

**ILSLEY PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES
REGULAR MEETING
SEPTEMBER 12, 2022
HELD ELECTRONICALLY VIA ZOOM**

Board decisions are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

Present

Board members: Joe McVeigh, President; Meg Baker, Secretary; Andy Hooper, Treasurer; Steve Gross, Amy Mincher
Library Director: Dana Hart
Public: None present
Minutes taken by: Vivian Ross

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

President Joe McVeigh called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm.

See Board Packet <Board Packet 9.12.2022.pdf> for agenda and accompanying documents.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the previous regular meeting were approved with two amendments: Ilsley Public Library had a booth at Addison County Fair & Field Days, not a tent, and Meg Baker is Secretary, not Amy Mincher.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Library Director Dana Hart directed the Board to her written report.

Joe asked the status of the Director's Evaluation Committee, which is composed of Amy Mincher and Meg Baker. Amy answered that the proceedings have been somewhat delayed, though the process will hopefully be wrapped up in time for the October Board meeting.

Joe then asked which alarm system Dana was referring to in the facilities portion of her Director's Report, and Dana clarified that it was the smoke alarm system. Joe wondered if sprinkler repair costs would be a part of the FY 24 budget. Dana answered that these costs would be absorbed by the Operating Budget, but she is optimistic about the situation after a conversation with the Fire Marshal, who informed her that not every safety system needed to be replaced at once, which had been a cause for financial concern.

In the context of future fundraising for the renovation/expansion project Dana reminded the Board that a decision had to be reached about who donors would write their checks to. Options included the following:

1. Donors write checks to the Friends of the Library, who would act as a fiscal agent;

2. Donors write checks to a new 501c3 created by the Library;
3. Donors write checks directly to the Town of Middlebury.

Dana described attending a Friends meeting to talk about potential collaboration on the capital campaign. She did her best to answer from the Friends. They requested that Dana reach out to the town legal counsel about questions as to how serving as a fiscal agent might affect their nonprofit status. The Friends were also concerned about liability insurance. Dana is looking into these concerns.

The Friends will discuss the possibility of becoming a fiscal agent for the capital campaign at their September meeting, then vote in October. The Library will move forward with the results of the vote. Amy Mincher reported that she is not be able to attend the September board meeting of the Friends..

Amy mentioned that John Barstow had attended the recent Friends meeting and had described his experience with being a fiscal agent for other non-profits through the Vermont Folklife Center.

Steve Gross asked what appeared to be causing the points of contention between the two organizations. Amy responded that she believed the cultures of the groups are somewhat responsible, as the Friends and the Library do not function in the same way, which may lead to mistrust in unfamiliar systems. Dana noted that many Friends are excited to work with the Library on this project, but that there have been historically some points where the Friends and the library Director have disagreed on certain practices and this may have led to some disaffection on the part of some.

Joe noted that one individual had raised a number of detailed concerns and suggested that the Friends may be raising issues that the Trustees have not thought of, such as liability insurance. He then suggested that the Friends might receive a portion of each donation to increase the numbers of their members, thereby creating a win-win situation.

Dana noted that the donor management software the Library would provide is a step in the right direction in terms of avoiding liability concerns. It has the potential to provide for greater accountability and has the potential to avoid errors that may be inadvertently introduced by the accounting methods currently in place.

Amy shifted the conversation to the passage in the Director's report mentioning the incident of belligerent behavior at the library. Dana said there has been an increase in patrons experiencing homelessness or other crises, and she expects an increase of such incidents in the future. Joe added that the Project 100 Team discovered a homeless encampment between the Library and the former Ben Franklin building. Dana said that local police are helping with that problem, occasionally patrolling the grounds at night.

PROJECT TEAM UPDATE

Joe reminded the Board of the four options that the Project Team had decided were most promising:

- A. Repair and renovate the current building without expanding.
- B. Repair and renovate the original 1924 building while demolishing the 1977 and 1988 additions and then expanding.
- C. Repair and renovate the current building then add an annex (e.g. the former Ben Franklin building) for increased space.
- D. Build a new library in the lower parking lot and find an alternate use for the current building.

In order to narrow the options down further, the Project Team will use a matrix to help evaluate how well each option meets the desired square footage program developed by Dana, Barbara Doyle-Wilch, and Judith Harris. Another step is to hire a conceptual estimator to give ballpark expense estimates for all four options. During this process the Project Team plans to engage the public to bring them up to speed and elicit feedback. Dana, Joe, and Meg plan to work with Jim Gish to create a presentation for an upcoming public meeting.

Amy described a visit she and several other Project Team members had made to the Manchester Community Library where they were given a tour by the facilities director. There Amy learned that going basic is the best course of action in terms of library interiors, as things often break and can be expensive to replace if they're high-end. Amy also discussed the abundance of outdoor space at the Manchester library, including a tent for summer programs.

Dana mentioned that the Team is thinking ahead to the next steps after the evaluation matrix and cost estimates. If the EDI site in the lower parking lot is found to be the best option, it has the potential to be a complex process which would require close collaboration with the town. For example, would the new building be just the library and a parking garage? Or might there be additional floors used for other purposes (e.g. apartments?) This might require partnership with a developer. Amy noted that an annex of the former Ben Franklin building might not be cost effective because the current state of that building would likely require it to be gutted and the interior entirely rebuilt.

Joe said that one question sometimes asked is whether the Project Team has considered putting the library in another part of town. He said that the Downtown Master Plan made it clear that invigorating the downtown is an important priority for the town. Moving the library out of the downtown areas would not be consistent with that vision. He invited the Board to attend the next Project Team meeting on Thursday, September 15th at 10:00am in the downstairs meeting room.

