

**ILSLEY PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES
REGULAR MEETING
NOVEMBER 9, 2020
ELECTRONIC MEETING VIA ZOOM PLATFORM**

MINUTES – DRAFT

Board decisions are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

Present

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

Library Director: Dana Hart

Public: Peggy Rush, Barbara Blodgett, Judith Irven, Marilyn Needham

Minutes taken by Saskia Gori-Montanelli.

CALL TO ORDER

President Joe McVeigh called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm.

See Board Packet <Board Packet 11.9.2020.pdf> for agenda and accompanying documents.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Catherine Nichols questioned the wording on a sentence on the first page of the previous minutes, concerning who had control over upholding the director’s decision in reference to removing books from the selection. She also asked if it would be possible to clarify what “cost of the mission driven decision” was referring to on page 2.

The minutes were accepted as amended.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

DISCUSSION OF GARDEN PROPOSAL WITH BARBARA BLODGETT

Barbara Blodgett, Judith Irven, and Marilyn Needham were welcomed by the board to discuss plans on behalf of the Garden Club, regarding a proposal to renovate the gardens in front of the Ilsley Library building.

Barbara explained that the Garden Club entertained applications every so often, and this would be the largest and most extensive application they have ever had. She noted that his project had not yet been approved by the Garden Club, and that plans were being discussed with the library board of trustees in order to move forward.

Barbara explained that the Garden Club was looking to spend about \$5,000 to renovate the Ilsley Library garden. Marilyn added that the \$5,000 was a placeholder. Because of Covid-19, the Garden Club had not been able to hold any fundraisers, so it was possible that going above \$5,000 wouldn't be financially feasible.

Barbara was confident that the Garden Club could gather several volunteers to help with planting.

Judith explained that the steep slope of the soil to the left of the steps makes it difficult for the plants to thrive. She suggested that if the steps were re-done, it might also be a good idea to extend the retaining wall in order to resolve this issue. She recommended that this long-term plan might work best if it were to be implemented in stages

Judith spoke about a shady section of land between the Ilsley Library building and the elm tree by the town offices. She wanted this factor to be taken into consideration when building this plan, because the shade wouldn't be good for a wide range of plants. She also recommended setting up signs by the garden that include information about the specific plants, in hopes that it would inspire people to plant flowers in their own yards. Judith appreciated the work that Anna Benson had done with the current garden and hoped that she would be a part of this process.

John Freidin was grateful for the Garden Club's offer to improve the aesthetic of the library gardens. However, in light of the fact that a substantial amount of construction might take place in this area, he wondered if the board should wait until the town's renovation plans were clearer.

Library Director Dana Hart had a similar concern: this area could get demolished or re-done in the near future. Nonetheless, the front garden needs work, and she wanted to make this a priority. Dana added that it was a good idea to go about this plan in stages.

Barbara mentioned that the Garden Club could help the board find an arborist, who could work on pruning the 2 Chinese Elm Trees that need maintaining. However the cost of that would not be a part of the \$5,000 projection.

Judith said that the steps and side-walls needed to be restored *before* the garden area was re-done. Assuming that the steps *were* re-done, construction workers could potentially trample the plants and get in the way of this process.

Dana voiced that the tentative plans that she had for the steps had to do with repatching, not re-doing them entirely. The process might not be as drastic as all that.

Andy Hooper stated that improving the front garden would be a huge boost for the library, as it would create an opportunity for a shaded seat, as well as allow people to experience the library from different angles. He appreciated the ideas and stated that the board would welcome the Garden Club's help.

Marilyn suggested that the budget be spread out, so that nobody had to commit to \$5,000 right away. Joe stated that the board didn't want to commit to such a project with this level of uncertainty, but that they did want to consider a more concrete intermediate plan.

Joe thanked Barbara, Marilyn, and Judith for attending the meeting.

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY REPORT

Amy Mincher spoke about a retreat for the Friends of the Library, which was facilitated by Barbara Doyle-Wilch. Dana, Catherine, and Amy attended this event, and concluded that while there was a lot of discussion, there did not appear to be much energy for considering new approaches on the part of the Friends.

The Friends plan to meet on November 10th. Amy and Dana will attend as will former Sarah Partridge librarian Mona Rodgers. Dana plans to ask them about future book sales, as well as touch base about what a Memorandum of Understanding between the library and the Friends might look like.

Barbara Doyle-Wilch thought that an infusion of new volunteers would be helpful, as two of their main book sale workers were no longer available to help. Dana noted that this might be a good time to reconceptualize the way the program is organized.

Dana added that the Friends of the Library does not wish to become a fundraising arm for the proposed renovation/expansion plan, so the board will have to look elsewhere to develop fundraising support.

Amy added that the library is not currently able to accept any book donations because there isn't anyone available to go through them. Some patrons find this frustrating.

Joe thanked Amy, Catherine, and Dana for attending the Friend's retreat.

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE REPORTS: REVIEW POLICIES

Children in the Library Policy

John presented the changes that were made to the Children in the Library Policy.

Under the Purpose section the word "guardian" was added.

Under the Statement of Policy a new sentence was added: "A person's right to use the library shall not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views."

