

**ILSLEY PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
REGULAR MEETING  
SEPTEMBER 14, 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 5:00 pm.  
See Board Packet <Board Packet 9.14.2020.pdf> for agenda and accompanying documents.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Peggy Rush, a member of the public, had a question about the previous minutes, concerning a statement about restrictions on the children’s room computers. Library Director Dana Hart explained that while there are no site-blockers in effect, the computer content must be appropriate for all ages. To monitor this, the downstairs library staff observes the use of computers and discourages inappropriate content. Unrestricted computers are available to adults on the upstairs level.

The minutes were approved.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments.

**FY 22 BUDGET PRESENTATION**

Director Dana Hart noted that certain budget lines that have yet to be determined.

President Joe McVeigh stated that he had spoken to Kathleen Ramsay, town manager, about Fiscal Year 22. He had asked whether funding levels were anticipated to be level or otherwise. Kathleen indicated that it was too early to tell because property taxes had not yet been collected yet this year.

Dana stated that the fire alarm replacement is a priority that cannot be delayed.

The new heating and cooling project will most likely have to be bonded. It is not certain that the Select Board will approve such a bond. John Freidin asked how certain Dana was of the \$500,000 cost for heating and cooling. Dana said that Engineering Services of Vermont reviewed the cost to replace the heating and cooling systems and estimated \$500,000.

### **RULES OF CONDUCT POLICY**

The board approved an amendment to the Rules of Conduct policy by adding the following requirement:

“Failing to wear a facial covering that covers the mouth and nose and failing to keep six feet apart inside the library will not be permitted. Anyone who engages in this behavior will be asked to leave the property unless corrected.”

John Friedin moved, and Andy Hooper seconded the motion to amend the Rules of Conduct Policy. The motion passed unanimously.

### **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Dana gave an update on the Word on the Street Initiative, a project that engraves community poems into sidewalks around Middlebury. A poem was selected to be engraved in the front of the library, and this process has begun. A library patron has expressed concern about the aesthetic of what they thought was the finished product. However, the installation is not yet complete. Once the process is finished, it is possible to re-pour the section of concrete if the size and placement is not satisfactory.

John asked Dana about the relationships among the staff, and if they had been extra welcoming to the patrons during the re-opening of the library. Dana said that the relationships were good, and there have been a few recent occasions where the staff met to socialize. Dana also mentioned that the staff is going out of their way to provide good customer service.

Joe asked about library traffic, and Dana said there are usually about 40-50 people per day. There were 500 people in the month of August. She explained that the lobby was very rarely at capacity.

### **FINE FREE PROPOSAL**

The Board discussed the idea of going fine free, which would mean that fines would be eliminated, but there would be fees if materials were not returned. If materials were 14 days overdue, the library would ask for them to be returned, but patrons would not have to pay unless the materials were lost or damaged. Once an item was confirmed as lost, the patron would either be charged for the material, or their account would be blocked.

The Library has not been collecting fines since March, because of restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dana introduced this idea to the board in November 2019 and again in February 2020. While the board agreed to move in this direction, there was no vote. As such a decision would result in a loss of revenue to the town, about \$9,000 annually, Dana wants to inform the Select Board in advance of this change.

This could be implemented gradually, or all at once. Dana said that one idea was to phase in this process. For example, the library could go fine free for youth materials in Fiscal Year 22, and fine free for adult materials in Fiscal Year 23.

Catherine Nichols moved, and John Friedin seconded a motion to endorse the fine free proposal. The motion passed unanimously.

#### **REVIEW OF FACILITY NEEDS AND GOALS**

Joe thanked John for his work as chair of the Library Building Committee.

The Board discussed facility needs and goals raised by the Gossens Bachman feasibility study of 2017. Primary areas of concern raised for discussion were children's spaces; accessibility; HVAC systems, lighting, wiring, and moisture abatement; bathrooms; overall space needs; and the community meeting room.

Children's space: Dana said that she wanted to make spaces for younger patrons more clearly delineated. For example, there is not currently a specific place for teens to hang out in the library. Catherine mentioned that she was impressed by the amount of natural light in the Bristol Library children's room, which is also underground.

Accessibility: There was some discussion about whether or not the library elevator is fully ADA compliant. Amy Mincher mentioned that the doors open on two different sides. This requires patrons in wheelchairs to shift orientation in a small space, which can be challenging.

Heating/Cooling/Lighting/Wiring/Moisture Abatement: John noted that moisture leaks in through the foundation of the original 1924 building at ground level and below. The only way to prevent this would be to excavate all around the building, which would create implications for the rest of the facility. John further noted that at present the building makes use of a dizzying amount of different light bulbs which makes for an onerous task of keeping them all in stock and replacing them.

Bathrooms: John brought up the issue of inappropriate use of bathrooms. He suggested that misuse would be less likely if the bathrooms accommodate two or more people.

Space: The future orientation of libraries is likely to be less about a repository of information and more of a community meeting and gathering space. However, Dana suggested that not all of the new meeting rooms proposed in the gBa review were necessary. For example, there is probably less need for a space dedicated to technology and computers now that many people have their own mobile devices.

Community Meeting Room: John wondered why so many people book the Ilsley Library Community Meeting Room when there are so many other available spaces in town. He asked Dana if the library had fewer restrictions. Dana said that the Library meeting room doesn't have any fewer restrictions than other places, but that it is easier to book.

Joe will send out a survey using a Google form that will ask Board members to rank the various proposed improvements from those they consider most essential to least essential.

#### **BOARD COMMENTS AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS (NEW OR OTHER BUSINESS)**

Joe announced that the Vermont Department of Libraries will be holding an online conference for trustees and friends. Topics will include presentations on finance, marketing, and human resources. John noted that Susan Clark, co-author of *Slow Democracy* would be presenting a keynote talk at this event. He recommended the book, several copies of which are available at the library.

Amy told the board that the Friends of the Library meeting would be held the following day and she would attend.

Dana and Joe both attend the board meetings of Middlebury Community Television. MCTV is making improvements to its television studio on the fourth floor.

John noted that The Little Pressroom now offers the service of converting VHS tapes to digital format to store on your computer. He believes this might be useful to MCTV. Dana said that patrons can do this for themselves in the library's Media Lab, when the entire building is open to the public.

Andy mentioned that Dr. Anthony Fauci would be a part of Governor Scott's press conference on September 15th. Andy also said that Middlebury College would be moving to Phase 2 of its coronavirus reopening plan on September 17th, meaning students would be able to venture off campus and out into the broader community.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

President Joe McVeigh adjourned the meeting at 6:10 p.m.

The next regularly scheduled meeting will take place on October 12, 2020 at 5:00 p.m. via electronic meeting.