



TOWN OF MIDDLEBURY

Library Board of Trustees

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, September 12, 2023 – 4:30 P.M.

Present: Rita H. Smith - Chairman
Meg Vance
Mary Veillette
Peter Vaccarelli
Diane Giuditta
John Moriarty

Also Present: Jo-Ann LoRusso, Library Director
Rachel Primus, Recording Clerk

Absent:

Rita Smith called the meeting to order with the Pledge of Allegiance at 4:30 P.M.

Approval of June 13, 2023 Meeting Minutes

VOTED: Unanimously on a motion by Meg Vance and seconded by Diane Giuditta to **APPROVE** the June 13, 2023 meeting minutes.

Trustee Reports

- **Treasurer's Report**

Mary Veillette read the report into the record. There were no changes in the Brick Sales and room naming opportunities account during June 1, 2023 through June 30, 2023. There was one brick sale in July for \$100.

Total brick sales to date = \$55,260.00

Total expenses to date = \$30,235.45

Balance in Fund 61 (Brick Sales and Room Naming Opportunities account) = \$25,024.55.

VOTED: Unanimously on a motion by Diane Giuditta and seconded by John Moriarty to **APPROVE** the Treasurer's Report.

- **Secretary's Report**

Nothing to report.

- **Director's Report**

JoAnn Lorusso said she emailed everyone a copy of her report. She reviewed the statistics and the September calendar. She reported the summer read went well. She noted there is a new group, the Library Explorers for ages 9 and up with age appropriate programming for them, and the group also gets them involved in volunteering. She said they are also trying to grow the teen group. They are trying to make the programs fun and engaging in a creative way.

JoAnn Lorusso said there is a new story time called Wiggles and Giggles, where the child needs to be independent to be in the group. She said they went back to age groups based on

developmental stages. She said they are aligning the calendar with Region 15 schools' calendar to utilize days off. They are also trying to make more family-oriented programs.

JoAnn Lorusso noted the library is now open on Saturdays from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. They are offering story time for babies on Saturdays at 10:30 am. It last about ½ hour and is a drop-in program. It will be followed up with a family-oriented movie at 11:00 am.

JoAnn Lorusso explained in October they will be having a scavenger hunt where the kids will go to the different sections in the children's area of the library. This will give them the opportunity to see what the different collections have to offer. They have a children's holiday fair scheduled for December 15th during library hours. The library is accepting gently used or new items to be dropped off between September 18th through October 16th. JoAnn Lorusso gave an overview of how the fair will work. She noted library volunteers will be responsible for handling everything and the money raised will go into the donation fund.

JoAnn Lorusso said on October 24th at 6:30 pm Emily Dinova, a Middlebury resident, wrote her first book and will be at the library to promote it.

JoAnn Lorusso said they were awarded the CT State Library Fiber Grant. They came out for the assessment. They noted a problem with the technology cabinet possibly over heating because of its location near the windows. They suggested the installation of shades.

JoAnn Lorusso reported the children's area is getting tight for space. They are pricing shelving units to swap out the bins. She said they will have to expand the teen section as well. They are currently getting quotes.

JoAnn Lorusso included the Middlebury Public Library Policy Manual Freedom to Read Statement in her report for the members to review. She noted the library does not ban or censor books and she feels they have to have a balance of diverse collection of books.

She said they town attorney has reviewed the study room usage changes and it is now in place. It has been an easy transition and the individual use was implemented on July 1st. She said there is a good group of individuals using the rooms for studying and they now have an individual policy with a form that needs to be signed.

VOTED: Unanimously on a motion by John Moriarty and seconded by Peter Vaccarelli to **APPROVE** the Director's Report.

Old Business

- **MPL Policy Manual**

Rita Smith said she wanted everyone to have a complete packet that was received back from the town attorney. He has signed off on everything for the study rooms.

New Business

- **Meeting Schedule 2024**

Rita Smith said that nothing has changed regarding the 2024 meeting schedule. Meetings will be held on the second Tuesday of every month, with the exception of July and August, at 4:30 pm in the Library Meeting Room. The first meeting of 2024 will be January 9, 2024.

VOTED: Unanimously on a motion by Diane Giuditta and seconded by Meg Vance to **APPROVE** the meeting schedule for 2024.

Rita Smith handed out a copy of the holiday town schedule and calendar with meeting dates for 2024.

Public Comment

None

Adjournment

VOTED: Unanimously on a motion by Peter Vaccarelli and seconded by John Moriarty to
ADJOURN to meeting at 5:11 PM.

These minutes are submitted subject to approval.

