

ILSLEY PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES
REGULAR MEETING
AUGUST 10, 2020
ELECTRONIC MEETING VIA ZOOM PLATFORM

MINUTES – DRAFT

Board decisions are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

Present

Board members: Joe McVeigh, President; Amy Mincher, Secretary; Andy Hooper, Treasurer;
John Freidin; Catherine Nichols
Library Director: Dana Hart
Public: Peggy Rush

Minutes taken by Saskia Gori-Montanelli.

CONFIRMATION OF ADHERENCE TO VERMONT PUBLIC MEETING LAW

President Joe McVeigh confirmed that the meeting, which was held electronically, conformed to the temporary amendments to Vermont Open Meeting Law and was duly authorized to be held electronically pursuant to Addendum 6 to Executive Order 01-20 and Act 92. He further indicated how public notice had been given and described to the public how they could participate.

CALL TO ORDER

President Joe McVeigh called the meeting to order at 2:00 pm.
See Board Packet <Board Packet 8.10.2020.pdf> for agenda and accompanying documents.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

John Freidin asked to have the previous minutes clarified to indicate that he is not the board treasurer.

The Board approved the minutes of the regular meeting of July 13, 2020.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Peggy Rush indicated that she was excited that the Ilsley lobby would be re-opening to the public on Wednesday, August 12.

BOARD DEVELOPMENT

The Board reviewed and discussed the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights. There was specific discussion on the subjects of: issues of access to library resources and services for minors; equity, diversity, and inclusion; economic barriers to information access; and privacy, particularly related to patron records.

Library Director Dana Hart spoke about Access to Library Resources and Services for Minors. She explained that children of all ages are allowed access to all library materials, which sometimes upsets parents because this may include the internet, video games, or access to information that parents or guardians think inappropriate. When this issue is brought up by patrons, the staff explains that people of all ages have the same rights as adults according to the ALA. However, by Vermont law, parents and guardians are permitted to view the loan records of children below the age of 16.

Catherine Nichols asked if the downstairs computers are controlled. Dana said that there are more restrictions on the computers in the children's room because there are computers with no restrictions available to patrons upstairs.

The board discussed Economic Barriers to Information Access. Dana indicated her plan to speak to the Select Board about going fine free. The library has not been charging fines for the past five months and consequently has not brought in any income during this period. It is the general view in the library community in the U.S. that fines prevent those with economic challenges from using libraries, presenting a barrier to access. It was noted that non-residents of Middlebury pay for membership. However, the Friends of the Library have a program to offset the cost of membership for those for whom payment would present a barrier to use.

The library is working to highlight materials about the subjects of equity, diversity, and inclusion. When creating the book collection, ALA guidelines stress the importance of ensuring that all viewpoints are included and uncensored. As the library is discouraged from censoring materials Catherine asked if there were many books about white supremacy and the Nazi party in the current collection. Dana was unaware of any pro neo-Nazi material. If she were asked to add such materials to the collection, she would do so, unless it was nonfiction material deemed to be inaccurate.

John Freidin thought it would be worthwhile to have the Governance Committee review the Library Bill of Rights and see if there needed to be any language alterations in IIsley policies. He wondered if someone could be in charge of overseeing the compliance with these policies.

President Joe McVeigh explained the ALA policy about privacy and noted that library staff can't disclose who is in the building. Dana further explained that if a student were absent from school and in the library, staff could not disclose whether or not the student was present to a parent or to the police, as this is a violation of privacy. Disclosing this information would make it clear that the student has a library card, and that is not information that staff are allowed to provide.

John suggested revisiting this position because of the pandemic and general policies of contact tracing. He did not think that the library should refuse to provide help to parents or police. He noted that anyone is allowed in the building and that presence does not necessarily mean the person has a library card. Dana indicated that there is no plan to record visitors to the library for contact tracing purposes. While this may be required at restaurants, it is not the general practice at other buildings, public or private.

