

**ILSLEY PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES
REGULAR MEETING
OCTOBER 11, 2021
JESSICA SWIFT COMMUNITY MEETING ROOM**

MINUTES

Board decisions are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

Present

Board members: Joe McVeigh, President; Catherine Nichols, Secretary; Andy Hooper, Treasurer;
Amy Mincher, Meg Baker

Library Staff: Dana Hart

Recording Secretary: Saskia Gori-Montanelli

Meeting called to order

President Joe McVeigh called the meeting to order at 5:00PM. See Board Packet for agenda and accompanying documents.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of September 13th, 2021 were approved.

Board Updates

Joe McVeigh reported that the Trustees hosted a successful luncheon for the Ilsley Public Library staff on Tuesday, September 28th, at American Flatbread. Beth Marr from Almost Home Catering provided the food. Joe thanked everyone for all of their teamwork; the food was amazing, and the venue was just right.

Joe added that at its meeting of September 28th the Selectboard appointed a Working Group for the renovation/expansion project. This group will convene for the first time on Thursday, October 14th. Joe and Dana met with Town Manager Kathleen Ramsay and Town Staff Work Group Liaison Judy Harris to clarify the role of the Working Group. A draft charge for the group has been created and will be reviewed at the first meeting of the Working Group. The Selectboard will formalize the charge at a subsequent meeting.

Public Comments

Dana shared email correspondence with patron Fran Putnam, a Weybridge resident. Fran requested that the library require masks inside. In her reply, Dana noted that the library is a department of the town. The library's mask policy is in line with the town's policy. The number of library patrons who do not wear masks is small, though a higher percentage do wear masks downstairs in the children's room.

To date this is the only comment received from a patron on this subject. Catherine felt strongly that patrons should be required to wear masks. Dana noted concern about putting library employees in the position of enforcing a mask mandate. She spoke of reports from other libraries of encounters with patrons who became belligerent when asked to wear masks.

Joe noted that signage on the Town Office doors appears to require masks, although the town's policy recommends masks but does not require them. Meg said it might be helpful if there was a sign that encourages masks, even if it is not enforced. Dana said that if staff were to put up a sign that said masks are required and then not enforce the rule, patrons who do wear masks will be unhappy that others do not.

Amy approved of Dana's response to Fran's email. The board agreed to keep the library's mask policy tied to the town's. Dana will review the current signage to ensure it is clear that patrons are encouraged to wear masks.

FY23 Draft Budget Request

The board revisited the FY23 draft budget request which was presented at the previous meeting on September 13th.

Operating budget. The total operating budget request is \$730,308, a \$37,181 increase over last year. The main driver behind this increase is a correction to the library's part-time regular budget line.

Capital budget. The current estimate for the HVAC system replacement is \$700,000. This does not include the cost of the removal of the oil tank which is buried below the back garden. The \$15,000 budgeted for architect/fundraising consultant fees will augment the \$24,500 currently in a trust agency account if needed. The account is titulary designated for a fundraising feasibility study but it is anticipated that it will be used instead for architect fees for the renovation/expansion project.

\$10,500 for repair of downstairs windows and \$25,000 for repair/replacement of the cracked cement front steps has been entered as a placeholder in the capital budget for FY24. If the renovation/expansion project moves expeditiously those items may be included in overall plans.

\$103,000 has been entered as a placeholder for modernizing the elevator in FY2026. This estimate is only for modernizing the current elevator. The cost of a new elevator would likely be considerably higher. This could also be subsumed in the renovation/expansion project.

Revenue budget. As the library is now fine-free, no revenue is anticipated from fines. Over the past two years the pandemic has reduced revenues from non-resident fees and from the amount paid by patrons to replace lost materials. It is hoped that resumption of normal hours and borrowing patterns will return those revenue figures closer to the amount anticipated in the budget.

Andy Hooper moved the approval of the budget request. Catherine Nichols seconded. The motion passed. The budget request was approved.

Quarterly Finance Report

Treasurer Andy Hooper summarized the quarterly finance report.

Trust agency accounts. Andy noted some discrepancies in the balances of the trust agencies accounts. He had different figures in four of the accounts, one set from the town's fund balance and a different number from Dana. Dana suggested that this might be due to the way in which fund balances were closed out at the end of the previous fiscal year. She will look into the discrepancies.

Trustee investments. Andy reminded the board of the February decision to consolidate the number of investment vehicles. While investment returns were excellent earlier in the year, the current quarter's returns are average. Funds were expended for the facilitator for our board retreat and development of the charge to the Design Team and for the Trustee's luncheon for the staff.

