

**ILSLEY PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES
REGULAR MEETING
JANUARY 9, 2023
JESSICA SWIFT COMMUNITY MEETING ROOM
and via Zoom**

MINUTES

Board decisions are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

Present

Board members: Joe McVeigh, President; Andy Hooper, Treasurer; Steve Gross, Amy Mincher
Library Director: Dana Hart
Public: Claire Tebbs
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 1.9. 2023.pdf> for agenda and accompanying documents.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the previous regular meeting were approved.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Library Director Dana Hart directed the Board to her monthly report, then said she wanted to add that she had prepared a draft timeline up until her parental leave. Dana has a staff member in mind to cover her duties during her leave. She is also considering hiring an additional part-time staff member to process the many invoices that the library receives on a regular basis. A lot of the director's work has been delegated or deprioritized because of the time Dana needs to spend working with the Project 100 team, so performing the remaining director duties should not be too burdensome on staff. Other staff members have absorbed duties and they're managing them well. Dana hopes to work remotely the first week of April then go on leave until about the middle of June, then return and work part time on the issues relating to the Ilesley 100 Project.

Board Member Amy Mincher asked if the budget had been presented to the Select Board, and Dana answered that it had been presented and they didn't have many questions. Dana hasn't heard from Kathleen with any major changes to be made, which she believes she would have by now. She asked Treasurer Andy Hooper, a Selectboard member, if there could still be something coming, and he said it was possible, as Kathleen had said funds are still tight, though the library budget was in line with other departmental increases.

Amy asked for the number of service calls made to Plouffe's, which she planned to use in a social media post, which Dana will supply to her later. Dana added that Middlebury Roofers is going to come in and assess the roof, as there have been three significant leaks and broken slate tiles on the ground.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

On a motion by Steve Gross, seconded by Andy Hooper, the Board voted to enter Executive Session to discuss a personnel matter. Subsequently, the board reconvened in public session. No action was taken pertaining to the Executive Session.

RECRUITING NEW TRUSTEES

Joe reviewed the criteria for being a Board Member: They must be a resident of Middlebury and a registered voter, and they must collect a certain number of signatures and turn them in to the town clerk forty-five days in advance of the election, which is towards the end of January. Joe mentioned that signature sheets were allowed to be left at the circulation desk for patrons to sign them. Amy asked Claire Tebbs, a potential board candidate, if she had questions. She said yes, though she had already spoken with Secretary Meg Baker. Claire said she had experiences on different boards in town and she wanted to understand the relationships between them, and she knows that the building project makes this a unique time to join the Library Board.

Joe explained that the Selectboard hires the town manager, but the library is a branch of the town. Therefore everyone who works at IIsley also works for the town. The Trustees are in charge of hiring and supervising the Library Director. Dana added that she works with Kathleen, but reports to the Board. Joe continued, saying the Trustees are responsible for policy, not everyday library activities. The Selectboard appointed the IIsley 100 Project Team, which was created with two Library Trustees, two members of the Selectboard, a few public members, and library and town staff.. Amy says the Trustees may have a more general role in the building project once it gets going, maybe in fundraising and "friendraising." The Trustees will be cheerleaders for the library. One of the biggest tasks the library will face is moving services and materials to another facility during construction, and the Trustees will probably help with decisions about this.

Claire said she wanted to know if the Board had any questions or concerns for her, then mentioned the possibility of a conflict of interest, as she runs programs out of the library as a facilitator. Dana said she would send along the conflict of interest policy, but thought it would only be a problem if Claire was getting paid. Claire said this was fine. Claire then said she had spent a lot of time advocating for the vibrancy of downtown and was very opinionated about the necessity of having the library as the center of the town and wondered if that might cause issues with other Board Members. Amy said the rest of

the Board had reached a similar consensus about the library's place in the town. Dana said the question of a downtown location had been settled unless a benefactor were to offer a free piece of land, in which case the Board would be obligated to look into it, but many members of the public feel strongly that the library should remain downtown. Amy said that after looking at order of magnitude estimates, the Board got the impression that moving away from the downtown would not save money.

Steve said the building project is a big opportunity to "get it right." Amy said they needed people who would be positive about the project and who would be able to answer questions like "who's going to pay for this?" Andy mentioned that he had just checked the conflict of interest policy, and Claire could continue to be paid, she would just have to recuse herself when the pay of herself and others was being discussed.

PROJECT TEAM UPDATE

Joe handed out the report he and Dana would be presenting to the Selectboard on Tuesday, January 10th, with the two building options that have been eliminated and the two that are left. Dana added that there would be two public meetings to discuss the same options with an opportunity for public feedback. Amy asked if the public should know the Board was only presenting two options, and Dana said they were presenting all four but making sure people know early on which two are more feasible, just in case someone has a strong opinion about an eliminated option that they want to voice at the meeting.