Respectfully submitted,

Rachel Primus

Recording Clerk

Attachments

Cc: Library Board of Trustees
Library Director
Town Clerk

TREASURER'S REPORT

TO: Middlebury Public Library Board of Trustees

FROM: Mary C. Veillette, Treasurer

DATE: September 7, 2023

RE: Report for the period June 1, 2023 through
August 31, 2023.

There were no changes in the Brick Sales and Room Naming Opportunities accounts during the period June 1, 2023 through June 30, 2023. There was one brick sale in July for \$100.

Total Brick Sales to date: \$55,260.00

Total Expenses to date: \$30,235.45

Balance in Fund 61 – Brick Sales and Room Naming Opportunities
account: \$25,024.55

Respectfully,

Mary C. Veillette, Treasurer

To: Middlebury Public Library Board of Trustees

From: Jo-Ann LoRusso, Library Director

RE: Director's Report

September 12, 2023

Statistics for August 2023

(Chart)

Calendar of September Events

(Calendar)

Children's Holiday Fair

(Flyer)

Helping Hands-Volunteers of the Middlebury Public Library will host a children's holiday fair on Tuesday, December 5, 2023 during library hours to raise donations for programs.

Connecticut State Library 's Fiber to Library Grant Program 2023: Phase 2

The Fiber to Library grant: Phase 2, awarded by the Connecticut State Library, is designed to address equipment needs and installation fees to upgrade the recommended internal connections based on the original network assessment.

Overall, the Middlebury Public Library's network is meeting the needs of the community. The main recommendations included upgrading the cabling to CAT 6, replacing the current Comcast wireless modem and WiFi (including access points) with a centralized managed solution such as Ruckus, consolidating the switches into a new FS switch, and adding an additional switch for more ports for future growth. The total estimated costs based on the network assessment from Novus is \$44,153.

The Middlebury Public Library has applied for the Fiber to Library grant: Phase 2 recommended internal network connections in the amount of \$44,155. The Connecticut State Library Board reviewed the Fiber to Library grant: Phase 2 applications and the Middlebury Public Library was awarded the grant. Phase 2 begins September 6, 2023.

Middlebury Public Library Policy Manual

Freedom to Read Statement

The freedom to read statement is essential to our democracy. It is continuously under attack. Private groups and public authorities in various parts of the country are working to remove or limit access to reading materials, to censor content in schools, to label "controversial" views, to distribute lists of

"objectionable" books or authors, and to purge libraries. These actions apparently rise from a view that our national tradition of free expression is no longer valid; that censorship and suppression are needed to counter threats to safety or national security, as well as to avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as individuals devoted to reading and as librarians and publishers responsible for disseminating ideas, wish to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read.

Most attempts at suppression rest on a denial of the fundamental premise of democracy: that the ordinary individual, by exercising critical judgment, will select the good and reject the bad. We trust Americans to recognize propaganda and misinformation, and to make their own decisions about what they read and believe. We do not believe they are prepared to sacrifice their heritage of a free press in order to be "protected" against what others think may be bad for them. We believe they still favor free enterprise in ideas and expression.

These efforts at suppression are related to a larger pattern of pressures being brought against education, the press, art and images, films, broadcast media, and the Internet. The problem is not only one of actual censorship. The shadow of fear cast by these pressures leads, we suspect, to an even larger voluntary curtailment of expression by those who seek to avoid controversy or unwelcome scrutiny by government officials.

Such pressure toward conformity is perhaps natural to a time of accelerated change. And yet suppression is never more dangerous than in such a time of social tension. Freedom has given the United States the elasticity to endure strain. Freedom keeps open the path of novel and creative solutions, and enables change to come by choice. Every silencing of a heresy, every enforcement of an orthodoxy, diminishes the toughness and resilience of our society and leaves it the less able to deal with controversy and difference.

Now as always in our history, reading is among our greatest freedoms. The freedom to read and write is almost the only means for making generally available ideas or manners of expression that can initially command only a small audience. The written word is the natural medium for the new idea and the untried voice from which come the original contributions to social growth. It is essential to the extended discussion that serious thought requires, and to the accumulation of knowledge and ideas into organized collections.

We believe that free communication is essential to the preservation of a free society and a creative culture. We believe that these pressures toward conformity present the danger of limiting the range and variety of inquiry and expression on which our democracy and our culture depend. We believe that every American community must guard the freedom to publish and to circulate, in order to preserve its own freedom to read. We believe that publishers and librarians have a profound responsibility to give validity to that freedom to read by making it possible for the readers to choose freely from a variety of offerings.

