

**ILSLEY PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES
REGULAR MEETING
JULY 12, 2021**

MINUTES – DRAFT

Board decisions are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

Present

Board members: Joe McVeigh, President; Catherine Nichols, Secretary; Andy Hooper, Treasurer;
Amy Mincher, Meg Baker
Library Staff: Dana Hart, Director
Recording Secretary: Saskia Gori-Montanelli

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

President Joe McVeigh called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm. See Board Packet for agenda and accompanying documents.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the regular meeting of June 14, 2021 and the minutes of the special meeting of June 21, 2021 were approved.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

VOTE ON MOU WITH FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY

President Joe McVeigh summarized the history of the proposed memorandum of understanding. Barbara Doyle Wilch facilitated a retreat for the board of the Friends of the Library in the fall of 2020 and encouraged them to create an MOU with the library. The Friends proposed an initial draft. Amy Mincher, Dana Hart, and Joe McVeigh returned it with proposed revisions. Amy and Joe met via Zoom with Friends President Lorrie Muller and Friends member Revell Allen review and discuss the MOU. The revisions were agreed upon in their current form.

Looking at the MOU, Meg Baker asked if there was anything listed in it that was not already in practice. Director Dana Hart said that everything was in practice already, but noted that the issue that seems to cause the most discussion is the amount of available space for the Friends to store books for their monthly book sale.

The Trustees voted to approve the MOU between the friends and Trustees: with 5 in favor, 0 opposed.

Joe noted that David Weinstock, who has facilitated poetry workshops at the Ilsley Public Library and has volunteered to help with public communications and possibly fundraising. David had raised the question of why the library does not regularly raise funds for the library as is done in other towns such as Vergennes and Manchester. Amy Mincher was curious as to how much other libraries who host fundraisers really raise from them.

Dana said that the library can accept donations which are administered by the town's accounts, but had been advised that the library shouldn't accept major gifts for capital projects. Dana said one of the reasons that the library doesn't host an annual fundraiser is because people would be confused about who they are giving money to—the Friends or the library. Dana acknowledged that the concept of an annual appeal is a good idea.

In terms of funding the renovation/expansion project Joe said that the Trustees have to be realistic about what could be raised through a fundraising appeal. He noted that the plan was to go beyond the idea of "fundraising" to look at "funding" the project through a variety of potential sources including fundraising, a bond vote, grants from different sources, and potential major donors. Meg thought involving the Development Office at the College would be a good idea. She wondered what the role of the Trustees was in the funding process and how much should be done by the Trustees as opposed to others. She wanted to make sure that the work of funding did not conflict with the work of the design team.

Andy Hooper said that there were 3 legs to this plan: design, community engagement, and funding. The funding aspect is difficult because it is a challenge to ask both ask people for money and to campaign in favor of a bond vote at the same time. Because the Trustees are public officials, they shouldn't "influence the way the public thinks" in the same way that school boards can inform but cannot advocate for future change.

QUARTERLY BUDGET REVIEW

Dana pointed out an error in the budget. It appeared that the "teen" section was underspent by 50%, but it actually used closer to 100% of its funds. Meg noticed that printing was over budget, and wondered why. Dana replied that she was working on a PR campaign to raise awareness of Vermont libraries, and the library paid for part of the design.

Meg wondered if there was any news from Middlebury College about work study students for the upcoming academic year, and Dana said she will find out soon.

Reporting on the Trustee-governed investment funds Andy reminded the board that we reduced the number of investments. He clarified that the 2 orange lines in the Google Sheet were 2 relatively new investment vehicles. The recently reorganized investments have done well in the current economic climate. There is about \$106,000 in the accounts. About \$40,000 of this is unrestricted, some of which might be used to help with planning for the renovation/expansion, although this would involve a loss of principle.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Dana Hart drew attention to the Director's Report in the Board Packet.

Amy said that she is offering a teen yoga program and that it is not listed in the Director's Report. Dana apologized for the error.

Andy added that \$7,000 per year for internet service seemed high. Dana said that the library needs a lot of internet because it is a vital space to the town, and that the money is for the equivalent level of service they get from the College right now.

Meg and Amy wondered if they could go to the College and ask them to help offset some of the numbers. Dana replied that the library has been getting free internet from the College for a long time and doesn't want to ask them for a cash gift just because they have helped in the past.

