back in April. LB has asked for lockdown drill training for library staff because several staff members are concerned for safety. LB would like to see some professional training specific to our building. LB says we can write up a procedure with PD assistance but would like to get someone to come in and give a professional opinion for active shooter training. The Police are still reviewing the emergency procedure draft and have not given an idea of when they can give feedback. The response to the request for professional training was a suggestion of an outside agency the Police have used before, but it appears their staff are in transition and would not be able to schedule anything soon, although they usually do these types of things in the summer. The Police may be trying to hook us up with the schools department's active shooter training but LB feels that it would be very different from what is needed at the library owing to the library's layout and lack of doors that lock. The staff are concerned. Tammy asked if this training has been done at other libraries. LB says yes and could check if another library could suggest someone. Cindi asked who was involved, and LB replied the Police. Michael said the Select Board would probably include this as part of the executive plan eventually. Jennifer asked "Does the library have a set number of emergency drills?" LB said "Just for equipment like checking the fire extinguisher." There are no set

plans each year. LB emphasizes that the Library needs a plan for active shooter training. Jennifer says LB doesn't need to convince Trustees, but needs to convince the town. "Talk to the town and schools to be part of that. It will become imperative that the schools and police department will have to be part of that plan. You are on the same campus. If they don't make you part of that same (training) system, they will look bad, and they don't want to." LB will look into it, but would like to have someone come here and look at our building very specifically. Tammy says she thinks they would have to come here - the situation is very different here. Jennifer commented about the training at all the schools she's worked at and how there is a school resource officer. Michael asked who is the contact person at the Police Department? LB replied Lieutenant Bannish. LB agreed to get in touch with the school resource officer. Cindi replied "You are down two days in doing that - school is ending. But the resource officer moves around (school locations)." Back in April LB was told that there would be a training, but it's not happened. Jennifer comments "If you want to be obnoxious the way I would do it, is to go to the superintendent and demand 'You need to facilitate a meeting.'" LB will reach out to the schools. Summertime is the best time for training because the library can close for a morning. LB will continue to check with the Police Department to see the status of the 30 page draft doc, etc.

Dealing with Weeded Materials - LB asked "Does anybody else have ideas about dealing with our weeded materials?" She explained that we have to get caught up with the collection and remove damaged, old material, etc. The Friends have stated that they are not going to have a book sale. LB says Trustees suggested that the Maintenance Dept. would help. At this time the Maintenance Department is understaffed. Nancy Zdun offered the use of her pickup truck, but she can't load. The Fire Department could help load, but they can't leave town boundaries. Hard to coordinate the timing. Does anyone know someone with a truck? Jennifer suggested getting the National Honor Society students to do community service - they could load the boxes etc. Jennifer said fifty percent of the National Honor Society students' families have a pickup truck. Michael asked how many boxes there are. LB stated there are some in the Community Room corner, some on a cart in the staff room - a fair amount. We are trying to catch up with weeding to create space in the shelves so people can actually shelve the materials. Tammy asked where the weeded items go. LB replied to the Agawam bindery - it's near the industrial park, a 5-10 minute drive from here. LB agreed to touch base with the Honor Society. Tammy will get in touch with Nancy Zdun and see if she can find guys to help load.

### **Acceptance of Minutes:**

Approval of May Minutes - LB asked are there any changes, corrections? Everyone reviewed the minutes. Maria said she read the minutes at home and didn't see anything obvious. Michael asked does he hear a motion to accept? Maria seconds. All in favor - all raised hands.

### **Director's Report:**

May Statistics - LB said everyone has a copy of the report. It looks like May was a pretty successful month - hit over 4000 circs. March was an odd month. This is wonderful for a non summer month. Went over the stats. Good on door count, etc. Jennifer said "Do we have any idea of why March was so stellar?" LB - March tends to be a longer month than most? It's a mystery. It could depend on programs - we had quite a few in March. 2-3 storytimes in March. That helped it out. Tammy noted

there was an error in where it was printed June instead of May on the 2nd page - LB will make the change. Any additional questions? No, so LB will move on to old business.

### **Old Business:**

LSTA Grant Update - LB is still working on it - there is funding for two more additional programs to use up until September. The Study spaces are open now and are very popular, there was demand for them and they were being used from the first night they were open.