Joe explained that the two eliminated options were Option A and Option C. Option A, renovating the existing building but not expanding it, was eliminated because it doesn't meet the space needs of the library. Option C, adding an annex (e.g. the Ben Franklin building) and renovating, was eliminated because it doesn't help carry out the mission and would be detrimental to library services by splitting up intergenerational services, while also costing more money in staff time, and creating the problem of maintaining two old buildings in addition to apartments. Also, entrances might be in the back of the buildings, which would reduce downtown engagement.

Joe said he and Dana would present the Project 100 team's findings to the Select Board, then go to the next meeting with a recommendation, and Dana mentioned an *Addison Independent* article coming up about the building project. Steve said that the beautiful libraries visited by the team and shown on social media show what is possible but also what Ilsley is currently missing, as exemplified by the small space for teen materials. Steve emphasized the importance of spaces for different age groups and kinds of people and the resources they need. Amy said she would work on social media posts about the different people who use the library.

Dana explained that the library currently consists of the original 1924 building, as well as additions from 1977 and 1988. It had been recommended by the previous Library Building Committee that both additions be demolished. There's some space nearby that could function as space for expansion, including a field of sorts. Dana said the 1977 and 1988 additions wouldn't necessarily have to be demolished, but that was just the best professional advice they had received. Joe mentioned that the 1924 building and its height created accessibility issues, which would need to be addressed for a new space. The upcoming in person Project 100 team meeting is Tuesday, January 17th, and the virtual

meeting is Friday, January 20th, at noon. There will also be feedback gathered at Eastview and the elementary school.

BRIDGE PLAN: FINALIZE PRIORITY AREAS

Joe reminded those present that the Board had brainstormed priority areas at the last meeting, and Dana brought them to staff for feedback. Dana said the highest ranked priority areas spoke for themselves because they were chosen by the staff, and smaller priority areas could be tools for moving forward with other ideas. The staff didn't like the inclusion of the capital project as a possible goal because they didn't have fundraising experience other than being enthusiastic advocates, but they were otherwise happy. The next step is to narrow the list to a smaller number of priority areas.

Andy asked for a refresher on what "connecting with others" meant, Dana said it meant helping people connect with each other through intergenerational gatherings and communal spaces. Amy said that "communication" could be used as an action step within all the priority areas. Joe mentioned that it might be useful to discuss what the capital campaign would look like (collecting money but also forming relationships) with the Select Board and staff. Dana said the capital campaign was too large a goal for the staff's goals. Joe asked how long the bridge plan would be in effect, Dana answered 3-5 years, there would have to be a real strategic plan after 5 years. Joe wondered how much time and energy should be put into a plan before the new library model has been decided, but Dana said there was a lot that had to be done now, like cleaning out the collections and supplies and beginning mental preparation for the staff.

Amy asked how the Sarah Partridge Library was being included in the bridge process, and Dana said all policies apply to Sarah Partridge because they are a branch. Joe mentioned that someone had suggested that the bridge plan could be an opportunity to teach more tech skills and increase awareness of the library's digital resources.

Joe confirmed that the deemphasized priority areas were assessing community needs, the capital campaign, creative approaches to library activities, improving digital discovery, and "learn and create." Joe asked if anyone thought they should be reconsidered. Andy said assessing community needs stood out to him, and Joe answered that this would be a good action step under "welcoming everyone in." Joe asked if the Board was comfortable endorsing the four priority areas the staff had chosen (these included staff wellbeing and professional development, continuity of service during construction, welcoming everyone in, and connecting with others). Other than small concerns about wording, the Board was in favor. Steve asked if there was the time and resources to make the priority areas a reality. Dana said Ilsley is a well-resourced library, the question is just which direction to take those resources in. Joe outlined the next steps of the bridge plan development: referring the four priority areas back to the staff and encouraging them to think about how they could be put into action, both with smaller priority areas and specific action steps.

BOARD COMMENTS AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Joe said he was hoping to take some time at the February meeting for the Board to self-assess their inner workings and levels of participation. Dana and the rest of the Board agreed.

Amy asked about the recently finished promotional posters, Dana said the posters would be put up in person and on social media. The locations of the hard copies are not set, but possibilities included the curvy windows in the town offices, businesses downtown (maybe a week before town meeting), the library itself, and any places the Board saw fit. Joe reminded the Board that the purpose of the posters was not to support the renovation or a potential bond vote but just to celebrate the library.

ADJOURN

President Joe McVeigh adjourned the meeting at 6:20 p.m.

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