

ILSLEY PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES
REGULAR MEETING
March 11, 2024
ILSLEY PUBLIC LIBRARY

MINUTES

Board decisions are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

Present:

Board members: Meg Baker, President; Joe McVeigh, Treasurer; Library Director: Dana Hart;
Barbara Doyle-Wilch

Absent: Claire Tebbs & Natasha Sen

Minutes taken by: Fiona Gong

Public: No public

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

Library Director Dana Hart called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM.

See Board Packet <Board Packet 3.11.2024.pdf> for agenda and accompanying documents.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Barbara Doyle-Wilch noted that she had incorrectly given the date of when the library started in the last meeting, which was in 1795. The minutes of the previous regular meeting of February 12, 2024 were accepted.

BOARD ORGANIZATION.

Margaret Baker proposed a slate of Natasha Sen as secretary, Joe McVeigh as treasurer, and Margaret Baker as President. Barbara Doyle-Wilch seconded the motion, and Library Director Dana Hart handed the meeting over to Meg.

Meg proposed different committee appointments.

Appointments:

Director's Evaluation Committee: Claire Tebbs (chair), Meg Baker

Governance: Natasha Sen (chair), Joe McVeigh

Ilsley Board liaison to Friends of the Ilsley Public Library: Barbara Doyle-Wilch

Ilsley Board liaison to MCTV: Claire Tebbs

Ilsley Board liaison to the Ilsley Project 100 Team: Joe McVeigh, Barbara Doyle-Wilch

Recording secretary: Fiona Gong

Meg wanted to confirm regular meetings as the second Monday of the month from 5-6:30, and proposed to keep the same time, with one meeting a year at Sarah Partridge.

DIRECTORS REPORT

Dana said that she is taking time off in May from May 17-June 1. She has also been accepted to the Rare Books School's reference resources for rare books class from July 22-26 and it will be remote, so she will be around but will be taking the class.

Joe asked what the implications of the Weybridge vote were. Dana said that Weybridge has voted to sign the letter of intent, so the next step is signing a Memorandum of Understanding between the two towns, and if it looks good to the Trustees Dana will send it to the Selectboard. Weybridge does not need to vote again, they just need to sign it, and then the Town of Middlebury would send them an invoice in September, which is when the payment would happen. There will be information in IIsley newsletters about Weybridge, and IIsley has already started giving out library cards to Weybridge residents. It will be honored even before the appropriation and paperwork takes place. Meg said it would be good to get a flyer to families at the Weybridge school.

Dana said that in the fall the Department of Libraries will open up a second round of grant funding which IIsley is ineligible for, but Dana will propose to Weybridge to apply on their behalf for the Cotton Free library as a way to make it accessible again. The Cotton Free Library is the Weybridge library, but it is not functioning. The grant pool is 10 million dollars.

Meg asked if the governance committee needs to take a look at the MOU, and Dana said it doesn't unless the committee feels strongly that they should. Joe mentioned that it will go to the town's attorney.

Joe asked what the plans are for the solar eclipse, and Dana said there will be an event at Mary Hogan, it will be an early release day for schools, and that there will be food trucks. IIsley, the Middlebury Parks and Rec Department, and the town of Brandon are collaborating to give out eclipse glasses, and water. The Parks and Rec department is the lead department, and Scott Bourne will be heading up public safety; there will also be police officers present. The Town is concerned about the influx of people and traffic the eclipse will bring.

BRIDGE PLAN CHECK-IN

Meg explained the Bridge Plan. The Bridge Plan is a simpler version of a strategic plan. The IIsley Trustees looked last year at the idea of doing a strategic plan, but because of the uncertainty of the library's future, decided not to go with a full fledged plan, but to do a Bridge plan between now and when the library is fully in its new space. Dana said that the Trustees can review the Bridge plan more fully at the retreat.

Dana said that she feels the library is doing well on the Bridge Plan, and that the library staff incorporated a lot of the goals into their individual goals for the year. The process was started in August and there were six months for the staff to work on the goals that they set, and in the coming months the library will have more good news to report. Dana said she feels the library is strongest in staff well-being, personal development and continuity of service on which a lot of energy has been focused. Barbara said she has been working with Kathryn on customer service and how it impacts how people feel when they come into the library.