Joe thanked the Board for reading through these documents and continuing to work on developing knowledge and skills to inform governance.

RESOLUTION OF THANKS

The board reviewed the resolution of thanks for retiring Sarah Partridge librarian Mona Rogers. Catherine and Dana will coordinate a socially-distanced event to honor her on Saturday, August 29th. The resolution will be circulated for signatures and will be presented by Catherine on behalf of the board.

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

John Freidin and Andy Hooper reported that they had worked with Dana to add a bullet point to the existing Rules of Conduct Policy requiring patrons to wear masks and maintain social distancing while in the library. As the Governor has now mandated such a requirement, the Board discussed whether adding such a point was necessary.

The board spoke about a potential policy on wearing masks. John doesn't think they should rely on the governance mandate to authorize them to have someone leave the library if they are not wearing a facial covering in the building.

Joe suggested adding a bullet point about failing to follow prescribed social distancing regulations. While this is harder to monitor, Dana says the circulation staff will be monitoring social distancing when patrons are in the library, and that if someone were habitually disregarding their reminders, they would be asked to leave.

Amy Mincher agreed that the patrons are expected to comply with the library staff when they give reminders regarding safety.

DIRECTOR'S EVALUATION COMMITTEE REPORT

Catherine and Amy reported on their work on the Director's evaluation process. Catherine and Amy planned to meet later in the week and have a report for the board's September meeting.

QUARTERLY FINANCE REPORT

Dana presented the end of year financial report for the Capital Budget, the Revenue Budget, and the Operating Budget as well as the balance of the trust agency accounts.

Dana summarized key expenses areas. For example, the telephone line was under budget, the operating budget came in under budget because of furloughs to staff. The copier service plan might have been over-billed. Building repairs were over budget, because of an unanticipated elevator test.

Joe asked about the implications of the lack of funds from the Friends' book sales. Dana stated that the Friends have a healthy reserve. The library will ask for less money from the Friends because hosting indoor programs won't be possible, but the Friends will continue to support the library. The Board discussed the possibility of an online book sale.

CAPITAL BUDGET:

Dana Hart explained that the library website needed to be refreshed, and that the historic

restoration project will use the external repairs money. Revenue is down because the building has been closed, and the library stopped charging fines. Dana noted that the library is not viewed as a major revenue source for the town government.

TRUSTEE-GOVERNED FUNDS AND INVESTMENTS

Andy Hooper reported on the balances and performance of the trustee-governed funds held at Vanguard. He took the figures from the Vanguard report and abstracted them into a simplified report to make them easier to read. He explained that asset amounts were remarkably stable, which was a pleasant surprise, given the fiscally bumpy year for the markets due to the pandemic.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Library Director Dana Hart directed board members to her written report.

Amy Mincher wondered about progress on engraving of the poem on the sidewalk. Dana said that the project had begun but that a key person had moved to Colorado, slowing the process.

Dana noted that staff members Susan and Stephanie have returned from furlough. Mona is back at 1/3 of her regular hours. Judy is still on furlough.

In preparation for a cautious, partial reopening the reference room has been rearranged to accommodate new youth and children's books. The current capacity for the lobby and reference room together is 8 patrons. The building is working with an occupancy rate of 25% of the total number of people permitted in the lobby and reference room. Although the governor is permitting up to 50% capacity, the library will stick with 8 people to begin with. The number could be relaxed or tightened depending on levels of public health and infection.

BOARD COMMENTS AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Catherine and Dana suggested that Mona would be at Sarah Partridge between 10 and 12:30 on Saturday, August 29th and hoped that the board would come and say goodbye to her at that time.

Andy Hooper requested to shift the board meeting time to after work hours. The board agreed to return to its pre-COVID meeting time on the second Monday of the month from 5:00-6:30 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

President Joe McVeigh adjourned the meeting at 3:30 p.m.

The next regularly scheduled meeting will take place on Monday, September 14th at 5:00 p.m. via electronic meeting.