



Minutes of a Special Meeting of the Coeur d'Alene Public Library Board of Trustees

July 29, 2024

Meeting held in Library Community Room

Trustees Present:

Jim Windisch, Board Chair
Ann Smart, Board Vice Chair
Melisa Carper Bell, Board Member
Katie Saylor, Board Member

Others:

Ayla Frens, Student Representative
Sharalee Howard, Children's Librarian
Melissa Searle, Interim Library Director

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by Board Chair Jim Windisch at 4:03 p.m.

Material Review: A motion to keep the book "Sex is a funny word" where it is currently located in the non-fiction juvenile collection was made by Katie, Ann second.

Jim read the concerns cited on the submitted Material Review and Relocation Request form: "This book depicts cartoon renderings of genitalia including a male erection. It also instructs about & promotes masturbation." Jim then read the follow up communication emailed by the requester who was unable to attend the meeting but was invited to provide further comment: "The content of this book, "Sex is a Funny Word" is entirely unacceptable for children. It promotes ideas and behaviors that the vast majority of people in our community disagree with and find reprehensible. I am not merely guessing with that statement; I have spoken with numerous people in our area, especially parents, concerning this exact book, and they have voiced their support for its removal from the library to me. Beyond the objectionable ideas and behaviors that it promotes, the book also contains depictions of adult genitalia, including erect male genitalia. This is a clear violation of Idaho House Bill 710 and is grounds all by itself for its removal. Please remove it."

Katie asked when the book was added to the collection, how many times it has been checked out and how many complaints the library has received regarding it. Melissa stated it was purchased in 2015, it has checked out 32 times and to her knowledge we have received no prior complaints. Katie noted that the Coeur d'Alene Public Library serves the city population as its primary objective. She respects the point of view of the requester but does not feel the statements regarding opinions of other people are verifiable at this point. She stated community standards need to be taken into account and prior to this request, there have been no complaints from those who have checked the book out. She states it is understandable that not every one will want to read the book, and that we serve a broad community and can't make restrictions to meet one group and exclude others.

Ann stated she too believes that community standards need to be taken into account, and when held to the three-prong Miller test for obscenity, she would not define the book as meeting that standard. She believes it has education and informational value.

Melisa asked about the timeline for responding to the request. Melissa responded that it is 60 days and the deadline is September 6th. Jim noted that there was a note to the grown-up reader in the beginning of the book and read it aloud. He is unsure of where the book should be placed. He mentions on page 29 of the book the author states that different people may feel differently about the book and its contents. Katie also noted that the book mentions knowing what your family thinks about the topics covered in the book. Jim added to that that on page 108 the book refers to every family and community having its own ideas.

Melisa suggested tabling the conversation until she has more time to review the book. Melisa motioned to table the decision until a future meeting. Ann second. Approved.

Executive session: Motion to move the meeting into executive session at 4:24 p.m. to consider personnel with potential action, pursuant to Idaho Code 74-206(a) regarding the hiring of the Library Director. Roll call: Ann, Aye; Katie, Aye; Melisa, Aye; Jim, Aye. Motion carried. The Board invites Darci Todd, City HR and Ayla Frens, student representative, to attend.

Motion to exit executive session at 5:39 p.m. and return to the regular meeting. Roll call: Ann, Aye; Katie, Aye; Melisa, Aye; Jim, Aye. Motion carried.

Next regular meeting – August 28, 2024 at 4:00 p.m. in the Library Community Room

Adjourned at 5:39 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Melissa Searle