

ILSLEY PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES
REGULAR MEETING
JANUARY 13, 2020
SARAH PARTRIDGE LIBRARY, EAST MIDDLEBURY

MINUTES – DRAFT

Board decisions are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

Present:

Board members: Catherine Nichols, President; Amy Mincher, Treasurer; John Freidin, Joe McVeigh.

Library Director: Dana Hart.

Public: Barbara Doyle-Wilch, Andy Hooper

CALL TO ORDER

See Board Packet <Board Packet 1.13.2020.pdf> for agenda and accompanying documents.

President Catherine Nichols called the meeting to order at 5:02pm.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

DECISION: The Board approved the minutes of the regular meeting of December 9, 2019 without amendment.

MCTV REPORT

Joe McVeigh (Ilsley representative to the MCTV board) reported that in 2019 MCTV had produced nearly 500 hours of programming, divided into the following categories: Education (236) consisting of school board meetings, library talks, and cultural events; Public (176) consisting of church services, talk shows, local productions, and a few sports events; and Governmental (86) consisting mostly of meetings of the town select board and development review board. Beginning in February 2020, MCTV's channel assignment on the Comcast cable network will move from channels 15 and 16 to higher numbers, most likely 1070 and 1090. This will allow for eventual broadcast in HD and also allow specific programming to appear on the interactive channel program guide. There will be a three-month period during which MCTV will air on both sets of channels. MCTV is considering how best to notify the public of this change of channel. Budget priorities for 2020 will focus on modernizing the studio, beginning with the computers used for production. The MCTV Annual Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 26 from 4:30-6:30. Board members are encouraged to attend.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Andy Hooper, a potential candidate for Library Trustee introduced himself to the board. Andy indicated that he had submitted his name to the Town Clerk and taken a petition but had not yet obtained any signatures. Board members let him know that it was possible to leave a copy of the petition to obtain signatures at the upstairs circulation desk in the library.

FRIENDS' REPORT

Dana Hart reported that Friends of the Library President Lorrie Muller is recovering from back surgery. Ray Hudson is Acting President. Champion book sorting volunteer Bob Wallace has been out of action for two weeks with a serious medical condition, presenting the Friends with a dilemma on how to get books sorted for their monthly book sales. The friends reported a total of 1100 recorded volunteer hours for 2019. Half of those were by Bob Wallace. Friends Treasurer Cynthia Watters is getting the budget in order. Cynthia would like a generous year-end gift from long-term library supporters to be designated for the Friends, rather than given directly to the library.

Amy Mincher noted that the current book sorting and used book sale situation is not sustainable. Dana also noted her concern about what to do with the books piling up without a key volunteer there to sort them. Catherine noted that the Ilsley Trustees are not responsible for the tasks of the Friends. If something isn't working for the Friends it is not the job of the Ilsley Trustees to fix it. It was noted that various suggestions and potential solutions have been made before, but they haven't been taken up. Joe said that if the backup of donated books interferes with the smooth functioning of the library, then it is of concern to the Board or to Dana. John suggested putting free books outside on the sidewalk. Dana noted she is hesitant to have the staff become move and sort books for this separate, non-profit entity.

DISCUSSION OF DRAFT BOARD FINANCIAL POLICY

Amy and Joe presented a draft policy to govern the use and handling of the endowment funds controlled by the Trustees. John found the policy confusing. Joe attempted to explain that "Trust Agency Accounts" are accounts held in cash by the town.

The money directly controlled by the Trustees is currently held in investment accounts at the Vanguard company. These accounts fall into three categories. The first is called the "Settlement Account." This is a money market fund with minimal return on investment. It is usually used as a cash account for transferring funds into and out of the other accounts. It is the goal of the Trustees to then have two other investment funds held at Vanguard, one for restricted funds, with the object of earning income; the other for unrestricted funds, with the object of growth. At the present time there are multiple funds, stocks, and bonds in both categories. John suggested clarifying the terms used. Dana will rework the policy and will ask board members to help craft clearer language.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Dana reported that a panel of judges selected a poem to be engraved on the sidewalk in front of Ilsley as part of the Word on the Street public poetry contest. Dana has submitted our annual report to the Vermont Department of Libraries and summarized the highlights in a 2019 Impact Report. The complete report will be made available online in the Trustees' DropBox. A historic preservation grant to restore windows has been awarded in the amount of \$5,350. Dana has been awarded a scholarship to attend the Research Institute for Public Libraries this summer in Chicago. Dana presented budget requests to the Select Board on December 17, 2019. The library has received a bequest in the amount of \$5,000. Dana continues to work on a proposal to make the library fine free. Plans call for staff to spend more time weeding books from the collection this year. The library plans to migrate its email from Outlook to Google G-Suite later this year.

