

ILSLEY PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES
REGULAR MEETING
OCTOBER 9, 2023
ZOOM -- ONLINE ONLY

MINUTES

Board decisions are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

Present

Board members: Amy Mincher, President; Joe McVeigh, Treasurer; Meg Baker, Secretary;
Natasha Sen, Claire Tebbs

Library Director (Acting): Royce McGrath

Library Director: Dana Hart

Minutes taken by: Fiona Gong

Public: Steve Gross; Former Board member

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

President Amy Mincher called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm.

See Board Packet <Board Packet 10.9.2023.pdf> for agenda and accompanying documents.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the previous regular meeting were accepted. Board member Joe McVeigh asked if there had been any forward motion with the Weybridge discussion with the selectboard. Dana Hart answered that the selectboard has reviewed it, discussed it, and the next step is for Kathleen to reach out to the chair of the Weybridge selectboard and to see if they'd like to discuss it. Once they have a meeting date Kathleen will let Dana know. Dana reminded everyone that the Trustees' recommendation for a price to propose to Weybridge was that they go with the high end number first and the low end number second. She supplied the Selectboard with the two numbers the Trustees had put forward.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Acting Director Royce McGrath said all roof repairs on the library have been finished, and now the library is only waiting for electricity to be turned back on which should happen any day.

Royce said the library has also submitted reports of damage to the insurance company and if money is received then the library can go forward with more roof repairs.

Former board member Steven Jay Gross joined the meeting.

Royce also said the plumbing system got backed up, sewage was coming out of the downstairs toilets into the custodian closet and community meeting room. Mr. Mike's responded right away and were able to reopen all bathrooms by 11 am the next morning.

Last week architects and engineers came to do a tour of the library. One of the engineers noted the septic system is quite weak, and it would be very easy to fix when they renovate the building.

Lately the library has been dealing with a host of issues, mainly with one person who the police helped the library issue a no trespass report against, and can no longer come into the library. The police recommended calling about people sleeping on the library property. The library has called the police twice so far, and the police have been coming by the library every morning to have a more visible presence.

Claire said there is a Selectboard meeting about the unhoused population at the Selectboard tomorrow, and asked if the library is part of that discussion. Royce said it is of interest to the library, but they are not part of the conversation tomorrow as it is mostly for downtown businesses. In the opinion of the police Chief, things are safe in the community, and Royce said that the library has support when it needs it.

Royce said the staff has been increasingly stressed out in the past month, and the library is looking to train staff to help people dealing with crises.

Meg asked whether the Rules of Conduct need to be revised, and Royce answered the policy has been helpful as she was able to use it to tell the police what was happening and point out what was wrong. Royce also said it would be nice to have guidelines for no trespass orders, as the last two have been against people for a year, and the library wants to be fair to everyone.

Meg said no trespass orders are typically issued for one year as the default, and Natasha agreed and said you can talk to the police to shorten it. If there's a repeated violation, it could become a ban. Meg said WomenSafe is incredibly helpful with explaining the legal pieces and what options are, and they might also be able to answer questions about no trespass orders with the library. Joe thanked Royce and the staff for dealing with a stressful situation, and congratulated Ilesley Public Library for being featured in the Boston Globe.

Dana said October 30 she'll be back in the building full time as director and thanked Royce who has been acting as library director.

TRUSTEES' FINANCE REPORT

Joe gave a report on the library finances. There are some trust agency accounts with nothing in them. Dana said each year the library applies for a courier grant and they take \$513 out of that account so it goes back to 0. Right now it is 0 because the library has not yet gotten that grant.

Meg noticed printing costs are very high and last year at this time they were also very high. Dana said we've been printing a lot this year for the renovation project, and more, and there is a lot of printing yet to come. Meg suggested maybe the library should increase that line item for future years.

Joe said the expense line listed for the capital campaign account has about \$164K in it. Part of those funds has been in that account for a while, and additional money was added to that budget line in this fiscal year for the schematic design of the renovation expansion project. So although the expense line appears to be for the capital campaign, it in fact includes expenses for schematic design for the renovation. The library has more or less broken even for the year in terms of investments, and had to pay some of it out because of restricted funds.

Joe said that of the Trustee's two restricted funds, each produces about \$1,000 a year. The Treasurer of the Trustees is supposed to write a check to disburse the investment income of the restricted funds in January of the following year, but this has not happened in a couple of years.

Joe has recently made the distributions and will be getting it back on track. The Trustees have taken about \$4,000 out of their holdings and disbursed it to the library.

Amy noted the restricted funds are designated for a specific purpose, and Joe agreed, saying of the two restricted funds the library has, they are supposed to be used to purchase items dealing with American history or literature. The upcoming capital campaign is not likely to generate funds for trustees, but the money is not used very often.

Amy mentioned that the Financial report was supposed to be done at the Trustee's September meeting, and Joe said it actually works better to do the Financial report every three months after the quarter has closed.

2025 OPERATING BUDGET

Meg Baker made a motion to accept the budget as presented by Dana on September 11, 2023. Claire Tebbs seconded the motion. The Trustees voted unanimously to approve the FY 2025 Operating Budget.

Dana mentioned that the publisher of the Addison Independent reached out to the library with an idea for publicity and funding by having Ilsley Library be the beneficiary of the annual Maple Run. The Trustees decided to wait to do this until next year when they are out of the silent phase of the renovation project. Dana will get back in touch with Angelo Lynn and express appreciation but get it in the calendar for next year instead.

