

**ILSLEY PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
REGULAR MEETING  
JANUARY 11, 2021  
ELECTRONIC MEETING VIA ZOOM PLATFORM**

Board decisions are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

Present

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

Library Staff: Dana Hart, Director; Tricia Allen, Youth Services Librarian; Chris Kirby, Adult Services Librarian

Public: Peggy Rush, Meg Baker, Barbara Blodgett, Judith Irvin, Marilyn Needham, Lily Snow

Minutes taken by Saskia Gori-Montanelli.

**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER**

Beginning with a formal notification of the steps taken to adhere to public meeting law while meeting online, President Joe McVeigh called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm. See Board Packet for agenda and accompanying documents.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of December 7, 2020 were approved without objection, with the correction of one typographical error.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Meg Baker indicated her intent to run for election to one of the open positions on the board at the March town meeting. She stated that she had completed the necessary paperwork with the Town Clerk for her name to appear on the ballot. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the legislature has temporarily removed the requirement for signatures from multiple eligible voters in order to appear on the slate.

**AFFIRMATION OF BOARD POSITIONS AND CLARIFICATION OF ANDY HOOPER'S LEGAL NAME**

In order to obtain the appropriate authorizations for treasurer Andy Hooper to have access to the accounts, the Vanguard company requires verification of his full legal name. When officers were elected in March 2020, the minutes reflected only shortened versions of board members' names.

Amy Mincher moved that the IIsley Public Library Board of Trustees reaffirm the election of board officers conducted on March 9, 2020 to include the full legal name of each officer as follows: Joseph Adams McVeigh, President; Timothy Andrew Hooper, Treasurer; Catherine Palmer Nichols , Secretary. Andy Hooper seconded this motion. Five in favor none opposed, the motion passed.

## **GARDEN PROPOSAL**

The board discussed the proposal from Barbara Blodgett to redesign the gardens in front of the library facing Main Street. Barbara presented a 3-phase proposal with a design by Judith Irvin. Marilyn Needham, Co-President of the Garden Club attended to indicate her support for the plan, which is dependent on receiving a grant from that organization.

Joe raised some questions about the proposal in a memo, which Barbara addressed. Barbara and Judith decided to split the proposal into 3 phases. The cost estimates are for phase 2. A rough estimate took into account design cost, shrubs, perennials, delivery, compost, and edging of the two main beds for a rough total of \$4,049. If a grant of \$5,000 is successfully obtained, this would leave about \$1,000 for labor and other considerations. The installation process would include soil preparation, seeding of grass, slope renovations, planting and dividing existing forsythias. These costs have not been estimated yet.

Joe wondered to what extent the garden club would support this grant. Marylin noted that the professionals taking care of the installation would add to the cost, and one of the major concerns was the maintenance. She also added that one garden club member was concerned about what might happen to the garden if the library goes through renovations that will ruin its progress.

The executive board of the Garden Club will meet to discuss and vote on the grant proposal when it is received.

John Freidin wondered if the \$4,049 cost covered all 3 phases, and Barbara's answer was that it did not cover the pruning of the Chinese elms, nor did it cover any of phase 3.

Lily Snow wondered if the size of the flower beds could be reduced to lower the burden on the public works gardener.

Library Director Dana Hart asked if the removal of one of the proposed beds would help with maintenance and cost, as she didn't want to implement a beautiful garden that could fall into disrepair without the proper care.

Lily stated that it will be helpful, but it wasn't clear what volume would be best for the gardener. Overall, less is easier to maintain. The gardens on the side and rear of the building can be simplified to make the overall project easier to maintain. There is flexibility, and the balance will come over time.

John Freidin said that he wanted to see plenty of flowers, trees, perennials, and color, but that it was too early to design the garden because it is not clear what renovations the 1988 addition will be going through. He stated that it's better to know what the building will look like when viewed from Main Street before making such detailed plans.

Judith noted that the perennials could be temporarily removed, stored, and re-installed if the library went through changes that would alter the garden. It would not be ideal but was certainly an option. Judith added that it would be difficult to move the magnolias, but that the perennials can be relocated easily.

Andy said that if the board waits until they know what the next iteration of the library will be, there will be no progress. He stated that this was a generous offer that will help the library to be more in keeping

with the town's recent improvements. Waiting until architecture and renovation projects are finished will prolong this project unnecessarily.

Catherine Nichols agreed, and expressed her appreciation for the work that Barbara, Marylin, and Judith have done to make this plan a reality. Marylin added that since the whole town will be renovating, now is the right time because the library will fit nicely with the rest of it. She will support the approval of the grant by the Garden Club.

Joe summarized that the main concern was the time it would take the town's gardeners to maintain the new design. He was in favor of the is project, as long as the board could be assured that it is not so ambitious that it cannot be maintained. The board cannot accept a gift that will result in unbudgeted expenditures down the road. Barbara and Judith will coordinate refinements on the design with Lily so that it wouldn't need extensive maintenance.

Barbara added that wholesale nurseries were taking orders already, and that she wanted to start the project as early as the beginning of April.

Catherine moved to accept Barbara's proposal with understanding that the funding comes from the garden club's grant. Andy seconded this motion.

John proposed an amendment that funding should include watering of the plants until that is no longer necessary. However Lily indicated that this would be part of regular maintenance and John withdrew his amendment.

The motion passed with 4 votes in favor (McVeigh, Hooper, Nichols, Mincher) in favor and 1 opposed (Friedin).