The freedom to read is guaranteed by the Constitution. Those with faith in free people will stand firm on these constitutional guarantees of essential rights and will exercise the responsibilities that accompany these rights.

We therefore affirm these propositions:

1. *It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those that are unorthodox, unpopular, or considered dangerous by the majority.*

Creative thought is by definition new, and what is new is different. The bearer of every new thought is a rebel until that idea is refined and tested. Totalitarian systems attempt to maintain themselves in power by the ruthless suppression of any concept that challenges the established orthodoxy. The power of a democratic system to adapt to change is vastly strengthened by the freedom of its citizens to choose widely from among conflicting opinions offered freely to them. To stifle every nonconformist idea at birth would mark the end of the democratic process. Furthermore, only through the constant activity of weighing and selecting can the democratic mind attain the strength demanded by times like these. We need to know not only what we believe but why we believe it.

2. *Publishers, librarians, and booksellers do not need to endorse every idea or presentation they make available. It would conflict with the public interest for them to establish their own political, moral, or aesthetic views as a standard for determining what should be published or circulated.*

Publishers and librarians serve the educational process by helping to make available knowledge and ideas required for the growth of the mind and the increase of learning. They do not foster education by imposing as mentors the patterns of their own thought. The people should have the freedom to read and consider a broader range of ideas than those that may be held by any single librarian or publisher or government or church. It is wrong that what one can read should be confined to what another thinks proper.

3. *It is contrary to the public interest for publishers or librarians to bar access to writings on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author.*

No art or literature can flourish if it is to be measured by the political views or private lives of its creators. No society of free people can flourish that draws up lists of writers to whom it will not listen, whatever they may have to say.

4. *There is no place in our society for efforts to coerce the taste of others, to confine adults to the reading matter deemed suitable for adolescents, or to inhibit the efforts of writers to achieve artistic expression.*

To some, much of modern expression is shocking. But is not much of life itself shocking? We cut off literature at the source if we prevent writers from dealing with the stuff of life. Parents and teachers have a responsibility to prepare the young to meet the diversity of experiences in life to which they will be exposed, as they have a responsibility to help them learn to think critically for themselves. These are affirmative responsibilities, not to be discharged simply by preventing them from reading works for which they are not yet prepared. In these matters values differ, and values cannot be legislated; nor can machinery be devised that will suit the demands of one group without limiting the freedom of others.

5. *It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept the prejudgment of a label characterizing any expression or its author as subversive or dangerous.*

The ideal of labeling presupposes the existence of individuals or groups with wisdom to determine by authority what is good or bad for others. It presupposes that individuals must be directed in making up their minds about the ideas they examine. But Americans do not need others to do their thinking for them.

6. *It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians, as guardians of the people's freedom to read, to contest encroachments upon that freedom by individuals or groups seeking to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large; and by the government whenever it seeks to reduce or deny public access to public information.*

It is inevitable in the give and take of the democratic process that the political, the moral, or the aesthetic concepts of an individual or group will occasionally collide with those of another individual or group. In a free society individuals are free to determine for themselves what they wish to read, and each group is free to determine what it will recommend to its freely associated members. But no group has the right to take the law into its own hands, and to impose its own concept of politics or morality upon other members of a democratic society. Freedom is no freedom if it is accorded only to the accepted and the inoffensive. Further, democratic societies are more safe, free, and creative when the free flow of public information is not restricted by governmental prerogative or self-censorship.

7. *It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians to give full meaning to the freedom to read by providing books that enrich the quality and diversity of thought and expression. By the exercise of this affirmative responsibility, they can demonstrate that the answer to a "bad" book is a good one, the answer to a "bad" idea is a good one.*

The freedom to read is of little consequence when the reader cannot obtain matter fit for that reader's purpose. What is needed is not only the absence of restraint, but the positive provision of opportunity for the people to read the best that has been thought and said. Books are the major channel by which the intellectual inheritance is handed down, and the principal means of its testing and growth. The defense of the freedom to read requires of all publishers and librarians the utmost of their faculties, and deserves of all Americans the fullest of their support.

