

Ventress Memorial Library

Trustee Meeting Minutes

June 26, 2024

1. Call to order

Trustee Chair Gregory Caille called the meeting to order at 4:03 p.m. In attendance, Chair Gregory Caille, Vice-Chair Michelle Noonan, Robert Marzelli, Greg Guimond, Dylan White, Wally Coyle, and Cyndee Marcoux (Library Director), Erica Ruscio (Head of Adult Services), Wendy Gardner-Briendel (Youth Services Librarian, Tori Gellman, (Young Adult & Makerspace Librarian). Absent Dana Forsythe In addition, 33 members of the public signed into the Zoom meeting.

2. Trustee Caille announced that the meeting was being recorded and that we would go out of order and opened the meeting with Announcements and Correspondence.

3. Announcements and Correspondence

- a) Library Director, Cyndee Marcoux started with a statement regarding the Drag & Desserts event: Hello everyone,

Thank you for taking time on this beautiful day to attend this meeting. For those of you who don't know me I am Cyndee Marcoux, Director of The Ventress Memorial Library.

The Ventress Memorial Library is committed to embracing diversity of viewpoints, enhancing literacy, and promoting lifelong learning. Our goal is to provide programs that resonate with the varied needs and interests of our community members. Although not every program will appeal to every individual, we strongly believe it is crucial that all community members feel welcome and see themselves represented in our programming and collections.

While literacy is a core library service, it is not all that we do. Programming is an integral part of the library's services, and we offer a wide variety of programs for all ages. Last year alone we held 376 programs with 8,381 people attending. Much of our programming is selected based on interest from the community at large. We offer programs that reflect the diverse experiences and identities of our patrons. As always, library users are responsible for what programs they and their families choose to attend. It is the practice of the Ventress Memorial Library not to exclude topics, resources, or speakers because of possible controversy.

However, the email and social media campaign that began on June 11th regarding the upcoming Drag & Desserts event escalated quickly, with posts and comments that made me very concerned for the safety of the teens, library staff and the performer if the event took place. Therefore, I made the difficult decision to cancel the event.

I believe it is crucial that we address and counteract this harmful rhetoric to preserve the integrity of our library and ensure it remains a safe, inclusive space for all members of our

community. We hope to offer an alternative LGBTQ+ program for the teens in the near future.

Thank you

b) Next Trustee Chair Caille read a letter of support for library staff:

The Drag + Desserts event scheduled for Saturday, June 15th 2024 was unfortunately canceled after a tremendous amount of negativity was directed at the library. The Drag + Desserts program was to be an educational experience for teens ages 12-18. A local Drag performer had prepared a makeup tutorial and history workshop to celebrate Pride month and freedom of expression. This program was developed in line with the library's mission to "inspire and empower all to access knowledge, culture and social connections" and the Town of Marshfield's proclamation that it is a "welcoming and inclusive community for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer individuals" and that "celebrating Pride Month increases awareness and is an opportunity to engage in dialogue to strengthen alliances and build understanding and acceptance".

The Board of Trustees fully support the Ventress Memorial Library Staff and their programing efforts to include all residents of the Town of Marshfield.

c) Finally, Trustee Chair Caille read a letter of support from the Massachusetts Library Association:

PO Box 901, Bellingham, MA 02019
781-698-7764 | ifsrc@masslib.org | www.masslib.org



June 25th, 2024

Dear Board of Trustees of The Ventress Memorial Library,

Decisions about library programs should be left to the professional staff of the library, who take into consideration the needs of the entire community. While parents have every obligation to guide their own teenagers towards the right social and educational opportunities, they do not have the right to limit access to experiences or ideas for others' families.

Furthermore the effort to discredit and silence LGBTQ people in libraries and schools is part of a national trend. Libraries throughout the Commonwealth are experiencing harassment and hate directed towards collections and services meant for the queer community. Groups such as Mass Resistance; an anti-LGBTQ hate group, Moms for Liberty, with a chapter in Plymouth County, and local Neo Nazis- NSC-131, are organizing against libraries in Massachusetts. The effort to censor The Drag and Desserts event is part of this anti-democratic movement. It does not speak for the majority of American families; it does not uphold civil rights law or First Amendment freedoms.

The Massachusetts Library Association Intellectual Freedom/Social Responsibility Committee (IF/SRC) champions the public's constitutional right to access a broad array of information, services, and programs. As professionals, librarians rely on policies, advanced education, and local knowledge to create collections, services, and programs that serve all members of their communities. Individuals must make their own decisions about how they engage with Library offerings. Library materials and programs should not be censored due to controversial subject matter. Our freedoms rely on the ability to determine our own values and abide by the rule of law.

These ideals are rooted in the First Amendment and the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights. While the IF/SRC supports the right to petition, we stand against the values of a few being used to limit the intellectual freedom of the many. We ask that you do not limit services to your LGBTQ residents or allow the political agenda of a minority to influence Library policy and procedure.

Respectfully,
Andrea Fiorillo, MLIS
Chair, Massachusetts Library Association Intellectual Freedom/Social Responsibility

d) Trustee Caille opening the meeting up for comments from the public:
Nine members of the public spoke in support of the library and LGBTQ+ events. When there were no more comments or questions Trustee Caille returned to the start of the agenda.

e) Trustee Marzelli announced that he would not be renewing his appointment to the Board. The Director and Trustees thanked him for his service on the Board.

4. **Approval of Minutes of May 15, 2024**

Trustee Caille motioned to approve the minutes of May 15, 2024. Trustee Guimond seconded the motion; a roll call vote was taken; all were in favor.

5. **Directors Report**

The Director went over her report. There were no questions.

6. **FY24 Budget Update** - None

7. **FY25 Budget Draft** - None

8. **Set date for next meeting**

The next meeting will be held on August 12, 2024 at 4 p.m. via Zoom

9. **Adjourn**

Trustee Caille made a motion to adjourn at 4:50pm. Trustee Guimond seconded the motion; a roll call vote was taken all were in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cyndee Marcoux