Children's Room Mural Proposal - Everyone should have the picture of the final copy by Chelsea, including the requested ram. This is just a mockup, and this is the final draft. Chelsea is hoping to get it done by the end of August. Maintenance is to prime the walls. The Library is ready to go. Friends are funding half of it, and half will come out of the Library State Aid account. Jennifer asked "Will there be any special presentation to open?" LB said there will be a plaque and we'll maybe have some fun unveiling. It will add brightness and color.

New Staff - Circulation Librarian and Summer Page - LB just sent over a request to the Selectboard for approving the summer page. The position usually starts in June, runs for 8 weeks. They help with shelving, projects etc. Hope to get approval and start by the end of this month. LB explained that a new circulation person started but it didn't work out. We have another new person named Alyssa who has started. Michael asked about permanent staff leaves of absence. LB stated that the library will have to work with the staff we have. The budget request for another permanent person was not approved. So if the library has to close early or open late owing to staffing shortages, we will just do the best we can. Having the summer page will help.

### **New Business:**

#### Materials Selection Policy Review: Adult and Juvenile Materials Selection Policies, Use of Study/Meeting Spaces

LB explained that book challenges are happening not just in schools but also in public libraries. There are different ways to make a challenge. Patrons will bring a book up asking "why do you have this title." Some will just check a book out and not bring it back. LB says now is the time to update policies. For adult policies -the last draft was approved 12/2003 Trustees meeting, the children's policy is older. LB believes policies are pretty strong, they cover a wide area, but the thing is that we have two different policies with separate sections. It doesn't make sense to have two policies. Therefore LB created a draft with one policy for juvenile, adult, young adult policy so that the wording is the same. LB wants to confirm the Board of Trustees is supportive, and backs staff making the ordering decisions and using book reviews to the best of their ability to make sure the collection is fair, balanced, equal. Comments? Tammy is excited to see all this (the material orders) coming in when she comes to sign the warrants payables.. Michael asked "Do you use the NYT book reviews?" and offered to provide them personally. LB replied yes and will gladly take that. The Board of Trustees sets the policy. Different library departments order their own materials but follow the policy

set by trustees. We are very specific in criteria - we use reviews but also order things based on popular interest when people request things. Jennifer added "*PS. I Love You* was an awesome series, just saying." LB - "Yes, so for example, we might add that to our collection if we get a recommendation." There are a bunch of different ways to add to the collection. LB drew attention to the addition of the Library Bill of Rights at the end of the revised policy. It says to protect privacy and provide materials that people want. We also want to have the ability to include self published material, if the standard is acceptable. We are not able to take donations, because we are still getting a lot of that. If someone has an item of historic value - we could make an appointment to examine it, but see if it's better for the historical society. Look at the statement on page 3 - it's a statement that we serve a variety of patrons of different backgrounds. We want to appeal to everybody. Cindi- "This is just the permanent collection owned by the library?" (Not Overdrive/digital collections) Yes.

Reconsideration procedures - here is where LB made a major change. LB feels like there were too many steps and it was redundant for the patron to fill out the library reaction form Appendix B - this is what they would fill out and the Director would respond to them in writing. This isn't the best step - if someone has a reaction, LB would only be reiterating the policy. That is redundant and will prolong the concern. If we are only meeting once a month, they want their concern addressed on a reasonable timeline. LB suggests this is skipped, and instead someone fills out the form, and LB brings it right to the Trustee meeting instead of the intermediary step. Cindi has concern about timing. Technically - the complaint would have to be put on the agenda, to include with trustees meeting. Cindi feels that the middle step of Director responding is to give them a more immediate response. LB- says that once they hand in the form, she would be in touch with them to explain procedure and give them a copy of the policy. Cindi wants to make sure an upset person gets an immediate response. LB says that with most of the interactions when this happens - a person is not likely to think about filling out a form - they want to talk to someone initially. LB would expect to talk to them first, and explain this is how we do things, this is how we chose materials. Then next step is to bring to board. Michael says that maybe talking to a person gives LB the chance to reconsider where to put materials if they complain. Jennifer says parents are the people who are most likely to complain. She thinks they want the librarian to hold the book when it's under dispute. That may de escalate the situation faster than anything else. LB - if an item is brought to our concern it will remain available. Every library does things differently, but this is the general consensus that all libraries follow- we want to make sure we don't censor things. It would stay available until the Trustees meeting. Then the Trustees can decide what to do. (So we don't take something away by making a quick decision and depriving someone else of it when they are looking for it.) Jennifer comments that making something unavailable and removing it from the shelf are two vastly different things. LB replies "It's a slippery slope. I can see justifying it either way. It comes down to the Trustees decision." Michael says "Sometimes people might have an initial reaction to an item, but if they gotta fill out a form, or show up in front of the trustees, it's another matter." He can only remember one or two patrons actually showing up to protest. One time it was just someone who didn't want to pay for a destroyed book. There is a cooling off period - and parents are responsible. Cindi comments, "The procedure is to show people we're taking this seriously." LB being able to articulate procedures and policies is good. Cindi doesn't think books should be pulled off shelves immediately - she believes in a process. Michael added "The key thing is that one person in an area is not deciding for the entire town". Cindi said that when she had to collect signatures to be a library trustee that she had five or six who told her "Do not ban books." It was interesting that people care enough about the issue to say that when