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE: POLICY REVIEW

Addendum to MOU

Dana said that the Friends of Ilsley Public Library have seen the MOU and are in general agreement and have sent it to the town's lawyer to review. Meg said that the Friends have concerns about the use of the word fiscal agent and would rather have it say conduit. The Friends also want it to be clear that there will be a separate account for capital campaign contributions. Meg explained the difference between fiscal agents vs. fiscal sponsors is that you can be a fiscal agent and not have any decision-making power. If you are a fiscal sponsor you get to control how the money is spent. The Trustees are asking the Friends to serve as a passthrough fiscal agent. Dana said the Friends will essentially be doing what they are already doing just on a bigger scale, they just want a short addendum to say the money they will be receiving for the capital campaign is different from the money they get regularly.

Joe said the reason for having people make donations for the capital campaign through the Friends is that people are annually writing checks to the Town of Middlebury to pay their taxes, and the Trustees didn't feel that people would want to make the donations out to the town, whereas the Friends of Ilsley Public Library are a separate organization.

Meg suggested changing the wording of the MOU to "the Friends of the Ilsley Public Library will accept donations to the capital campaign" and Dana agreed.

The Trustees approved the new language, and agreed to pass it on to the attorney as the final draft. Amy also noted the Friends have a meeting on Thursday and she can take the Addendum of the MOU to the Friends then.

The MOU will come back in November/December to the Trustees.

Treatment of Gifts

The Treatment of Gifts policy refers to how the library accepts gifts. In the policy the committee has clarified where it means library director and where it means other directors. In the Money and Financial Instruments section the governance committee made an adjustment about how the library will accept money to the capital campaign. Gifts for the capital campaign should be transferred by the Friends to the Town of Middlebury. Because of the change to the Addendum to the MOU, a similar change should be made in the Treatment of Gifts policy.

In the Treatment of Gifts policy it had previously said that if the amount of the gift was \$1,000 and not earmarked for a specific purpose it would be given to the Ilesley Public Library Board Treasurer. The Governance committee recommends changing the amount to \$3,000. The reason for this change is that \$1,000 seemed very low and the Governance Committee didn't want to burden the library treasurer with a small amount.

Joe said the total amount of unrestricted funds at the Trustees disposal is \$35,000. \$3,000 represents 8% of that which seems like a lot of money not to have, whereas \$1,000 doesn't seem like a small amount. Joe said he is in favor of not changing the policy.

Dana said the reason she requested the amount to be higher than \$1,000 is if the library gets a gift for \$1500 the library could really use that. If the amount is just a little over \$1,000 she would love to have it for the library instead of having it go to the Trustees and then requesting it back for library purposes. If there was \$1,000 in the unrestricted account right now the library could do a lot with it, and she would rather the money be used right away.

Amy said the Trustees don't have a lot of reason to use those funds in the account and that what the library could use it for would make more sense.

Dana said for the gifts to be passed on to the Trustees there is not a process by which she can request money from the Trustees and then the money can't be used for library programs.

The Trustees agreed that the Governance Committee can make the decision on whether or not to change the number. The Trustees will vote on it at their next meeting.

Responsibility for Children in the Library

(formally called Children in the Library policy)

Amy asked what's acceptable for computer usage in the library? Meg answered that the Computer Use in the Library policy has things about not disturbing other patrons. Dana said adult computers are available with no filter, but whatever is viewed in the youth department has to be acceptable for all viewers. If someone is viewing something in the youth department not acceptable for all viewers, they'll be redirected upstairs. Claire said she was concerned about the things kids can access on library computers. Meg said the reason for this is the First Amendment and that the library is a safe space. There is a section about how parents and guardians have full responsibility to oversee and monitor kids. Computer usage is completely free access to everything. Claire said we should make that more publicly known the fact that on all computers kids have free access to everything. Natasha proposed putting up a sign near the computers that informs parents of this.

Dana said that the filters that do exist for computers are not effective. It would essentially be censoring access to the internet and it's tricky to categorize the internet. Unless there's a really restrictive filter, things will get through. Meg said that in the policy children will be redirected out of the youth room if they are accessing material that is inappropriate for all ages.

Amy said if anyone has comments on edits to this policy they can email them to Natasha or Meg and they can decide what to bring to a vote for the next meeting.

The Conversation on the Materials Selection Policy and Request to Reconsider Materials will be tabled and reviewed first at the next board meeting.

ILSLEY 100 PROJECT DISCUSSION/UPDATES

Joe said the contract between the select board and the team of ReArch is being negotiated. They came to the agreement that they would charge \$155,000 for two thirds of the schematic design. The contract was signed a week ago today. Last Wednesday key members of the architect firm came to the library to scope things out. On Friday the architect firm met with the Vermont Department of Historic Preservation. Decisions need to be made about the original building and the nail salon/travel agency, which are also covered by the Vermont Department of Historic Preservation. The plan is to have a kickoff meeting with the Ilesley 100 Team, and the Trustees in two weeks. A library expert from Colorado will be brought in. This meeting will be on the 26 of October at 10-11:30 or 12:30 -2.

Joe said the other thing is the fundraising feasibility study. Identified a number of people to be spoken to by fundraising consultants, who have been talking to them about the plan, how much they might give. From these discussions they'll come back with a report in late November about how much they think the local community is ready to contribute.

BOARD COMMENTS & UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Amy said an event the library had the other week was great, and a template for how to do future events. Amy said maybe the library can partner with the Marquis and show library movies.

Meg will put the director's evaluation on the agenda for next month. Claire thanked Natasha and Meg for working on the policies.

ADJOURN

President Amy Mincher adjourned the meeting at 6:36pm.

The next regularly scheduled meeting will take place on Monday, November 13th, at 5 p.m.