

ILSLEY PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
REGULAR MEETING  
December 11, 2023  
JESSICA SWIFT COMMUNITY MEETING ROOM

MINUTES

Board decisions are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

Present

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

Absent: Claire Tebbs

Library Director: Dana Hart

Minutes taken by: Fiona Gong

Public: Peggy Rush, Steve Gross

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

President Amy Mincher called the meeting to order at 5:02 PM.

See Board Packet <Board Packet 12.11.2023.pdf> for agenda and accompanying documents.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the previous regular meeting of November 13, 2023 were accepted with one minor change.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Peggy Rush thanked the board of trustees for all that they are doing.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Library Director Dana Hart said that the Libraries open house on Saturday went very well and the tone from the people who attended was positive. She got 20-25 comment cards which she has entered into a database, which will be pulled together for the Project Team. Dana has been doing many open houses with different members of the community, which will wrap up the phase of Public Engagement. Dana also said that Judy Holler is retiring at the end of December, but will stay on library staff as a substitute.

President Amy Mincher asked Dana how the Teen Advisory group reacted when Dana held an open house with them about plans to renovate the library. Dana replied that she was surprised at how strongly attached some of the teens are to the current building, and there was anxiety initially, but as the conversation continued they reacted with more excitement. There was not a lot of relevant feedback, but feedback to keep in mind as the library gets further along with the project. Amy noted that the library should be thinking about making furniture and colors of the rooms in the new library flexible for all ages.

Secretary Meg Baker asked about the problems with the pipes and Dana said that the problems with the pipes will be addressed as part of the facilities project. Dana said of the comment cards received that the feedback is generally positive. There were more people voicing concern about the possible outdoor programming space than any other space, asking if it is essential. The benefits of having an outdoor programming space is that it is cheaper than an indoor space, it will be protected by walls on two sides, and southern facing. Most people at the open houses have been closer to retirement age.

## PROJECT TEAM UPDATE

Dana said that the Project Team is wrapping up design for this part of the project. They are done figuring out the building envelope and major adjacencies. Next week or so the architects will wrap up that phase and do no more designing until after the bond vote passes. At the next meeting of the project team they will give a project cost estimate.

Treasurer Joe McVeigh said should the cost estimates come in higher than where we are, the library will need to decide whether to save costs by reducing things or finding more money. Dana mentioned she will send out an executive summary of the fundraising consultant. The library will launch a capital campaign in January with a \$4 million goal, which includes potential institutional gifts. CPG Enterprises is confident that there is \$3 million in private individual giving, and institutional giving is the only thing that's hard to estimate. The estimate does not include grant funding.

Dana has identified \$1 million in grant funding that the library is eligible for. In January the Department of Libraries will be releasing an application for a grant of \$1 million or more, which Dana will be applying for. Dana also mentioned that today the heat in the library did not come on because of the boiler not working, and said that the library had 58 service calls in 2023 at least 30 that would be for the boiler over the course of the winter. Dana has a draft of the annual report which does include facilities challenges, and it was a tough year for the library building. Natasha Sen said it will be important to highlight the number of service calls the library made over the year, as the building is falling apart and it is important for the public and the selectboard to know that. Meg added that it is important for people to know what the issues with the current building are that aren't clearly visible.

Joe said the next step is resolving the financial piece, getting the initial cost estimate, and seeing how much the Middlebury Selectboard is willing to bond for. The Library is still shooting for May to do the bond vote. Dana said she thinks if the library can cover a third of the cost then the town will be comfortable bonding for the other two thirds.

President Amy Mincher asked everyone to think about what is the role of the Board of Trustees, which has been separate from the Ilsley 100 Team in terms of how involved it has been with the building project. How does the board foresee participation in the project going forward? Meg said Ilsley 100 will continue to need spearheading, and it will be important to make sure the Board of Trustees has some kind of communication set up between Ilsley 100 and the Project Team. She also said she feels the Board of Trustees needs someone who is directly involved on the Ilsley 100 team to be on the Board of Trustees. Joe said that the role of the Ilsley 100 Group has changed, and going forward will be less involved in design and more involved in championing the project. Joe also said that the Board of Trustees, and the Ilsley 100 team are subcommittees officially to the Selectboard. The biggest issues going forward are fundraising, the bond vote, and the Middlebury Selectboard and their willingness to bond. Dana said that soon the library renovation will mostly be a selectboard project. Soon the Project Team will be presenting the selectboard with all the information and the Middlebury Selectboard will decide what to do with it. The Project Team will give them what we can raise in grants, in fundraising, and here is what it will cost. Natasha mentioned that the cost of the project will go up the longer it is put off. Meg said that the Ilsley 100 Team will be important to be involved in working with the staff during the move. Communication between the Board and the Project Team during the move will be important. Natasha said that it is the Board's responsibility to make sure the library

operates while the construction is going on. Dana said the library already has a moving team. The Project Team may be responsible for budgeting the move, which will have to be included in the numbers.

