

**ILSLEY PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES
REGULAR MEETING
NOVEMBER 13, 2019
SMALL CONFERENCE ROOM, TOWN OF MIDDLEBURY MUNICIPAL BUILDING**

MINUTES – DRAFT

Board decisions are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

Present:

Board members: Catherine Nichols, President; Amy Mincher, Treasurer; John Freidin, Joe McVeigh.

Library Director: Dana Hart.

Public: Bob Albern

CALL TO ORDER

See Board Packet <Board Packet 11.13.2019.pdf> for agenda and accompanying documents.

President Catherine Nichols called the meeting to order at 5:37pm.

Catherine Nichols described her experience at the annual meeting of the Shelburne Museum of Vermont History. The guest speaker encouraged participants to make use of modern-day screens as an advantage and noted that the capacity of the arts and humanities to effect change is enormous.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

DECISION: The Board approved the minutes of the regular meeting of October 14, 2019 with an amendment to note that a vote was taken in favor of John Friedin’s motion about Barbara Clearbridge’s request to reconsider materials.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

FRIENDS’ REPORT

Friends President Lorrie Muller is taking a temporary leave of absence. Ray Hudson is in charge in the interim. Catherine reported on behalf of the Friends that the recent November book sale netted \$557.05 Chris and Tricia will be making requests for funding on Friday morning. The Friends would like to have more space to store books for the book sales and there is the ongoing issue of needing help moving books. A sustainable long-term solution is needed.

DOWNTOWN MASTER PLANNING COMMENTS AND REFLECTIONS

Several board members attended various meetings at the recent “Planapalooza” events, sponsored by the Planning Commission and described their experiences. There is a renewed interest in developing the parcel in Bakery Lane below the library. Dana attended a focus group with other cultural institutions,

others attended focus groups on sustainability and had personal conversations with members of the consulting firm engaged to draft a downtown master plan.

CONVERSATION ON FINE-FREE PROCESS

Dana shared a comprehensive report on the effects of eliminating fines at libraries and the board discussed the possibility. It appears from numerous studies that a fine system disproportionately affects low income households and can become a barrier to library use. Other libraries have found that items of the collection are more likely to be returned if there is no fine.

Dana noted a difference between fines and fees. Although we might do away with fines. If a patron lost a book they would still need to pay to replace it.

Dana presented an overview of the current situation at Ilsley.

7767 patron records

4558 patrons are current – must renew card annually – may check out materials

3209 patrons are expired – card has been expired for 5 years and have moved away or just haven't been back for a year.

Of 4558 current patrons, 2245 (49%) have no fines; 1812 (40%) have fines totaling less than \$5.00; and 501 (11%) have fines or fees greater than \$5.00

Of 3209 expired patrons, 1693 (53%) have no fines; 587 (18%) have fines totaling less than \$5.00; and 929 (29%) have fines or fees greater than \$5.00.

Joe noted his concern that if we do away with fines, it could be held against us if we then appeal to the town and individuals for funding for expansion/renovation.

John noted that eliminating fines would save money in staff time and that having books returned would save costs. He suggested checking on the experience of Milton, VT.

Getting books back would be cost-saving.

In outreach with parent-child center, staff there noted that fear of fines and damaged books prevents some of their clients from actively using the library.

NEW AD HOC COMMITTEE SUGGESTION – SERVING SURROUNDING TOWNS

The Bixby Library in Vergennes provides service to Ferrisburg, Panton, Waltham, and Addison

Dana would like Ilsley to offer services to Weybridge and Ripton. John will help Dana brainstorm about how to approach other towns and calculate potential costs and necessary fees.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Dana Hart directed board members to her written report and invited questions.

John noted that Middlebury is stodgy and has too many old people. Anything we can do to liven the place up is good! It was noted that our new hire in the adult circulation area has a lot of enthusiasm, which is appreciate. Amy attended the Word on the Street Poetry contest and found a nice range of ages in attendance.

Dana reported that a couple had their wedding photos taken in the library garden and shared a clipping from the newspaper: "The couple chose to take wedding photos in the small but beautiful garden behind the Ilsley Library, which was not only a lovely staging ground, but special to Lillian's heart, since her grandfather used to maintain the garden before he passed away." *Addison Independent* Oct 17, 2019 p. 19

John asked about reaching out to the Young Writer's Project

Ruth Hardy met with Dana and 2 other library directors along with Lara Keenan. Ruth shared a draft of a bill to establish a working group on the status of libraries in Vermont. Such a bill would likely result in a revision of the state standards for libraries.

ACSU has halted a potential plan to send digital access library cards home with each kindergartener. Apparently the school district is no longer comfortable about the idea of giving kindergarteners access to library resources. The project has been put on hold.

Dana is applying for a scholarship to attend the Ripple Conference, a research institute for public libraries. She may be able to obtain a 100% scholarship. She needs the trustees to write a letter for recommendation.

A friend of Dana's will nominate her for next year's session of the Vermont Leadership Institute at the Snelling Center and she will start looking into it. The institute operates on 2-3 day modules throughout the year, the equivalent of 20 days. The cost is \$8,000.

The board agreed on a second salary increase for the director according to the terms of her original contract. Any further increase would be proposed for the following fiscal year and the board would need to vote next spring/summer.

ENGINEERING SERVICES OF VERMONT REPORT

Dana reported on various possibilities to replace the library's heating/cooling systems. Option 1 went down to c. \$500,000 back up would be closer to \$900,000. Incentives of about 10,000. If done within next two years. Budgeted \$27,000 for serious study. Would need a bond or to tap into the local option tax. Dana talking about it with Kathleen and Dan Werner. Who/when is decision made? The soonest this could happen would be in the summer of 2021. It requires a couple of months to do the planning. Engineers Services of VT would create a detailed plan to be put out to bid. Then we could get an actual number to put in the budgeting process for FY 22 though work could begin in summer of 2021.

ADJOURNMENT

Treasurer Amy Mincher adjourned the meeting at 7:58p.m.

The next regularly scheduled meeting will take place on Monday, December 9th at 5:00 p.m. in the Jessica Swift Community Meeting Room.