Meg was curious about how the staff see the progress, and said it would be interesting to ask the staff where they see things going well. Dana said she would send Barbara a copy of the Bridge plan, which is essentially a plan for what to focus on between last year and an ideal for when the library is in the new building. In the Bridge Plan, the goals were to make everyone feel welcome, keep community connections, plan the move and construction period and continue services during that time, as well as retaining the staff. Joe said that the plan was really developed by the staff and the goals were identified by the staff. Joe mentioned that there have been a lot of new programs lately and it will be interesting to see what happens with the programs when the library is in its temporary space.

PLANNING FOR 2024 RETREAT

Meg said the library typically does an all-day retreat in late spring/early summer. The retreat will immediately follow the bond vote, with a focus on the next phase of library operations. It is uncertain what will happen to the Ilesley Project 100 Team after the bond vote. She hopes the focus of the Trustees can be on the role of the Trustees and their responsibilities during the construction phase. Meg wants to talk about the logistical pieces related to space, particularly storage space for the collection, and ways the Trustees can be supportive in that, as well as logistical and broad overarching pieces related to the library's vision/mission.

Barbara said she has been involved with Ilesley Project 100 Team and the Friends and thinks it is important to define their roles, as well as to think about how to keep the level of service the same during the move, and a huge amount of support will need to be given to the staff. The board plays a key role in that. Barbara also said she wants to discuss how to stand behind Dana in the design pieces, and that the Ilesley Project 100 Team should not be involved in financial decisions as they are not an elected committee. She said the board's responsibilities should be with the expenditure of money, and support for the staff, as well as working more closely with the Ilesley Project 100 Team.

Joe said the Trustees approve the library budget Dana prepares, which then goes to the selectboard, and then to the voters. The Ilesley Project 100 Team is appointed by the selectboard, and any money they have goes to the selectboard, so the Trustees don't have any say in spending that money. Dana said that anything the library spends money on will be Kathleen's call as her name is on the contract with ReArc. The Ilesley Project 100 Team needs to have a discussion on what its role will be after the bond vote. Barbara said there will still be fundraising after the bond vote, if it passes, and Dana said there should still be a capital campaign committee, which could be expanded after the bond vote.

Dana said she will check in with Kathleen, the selectboard, and ReArc to get an understanding of how these changes have been managed in the past and who can be responsible for what. Meg said a good goal would be to figure out ways the Trustees can be supportive during the transition.

Meg asked if the retreat should have a facilitator, and Dana said she doesn't think so and that the Trustees can facilitate it themselves. Joe mentioned that last year's retreat felt more free

flowing. Meg said someone from the Ilsley Project 100 Team could facilitate, but it would also be nice to have someone from the Ilsley Project 100 Team attend to either facilitate or attend to discuss the transition. Barbara said once there is an agenda it can be decided if it needs to be facilitated or not. She said that she is happy to help work on the agenda. Dana said it would be nice to ask Judith to attend.

Meg said Barbara, Dana, and she will make a list of goals and activities, and the Trustees decided the retreat will be on June 18 from 9-3, at Dana's house. Dana will send directions to everyone attending.

PROJECT TEAM UPDATE

Joe said there was a town wide presentation at the Town Meeting on Monday night, which was essentially a quick summary of where the project is at with an emphasis on finances, seen by the 180 people at the meeting and whoever watched the broadcast. Dana said a lot of people said they saw the broadcast based on polls. Dana, Joe, Meg and others were at the polls on Tuesday, spoke to people and gave out bookmarks to remind people to vote on May 7. They received questions, objections, and comments, which were overall positive. Dana has also given two presentations so far, which have been very well received.

Dana said the most important thing is to be ready to provide a presentation at a moment's notice, and if anyone hears from a group or community that wants to hear a presentation she is ready to go. Dana is also happy to meet with people individually. Dana said she cannot present at a school unless the school is a partner in the project, but she can ask the school to send something out in their newsletter. There will also be an advertisement in the Addison Independent the week of the young child issue, and a week or two before the bond vote the library could put design boards up in the youth room. Meg said there was a library lunch with a number of fifth graders who had questions about the library. Dana said she will reach out about any other opportunities between the library and the school. Joe said that there were groups of middle schoolers brought to the polls on Tuesday, who were brought over to see the library group, and their general reactions were very positive. The Ilsley Project 100 Team is feeling very optimistic and doesn't want to lag in its efforts to get people out to vote, and if people vote it will help with fundraising efforts. Dana will send out a postcard as well as soon as it is developed.

