

**Ilseley Library Board of Trustees
Special Meeting**

**9:30 AM-4:00 PM, Saturday, April 27, 2019
654 East Munger St. Middlebury, VT**

DRAFT MINUTES

Present: Board Members: Catherine Nichols, Amy Mincher, Faith Gong, John Freidin, Joe McVeigh.
Library Director, Dana Hart. Listening Tours Chair, Barbara Doyle-Wilch.

Barbara Doyle-Wilch and Dana Hart facilitated a day of reflection and planning.

There were no comments from the public.

Review of Previous Year's Accomplishments and Challenges

Dana reported that all Board members had accomplished what we set out to do at last year's Board retreat: Tell Me! Tour, revised Bylaws, revised IPL policies, training with Lara Keenan, improved budget tracking & reporting, Director evaluation.

Fourteen candidates applied for new Adult Services and Circulation position, and three are being interviewed as final candidates.

Decision 1: Direction

Barbara led us in a discussion of three choices:

- A. Do nothing
- B. Move forward with current \$9.6 renovation plan
- C. Reconceptualize with mid-range budget

We clarified that these options are not exclusive of each other, or one may lead to another.

What do we need to know in order to select all or any of these options? Some thoughts:

- How many citizens are deeply engaged in a new library building?
- What is the impact if we do nothing?
- What do the majority of Middlebury residents want in a renovated/expanded library?
- What other major, private fundraising is happening in the next few years? What bonding/schoolboard projects are coming up?
- What are our top priorities for the building?
- What are the citizens' considered preferences? What would the community & staff be willing to give up, and what do they feel are essential?
- What would be the cost to every taxpayer? (Effect of reappraisal is part of this.)

- What variables will affect support?
 - Are we missing any grant funding or partnership opportunities?
 - How much “non-library” space do we want? What’s the capacity of the existing structure to accommodate this?
 - What other partners should we be brainstorming with?
 - What is the vision for Ilsley Library down the road? How do we present that to people? How important is it that the building become flexible?
 - Who are the stakeholders in this process? How do we reach out to and include input from people who don’t think of themselves as library users?
 - How can we better publicize our efforts?
 - How can we make programs/services easier to use and more widely used?
 - Explore cost issues/funding capabilities. How much is the \$9.6 million concept worth today (2 years later)?
 - Surrounding town involvement?
 - How much would the architects be willing to alter plans? How much would it cost for them to come up with a new plan?
- **If we could pull out 3-5 major pieces of information to investigate this summer, what would they be?
- **Who do we need to include in these projects?
- **What’s the timeline?

Slow Democracy Discussion

John discussed the processes outlined in the book *Slow Democracy*, and how they might apply to the Ilsley Library renovation.

Neutral question: “How can Ilsley become the best place to gather, learn, create, make friends, etc?”

We haven’t gathered a group that’s inclusive. We haven’t provided them with all the information and allowed them to deliberate. Our surveys have been stand-alone events, unconnected from each other.

We can solve this problem by getting information ourselves about the cost per taxpayer of a variety of bonds.

Decision-making takes time. Requires a skilled, neutral, paid facilitator. Depends upon building trust among participants. This process naturally develops broad support from participants and their friends and associates.

Essential elements:

1. Inclusiveness. Diverse participants.
2. Deliberation.

3. Empowerment. Make clear connection between recommendations and what will happen.

Questions:

1. How does the lack of a sense of urgency impact a “Slow Democracy” approach? Can we get people to participate if they don’t see this as an issue with strong opinions on either side?
2. How do we define diverse and how do we get a representative cross section?

Decision 1: Strategies for Information Gathering/Project Leaders and Timeframes

Major summer project threads:

*Community participation/slow democracy: What are the community’s priorities for a renovation/expansion? How do we hear from the community? How do we get a diverse group? What is the most appropriate process? (2-3 people brainstorm possibilities, along with a consultant)

--John, Barbara, Dana

*Funding: Look into upcoming projects in Middlebury, cost per taxpayer, impact of reappraisal, other funding sources. Consider models for outlying towns that participate in Ilisley.

--Catherine. John will continue working on cost per taxpayer.

*Architects: What does the current proposal cost now? What would it cost to reconceptualize?

– Catherine and Dana

*Coalition building: Reaching out to other organizations, the selectboard. Share our existing services and programs with the community.

--Amy and Joe

*Current building: Talk to Jen Murray about where we fit in the town plan? If we did nothing, what are the risks?

--Dana, working with John on what Building Committee already did. Faith interviews Dana on impact of doing nothing and writes it up

Assignment: Write a paragraph of what we’d propose to do for the next Library Board meeting. Also: Does your work depend on any other committee’s work?

Board Effectiveness

-Incorporate focused agenda, outside speakers, staff presentations

-Meeting time: 2 hours, from 5-7 PM or 5:30-7:30 PM on Mondays

-Board size: Do we move from 5-7 members?

Compromise: We could add one more board member, for two 3-year slots each election cycle.

Invite Shelburne Library board member to come talk about work on the building project.

-Mini-retreats once a quarter or every 6 months?

-Identified desire to strengthen our financial/accounting practices and policies. Consultant? Volunteer? Additional board members? Amy would like to meet with the Policy Committee to draft procedures. Joe suggested a short financial literacy document for Board members, then policies, then more detailed procedural document for the Treasurer. John suggested a policy that if a check needs to be written, it must be passed at a Board meeting and signed by two people.

Respectfully submitted,

Faith Gong, Secretary