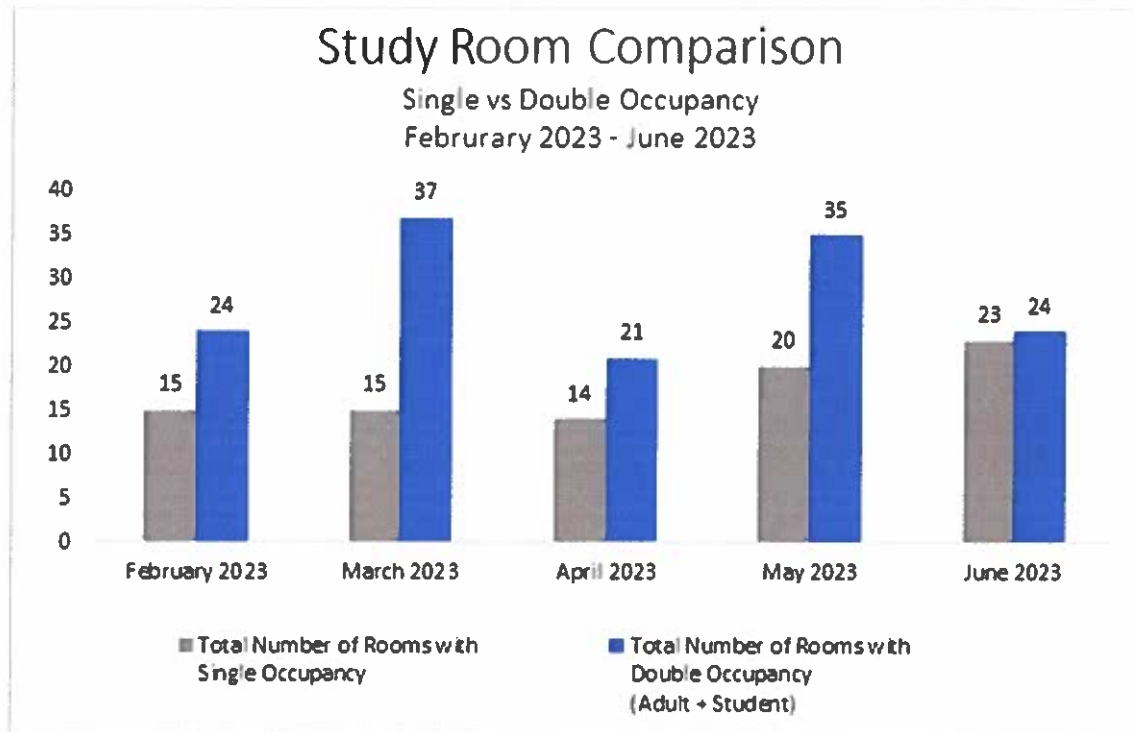
We state these propositions neither lightly nor as easy generalizations. We here stake out a lofty claim for the value of the written word. We do so because we believe that it is possessed of enormous variety and usefulness, worthy of cherishing and keeping free. We realize that the application of these propositions may mean the dissemination of ideas and manners of expression that are repugnant to many persons. We do not state these propositions in the comfortable belief that what people read is unimportant. We believe rather that what people read is deeply important; that ideas can be dangerous; but that the suppression of ideas is fatal to a democratic society. Freedom itself is a dangerous way of life, but it is ours.

This statement was originally issued in May of 1953 by the Westchester Conference of the American Library Association and the American Book Publishers Council, which in 1970 consolidated with the American Educational Publishers Institute to become the Association of American Publishers.

Adopted June 25, 1953, by the ALA Council and the AAP Freedom to Read Committee; amended January 28, 1972; January 16, 1991; July 12, 2000; June 30, 2004. *A Joint Statement by: ALA and Association of American Publishers*

Study Room Usage: February 2023 - June 2023

(Please note: Individual Use Study Room Policy was instated July 2023)



	Total Number of Rooms with Double Occupancy (Adult + Student)	Times Double Occupancy Rooms were Signed Out by Same Patrons	Percentage of double occupancy study rooms signed out by same patrons
February 2023	24	22	92%
March 2023	37	32	86%
April 2023	21	18	86%
May 2023	35	25	71%
June 2023	24	18	75%

In February, 22 of the 24 (or 92%) double occupancy rooms were signed out by the same patrons

In March, 32 of the 37 (or 86%) double occupancy rooms were signed out by the same patrons

In April, 18 of the 21 (or 86%) double occupancy rooms were signed out by the same patrons

In May, 25 of the 35 (or 71%) double occupancy rooms were signed out by the same patrons

In June, 18 of the 24 (or 75%) double occupancy rooms were signed out by the same patrons

August 2023

Collection Size	73,716
Monthly Circulation	3,629
Active Cards	3,029
New Residents	25

	Number of Programs	Number of Attendees
Adult Programs	4	14
General Programs	2	2
YA/Teen Programs	3	5
Children's Programs	12	133
Family Programs	10	23
Total Programs	31	177



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VOLUNTEERS OF THE
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