

**ILSLEY PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES
SPECIAL MEETING
MONDAY, JANUARY 7 2019
654 East Munger St. Middlebury, VT**

MINUTES - DRAFT

Present:

Board members: Catherine Nichols, President, Amy Mincher, Treasurer; Faith Gong, Secretary; John Freidin, Alice Eckles
Library Director: Dana Hart
Public: Joe McVeigh, Recording Secretary

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting began shortly after 6:00 p.m.

PROPOSED RENOVATION PROJECT

The board met to discuss next steps in the proposed library renovation project. There was extensive and freewheeling discussion. The following a sample of some of the ideas shared during the meeting.

- **Alice** asked if it could be a renovation instead of an expansion.
- **John** noted the need to get children out of the basement.
- **Dana** said we don't have enough space. Could we build 2 floors on top of the existing 1988 expansion?
- **Joe** noted the need to begin developing relationships and start having conversations with members of the select board, residents, and potential donors.
- **John** agreed with the need to generate enthusiasm. He noted that at the time of the town offices building/recreation center bond, the college's offer of help came with a time limit, and people saw it as a bargain. He noted that the cost per square foot of the new municipal building is more than the cost per square foot of the proposed library expansion.
- Can we afford \$10 million? Is there sufficient interest and enthusiasm?
- **Joe** noted that bond vote of \$6.5 million for the new town offices and recreation center in 2014 passed by only a 53%-47% margin.
- **Faith** said we shouldn't separate the concept of enthusiasm and the cost of the building. We definitely need to improve communications. But we also need to be thinking about the budget. We will need to get the price tag down if we want to get support from Middlebury residents.

- **John** noted that a less substantial renovation costing \$4-\$5 million would not be sufficient to effect the changes needed as seen in the needs analysis.
- **Amy** asked If we promote the renovation now, how will the reception be different?
- **Amy** noted that if we are going to raise funds, we need some initial donations before we begin trying to convince people to give.
- **John** asked if we might be able to get some funding from the unspent money that the town is accruing from the [business fund? Cross-street bridge project?]
- **Catherine** expressed concern with empty store fronts down town.
- **John** suggested that one alternative is to take information from the Tell Me Tours and do as much as we can. He noted that he had visited the library in Vergennes where he felt warmly welcomed and would enjoy a similar feel to Ilsley.
- It was suggested that before we begin to have conversations with people, we should to decide if we are going forward with existing footprint or not.
- **Joe** suggested that it might be helpful to have more voices to help in that decision-making process.
- **John** indicated that had attempted to get some feedback from David Provost at the college. John had been successful in running ideas by Ken Perine (skeptical); and Nancy Malcolm (opposed. Too much money.)
- **John** suggested that we have three possible choices: 1) Go ahead with what we've got, 2) Try to do it for less, 3) Wait. If we are not moving ahead at this time, we can at least set a timeline. What are we doing during the pause?
- **Faith** said that she I still feels like the price tag is too much. Her economist husband would say that those who participated in the tell me tours were a self-selected group. She thinks there are a lot of issues in our town and community. There are people who are just drowning here: opiate crisis, foster system falling apart. She feel slike the price tag is problematic and that going all in for the biggest and best solution may not be realistic.
- **Dana** asked what sort of lower price tag would be palatable: \$7.8 million? \$5.6 million?
- **Amy** noted that the library is the most used public building in town.
- **Joe** noted that the one point on which the board had agreed was to begin to implement some of the suggestions from the Tell Me Tours.

The meeting concluded at 8:20 p.m.