

**ILSLEY PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES REGULAR MEETING
MONDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2019
ILSLEY LIBRARY, MIDDLEBURY**

MINUTES - DRAFT

Board decisions are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

Present:

Board members: Catherine Nichols, President; John Freidin; Faith Gong, Secretary; Amy Mincher, Treasurer; Joe McVeigh

Library Director: Dana Hart

Member of the Public: Barbara Clearbridge

CALL TO ORDER

See Board Packet for agendas and accompanying documents.

President Catherine Nichols called the meeting to order at 5:01 PM.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

DECISION: The Board approved the minutes of the regular meeting of September 3, 2019.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no comments from the public.

MCTV REPORT

MCTV Liaison Joe McVeigh recently attended the MCTV Board meeting (along with Dana.) There is a new member of the MCTV Board. There are ongoing negotiations with Comcast, and there is some concern about losing funding.

There was further discussion about why public television **looks** like public television, what sort of programming is broadcast, and whether anybody watches. MCTV is interested in becoming more of a resource to the community, and continuing to try and develop young peoples' facility with technology.

Amy Mincher wondered whether there was any way to collect data on how many people are watching. Joe responded that it is possible to see how many hits there are on You Tube, and the data isn't especially encouraging.

Dana added that the arbitration with Comcast, according to Kurt, is moving forward in a more positive way.

FRIENDS' REPORT

Amy Mincher reported that Lorrie Muller plans to take a leave of absence for back surgery following the next book sale and meeting. Ray Hudson and the rest of the Friends Board will fill in. The October book sale took in \$483.75 – lower than usual. The next book sale is November 2.

There was not a high turnout at the October Friends appreciation event at the Sheldon Museum. Dana and Amy sought input from the Friends Board about how to improve turnout next year, but received none. Amy suggested a tea or something in the afternoon. Interestingly, the Friends don't have a good sense of their membership. Regardless of the small turnout, it was a lovely event.

John hopes that the event will happen at Ilseley next year, no matter what.

REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF LIBRARY MATERIALS

Barbara Clearbridge was in attendance to discuss her request for reconsideration regarding the book *Once a Crooked Man*.

Faith commented that she thought the idea of rating books was interesting, but that she couldn't see how it was possible for the staff to review and rate every book that came in.

Barbara suggested that one member of the staff could read all new books that come in and note objectionable material.

Dana stated that it is against American Library Association policy to rate books, as it is considered prejudicial.

John added that the Motion Picture Association (which rates movies) is private, but the library is part of the government, and the government is prohibited from interfering with free speech or ideas. (A rating system at the library might be unconstitutional.) He is opposed to making qualitative decisions.

Barbara clarified that she's given up on the request to reconsider the book, since it's against library policy. Her request is now to put some sort of a warning or information about what the book contains.

Catherine would hate to sabotage anything that would violate what Dana feels is appropriate. Amy noted that flagging objectionable content is a "can of worms," in that there are many different subject areas that people would find offensive.

John moved that the Board of Trustees thank Barbara for her clear and gentle explanation of an issue that she finds very troubling, but moved that the library not take action on any of the options that Barbara listed in her request for reconsideration form.

FY '21 BUDGET DISCUSSION AND VOTE

Very little changed on the budget since our last discussion, other than the minimum wage increase.

Catherine asked for clarification of the "Platform Fees" line item. This represents fees paid for various online platforms that the library uses, which is being moved out of the Youth and Adult Services line items. This new line item does not represent any increase or decrease, just movement from line items.

Joe expressed curiosity about circulation on Kanopy and ebooks/audiobooks. Dana will bring those figures next month.

Revenue also has not changed since our last meeting.

Dana gave an update on the Capital Budget. She and Dan Werner have been working on maintaining the library's boiler, and to give the town ballpark cost estimates for replacing the library's heating and cooling system. Engineering Services of Vermont sent that report next week: To replace the library's heating/cooling with heat pumps only would cost \$600,000; to replace it with heat pumps and a pellet-fired or gas backup boiler would cost \$800,000. Heat pump technology has evolved so that they could conceivably heat the library without a backup boiler.

John asked whether the heat pumps would be transferrable to a different building. Dana responded that they are.

The current issue is to have Engineering Services work on more detailed planning over the next year; in order to install heat pumps in 2022, we'd have to budget for the design work now. Dana believes this should either come from a bond or from the Cross Street surplus. She had originally budgeted \$50,000 for a new boiler in 2021. Significant increases in the town's personnel costs and other projects are expected. Kathleen Ramsey asked for an estimate for the design work, because the \$50,000 in the budget seemed high to her. Dana got a quote for the design work, which would be \$15-20,000, plus another \$5000 if we were going to use Engineering Services to vet the bids that would then come in.

John supported moving as expeditiously as possible. Dana added that the fuel oil tank is over 30 years old, and although it's not leaking currently, it needs to be replaced in the next year or two; it's a real concern and liability.

The earliest the work could begin at Ilseley would be Spring 2021, as long as the work finished in July 2022.

John voiced a preference to be all heat pumps; Dana agreed. There are incentives for this project; Dan and Dana are talking to Efficiency Vermont to figure out what. This would have to go through the town's Energy Committee, Infrastructure Committee, and the the Selectboard.

