

MINUTES
MORE Executive Committee
Friday, February 7, 2025

Present/Attending: Tiffany Meyer (EL), Leann French (DR), Karen Furo-Bonnstetter (WO), John Thompson (IF).

Also Present: Lori Roholt, Jackee Johnson, Cecelia Cole, Katelyn Dubiel, Joanne Gardner.

Absent: Joleen Sterk (ME).

Introductions – jackee johnson – more support specialist.

CALL TO ORDER:

Meyer (EL) called the meeting to order at 10:08 am.

ESTABLISH A QUORUM:

Meyer (EL) established a quorum was present.

**CERTIFICATION OF COMPLIANCE WITH
OPEN MEETING LAW:**

Certification of compliance with open meeting law was confirmed.

AGENDA:

Furo-Bonnstetter (WO) moved to approve the agenda. French (DR) seconded. Motion carried.

MINUTES:

French (DR) moved to approve the minutes dated January 3, 2025. Furo-Bonnstetter (WO) seconded. Motion carried.

**MORE CIRCULATION POLICY UPDATE
“LOANING WITHIN MORE SECTION”**

Furo-Bonnstetter (WO) moved to discuss the MORE Circulation Policy amendments and approve. French (DR) seconded.

Meyer (EL) noted that the January MORE Directors Council had a good discussion of the proposed amendments. Meyer thanked French (DR) for chairing that meeting.

Meyer (EL) reached out to the Phillips Director on Wednesday.

The MORE Directors Council did not want to approve the recommended changes for lending within MORE based on censorship and opposition to the core values.

There were suggestions expressed that Phillips could institute pick up at their library only for the labeled materials deemed as prejudicial. This could be a logistical challenge.

Concern was raised at the Directors Council about libraries restricting what patrons are choosing from the MORE catalog. It was viewed that it is not the library's job to decide what people check out.

There is also the perception that the labeling is a form of censorship. Roholt noted that everything that contains a label in Phillips collection is also available without the labeling at other libraries.

Meyer (EL) noted that LBGQ+ stickers are used at another library. The stickering is done with good intent and placement is on the outside of the spines. Phillips stickers are placed inside the book covers. Furo-Bonnstetter (WO) noted that some patrons may inquire why the materials are not labelled. It can go either way.

Meyer (EL) noted the intention is to support the director at Phillips and prevent people from being offended or hurt by the labeling. Meyer questions if a policy is the best way to do that.

Thompson (IF) noted that there is already an opinion from the division that what Phillips is doing is acceptable legally. It is not viewed as a good practice overall, but does not violate statute.

Thompson (IF) added that there is some talk in the broader library community about putting labels on books the same as on videos. That in itself is a challenge. Whose values are assigned to making those decisions. Professionally, we need to be careful about what slopes we fall down and end up in another spot we do not want to be.

Meyer (EL) inquired what other committee members felt about the Loaning Within MORE section. If the third bullet was removed and the asterisk comment remain strongly discouraging libraries from using any prejudicial labels.

Roholt noted that using the wording strongly discouraged is not enforceable. Generally, policies have the ability to enforce. Even if the third bullet was left intact, it is not particularly actionable.

If the third bullet is stricken, the library would have to circulate everything, unless damage to the item, or would cause undue burden on owning library staff.

Roholt noted that Leah Langby has a good post on the IFLS website called Labelling and Rating Systems. It discusses taking care with labels and differentiating between wayfinding and other kinds. Labels can potentially influence what patrons choose to read because of the perception it might create.

Meyer (EL) asked if it would be helpful for the system or MORE Directors Council to get together and write a letter to the Phillips Library Board regarding the labelling process and the possibility of going to their meeting. The director would not be opposed.

Roholt noted that a patron raised a concern on a book from Phillips which was labelled with a LGBTQ sticker on the inside and viewed that this constituted a warning label on the book. Warning labels about content fall under prejudicial labeling. This proposed policy approach is satisfying to them.

French (DR) inquired how many cardholders we have, and Roholt noted about 130,000. Meyer (EL) noted that we do not want to discount one person's experience maybe speaking to others as well. Phillips is in a tough situation as they were required by the library board to do the inside cover labeling. The library board is okay with not circulating those items.

(Cecelia Cole joined the meeting at 10:31 am.)

Meyer (EL) inquired if a policy is the best way to address the concern or would a more direct approach be better. Meyer has talked with the Phillips director as well as Cecelia Cole, who is part of the Intellectual Freedom (IF) workgroup about the person who initially raised the concern and brought information to the IF workgroup. In discussing a collective letter to the Phillips library board, there was concern not to create further issues for her and her library board. If nothing else should be communicated it is still an issue, and the system is concerned at a system level. The Phillips director is in favor of a letter.

Cole also discussed labels with the Phillips director. The director expressed thoughts about moving labels to the outside of spine and other labels added to collection. Cole noted that the stance is not to recommend more labels, as they can communicate both intentional and unintentional consequences. Cole is in continuous conversations with the Director. She has not spoken with the person who filed the original complaint. That person could be part of the conversation at some point.

The MORE Directors Council does not meet until March. The possibility was raised to draft a letter for the March meeting to the Phillips Library Board. Meyer (EL) inquired if there would be legal issues taking that route. Roholt noted that the MORE Directors Council has not done this in its history, but it would not be considered out of bounds. Thompson (IF) added that it would not be a legal issue from the Directors Council but would be questionable from the IFLS Library System Board. The system cannot meddle with local control.

We also need to consider what precedent we set if the Directors' Council writes a letter about labelling and then someone else brings up another issue and wants a letter sent from the Directors' Council. What road does the Council start going down in terms of practices occurring at local libraries and unintended consequences.

Cole noted that if a situation similar to Phillips happened and the library received a complaint from the public or others and there is pushback from the library's board, maybe it would be appropriate for the Directors Council to address it. Is it the responsibility of the Directors Council to provide support? Is there a mechanism in place to support each other? Furo-Bonnstetter (WO) agreed with Cole and these instances could be managed on a case-by-case basis. The issue could go to the Directors Council who would have to agree and approve sending a letter. This would be supportive of the freedom to read and the director. French (DR) is not entirely opposed, but there are concerns of precedence and unintended consequences.

Roholt would like to see the wording in the second paragraph of the Loaning Within MORE paragraph be changed from encouraged to required. This would allow the ability to point libraries holding back parts of their collection to this policy. Roholt would also recommend keeping or striking the third bullet and keeping the asterisk area. If the second paragraph encouraged is replaced with required, then there is no enforcement with the third bullet anyway.

After discussing different options, the committee considered the following changes: paragraph one remains as is. The asterisk text would be moved and create paragraph 2. The original second paragraph would become the third paragraph with the two bullets as exceptions.

It was suggested that the IF Workgroup could review the Loaning Within MORE as discussed with the proposed amendments. Cole noted that the IF Workgroup can discuss when they meet at the end of February. Meyer (EL) expressed interest in meeting with the IF Workgroup when they meet.

Furo-Bonnstetter (WO) moved to table the motion to discuss and approve the MORE Circulation Policy and have the Intellectual Freedom Workgroup review it. French (DR) seconds. Motion is tabled.

ADJOURN:

The meeting adjourned at 10:56 am.

Joanne Gardner, Recorder