

**ILSLEY PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES
REGULAR MEETING
APRIL 10, 2023
JESSICA SWIFT COMMUNITY MEETING ROOM
and via Zoom**

MINUTES

Board decisions are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

Present

Board members: Amy Mincher, President; Meg Baker, Secretary; Joe McVeigh, Treasurer;
Claire Tebbs
Library Director: Dana Hart (via Zoom), Royce McGrath
Public: Natasha Sen, Kurt Broderson
Minutes taken by: Vivian Ross

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

President Amy Mincher called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm.
See Board Packet <Board Packet 4.10.2023.pdf> for agenda and accompanying documents.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the previous regular meeting were accepted.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Member of the public Natasha Sen introduced herself, saying she was looking into becoming a member of the Board. She and her son are patrons of the library and she looks forward to seeking a more administrative role.

Director of MCTV Kurt Broderson introduced himself, outlining his previous and current roles in the library. He will be coming to Board meetings for the foreseeable future in order to keep communication with MCTV clear, as the usual liaison is unavailable.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Amy directed the Board to Operations Manager Royce McGrath's monthly report. Library Director Dana Hart explained that the finance review is usually separate from the monthly report, but was included this month as we introduce a new treasurer. Treasurer Joe McVeigh will present finances to the Board next month. Amy asked about the new lights installed at the library, and Royce said there had been patron complaints about darkness on the way to the community room, an issue solved by the new bright lights. Amy then asked about Staff Member Renee Ursitti's new patron survey. Royce answered that it was a method for collecting community feedback on library programs, available both on paper and via QR codes posted around the library. So far Renee has received good responses. Dana added that this survey was a direct result of Board encouragement to collect additional community feedback.

Joe asked Dana and Royce about their venture to the Vermont Library Association meeting. Royce said the biggest issue discussed was challenges to book collections, but there are resources and information available to assist libraries in managing challenges. However, challenge procedures could come up when the Board reviews their policies. Meg said the Governance Committee would like to review the resources from that workshop. Royce said the most important pieces of advice she learned were to stay calm, create a thoughtful form that someone couldn't just cut and paste, have a time limit, and policies that a book can't be challenged multiple times and that only community members can challenge books.

Kurt asked if Ilsley offered assistance to school libraries in the realm of collection challenges, as many smaller libraries have no support in this area. Meg answered that ACSD staff recently met about curriculum and library challenges to create policies and procedures. She hopes to look at the ACSD challenge policy when the Governance Committee looks at the Ilsley policy. Dana said Ilsley shares their policy whenever other libraries ask for help, as Ilsley's past experience with collection challenges has been largely positive. She also said that school libraries are very different from public ones, needing or receiving different forms of support. Joe pointed out that the challenge policy was available on the Ilsley website under "policy on request to reconsider materials."

Natasha asked if they had looked at exemplar policies at the Vermont Library Association meeting or just suggestions. Royce answered that exemplars were among the available resources. Dana added that the staff have been trained on how to react to patrons seeking to challenge a book, and they have all the resources handy.

In reference to the budget, Dana said overages would be in heating fuel and building repairs, but they will most likely be evened out with savings in other budget lines. She did not think there was a risk of dipping into the collection budget, and the overages were generally small enough to be of little concern. Meg asked about efforts to shrink the number of budget lines. Dana explained that desire was coming from the town treasurer's department, as all departments are being asked to tighten up their budgets. The library has many budget lines for taxpayer transparency, but it's a nuisance for Dana, Royce, and the town treasurer department to administer all the different lines. The current plan is to consolidate into four primary collection budget lines: adult, teen, juvenile, and youth, with digital and physical lines for each category. Joe added that there appeared to be some immediate possible consolidations (e.g. the various supply line items).

Joe asked about what category of expense roof leaks fall under, and how much they would be. Dana said someone was coming to get a quote, which will be requested as part of next year's capital budget. It would probably be too much to fall under the maintenance budget. Meg asked if they knew how long the roof was supposed to last as it was replaced not that long ago. Dana said there was work done on it eight or nine years ago, but the next step was to reach out to the roof company, inform them of the leaks, and ask what to do next. Dana doubted that there were still warranties on the roof.

PROJECT TEAM UPDATE

Joe updated the Board that the IIsley 100 Team had put out a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) at the beginning of March, and had received 6 different packets from firms (some of which were collaborative proposals) by March 27th. The last IIsley 100 Team meeting voted out two of the possibilities because they were too expensive and their areas of expertise were outside IIsley's area of need (e.g. prior experience with very large libraries or libraries in urban settings). All the remaining firms are local. The next step is to have a meeting (Thursday, April 13th, at 10am), at which a subcommittee will decide on the parameters of the design competition. Parameters would include a time limit, access to the library and its staff, and how contenders would be adjudicated. These parameters would hopefully be passed out at the end of April or beginning of May. Then the firms would have a few months to work on a design, which they would submit and present to the IIsley 100 Team, the Selectboard, and the public. This process would hopefully further narrow the contenders. Design submissions would be received in July, presenting the plans would take place in late July, with contracts hopefully signed in August.

Recently, Dana and Joe discussed the project with the Selectboard and faced some unexpected resistance to the planned \$10 million bond. Joe mentioned that the selectboard had mentioned Tax Increment Financing (TIF) as a possible source of funding, in which the EDI site would be developed and could pay for the renovation. However, this proposal would take longer and might necessitate delaying the renovation and expansion project while just fixing/replacing necessary items. Natasha thought the Board would have to contend with the possibility of continual price increases if there were construction delays. Meg noted that the IIsley 100 team had already discarded the strategy of renovating "what needed to be fixed" and she was surprised that it was back on the table when the costs of that proposal were nearly as high as the chosen option.

