

**ILSLEY PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES
REGULAR MEETING
DECEMBER 13, 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 (acting recording secretary)

Library Staff: Dana Hart

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

The minutes of the November 15th, 2021 meeting were approved.

Catherine noted that the Friends display in the window of the National Bank of Middlebury was very attractive. Joe noted that the Friends membership levels now have tiers of support. Amy reported that the Friends will continue to offer book sales in the spring.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Dana Hart called the board's attention to her written report, found in the board packet. Jerry Plouffe responded to the plumbing issue in the middle of the night and was extremely helpful. The library needs to replace the alarm that warns about moisture as it gives lots of false alarms. When such alarms go off after hours sometimes a library employee who lives nearby can come in to see if we need to address the issue. Otherwise, it can be difficult to determine remotely if the problem needs to be addressed.

The elevator is safe. However, it has been scary for those who got stuck. The alarm has been changed to be louder to alert others, but that does not help when staff are alone in the building. It is believed that something gets stuck in the treads which causes the issues.

Mike has left his position. Sean is now the only custodian but he has injured himself. Mr. Mikes will be cleaning some nights and Sean will continue to help. We need to think about long-term solutions.

Dana will be teaching a Middlebury class, but we are waiting to hear whether the classes will be in person. She will be out from 10-1 M-Th. Catherine suggested that it might be interesting to offer short selections from the class to the general public.

Dana will be presenting the FY23 operating budget to the Selectboard on December 14.

UPDATE ON WORKING GROUP

The Ilsley 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. The group was charged with four major tasks: Summarize what has happened before; consider what has changed since the previous report; revise the charge to the design advisory team; make suggestions on considerations, questions, and issues that the next group should deal with.

At its recent meetings the working group has brought in members of the former library committee including John Frieden and Nick Artim. Judith Harris also interviewed John McCloud. Gossens and Bachman have also spoken with the group about how they came to decisions in their report.

The working group would like to call the whole project Ilsley 100 or IPL 100. They like the centennial idea. Design Advisory Team is the likely name of the workgroup that offers guidance to the professional design team.

The working group is now focused on revising the charge to the Design Advisory Team. One question is whether the Design Advisory Team should explore other site options. The architects were enthusiastic about the current historic building. Judith felt that there needed to be specific sites identified if the Design Advisory Team should explore them. There is recognition that a lot of work has already been done and some have asked how much we want to start over. The working group needs to consider whether there is a budget cap and how much guidance to provide the Design Advisory Team. Gossens and Bachman were very interested in having that guidance as it would help create a more appropriate design.

The trustees discussed the three proposed working groups: Design, Funding, and Community Engagement. Organization of the structure to allow for appropriate oversight and communication feedback loops will need to be decided by the Working Group. The town has more experience with fundraising, bonds, and large infrastructure grants. Joe noted we will need professional assistance with fundraising and community engagement. Dana said we need to have overlap between the groups somewhere - either on the executive committee or the Design Advisory Team in order to maintain communication. Joe pointed out that adding an executive group creates an added layer of bureaucracy and we run the risk of volunteer burnout. The trustees agreed that the Executive Committee felt duplicative and that we should have the chairs of the other two groups on the Design Advisory Team.

The community engagement team will likely consist of a core of central workers who will then parcel out smaller tasks to individuals rather than becoming a large working committee. Meg pointed out that the

community engagement group would be communicating with and for the design team. In general terms of community engagement, Dana has begun writing a series of op-ed pieces for the *Addison Independent* and we are in discussions to resume the practice of regular appearances on a local radio program. Library staff have been working hard on communication in Front Porch Forum, social media, the website and the newly redesigned newsletter. Facebook and Instagram are very active. Jim Gish was mentioned as a model example on how to communicate complicated information to the public.

Joe pointed out that we also need to determine who the groups report to: Trustees or Selectboard. Joe advocated for a partnership between the selectboard and the trustees. Meg worried that if there was joint supervision it would not receive adequate attention. Dana feels it is important to regularly report in person to the selectboard.