### **APPROVAL OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION POLICY and LIBRARY PROGRAMS AND SPACES POLICY**

At the previous board meeting on December 7, 2020, the Governance Committee (J. Friedin & A. Hooper) presented proposed revisions to two policies and explained the changes. After having the opportunity to consider the proposed revisions over a one-month period, the board voted as follows:

John Friedin moved to approve the amended policy on Professional Development and Education as outlined in the draft of the policy dated 12.1.2020. Catherine Nichols seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

John Friedin moved to approve the amended policy on Library Programming and Use of Meeting Spaces as outlined in the draft of the policy dated 12.1.2020. Andy Hooper seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

## **CONSIDERATION OF DISPLAYS IN LIBRARY POLICY and CONFIDENTIALITY OF PATRONS RECORDS POLICY**

The members of the Governance Committee (A. Hooper & J. Frieden) described the proposed revisions to two additional policies. Andy detailed the changes in the Review Displays in Library Policy and Confidentiality of Patrons Records Policy, with the plan to vote on these policies at the next scheduled meeting. There were not many substantial changes, apart from adding the rebuttal language to the Statement of Policy and adding ALA as one of the sources.

Tricia Allen and Chris Kirby said that these changes seemed in line with current practices, and they had no objections.

Chris, who takes care of bookings of lobby displays, brought up the question of whether the library wants to use the bulletin boards to advertise events that aren't relevant to location, such as events in Burlington. There have been individuals outside of the community who have been interested in displaying information that didn't pertain to Addison County, and this wasn't very relevant to local needs. John wondered how we would justify turning someone away.

Amy encouraged including wording that specifies what happens when artwork from the display is stolen. She knew of artwork being stolen in similar settings. Dana and Andy agreed that this sounded prudent.

Andy added that the Confidentiality of Patron Records Policy didn't have any significant changes, but that the ALA was added to the list of sources.

## **UPDATE ON LIBRARY FACILITIES PLANNING**

Joe discussed Library Facilities Planning, showing a timeline from November 2019 to August 2020. He reviewed the events from board members participation in the Downtown Master Plan process (November 2019) to the board's prioritization of facilities needs (October 2020.)

Joe and Dana have held a few informal meetings with people not previously involved to generate some new thinking about renovation and expansion planning. They spoke with Jim Gish (Town Liaison to Rail/Bridge Tunnel Project), Amey Ryan (President), and Karen Duguay (Director) Downtown Business Improvement District, Doug Anderson (Artistic Director) and Lisa Mitchell (Executive Director) Town Hall Theater, Stacey Rainey and Mary Cullaine, co-owners of Old Stone Mill and Community Barn Ventures.

Joe said it was exciting to discuss this process with people who haven't been a part of it before, in order to gather new perspectives. He and Dana received helpful advice from everyone. Jim Gish indicated that although the building may have problems, this isn't usually very compelling from the taxpayer/potential donor point of view. He encouraged thinking big and reaching out to donors in the Middlebury College community. Amey Ryan noted that she rarely uses the library, prompting Joe and Dana to think about the need for communication. Doug Anderson's main point was that people don't support buildings, but they support programs.

Dana added that Mary Cullaine suggested re-establishing the library's main goals clearly, such as to be more sustainable or accessible, and to then make a narrative out of those pillars.

Joe noted that they were in no way asking these individuals to make decisions but were simply seeking out additional ideas to stimulate our thinking as we seek to move ahead.

Joe said that thinking ahead, there were a few competing challenges. He would love to get this going soon, but everyone is still coming out from economic challenges of the summer. Meanwhile, Dana Hart is about to be on leave for an extended period of time. The board could use its spring retreat clarify the next steps but needs first to determine the process by which we will proceed.

Joe suggested that the board convene in 2 weeks to discuss how we will get this program moving again.

The board agreed to hold a special meeting will take place on Monday, February 1, from 5-6:30pm via the Zoom platform to discuss library facility needs.

### **QUARTERLY FINANCIAL REPORT**

The board had the opportunity to review the financial report for the first two quarters of the fiscal year. Dana noted that the library is on track to be under budget as far as expenses go. This was expected because some staff is still on furlough. Revenue is also lower, as anticipated.

Treasurer Andy Hooper and President Joe McVeigh have been reviewing the instruments in which the trustee-governed funds are currently invested. At the next meeting they intend to present a proposal to simplify the number of holdings and obtain a higher rate of return.

### **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Dana updated the board on the Director's Report, saying that she, Chris, and Tricia have been planning for Chris and Tricia to take over as Acting Co-Directors when Dana goes on her maternity leave which is expected to begin in late February. They were confident that they were in good shape.

Dana anticipates that she will be on leave full-time from March-June and return in a half-time capacity in July and August. As a result, the responsibility for making decisions about further reopening of the library will fall to Chris and Tricia.

Dana had hoped to return to indoor browsing in mid-January, but COVID-19 cases have been increasing rather than declining. Parameters have been established as to when to consider reopening in various stages. When the case per million goes below 800, we plan to return to permitting limited indoor browsing of new materials as was done in the fall. When the case count per million gets down to 400 or less, we hope to return to regular hours with full access to the collection, however, we will discourage patrons from using the library as a lounging space. The building would close twice a day in 30-minute increments in order to allow air to circulate. For this to happen, it is necessary to reach a temperature that allows the windows to be open all day.

Tricia and Chris feel comfortable with these plans.

**BOARD COMMENTS AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

Catherine will draft a letter of appreciation for Anna Benson's work.

Dana stated that long-time cataloger Jan Lyons has decided to retire, and her last day will be February 26th, 2021.

**ADJOURNMENT**

President Joe McVeigh adjourned the meeting at 6:45 p.m.

The next regularly scheduled meeting will take place on Monday, February 8 at 5:00 p.m. via electronic meeting.

The special meeting will take place on Monday, February 1 at 5:00 p.m. via electronic meeting.