Steve suggested that the Library should highlight health and safety concerns as a reason to renovate or rebuild the library. This could reframe the renovation discussion.

FY 24 DRAFT BUDGET PROPOSAL PRESENTATION

Dana directed the Board to the budget spreadsheet attached to the Director's report.

Dana pointed out the highlights of the Operating Budget, which included adding \$15,000 for part-time administrative help with the capital campaign, a \$20-22,000 increase in funding for regular full-time employees and a \$15,000 increase for part-time employees, a 4% increase for collections spending to

combat inflation paired with a 1-2% increase in subsequent years, and moving \$13,000 from the regular budget line to the service contracts line to reflect keeping Mr. Mike's as the current primary cleaning service.

Joe asked when the part-time capital campaign assistant would be working, and whether this would be a one-time expense. Dana answered that she believed it was a one-time expense, and that the person would most likely work at a later point of the campaign, but it's hard to be sure.

Dana moved on to discussing the Capital Budget highlights, including the following: Final non-historic window replacements from the 1988 addition to the building as they are beyond repair; necessary carpet cleaning; and the need for funds to support the renovation/expansion project.

Joe asked if there was a plan for updating technology as it became obsolete. Dana replied that there is \$5,000 budgeted for this purpose, the Library looks into equipment replacement as individual items get older, and that the Library will get as much technology from Middlebury College as possible. Joe then asked if the Capital Budget carries over from year to year. Dana said yes, clarifying that there will be \$34,000 left over from the previous budget, but the Library will be requesting an additional \$163,000.

Dana moved forward to the Revenue Budget highlights. There were no significant changes in this portion of the budget, the Library will continue as it is going currently. Meg asked if the decrease in nonresident fees was a consequence of the pandemic, to which Dana said yes, but she expects to regain pre-pandemic fee levels soon.

The Board will vote on the FY 24 budget in October, though last minute changes will still be possible. In the meantime, Dana will continue working on the budget with the Town Manager.

VOTE TO APPROVE MISSION AND VISION STATEMENTS

Joe reminded the Board that no changes had been made to the vision and mission as a result of MCTV feedback, though a lasting question was the inclusion of "literacy."

The Board discussed possible final edits to the statements. Amy wondered if adding "our" to the mission statement between "meet" and "evolving" would add a sense of community, and Treasurer Andy Hooper disagreed. Meg reiterated that she liked "literacy" but couldn't find a place to put it. Joe asked about the discrepancy between "Ilsley Public Library system" in the first sentence and "library" in the last sentence, which he believed would likely raise concerns. Dana reminded the Board of the prior decision to keep "system."

The Board voted on Amy's suggestion of the inclusion of "our." There were two votes in favor and three opposed. "Our" was not added to the mission statement.

Dana discussed including the Sarah Partridge Library by name, after which the Board talked about the dilemma of being inclusive and wordy or "cold" and succinct.

Andy moved to accept the updated vision and mission statements as written in the July meeting, and Meg seconded the motion. Five members voted in favor of acceptance, none in opposition. The motion to accept the statements passed. The accepted statements read as follows:

Vision: We envision a welcoming and vibrant community that inspires individuals to pursue their passions, discover new ideas, connect with others, and engage with civic life.

Mission: The Ilsley Public Library system enriches lives and builds community connections by providing engaging and accessible programs, services, resources, and spaces that meet evolving community needs. Library staff invite everyone in to learn, create, and collaborate. The library is a safe and friendly environment where everyone belongs.

STRATEGIC PLANNING CONVERSATION

Joe summarized the strategic planning conclusion of the previous meeting, which was to go forward with a strategic planning process without specific plans for what it would look like. He hoped to incorporate ideas from the Board and staff about the direction the plan would go in.

Dana said that the Trustees have to decide how big they want the strategic planning process to be, and whether it should include a professional to facilitate the process. Andy noted that having a concrete plan could run into issues with physical aspects of the building project, and Steve said it is important to remain rooted in the alignment between the mission and vision statements as well as the building; this would require thoughtful reflection on how to evolve with the building using a nonlinear plan.

Joe asked what a nonlinear plan would look like, and Steve answered that it would include interacting with the staff and public, remaining grounded in connections to technology, library dynamics, and the town, and imagining many different scenarios. He added that a facilitator would be helpful in this process.

Joe pointed out the shift in conversation from the prior meeting, which was more focused on SMART goals. He highlighted the conceptual manner of the current conversation. Dana said that the first step in the strategic planning process was conceptual, the next more specific.

Joe asked if a smaller group could discuss this topic between Board meetings. He, Dana, and Steve volunteered to do so.

BOARD COMMENTS AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

The staff appreciation luncheon will take place on Tuesday, September 13th.

Meg reminded the Board that they needed to discuss policies in a subsequent meeting, as well as the director's annual evaluation. Andy and Meg will review the policies to make sure they're up to date with recommendations from the governance committee. From there they will be amended and voted on.

Both the Project 100 team and the Friends of the Library are invited to the luncheon, and the weather forecast points to thunderstorms. This leads to discussion of a potential plan B, e.g. bringing pizzas to the community meeting room. Amy said she had not been able to get in touch with Danielle from Flatbread, so Andy mentioned that he had an alternate way of contacting her.

Amy summarized that the main questions were whether they could have pizza inside or transport it somewhere else. Dana noted that if it would be too hard or expensive to transport the food, the staff

would survive getting wet. The Board decided to continue exploring their options and attempt to contact Danielle again.

Steve and Meg will be absent from the luncheon, so Joe, Andy, and Amy are in charge of drinks, desserts, and other needs. Andy offered to provide drinks.

ADJOURN

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

The next regularly scheduled meeting will take place on Monday, October 10th, at 5 p.m.