It may be a challenge to find a person to chair the Funding Team as that person will also likely sit on the Design Advisory Team. Dana recalled that the charge indicated that the design had to be approved by the trustees and the selectboard. We will need to start fundraising before we have a final design. Catherine was discouraged that the funding was holding the project back. Andy pointed out that costs and labor are challenging to plan around right now. It is hard to plan when we don't know what the budget cap should be.

If it is necessary to cut costs it may be necessary to restrict changes to certain priorities. Meg suggested that the Design Advisory Team create a list of nonnegotiable goals for the project (e.g. the elevator, moisture issues). Joe pointed out that it is not necessarily very forward thinking to design only to fix the current problems. Meg responded that the cost drivers of this project are mostly likely to be nonnegotiable and that the other goals would not likely add as much to the total cost of the project.

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 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TEAM

Dana and Meg met, did some brainstorming, and created a planning document. Things are still in the planning stages and will depend on next steps from above.

UPDATE ON HOMECARD PROCEDURES

Dana presented on Homecard which is a lending consortium of libraries that allows patrons to check out materials at other Homecard libraries. Ilsley joined the consortium but only allowed patrons from other libraries to borrow materials that are normally eligible for interlibrary loan. Therefore, Homecare participants were somewhat limited in their borrowing privileges. For example they could not take out new books, DVDs, or park passes.

We recently added the Aspen layer to search results in the VOKAL library catalog system. Prior to this change, Homecard participants were unable to check out the materials listed above. But as a result of the change to Aspen, patrons from other Homecard libraries can now place holds on Ilsley materials from home including the items that were previously unavailable to them.

This puts the library in a difficult situation. The problem is that allowing borrowing through Homecard reduces income from our non-resident cards as so many local towns participate. We are the only library of our size in Homecard that is a larger hub within a group of small towns which means that more patrons borrow from Ilsley than is typical say, from libraries in Chittenden County.

One option is to either become a “full” Homecard library and risk the loss of revenue from non-resident patrons. A second option is to withdraw from the Homecard consortium all together. A third possible option is that we could theoretically change the VOKAL system to make it so that Homecard users can’t request materials to which they are not entitled. We might be able to limit it at the desk or step up our communication to tell patrons that they can’t request new items. However, this does not sound very community-minded.

The trustees do not want to withdraw from Homecard. It was seen as a benefit to the community. We support honoring these individual holds but continuing to pursue solutions with VOKAL. In the long run, this could impact our income from non-resident fees and our partnerships with other towns. We should continue to monitor this concern.

The trustees tabled the discussion until January. Dana will collect some data on which communities have Homecard and how prevalent the use of the card is at Ilsley.

DISCUSSION: BOARD RECRUITMENT

The Trustees discussed possible Middlebury town members who might make good future library Trustees. Joe spoke with a community member who might be interested if we could use the OWL in our meetings to include virtual members. The trustees are not sure if signatures will be required to appear on the ballot. (N.: confirmation after the meeting from the town clerk indicates that signatures will be required with a deadline of January 24th, 2022.)

DISCUSSION: COVID POLICIES

The Trustees revisited their discussion of masking and other policies in light of the increased COVID transmission rates in the area. Case counts are high and rising. Dana has received feedback from staff and patrons that they would like a mask mandate. A community member posted on Front Porch Forum that she has concerns that the library doesn’t require masks. Staff are now required to wear masks in public places. Dana and Joe responded to the FPF post. Meg asked if enforcement would be a challenge. Dana said that the benefits outweigh the risks even if it is challenging.

The town may change the requirements around masks at the December 14, 2021 selectboard meeting. The library is one of the most public-facing offices of the town. Trustees set policy for the library so we have the authority to make a mask mandate in this space.

Catherine moved that the trustees require masks be worn while in the building. Amy seconded. Five in favor, no objections. The motion passed.

BOARD COMMENTS AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

We will plan to meet at Sarah Partridge for our January meeting.

Joe noted that Dana offered testimony to the legislature and it is available on YouTube.

ADJOURNMENT

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

The next regularly scheduled meeting will take place on Monday, January 10, at 5 p.m. in the Sarah Partridge Library in East Middlebury.