Board Member Claire Tebbs said there may be new members on the Selectboard who might not have an idea of the impact of the decision being made. Joe said a \$10 million bond would raise taxes 12%, which also assumes that the library could find \$5 million through public funding, grants, etc. Amy noted that this figure is a reach. Claire asked if there had been any thought given to implementing the project in phases, but Amy and Joe explained that this strategy was both more expensive and inconvenient than doing everything all at once. Dana said she had been asked to estimate the costs of staying in the building for a few more years while fundraising for the new building, and she will hopefully have estimates by the end of the summer. Replacing the roof, elevator, and boiler alone would be over \$1 million, which would need a bond vote anyway.

BRIDGE PLAN VOTE

Dana reminded the Board that 2-3 edits were suggested to the Bridge Plan at the last meeting, but no substantive or small changes had been put forward since then. Meg motioned to accept the Bridge Plan as amended. Joe seconded. Four members voted in favor, none opposed. The motion passed, and the Bridge Plan is now in effect.

MOU & TREATMENT OF GIFTS WITH FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY

Meg said the Governance Committee needed to look at the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Friends of the Library and Treatment of Gift policy, making sure all gifts will be treated as “pass throughs” for the capital campaign. Meg asked if there were any concerns the Governance Committee should consider before wordsmithing the policies. Amy said the goal was an addendum to the MOU, as this was the option recommended by Christine Graham because there had been changes in Friends leadership, causing forward momentum with the campaign. Dana suggested using the same language in the MOU and Treatment of Gifts policy. Amy summarized that Ilsley should be in charge of as many procedures as possible to ensure ease for the Friends, but the Friends would want oversight because the gifts were in their name.

Joe asked if the Friends’ accounting procedures were prepared for millions of dollars, to which Dana said they have new donor management software, and a new Friends member who has taken the role of helping Dana make sure all donations are processed correctly. Large gifts will also be generally early and spread out, so they will not slip through the cracks.

Amy asked if there was anything to be passed on to the Friends. Dana suggested informing them that Ilsley would reach out about adding an addendum to the MOU. Joe directed the Board to add a “money and financial instruments” section, in which the destination of gifts is determined by size. Meg said the Governance Committee might add to the policy that gifts specifically for the capital campaign would be handled differently.

EXTENDING SERVICE TO WEYBRIDGE

Dana explained that the next general goal in extending service would be for the Board to come up with an estimate of what to charge Weybridge residents for library use. Then that proposal would be approved by the town and Middlebury and Weybridge Selectboard to establish an MOU. Right now, the next step is to gather information so an estimate can be made over the summer. The current annual out of town costs are \$45 for an individual, \$70 for family, and 110 Weybridge adults have cards, as well as 59 youth through ACSD. Meg wondered about the number of Weybridge households, as families might only get one card per household. Claire said there are 358 households.

Joe and Dana agreed that it would be beneficial to devote time just to the numbers at a different meeting to see if a proposal that feels reasonable for both Middlebury and Weybridge can be created. Dana said she would want to be present for this meeting because it would be part of the formation of a precedent for other towns. The goal would be to have a number by the next Town Meeting, so a decision could be made in the summer and Selectboard discussions undertaken in the fall. The biggest concern is remaining reasonable on all sides, including Weybridge residents and Middlebury taxpayers. Dana said it was also important to remember that increased Weybridge patronage would contribute to a more vibrant downtown. Amy mentioned that retreat planning would come up soon and that this would be a good topic, and asked Dana when the best time to hold it would be. Dana replied late summer or early fall.

NEW TRUSTEE CANDIDATES

Amy recently talked to Barbara Doyle-Welch, who is willing to step in if needed. Her work with the Friends would soon be slowing down, but Joe reminded the Board that her workload for the IIsley 100 Team would soon be increasing. Amy told Natasha to let the Board know if she was interested in becoming a member, and Natasha said she was already interested. Meg asked if she had particular interests, but Natasha said she would be willing to take on whatever was needed. Amy said MCTV liaison position was open but could be hard because meetings took place at 9am, though Kurt had said he might be able to change the meeting times. She added that Kurt would also be speaking at the May Board meeting. Joe said the MCTV liaison was also a voting member of the MCTV board.

Joe moved that the Board recommend to the Selectboard that Natasha Sen fulfill the rest of the annual term of MCTV liaison. Meg seconded. Four voted in favor, none opposed. Amy will take the recommendation to the Selectboard's next meeting for approval.

Amy said that a review of the Trustees' bylaws will be on the agenda for the next meeting and recommended that the Board review them via the IIsley website. Dana reminded the Board to create a welcome binder for Natasha with resources she might need.

BOARD COMMENTS AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Joe asked if there had been any progress made on the 100th anniversary plans. Amy said this would be a topic of discussion in May, as Dana and Royce were currently sketching out a timeline. Joe reminded the Board to be aware of Memorial Day, happening on May 29th.

Joe reminded the board of the Friends' Annual Meeting on April 19th at 6pm at the library, which will include an author panel.

ADJOURN

President Amy Mincher adjourned the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

The next regularly scheduled meeting will take place on Monday, May 8th, at 5 p.m.