A sentence was also added to the third paragraph: "However, children may also use their own or any of the library's public computers." The word "guardians" was also added to the next sentence.

Materials Selection Policy

John presented the changes that were made to the Materials Selection Policy.

Under “Statement of Policy”, a sentence was added: “Within the limits of space and budget, Ilsley Public Library shall provide books and other library materials in a variety of formats that include an abundance of resources representing the greatest possible diversity of genres, ideas, and expressions and a full range of viewpoints and experiences that meet the informational, educational, civic, and recreational needs of all people in the community the library serves.” This makes clear the responsibility of the library to have a wide selection of materials.

In the next paragraph, two sentences were added: “In addition, the library may enter into cooperative arrangements and other partnerships to share the work of locating and acquiring diverse materials. Interlibrary loan may complement but not substitute for the development of a diverse library collection.” John explained that the emphasis of this policy was that the library should have a genuinely diverse selection of materials.

The wording in the last paragraph of the policy was also changed: “Materials will not be excluded because of origin, age, background, or views of those contributing to their creation; offensive language; depictions or descriptions of violence or sexually explicit activity; controversial content or endorsement or disapproval by an individual or group. Materials will not be labeled prejudicially or be segregated from the rest of the collection as a means of predisposing patrons against them.”

John had a comment concerning the first sentence in the Materials Selection Policy, saying that the aspirational language might not be achievable. He mentioned that a patron might not agree that all groups were being represented within the selection.

Dana said that if a patron complained about lack of inclusivity of a certain group, these resources could be found through ILL. To the extent that the budget and space allows, specific materials would be purchased.

After the discussion at this meeting, the board will vote to approve these changes at the December meeting.

QUARTERLY FINANCE REPORT

Andy shared the quarterly finance report spreadsheet with the board and asked if anyone had any questions.

John suggested that “Quarter 1” should be changed to the *dates* that it covers on the budget spreadsheet. (July-September)

Joe clarified that the percentage figures represented was what was budgeted for the year as a whole. While it may appear that some of these percentages are relatively high, some items are purchased up front at the beginning of the fiscal year, such as library supplies or downloadable books.

Catherine had a question about what “circulation supplies” meant, and Dana clarified that it meant processing materials, such as plastic book covers, stickers, or barcodes.

Joe turned the conversation over to investments. He was curious about the change in Cash in Vanguard Federal Money Market Fund. At the close of the previous year, \$9,000 were put in, but by midway of the current year, there were \$15,369. He asked where this money came from. Andy clarified that this money came from the sale of an existing gift of stock.

Joe suggested that the board should take a closer look at their investments and consider whether they might want to find a place where they can get a better return.

John also suggested adding a column to show what each of the holdings are as a percentage of the total.

Andy added that it would be important to figure out a proper investment vehicle to deal with the funds that are currently earning minimal interest in a money market account.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Dana had been working with Tricia Allen and Chris Kirby with the plan for her maternity leave. The last time they were interim co-directors for a serious stretch of time, they were compensated for it at a rate of \$500 each per month. In a future meeting, the board will vote to make a formal decision on how Chris and Tricia should be compensated for the 4 months that Dana will be out.

Mike Racine had an injury and has been out on workers' compensation for a few weeks. Whether or not he is able to return depends on his injury and treatment plans. Dana discussed a plan with Kathleen Ramsay to have Eric, the handyman at the town offices help with library building maintenance while Mike is out.

Dana said that the town's infrastructure committee requested \$600,000 to repair the heating and cooling systems. After running the numbers, Town Manager Kathleen Ramsay decided to put this request out as a bond vote in the next Fiscal Year (FY 22). The town will vote on the bond in March of FY 22. If the bond passed in March, work would begin in the spring, with invoices coming due July 1. The bond would be paid off within 5 years.

Dana commented on the fact that there is no air movement in the Ilsley building. The building is large, which is helpful in terms of Covid-19 safety, but there isn't any air transfer to clean out what viral load could get in. Dana recently purchased an air purifier, which isn't enough for the entire building. However, it could at least slightly lower the risk of infection. Dana will be purchasing air purifiers for the Sarah Partridge building, which is smaller.

Dana wanted feedback about the Word on the Street poem in front of the library and asked if the board could take a look at it. The options would be to stick with the current design or tear out the section of concrete, re-pour it, and stamp it in.

CONTINUED: BOARD PRIORITIES FOR FY 21

Joe brought up the fact that the board hasn't had enough time for more robust conversations, and that it might be helpful to return to 2-hour meetings.

The board was not overly enthused. Amy was okay with this idea, but she wouldn't be available every Monday. Andy added that zoom meetings take up a large portion of his day, and that 90 minutes seemed adequate.

John suggested that the board prioritize certain subjects in order to get to everything that needed to be discussed. Increasing frequency of meeting and keeping them shorter was a possibility.

BOARD COMMENTS AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS (NEW OR OTHER BUSINESS)

There were no board comments.

ADJOURNMENT

President Joe McVeigh adjourned the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

The next regularly scheduled meeting will take place on December 7 at 5:00 p.m. via electronic meeting.