

ILSLEY PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES
REGULAR MEETING
NOVEMBER 13, 2023
JESSICA SWIFT COMMUNITY MEETING ROOM

MINUTES

Board decisions are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

Present

Board members: Amy Mincher, President; Joe McVeigh, Treasurer; Natasha Sen, Claire Tebbs.

Absent: Meg Baker, Secretary

Library Director: Dana Hart

Minutes taken by: Fiona Gong

Public (on ZOOM): Steve Gross, Former board member; Judith Holler; Staff member

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

President Amy Mincher called the meeting to order at 5:03 PM.

See Board Packet <Board Packet 11.13.2023.pdf> for agenda and accompanying documents.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the previous regular meeting of October 9, 2023 were accepted with some minor changes.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Judy Holler and Steve Gross were present (on zoom) but had no public comments.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Library Director Dana Hart said the part needed to fix the boiler has been identified. It is an actuator, which costs \$26,000. Dana has submitted a purchase order request to the town manager, Kathleen Ramsey, and expects it to be signed.

President Amy Mincher inquired about the state of the bathrooms, which had been unusable. Dana said the most obvious theory the library has is that there are some fast growing tree roots finding their way into the library's pipes. A vendor that the library is in contact with has a telescope camera that they can put down the pipes and take a closer look at what is going on. The pipes are currently working.

Dana said the library now has an electronic system for reporting and storing incidents that happen. This reporting system is in a form that feeds into a spreadsheet, so from now on when any incident happens at the library, relevant information will be entered into the form and all staff members will get an email alert about the incident. The form can be edited, and incidents can be marked as resolved or filed. There was a discussion about the unhoused population in downtown Middlebury, and one man who leaves his shopping cart with his belongings outside the library door while he is in the library. The board brainstormed ideas of how to deal with the situation, including asking Dana to reach out to the new community coalition that was formed to tackle the issue of the unhoused in Middlebury. Claire mentioned that the Vermont Health Department is having conversations about where people can store their belongings, and that Dana can reach out to them.

PROJECT TEAM UPDATE

Joe McVeigh, chair of the Ilsley 100 Project Team, presented a report about the renovation/expansion project that he and Dana plan to present to the Middlebury Selectboard on Tuesday night. Dana said that in the past weeks the project team has asked the architects to focus on reducing the project square footage, reducing the part of the project that goes into the parking area, and exploring the main street entrance. They have been working with the Vermont Department of Historic Preservation (DHP) on the design.

Dana highlighted the reasons why a two-story concept is preferred: Every floor in the library building has to be staffed. Currently, the library only has enough staff members to cover two floors. There are many programmatic benefits to having a two story structure, and it allows the library not to segregate every age by a floor. There are spaces on the first floor that need to be on the first floor so that the library can access them after hours. If the program is squeezed the project would have to go up to three floors, and the children's room would have to be on the third floor.

Joe discussed the main problems that the design team faces: bringing the front entrance *behind* the current main entrance and loss of parking in the back parking lot. The revised design pulls the entry back slightly behind the facade of the original 1924 building and adds screening to cover the building next door. The current thinking is to widen the middle landing on the front library steps, and create a curving, gradually widening sidewalk that curves from the town offices sidewalk, across the stair landing, and goes to the new front entryway, possibly with seating. To address the projected loss of parking, the design team has created a plan to reconfigure the lot so that we only lose one or two spaces. We can also gain more spaces by re-striping the lower lot. Claire advised that it might be helpful to get more opinions on the parking lot.

Joe said right now the schematic design process goes up through January. In December there will be more public meetings, focus group meetings, and opportunities for public feedback.

Dana talked about organizing the community outreach groups. The library wants to have meetings with the general public. The library needs to engage with seniors, families with young children, teens, people with disabilities, people who have English as a second language, and community partners. Dana is working on a list of partner organizations to work with to organize these focus groups. The idea for the community partners meeting is to have each community partner send one representative to look at plans. None of the meetings are scheduled yet, but they are thinking about how to get information out.

EXTENDING SERVICE TO WEYBRIDGE UPDATE

Dana said Megan Sutton of the Weybridge Selectboard met with Dana and Kathleen and discussed creating an agreement where the town of Weybridge would pay a set fee for all Weybridge residents to become Ilsley cardholders. The Weybridge Selectboard will discuss it at the next meeting and will recommend it as an annual cost to join the library. This will be presented to the Middlebury Selectboard tomorrow. Having Weybridge buy into Ilsley would allow Dana to position Ilsley as a regional resource when applying for grants and to funders. Natasha said that while it's nice to have a formula you can replicate with other towns, for reasons of equity, it is good to be flexible.

MIDDLEBURY DEI FINAL REPORT

The trustees discussed the final report from consultants addressing the issue of diversity, equity, and inclusion in the town of Middlebury. Their final report said that the library is the

number one municipal office where people of color, people with disabilities, and people of the LGBTQIA+ community felt most comfortable receiving services. Dana mentioned that while this is a relief, there is a lot of work still left for the library to do. She is applying for a disability modification grant, and the board talked about problems to do with the library's elevator, which is often out of commission. There was discussion about how to offer more multilingual programming and have sign language interpreters at events. Claire suggested basing different languages on what languages are spoken in the school district.

DIRECTOR EVALUATION COMMITTEE UPDATE

Claire, who is on the Director Evaluation Committee, started by explaining the process of evaluating the director, where Dana does a self-eval, which has been reviewed, and provided feedback on. In summary, Dana is doing an amazing job as director, and everyone is very appreciative, recognizing that Dana is going above and beyond. Dana added that she is embarking on a 360 review process, which will be done next year, and the following year the whole staff will get 360 reviews. Claire also added that Dana is continuing professional development, and is applying to teach a J-Term course. Natasha moved to go into executive session to discuss a personnel matter. Public viewers did not see or hear the executive session. Dana left the meeting. Fiona left the meeting

EXECUTIVE SESSION (PERSONNEL)

Amy gave a brief summary of the executive session, saying that the board approved a 2% cost of living raise for Dana. Amy will contact Kathleen Ramsey to move forward with the raise.

BOARD COMMENTS AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

The board discussed the public relations campaign that was conducted last year. Joe asked thoughts about reviving it. Amy said she met with the Friends and suggested putting the PR posters up in the National Bank of Middlebury windows on Main Street.

Amy also said she met with Renee, Barbara, and Revell to talk about 100th Anniversary ideas. Dana said the library is doing a meet and greet with radio host Bruce Zeman and his new dog next week to celebrate the 100th anniversary. Amy emphasized that the 100th anniversary events should just fun, they should not be fundraisers. They discussed an idea to conduct a community scavenger hunt with Ilesley history. Claire mentioned a team of college students that are working with Ilesley on a quest project with Renee, and one of the quest themes is a history theme. The project is housed online within the library website. The college students have come up with two or three quests that they've tested. Amy also mentioned that a dream for next summer is to do a 1920s party at the Middlebury Inn as a fundraiser, maybe in September.

ADJOURN

President Amy Mincher adjourned the meeting at 6:34 PM.

The next regularly scheduled meeting will take place on Monday, December 11th, at 5 p.m.