

GOSHEN PUBLIC LIBRARY

Minutes of Board of Directors Regular Meeting

Wednesday, February 21, 2024

1. **CALL to ORDER:** Meeting called to order at 4:03 pm by President Henrietta Horvay
ATTENDANCE: Josephine Jones, Patricia Sanders, Johanna Kimball, Chairperson Henrietta Horvay, Anne Green, Lynette Miller, and Library Director Tabitha Guarnieri via Zoom
EXCUSED: none
2. **MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF JANUARY 17, 2024** – Henrietta Horvay motioned to accept the amended minutes of January 17, 2024, it was seconded by Anne Green and was voted unanimously.
3. **MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES:**
 - Johanna Kimball made motion to reflect in the January 17, 2024, minutes that Josephine Jones initiated the motion to review the Library Collection Policy Complaint procedure during the February 21, 2024, meeting. Patricia Sanders seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.
 - Lynette Miller made a motion to move the Public Comment to after New Business in the agenda. It was seconded by Anne Green and the motion passed unanimously.
 - Lynette Miller made a motion to add a link to the library policies on the library website and place a copy of the policies in a labeled binder at the library front desk. It was seconded by Johanna Kimball and the motion passed unanimously.
 - Lynette Miller made a motion to omit the word “representative” in the February 21, 2024 agenda under New Business as she does not represent anyone. Henrietta Horvay seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.
4. **CORRESPONDENCE:** twelve letters received and to be covered under new Business
5. **DIRECTOR'S REPORT:** Library Director Tabitha Guarnieri reports that the library usage statistics are consistent with the past couple of months. No one in Connecticut is up to pre-covid numbers (2019). Budgets are on track with purchases.
 - Lynette Miller made a motion to require that the Library Board of Directors be notified for approval prior to contracting with guest speakers. Anne Green seconded it. Discussions were had regarding micromanaging versus oversight and the responsibility and interface with The Friends of the Library who pay for programming. Johanna Kimball and Henrietta Horvay abstained. Josephine Jones voted nay. Yea votes were Patricia Sanders, Johanna Kimball, Anne Green, Lynette Miller. The motion passed.
 - Josephine Jones motioned to receive the report and Lynette Miller seconded. It was voted unanimously to receive the report.
6. **TREASURER'S REPORT:** No changes per Henrietta Horvay. Lynette Miller motioned to receive the report, it was seconded by Patricia Sanders and passed unanimously.
7. **PRESIDENT'S REPORT:** None
8. **OLD BUSINESS:** Budget and Capital five year plan. The budget is up about \$300 due to supplies, postage and professional development. Lynette Miller motioned to accept the budget and it was seconded by Anne Green. The motion passed unanimously.
9. **NEW BUSINESS:**

Josephine Jones discussed the book (Gender Queer: A Memoir by Maia Kobabe) and the complaint policy. She stated that it was every Goshen resident's right to challenge a book, but they must follow the Library Collection Policy Complaint procedure. The form is given to the Library Director who reads the book and

makes a determination. If the issue persists, it is to be read, reviewed, and voted by the Library Board of Directors. No books have ever been removed in the state of Connecticut.

The first Selectman and the Library Board of Director Chairperson Henrietta Horvay inadvertently overlooked the procedure and were incorrectly informed that the book (Gender Queer) was in the children's section. It was in the young adult section. Henrietta Horvay admits she did not check where the book was located and apologized if she did something unintentionally wrong. Henrietta Horvay was thanked for her many years of support and volunteering for the town.

A challenged book is to remain on the shelf until a determination is made. The library is not *loco parentis* and parents are obligated to assume responsibility for their children. Tabitha Guarnieri is considering reformatting the library to add more separation between the Young Adult and the Children's section,

Lynette Miller received forty complaints and will hand the complaints to the Library Director Tabitha Guarnieri tomorrow. The names of complainants will be held private and will not be part of the public record.

10. **PUBLIC COMMENT** – 2 minute limit

(Names and addresses of the public will be held private and will not be part of the published record.)

Public comment was given:

Resident stipulates that there should be no blaming, no finger pointing, and no personal attacks. Let us call this a lesson well-learned and cautions us of May 10, 1933, and Hitler's book burning.