Sarah Partridge librarian Mona Rogers plans to retire in August. Dana may look at the possibility of reconfiguring the staffing model for Sarah Partridge so that the librarian working part-time at Sarah Partridge would also work occasionally at Ilsley. Total personnel costs for the year are about \$11,000 for an 11-hour per week position. Half of the personnel costs for Sarah Partridge are paid by the East Middlebury Prudential Committee. The Prudential Committee is also responsible for maintenance of the Sarah Partridge building.

PRESENTATION OF HEATING SYSTEM DESIGN PROPOSAL

Dana presented the bid proposal from Engineering Services of Vermont, LLC for design of a heat-pump only heating system for the library at a cost of \$19,200. The proposal has been approved by the town Energy Committee. Dana will next present this bid to the town's Infrastructure Committee for approval. It will then go to the Select Board for approval. Monies for this project have been included in our capital budget for FY 2021. The engineering company's services would include a cost estimate for the entire project which would be received by about September 2021. The current estimate is \$485,000. At that point the Select Board could consider options of how to pay for it.

UPDATE AND DISCUSSION OF MOVING FORWARD WITH RENOVATION/EXPANSION POSSIBILITIES

Dana shared the following additional documents:

- Email summary to the board of Dec. 11, 2019 meeting with Brian Carpenter and Kathleen Ramsay
- Overview of Ilsley Library Renovation/Expansion Planning
- Town of Middlebury Proposed New and Existing Bond Payments 10/25/2019
- Town of Middlebury Capital Improvement Planning Forecast 10-25-19 v. 3

Dana, Catherine, and Joe updated the board on their meeting with Town Manager Kathleen Ramsay and Select Board Chair Brian Carpenter on December 11, 2019. Guest Barbara Doyle-Wilch was invited to facilitate a discussion of possible next steps using a series of guided questions. The questions and board responses are below.

1. Is it possible for the Trustees to make the renovation/expansion happen now, or should we work within the Town planning process.

Dana noted that a draft of the new downtown master plan is due in March or April with an opportunity for input. Is the library part of the plan? Dana pointed towards the town's forecast of upcoming bond needs and payments. It was asked whether the proposed Economic Development Initiative process was still moving forward in the Bakery Lane parking lot. The earlier proposal appears stalled but could be revived in some form with input from the master plan. Joe suggested using the energy of the planning process to move us forward. Catherine thought that the master plan presenting some exciting new possibilities. The possibility of a college art gallery or housing in that space might provide opportunities for synergies Amy said that she was feeling less of a sense of urgency new. It appeared that the general consensus of the board was to move forward in partnership with the town. John noted that moving forward with the current library expansion/renovation plan does not foreclose the chance to collaborate with others.

2. What would it look like if the trustees moved forward with the planning process without a new committee?

John asked “moving forward with what?” He noted that committees are a good way to do nothing while giving an impression of action. Amy noted that we need to know what we want before we move forward. Barbara suggested that this could be a subject of discussion at the retreat. John suggested that a committee could be formed to figure out how to finance the existing proposal. Barbara noted that one purpose of such a committee could be to better market the idea of the renovation and sell the idea that we need something better than what we have now. One way to do this would be along the lines of the Shelburne model in which the public was presented with various options at various cost points and asked to weigh in.

3. Do the Trustees feel that they can commit to working on the renovation/expansion in addition to their existing board duties?

This question was not discussed.

4. Given the above, can the Board reasonably commit to moving the project forward by themselves, or do they want to advocate for a new working committee?

Barbara asked, “what are we trying to push ahead?” John asked if we want to go with the current project with a near \$10 million price tag or do we want to back off that? Dana said the board should make that decision. That could help frame a charge to a new group going forward. Joe asked if we needed any additional information. John thought that all of the necessary information is in the existing report and that it is not necessary to repeat all of those steps. Dana suggested that the board hold a special meeting to decide whether to move forward with the existing plan or to recommend a change in the program.

The board agreed to hold a special meeting in late February to consider and vote on this issue.

BOARD COMMENTS AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Joe encouraged the Board to spend time at a future meeting considering how the library can help the downtown remain vital during the upcoming bridge/tunnel construction project.

Amy mentioned a practice from another library that printed messages about saving money on the receipts of books printed in the library. A “what your library can do for you” campaign was suggested.

John offered to share his thoughts again about likely future growth patterns of “downtown” Middlebury.

ADJOURNMENT

President Catherine Nichols adjourned the meeting at 6:58p.m.

The next regularly scheduled meeting will take place on Monday, February 10th at 5:00 p.m. in the Jessica Swift Community Meeting Room.