

**ILSLEY PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES REGULAR MEETING
MONDAY, APRIL 8, 2019
ILSLEY LIBRARY, MIDDLEBURY**

MINUTES - DRAFT

Board decisions are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

Present:

Board members: Catherine Nichols, President; John Freidin; Faith Gong, Secretary; Amy Mincher, Treasurer; Joe McVeigh

Library Director: Dana Hart

Public: Dennis O'Brien; Barbara Doyle-Wilch; Alice Eckles

CALL TO ORDER

See Board Packet for agendas and accompanying documents.

President Catherine Nichols called the meeting to order at 5:32 PM.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

DECISION: The Board approved the minutes of the regular meeting of March 5, 2019

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Dennis O'Brien, former member of Building Committee, introduced himself. He noted that Dana Hart had recently made an excellent presentation ("Not Your Grandmother's Library") at the "Town-Gown" meeting. ("Middlebury Town and Gown" is a select group of 60 members -- about 40% Middlebury faculty and 60% town residents -- that meets every two weeks at the Middlebury Inn to discuss politics and economics.) What struck him most was Dana's comment that the library is really a "community center."

Alice Eckles wondered whether the Sustainability Policy had been voted on, since it was introduced in the March meeting and no major objections or comments were offered, Dana apologized that she had not included the policy in the Board packet. It will be included in the agenda for the May meeting.

DATE OF MAY BOARD MEETING

The date of the May meeting has been changed to Monday, May 6 at 5:30 PM at Ilsley Public Library (IPL.)

FRIENDS' REPORT

Amy Mincher reported that she, Dana, Lorrie Muller (Friends President), and Susan Gowan have arranged to purchase 5 upholstered armchairs and a round coffee table from Woodward (where they received an excellent price.) The new furniture will be placed in the IPL lobby in roughly 6 weeks.

Faith will write a letter to thank the Friends for this gift. Catherine Nichols will write a thank-you note to Drew at Woodward.

Amy helped out with the Friends' April book sale, which went well (over \$500 in sales.) New wooden shelves have been helpful with storage.

Joe noted the need to look at the role of the Friends moving forward; perhaps they should take a more vibrant role in a new building.

ELECTION OF BOARD OFFICERS

The IPL Board officers for the 2019-20 year are Catherine Nichols, President; Amy Mincher, Treasurer; and Faith Gong, Secretary. Joe McVeigh has agreed to be "President-in-Waiting" for 2020-21.

Joe offered to serve as the MCTV Liaison for the coming year.

DISCUSSION: PLANNING FOR BOARD RETREAT

The April 27 Board Retreat will focus on Phase 1 of the IPL renovation/expansion. The three possible decisions are (A) Do nothing; (B) Move forward with current \$9.6 million plan; (C) Reconceptualize with a mid-range budget. The suggested goal is to make a decision by October.

John Freiden encouraged the Board to consider a different approach. This would involve an inclusive, deliberative process that would ensure that everyone in the entire community was represented. Do we (the community) want IPL to be only a library, or a community center as well? And what sort of library do we want? We would need to hire a trained person to take us through this process. (This process has been used successfully in Portsmouth, NH, as described in Susan Clark's book *Slow Democracy*.)

Barbara and Dana felt that this approach might well be the vehicle for moving forward (the "Tell Me More Tour.")

John suggested that the Board members read *Slow Democracy* prior to the retreat.

Dennis O'Brien noted that the Portsmouth situation was a crisis in which people had taken sides. But the IPL renovation is not a present crisis; we're trying to educate people to a future picture of the library and the community. His opinion is that we can't raise the kind of money that we need entirely by this method; we would need a separate track for fundraising.

Dana agreed, and described the vision of the "Tell Me More Tour" as a time for community feedback and education. She would like to have a clear idea after the retreat of what we'd like to learn. We also need information from the architects. Barbara framed this as "What information do we need?" to make one of the three possible decisions.

Joe asked whether fundraising feasibility wasn't essential to our decision making. Dana explained that we won't ever have a guarantee; the first step is to have a plan and push for it.

Alice encouraged us to use the information we've already gathered. Dana's sense from the Tell Me Tour was that enough people were uncomfortable with the current plan to merit the Board taking a second look at it. Barbara also noted that the Tell Me Tour participants were a self-selected group, and not representative of the entire community.

Dennis O'Brien suggested we ask, "Who has a real, vested interest in a vibrant downtown?" and shift people into thinking of IPL as part of this. He also suggested asking "Who or what has to be on board before we even start a feasibility study?"

Joe described the process as operating on multiple tracks: a fundraising track, a community education track, and a building track.

Barbara said her goal is to get Board consensus on our direction.

John would like consensus to come from the community.

Amy noted that in Portsmouth, the community group didn't reach a consensus, but presented options to the school board.

John suggested making proposal to surrounding towns about how to get their citizens free library cards. A concern is that some other towns have their own small libraries, and this could be a touchy issue. Dennis suggested framing it as "buying in to a larger dimension" following the IPL renovation. Joe thought that this was an exciting idea, but wasn't sure that the retreat was the best venue for this discussion.

QUARTERLY FINANCE REPORT

Amy and Dana reported that the regular part-time budget line was further along than desirable because of the time Mike spent making shelving for the Friends. Dana will figure out how to offset this. IPL will stop ordering books at the end of May. One quarter is left in the fiscal year, and the budget is otherwise looking good.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The 2018 Impact Report (by the Image Farm) will be printed out for dissemination, and sent to the IPL and Town email lists as a PDF. Dennis O'Brien suggested including a breakout for the value of the library's economic impact.

John thinks our current logo is terrible, but it isn't the right time to change the IPL logo. He suggested we add "Middlebury, Vermont." Joe agreed that it's not the right time to change the logo, for a variety of typographic reasons.

John suggested keeping track of the ongoing building improvements.

BOARD COMMENTS

Catherine likes the red and black of the library logo. She doesn't like the orange background of the Impact Report.

Joe clarified the role of the Board vs. the role of the Director. The Board agreed that the decision about the Impact Report lay with the Director. Consensus was reached.

Joe is hoping to go to Greenfield, MA on Friday, May 2, where the town just agreed to a \$20 million library renovation, in order to talk to the major players.

Amy mentioned that on Tuesday, May 21 from 8:30-5 there will be a Trustees & Friends Conference at the UVM Davis Center. She will send out the sign-up when it's available.

Dana added the Children's Librarian Tricia Allen is giving a talk at the VLA conference the next day.

ADJOURNMENT

President Catherine Nichols declared the meeting adjourned at 7:04PM.

NEXT REGULAR MEETING

Monday, May 6th, 5:30PM, Jessica Swift Community Room

Respectfully Submitted,
Faith Gong, Secretary