Because the College stopped paying for the library's internet because of security reasons, Joe wondered if anyone has gone to a College IT person and discussed how to patch up security. Andy said that unauthenticated people on unauthenticated networks are a problem, and that he doesn't think that solution will work.

Meg said there was a difference between telling the College that they want them to continue to provide for the library in an ongoing way, and telling them that it is going to be very difficult to get the library's budget though and if it would be possible for them to help offset the cost. Dana thought that Meg's point was compelling, but that it might put the College in an uncomfortable position.

The board discussed what they could do if they urgently needed a large chunk of money. Dana said that the town is not comfortable with them moving money from one budget line to another, but that they can overspend one as long as it is offset.

Joe asked what would happen if the elevator breaks before the building is fixed. Dana said that the library has budgeted for what it would cost to retro-fit that, but it were to fail tomorrow, she doesn't know what would happen. However, they would have to do something.

Dana said it was very exciting that the library can apply for American Rescue Plan funding. Facilities won't fit into the plan, but Dana, Chris Kirby, and Tricia Allen are coming up with a list of things they could spend the money on. For example, door counters, e-bikes, new toys, smart tables, an outdoor book drop, an indoor book drop, a sewing machine, etc.

FOLLOW UP DISCUSSION: SPECIAL BOARD MEETING

The Trustees reviewed the minutes of the June 21, 2021 meeting review the vision statement. Dana was asked to add "sustainability" to the statement, and there were a few options for how to do so. The 1st option inserts "sustainable" with the list of descriptors. The 2nd option ties flexibility and sustainability together as the two qualities that help enrich community member's lives into the future.

The Trustees preferred the 2nd option, which is, "The new Ilsley Public Library will be a welcoming, accessible, and safe community hub with the flexibility and sustainability to enrich community members; lives now and into the future".

Joe and Dana agreed that the wording makes it sound as if sustainability is the thing that enriches people's lives, which is not necessarily what they are trying to say.

The Trustees looked at the key themes:

Safe: All spaces prioritize the physical safety and health of staff and community members.

Accessible: All spaces, interior & exterior, allow for and support inclusive participation for all community members.

Flexible: All spaces are able to be repurposed to accommodate shifting programmatic, technological, workflow, & collections needs into the future.

Community hub: All spaces attract people of diverse demographics and promote comfortable gatherings for community members to meet, socialize, converse, learn, engage, collaborate, and help one another.

Welcoming: "Grounds and interior of the library will have welcoming aesthetics and atmosphere. This includes abundant natural light and plenty of light fixtures throughout. Entry spaces will be open and airy with staff members visible upon entry. There will be appropriate wayfinding signs so the patrons and visitors know where departments, bathrooms, and other amenities are located."

Andy said that in the "Flexible" element, they should take out the words "be repurposed to".

Dana added that the wording about a "diverse demographic" should be part of the "Welcoming" element. She also wanted to add a sentence about imparting a sense of belonging. Andy said that "Welcoming" and "Community Hub" overlap too much.

Joe pointed out that they are trying to impart emotional associations to the building, like a sense of belonging. Dana said that asking a design team to chase a feeling is not a bad thing. Joe agreed with this, but said that a sense of belonging is challenging to capture.

Dana suggested using the word "approachable" instead of "impart a sense of belonging". Joe wanted to shorten the list to "connect, collaborate, and learn" in the "Community Hub" element.

Possible statement ideas that the board came up with:

-Library spaces invite people of diverse demographics to create an atmosphere of belonging.

-Library spaces are aesthetically pleasing and invite people of diverse demographics to create an atmosphere of belonging.

-Light, open, airy spaces invite everyone in. Andy has no problem with everyone instead of diverse demographic.

-Entrances and light, open spaces invite everyone in and create a welcoming atmosphere.

-The new building will make efficient use of energy, water, and materials to have a minimal impact on human health and environment through excellence, design, construction, and maintenance.

Dana said that the Trustees should plan to circle back to this in the future.

ADJOURNMENT

President Joe McVeigh adjourned the meeting at 8:00 p.m.

The next regularly scheduled meeting will take place on Monday, August 9th at 6:30 p.m. in the Jessica Swift Community Meeting Room.

The next special meeting will take place on Monday, July 19th, at 6:30 p.m. in the Town Offices.