Resident reminds us that in 2022 the Goshen Town Library had a posting that said, "Every great Library has something to offend everyone". The Goshen Library collection contains a wide variety of viewpoints. This was not about a book, this was about rhetoric, censoring marginalized communities. Censorship is making a book hard to reach such as placing it high on a shelf or requiring it to be requested. These are violation of first amendment rights and cause serious legal and ethical ramifications. Parents' responsibility ends at their own family.

Many residents expressed concern about access to this book by young children.

Resident expresses concern a book may never be removed from the library and that the library would be reticent to remove a book.

Resident notes that the book was given many awards such as 2020 ALA given the Alex award (14+ year old). The book includes scientific research addressing body dysmorphia.

Resident says the book is inappropriate for children and should be placed out of reach of young children to protect them from their impulse control. The resident suggests restricting the book's availability to on-line only.

Resident is concerned of the book's depictions of menstrual cycles and young women's healthcare. The resident states the author isn't clear that this is not everyone's experience of puberty.

Resident states that although they do not personally like the book, they support keeping it in the library in an appropriate space. The resident reiterates that the purpose of the meeting is to provide a solution. Goshen is a little bit better today because of Henrietta Horvay.

Resident thanks the Library Board of Directors for being sensitive and professional.

Resident states that the library is a public space and should be a place of access and warns of censorship and first amendment violations. The resident notes that the book has been reviewed and found appropriate for high school ages and up. The library's goal is to provide knowledge and access.

Resident reminds us that we trust and respect our professionals and asks for clarification of the roles and responsibilities for the library.

Resident is concerned of age range recommended for the book and says it is pornography. Resident suggests an X-rated section of the library.

Resident request the book be immediately returned and appropriately put on the agenda.

Resident states that the book is age rated 18+ on Amazon and is inappropriate for young children.

Resident notes the stress this has caused town employees and the Library Board of Directors.

Resident states Henrietta Horvay is an exemplary and dedicated volunteer and public servant with decades of service to Goshen.

The book has not been returned as of yet.

Resident expressed concern of slippery slope and book banning. Resident stated that no one will dictate what their child reads.

Resident said that we live in a Democratic society, and we have choices. Parents are responsible for what children read. All people need to be welcomed.

Resident reminds us that Nazi Germany started with book burning.

Resident stated that the process in place was a good one and it is clear. The library is required to follow the State of Connecticut policies and agreed definitions.

Residents expressed their appreciation for the work done by the library board, and expressed concern that the book was not replaced in the library, as the policy states.

Tabitha Guarnieri reported two copies of the book were to be donated and are not here yet. A resident then gave Henrietta Horvay a copy of the book as a donation for the library.

Resident states that there has been much learning about state statutes for libraries which include definitions that are to be used for guidelines.

Resident agrees with age-related restrictions and suggests that if this book is in the library, then many more explicit books may be allowed.

Resident states that there are many explicit titles in the young adult section of the library, and this is the only book targeted to date due to its LGBTQ+ content.

Resident expressed concern about micromanaging of the Library Director Tabitha Guarnieri, and the practical reality of the requests made by the Library Board of Directors.

Lynette Miller request that members of the Friends of the Library attend the meetings of the Library Board of Directors.

Resident says book should be in adult content and not because it is LGBTQ. Parents are responsible for what their children read.

Lynette Miller motioned to take a five minute break and was seconded by Anne Green and passed unanimously.

11. **Executive session for performance review.** A motion was made by Johanna Kimball and seconded by Anne Green, to enter executive session at 5:43 pm. Motion to come out of executive session was made at 6:04 pm by Johanna Kimball and seconded by Patricia Sanders. It was voted unanimously.
12. **Any other business rightly before the board. None**
13. **ADJOURNMENT** - Motion to adjourn at 6:04 pm by Johanna Kimball and seconded by Patricia Sanders. Vote unanimously.

NEXT REGULAR MEETING WEDNESDAY, MARCH 20, 2024 @ 4:00 pm



Lee M. Kennedy - Clerk

Received Feb. 23, 2024 11:20 AM



Asst. Goshen Town Clerk