she was going door to door. She strongly feels that books need to stay on the shelves until a determination is made. Maria Gallo asked about the last page - where it says the submitted form shall become part of the public record. Maria asked was this in the policy? LB replied it might have been in the old policy. Other libraries have in their policy that submitted forms will be part of the public record. LB wants to share the form with the board, and if it's shared with the board, it becomes part of the public record. The Board will see it and it will be discussed at the meeting. The form will not be used as some other thing, only for this reason. Michael added that over the past 4-5 years the State Attorney General has interpreted the Open Meeting Law in an expanded way by adding new things, and referenced the issue of naming candidates that happened in Southwick. The State Attorney General decided that you have to name them specifically - so you are being very public with it. The trend is to modify the Open Meeting Laws so that more and more info goes to the public for transparency. LB would take a closer look to review this clause in red that Maria is concerned about, which version it is to be in, where it talks about patrons' privacy. Continuing the discussion, LB said to piggyback on the request for reconsideration of materials - it also applies to programs. There is also a separate form for programs, if there is concern about a program - it needs to be addressed early enough so that we have enough time to discuss at the Board's meeting before canceling a program, if we have to. There is also a recommendation form for addition to the collection - but it's almost the same as a patron's hold and there is an issue of privacy.

Discussion over keeping the Resource Reaction Form as a step in the process - Cindi and Tammy both confirmed yes. LB will rewrite procedure so that the patron will fill out the Resource Reaction Form, the library director will review it with the patron, then the patron will complete the Request for Reconsideration Form, and then it all will go to the board. The board then can see both forms when they sit down to consider the issue. Michael confirmed that it is okay for the board to vote on this knowing LB will rewrite the policy then asked "Do we accept the policy with amendments as stated?" Tammy seconds. All agreed. LB closes by thanking everyone for the support. "We do appreciate your feedback."

### Emergency Procedures and Planning

LB asks "Does the board need to vote on the procedures?" Michael says "We can probably just comment that that looks good etc, it's been cleared by ..."

### Strategic Planning - Preparing for New Plan

LB asks if there are any board members who are interested in helping with forming the new Strategic Plan. Tammy, Michael, Cindi volunteer. Discussion follows about making sure there are not four people which would form a quorum. LB states that we will begin working on the Strategic Plan by organizing a committee with two to three meetings over the next couple of months, opening it up to patrons, staff and someone from the schools to join. Michael reviewed past strategic plan committees adding that a couple years ago there was the librarian from the middle school (Donna) and a patron who could represent the 60 and above senior population. One of the other past committees had a high school student. LB thought participation could count as volunteer experience for high school students. The goal is to have it done by next spring. LB wants to do most of the groundwork by autumn and then finish by Spring.

Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners “Trustee Deep Dives: Collection Development and Intellectual Freedom Training”

Lynn has given everyone a copy of the info on this and encourages Trustees to attend. Maria says the Trustees don't need encouragement. LB states that we will probably have to revise our collection policies again. The training is on zoom. She does recommend it, they do a good job with their training. Seating is limited. Statewide there are only 50 seats. It's Thursday 16th, 10-11am. Register at <https://mblc.state.ma.us/>

Tammy makes a motion to adjourn, Maria seconds. All in favor said yes.

The next Trustees meeting date is agreed for Tuesday August 9th, 2022.