Operating budget. Meg asked Dana about any unanticipated expenses. Dana noted that it is likely the building repair budget will be overspent, but that it will be balanced out with reductions in other line items. The library has been understaffed by college work-study students and by substitutes. However, the lack of work-study students has not impacted the budget as much as Dana thought it would.

Director's Report

Director Dana Hart brought the attention of the Trustees to her written report and asked if there were any questions. Catherine applauded the upcoming workshop for staff to be facilitated by Steve Gross entitled "Imagining Our Library's Post Pandemic Agenda." Catherine suggested that we consider asking him to repeat the presentation for the public or the board.

Director Evaluation Committee Report

Catherine and Amy summarized the process used by the Director Evaluation Committee: the Director writes a self-evaluation, the members of the Evaluation Committee, as well as the Town Manager, read it, and respond to it in writing. Following that, the Committee meets with the Director to discuss the responses.

At the request of Board President Joe McVeigh, Director Dana Hart highlighted some of her goals for the upcoming year. These include:

- obtaining a bond vote for the needed HVAC system
- applying for a grant for the heating system
- switching email away from the college's servers to a new ISP
- adding new shelving signs
- removing the large desk in the reference room
- moving the indoor adult book drop from the processing room to the front circulation desk

- exploring extending library services to outlying communities
- completing historic window work
- completing a proposal for new fire alarm system
- switching newsletter delivery service to Mailchimp
- working on increasing personal visibility as the spokesperson for the library

Catherine reported on the positive response from the Town Manager to Dana's self-evaluation, affirmed that the library has indeed gone fine free after years of pursuing the idea, and recommended that board members frequent the library on a regular basis to become aware of new changes. She thought the possibility of expanding service to other communities was a good one, and she was intrigued about the possibility of expanded publicity for the library on the radio and in other media.

Amy reminded the board of the importance of keeping lines of communication open to ensure that Dana's workload is not overwhelmed as the renovation/expansion project progresses. She noted that it might be necessary to reevaluate some of Dana's goals if work on the renovation/expansion project takes up a great deal of additional time. Amy further noted Dana's plans for ongoing customer service training for the staff, and hoped that Barbara Doyle-Wilch might return to facilitate that.

Dana expressed her appreciation that Amy and Catherine were sensitive to the issue of potential time constraints and workload.

Executive Session

On a motion by Meg Baker and seconded by Catherine Nichols, the board entered into a brief executive session to discuss a personnel matter. Upon return from executive session the meeting continued.

Next Steps for the Renovation/Expansion Working Group

Dana said that a Working Group has been appointed by the Selectboard, and an initial charge has been drafted. The first meeting will take place on Thursday, October 14th, at 1PM in the large conference room in the Town Offices. All meetings will be warned and open to the public.

The Trustees wondered whether the Working Group would address the question of funding and if the Design Team should go into the process with a pre-approved price tag. Joe suggested that the Working Group might advise the future Design Team to take costs into consideration but suggested that asking the Working Group to establish a specific figure before the Design Team has carefully analyzed needs and potential costs would be premature.

Meg suggested that the Trustees need to talk to the Selectboard about what items are essential, like fixing the elevator. She suggested that once the key pieces are established, everything else will slide into place as well. Dana wondered if the Working Group should establish the list of essential, non-negotiable needs. Alternatively, the Working Group could be given a list of substantial improvements and asked to consider which ones are the most necessary. Meg argued that the Working Group should come up with

the list. When a cost figure is established it can be seen whether the most essential needs are met. Joe was not sure that the establishment of cost parameters is in within the scope of what the Working Group is meant to do. That might be the responsibility of the future Design Team.

Group Discussion: Future Directions

Joe said that as a board, the Trustees hadn't thought about the future of the library in a big-picture way. He mentioned contemplating where the library will be in 50 years from 2021. He suggested that re-considering future directions would be help Dana field questions from the Design Team.

Catherine stated that the use of the library as an integral part of the community is huge, but that 50 years in the future is too far to be thinking about.

Andy said this idea was partially addressed in the Trustee's draft charge to the Design Team about the desired qualities of the building, and how it would sustain what they want the library to do in the future. He said that this should always be on their minds.

Meg wanted to think more about community engagement; she suggested exploring and coming up with a quotation to share broadly about what the library is doing.

Amy suggested that the Trustees make use of the American Library Association's list of current trends affecting libraries. The board agreed to examine some of those trends at future meetings.

Board comments and unfinished business

Amy noted that there has been some discussion among the Friends of the Library about whether or not to enlarge their board.

Adjournment

President Joe McVeigh adjourned the meeting at 6:30PM.

The next regularly scheduled meeting will take place on Monday, November 8 at 5PM in the Jessica Swift Community Meeting Room.