Steve Gross said in issues like this it's important to remember how deeply involved many people are in the process. He said the big question is how the library can make connections and bridge the gap between the deep knowledge the Selectboard has with people who don't understand as well. Patience will be required. Steve Gross also said a 3D model of the project would be extremely helpful. Dana said once the Project Team finishes the schematic design as things are still continuing to change with the design, and the bond vote happens the architects might be more willing to do a model, and Amy said a 360 walkthrough of the Old Library building to see all the deficiencies in the building could also be helpful. Dana will follow up with the architects. Meg mentioned doing something funny on social media about the current building could also be helpful.

The Board agreed to continue to have conversations about how to close the loop between the people with deep knowledge about the project and people who don't.

#### POLICY REVIEW

The Treatment of Gifts Policy:

The Board agreed to change the \$3,000 figure in the new Treatment of Gifts Policy to \$2,000. Natasha made a motion to accept the policy. Meg seconded the motion. The trustees voted to approve the Treatment of Gifts policy.

The Responsibility for Children in the Library Policy:

Meg made a motion to accept the policy as written with the knowledge that sentences in the policy may be rearranged. Natasha seconded the motion. The Trustees voted to approve the Responsibility for Children in the Library policy.

Materials Selection Policy:

Meg said that this policy focuses on how the library creates the collection and weeds the collection. The Policy Review Committee looked carefully at the American Library Association's policies in order to change this policy. Dana said that all the changes made to this policy strengthen it. Joe suggested a small change to the wording near the bottom of the first page. Dana said we can go back to that and vote on this policy next month.

Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials:

Meg said one thing helpful in reviewing this policy was the American Library Association's content on first amendment rights. The community can make challenges to the materials but there are limits to have many challenges you can make. Joe noted that now you need to be a library patron in order to challenge materials, and Meg said there is also now a place on the form you need to fill out in order to challenge materials where you put your library card number. Another thing changed was informal concerns versus formal requests for library consideration, and other than that the policy is about the procedures that happen when there is a request. Dana said helpful changes were that you have to be a patron, you can only submit one request at a time, and once something has been reviewed you cannot request it to be reviewed again for the next three years. Meg said if you need a formal resolution you fill out a formal request for

reconsideration. Dana said this is helpful as there are a lot of informal concerns and she doesn't want it to be a matter of policy where informal concerns take as long as formal requests. Amy said that responsibility for following up after a concern or a request is on the person who made the complaint not on the staff person who received the complaint. Joe wanted to take out the part in the policy where it says that "patrons will not be notified of a decision made through informal complaint", to "patrons are not necessarily notified." The change was made to the policy. Another change made to the policy is now if you have a formal request, there is a question on the form that says, "What benefits might this item have to members of the community?" The reason for this is because most of the library books being challenged today are about gender issues and this question forces you to step outside of yourself and think about other members of the community, which is something the library wants to encourage. However if you skip this question, it is still a valid form.

#### BOARD COMMENTS AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

The Addendum to the Memorandum of Understanding between the Friends and the Library about the Friends serving as fiscal agents for the capital campaign has not yet been reviewed. Dana has been sending letters to people she thinks should become Friends of the library.

Natasha mentioned a concrete issue is that the library needs someone for people to write checks to, or an online option for people to give.

Amy said the Staff Appreciation Lunch is on December 30th at the Unitarian Church and the Hannaford Career Center Culinary Arts program is catering. Amy is trying to reach a price estimate, but it will be somewhere under \$1,000.

#### ADJOURN

President Amy Mincher adjourned the meeting at 6:45 PM.

The next regularly scheduled meeting will take place on Monday, January 8th, at 5 PM at the Sarah Partridge Library in East Middlebury.