Dana would like to amend the \$50,000 budget line for "Heating and Cooling" to \$27,000 to fund the design work.

John's concern is that it would be terrible if the town bonds for this, in terms of the library building project.

John noted that the town was warned that they would be "on the hook for a six figure repair."

Catherine is in favor of heat pumps to improve the library's carbon footprint. Amy noted that a place to store wood pellets would be an issue, which is another reason to avoid a pellet fired boiler. John added that wood is no longer considered a climate friendly option.

Joe asked for an update on whether the library planned to go fines-free or not. Dana would like to move in that direction, and feels it's currently on the back burner for further discussion outside the budget process.

The Board voted to approve the FY '21 budget, as amended.

Catherine commented that she's delighted to see Stephanie's desire to move back to 40 hours a week. Dana concurred.

QUARTERLY FINANCE REPORT

Dana reported that the library is where it should be. The bay window facing Main Street was painted recently after being put out to bid; the money came out of the maintenance budget.

Amy added that MCTV is paid all at once.

As per John's request, Dana has included the starting balance (as of July 1) of Library Trust Agency Accounts.

Amy reported that investments are even and stayed basically the same. We have had some expenses: the food and invitations for the Friends event. She's going to wait until January to write a check.

REPORT ON PRESERVATION TRUST RETREAT

Joe and Dana attended the Preservation Trust Retreat, organized by the Preservation Trust of Vermont. This year, there were about 3 libraries represented among the various organizations. The format is that each organization presents its issues, and it is discussed for 25 minutes.

Joe noted that we are ahead of many others in terms of accessibility. The need for regular maintenance was also important. Many grant-giving organizations were present, and it was interesting to get a picture of what's going on in that world. It was interesting, but not necessarily helpful in terms of moving our renovation forward. The scale of our project is so much larger than what anybody else was looking at.

Dana and Joe met some people (including Ron Wanamaker from the Shelburne Museum) who will discuss maintenance planning with us. The grants that were represented aren't necessarily applicable to us; we've already received a grant from the Preservation Trust for window estimates, and have applied for another to replace the windows. There is another potential grant for the heat pump project.

Joe was impressed by the ADA checklist for accessibility. It made him more aware.

UPDATE ON "PLANAPALOOZA"/DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN

Amy and Joe attended an event three weeks ago to kick off the downtown planning project, leading up to a larger event that will happen in November. 40-50 people attended. The town and planning commission have engaged a firm from Tennessee to facilitate the planning process. It will culminate in July 2020.

Attendees were broken up into tables with a map of the town, and had to list positive things about Middlebury, things that need improvement, and identify places where there are traffic issues. They were also encouraged to think about "big ideas." At the end, every group presented. The questions were general.

Amy reported that many people mentioned housing for lower income people, young people, and families. Burying all electrical wires. Making everything handicapped accessible. MCTV recorded the meeting and it can be watched on You Tube.

Joe's sense is that they're going to have focus groups and general discussions going forward. There will be an opening presentation on Thursday, November 7, a series of "Open Studios" at Bundle, a public "pin up and review" on Saturday, November 9, and a closing presentation on Monday, November 11 from 6-7:30 PM at the Town Hall Theater.

Joe spoke with Jen Murray (Middlebury Town Planner) and learned that the focus is on lower Weybridge Street and the Ilseley rear parking lot down by Otter Creek.

John shared that, based on his experience on the Economic Planning Commission, downtown Middlebury is not going to be a place that supplies the basic needs of the community. No retailer who's already out of town would move into town. At the moment, businesses are scattering. His sense is that we need to build a second, new downtown; this current downtown is suited to be "Ye Olde Middlebury." For John, the obvious place is down near Hannaford. He is skeptical of the Economic Development Initiative in the lower parking lot.

Joe encouraged members of the Board to attend one or more of the three open presentations. Related question: Should we reconsider our original meeting time on Monday, November 11, which would interfere with the closing presentation. The next meeting was moved to Wednesday, November 13 from 5:30-7.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Catherine asked about State Senator Ruth Hardy's desire to meet with library directors. She also asked why Ilseley is switching to Gmail from the Middlebury College system. Dana shared that it is difficult to have the college administering the library's email. Switching to Gmail will simplify things.

John stated that he would like to go over the Building Committee's past work with the entire board as we begin looking at the renovation project.

John also expressed desire to check on whether the library fire extinguishers are safe.

Faith asked about community feedback to the upcoming Drag Queen Story Hour. Dana has had 6 to 8 individuals reach out to her to express discomfort. All emails have been respectful, and she's replied to all of them in kind. She has explained that this is in direct response to a community request. She hasn't heard that anyone is planning to come in protest, or starting a petition. At this point she's not anticipating serious pushback. Amy is planning to attend, as will Dana. They are expecting a good turnout. Dana doesn't expect conflict, but is letting Chief Handley know that the event is happening.

BOARD COMMENTS AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Joe mentioned a large meeting at St. Stephen's Church (52 people attended) to discuss the issue of homelessness in our community. There are a handful of problematic people in this group (over 100 incidents have been attributed to 3 people.)

ADJOURNMENT

President Catherine Nichols declared the meeting adjourned at 7:01 PM.

NEXT REGULAR MEETING

Wednesday, November 13, 5:30 PM, Jessica Swift Community Room

Respectfully Submitted,
Faith Gong, Secretary