

**ILSLEY PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES
REGULAR MEETING
NOVEMBER 8, 2021
JESSICA SWIFT COMMUNITY MEETING ROOM**

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
Public: Peg Martin

CALL TO ORDER

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Catherine Nichols brought up page 3 of the previous minutes, asking if Dana had looked into the discrepancies on the Quarterly Finance Report. Dana explained that the numbers on the last day of the previous FY and first day of new FY didn't match because of a lag in reporting. The minutes of the October 11th meeting were approved.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Peg Martin, a member of the public, stated that the Ilesley Library is key to downtown Middlebury life, and that she wanted to be of use in library planning.

Joe said that the Trustees put together a charge for a new library design team. The Selectboard determined that there should be a working group before the design team began work. Peg suggested that it might be useful to start a campaign of letters to the editor to cover the things that are taking place at the library.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Catherine asked what was meant by the new "switches" in the front office. Dana explained that they were a means of connecting to the internet. The previous switches were old, large, and made a constant humming noise. The newer switches are smaller and quieter.

Amy Mincher was excited about the Library's new Mailchimp email newsletter. Meg Baker loved the addition of the puzzle in the library. She also said that it was great that the Ilesley library got some press from the Addison Independent about the expansion.

Dana Hart said that she will be testifying in front of the State legislator's Working Group on the Status of Libraries in Vermont. The focus of her testimony is on programming at IIsley. She added that there might be changes to the Library's budget coming up, and she will meet with Kathleen Ramsey about them. She will have to request an increase in the budget because of maintenance issues.

UPDATE ON WORKING GROUP

The IIsley Library Renovation/Expansion Working Group appointed by the Selectboard is comprised of Dana, Joe, Amy, Dan Brown, Lindsay Fuentes-George, and Judith Harris. The group meets weekly, and had met 3 times before November 8th. The Selectboard approved the charge. The group will summarize the work done by the previous committee as well as recommend questions and considerations that the design team should explore as part of its process. The group is cognizant the the feasibility study presented by the previous Library Building Committee successfully addressed all the deficiencies of the building, but, at a cost that was not be seen as workable by the town at that time.

Judith Harris has worked with the town as a consultant, and has expertise in construction and architecture, which gives her good insight. She made suggestions to the draft, one of them being to start thinking about the cost. Joe said that they should focus on expanding and renovating the library building as an important anchor destination in downtown Middlebury. Judith wanted to widen the scope. For example, would it be possible to integrate the design for the library in the EDI structure? What if it were possible to redevelop the entire block including the Marquis and Ben Franklin? Would it be possible to move the library down the street?

Peg said that while she had no problem with considering the idea of moving the library, the building is central to history. As difficult as it is to work with, it is something of value to the town in and of itself. Meg was concerned about moving the library further away from accessible parking. Keeping the library downtown is critical. Amy agreed about parking. She asked if the space would be good for the library in 100 years; If it keeps expanding, the library will reach the confines of the space that's allotted to it. She asked if the space would be better suited for something else, such as an apartment complex.

Dana said that this idea was worth thinking about. It doesn't concern her to think about a future design team considering these options. The highest priority is to make sure that the library serves the community's needs. If the Trustees don't explore all options, they're not doing their due diligence. Andy Hooper added that they should not lose sight of timelines and tasks.

Catherine brought up the former Ben Franklin building, and suggested that the library expand onto that. Meg said that this would bring up the possibility of having a children's library separate from the regular library. The beautiful thing about IIsley is that the two parts are integrated together.

The working group will continue to meet on Thursday afternoons at 2pm. All meetings are open to the public and can be attended in person or remotely via Zoom. Minutes and documents of the meetings

are available on the library's web page. Go to <https://www.ilsleypubliclibrary.org/about-us/renovation-expansion-working-group/>

UPDATE ON EXPANSION OF LIBRARY SERVICES

Dana would like to start preparing a proposal to expand library services to Ripton. The idea is that the town of Ripton would pay the town of Middlebury so that Ripton citizens can get free Ilsley library cards. She would like someone to help her brainstorm different models that would be feasible for Ripton's small community. Andy agreed to assist her.

Joe asked if in the context of the school consolidation political system, there was a perceived need for this on the part of Ripton. Ripton children have gotten free access to the Ilsley Library for a long time. The question was whether or not they would be eligible for free access if they leave the school district. Meg said that Ripton was likely to secede from ACSD, and that it will be extremely expensive for the town to engage services that they'll be required to have such as professionals in early childhood speech and language services. It might be that timing for this change is not ideal, but it is a good idea to start thinking about it now. It was suggested that reaching out to Weybridge about this possibility might be more opportune at this time, given the somewhat tense political situation in Ripton.

Andy stated that in town governance, one is always looking at how much of the benefit of the local tax dollars go to the local residents as well as how much go to those from surrounding towns who may enjoy the benefits but without paying for them through their own town taxes.

DISCUSSION: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Joe asked how the Trustees can--early in the process-- engage the community in defining their needs and desires. Meg said that the Addison Independent article was helpful in terms of community engagement. The overall project is envisioned of being made of up 3 teams: design, funding, and community engagement. It is important that any communication between these groups is clear, complete, and reciprocal.

Joe said that the reason the Selectboard asked for a Working Group was to make sure that the charge to the design team when is very clear. He anticipates that the current small working group will expand into a larger group. The three groups will have a number of opportunities for interested members of the community to help with.

Joe and Dana noted that the working group has run into questions about vocabulary. The specific language issue is with the term "design team." This term is typically used to describe architects and engineers. The Trustees and the Working Group have been referring to the future committee as the "design team," and the architects and professionals as the "professional design team." The Trustees need to come up with an official name for the future committee. The difference between the professional and non-professional design teams are that the non-professionals are community members steering the progress, so it might be important to express that the group is community based.

DISCUSSION: BOARD RECRUITMENT

The Trustees discussed possible Middlebury town members who might make good future library Trustees.

Joe asked what the work of Trustees was going to be going forward. Keeping the library on track during what will be a tumultuous few years will be necessary.

Meg suggested the name “Centennial Renovation and Expansion Team” for the future committee. It could be abbreviated to “CREaTe”

DISCUSSION: LIBRARY TRENDS

The Trustees briefly discussed current trends based on a list created by the ALA. (<https://www.ala.org/tools/future/trends>) The focus was on the trends of creative placemaking and coworking. Dana plans to write a short article for the Addison Independent, accompanied by an article by Steve Gross, who published a book that he wrote largely in the Ilsley library. Having a pamphlet that highlights certain aspects and uses of the library might be helpful to the public. The goal is to create an environment that’s hospitable to working.

BOARD COMMENTS AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Amy urged the Trustees to take a look at the Friends’ display at the window of the National Bank of Middlebury on Main Street.

ADJOURNMENT

President Joe McVeigh adjourned the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

The next regularly scheduled meeting will take place on Monday, December 13, at 5 p.m.