Joe said the bond vote is item number one, and fundraising is the second item. If the bond vote passes, the library will need to raise 8 million dollars. Dana has submitted the grant application from the Department of Libraries and feels optimistic the library will get the \$1.5 million she asked for. The grant is graded on a rubric and the only points Ilsley will lose on the rubric are for being in a too affluent town and not having any flood damage. She will find out about the grant in June or July. The next grant she is applying for is the municipal energy resilience program grant. The \$500,000 from the MERP grant is money that only the town is eligible for, so it is not up to the library. Dana met with Maddy Shropshire, a grant expert who came to answer questions. Maddy will tell the library about all the grants it can apply for based on the assessment of the building. She said it's hard to imagine the renovations could be done for less than \$500,000, even if the library stays in the same building. The library building/renovation

project is eligible for up to \$500,000. Dana is not sure the town will prioritize the library, but the library has a strong case. Dana is also still planning to apply for the Congressionally Directed Funding and Northern Borders Grant Funding which is very competitive. Meg asked about the grant funding for the proposed geothermal system, and if it is competitive. Dana said it is competitive. Assessments will be done for everyone in late summer and then the application portal will be open in the fall, which tells her what she is allowed to apply for, and what the assessors think the library will need. The library will know before it breaks ground. If the library cannot secure \$8.5 million, the project can still move forward. There is a reduction in scope that the library can accommodate, for example, not getting any furniture at first. The library can also not put that portion up to bid because it is not done with the fundraising. If every penny isn't committed and pledged by January 1, as long as the library is close to the goal, Dana said she thinks the project will still move forward.

Meg said the biggest question at the polls was how to donate money, and what is a ready answer to that. Dana said she would say that we are still in the silent phase of the capital campaign and seeking lead and major donors, as well as pledges because the fundraising is dependent on the bond vote passing. Gifts should wait until after the bond vote, but the Friends can take money right now. Donations can be accepted currently, but the library is not in the public phase yet and does not want to encourage gifts before the bond vote. Meg said that moving forward after the bond vote the Trustees will want to make sure they have all the infrastructure and technology to accept donations. The library will want to take advantage of the public interest around the time of the bond vote. Barbara said the Friends are pretty well set up. Dana said the project needs a website and an easier way to make credit card donations, as well as receiving appreciated stock gifts. Meg said having pledge envelopes available for people to take from the circulation desk would be really helpful.

Joe said on April 15 there will be an informational meeting at the high school, and Dana said MCTV will do recording and work with the tech person at the high school to set up broadcasting. Dana has a print-out on what the library is looking for for storage space for the collection in case anyone asks. She needs to figure out how many square feet the library needs with the collection in boxes. She has some leads on potential storage space and will know by the next meeting if it will go through or not.

Joe said Louise Penny is the sponsor of a murder mystery play that takes place in the library. This play has been released for free to be used as a fundraiser for libraries. The plot of the play is that people come to the library for a murder mystery game and someone actually gets murdered. Dana said over the summer the library could premiere it to coincide with Ilsley's 100th birthday. It has an 8 person cast. Meg has an idea of who could direct it. Joe said over the next ten months or so sustaining the interest of the community in the project is essential, because it will mostly be happening behind the scenes. Joe's other thought is for the Memorial Day Parade the library should go big, and should have a float with a picture of the library, and have someone dress up as Colonel and Mrs. Ilsley and on the side have it say 'Thank you Colonel and Mrs Ilsley' and then it could say 'Who will be the next Colonel and Mrs. Ilsley?' Barbara said the Friends are planning a big birthday party in September for the anniversary of

the Ilsley Dedication and that it would be a great time to do the play and have all day activities and food trucks, as well as something to advertise the celebration.

Barbara said the posters the Friends did following the history of Ilsley are up in locations along Main Street. The Friends discovered all the places the library has lived since 1795 and put together what the place looked like then and what it looks like now, and in April will host a scavenger hunt around Middlebury focused on families. The posters are in store fronts where the library lived. There is also a QR code on the posters that take you to the library website. The Friends will get something in the Addison Independent about the scavenger hunt. The posters will be kept up until after the bond vote to keep the library in everyone's head. Two weeks before the bond vote is when the scavenger hunt will be. Joe said it would be nice to get someone to write an article on the history of the library and maybe the Addison Independent could publish it. Meg said there are great community engagement pieces planned for the next year, things the Trustees can be engaged with. Dana said the timing works perfectly between the bond vote and the summer, because it will be appropriate to take a break over the summer and then have the 100th anniversary and the beginning of the public phase of the campaign pushing through to January.

BOARD COMMENTS AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS Board comments and unfinished business

No unfinished business.

ADJOURN

Barbara Doyle-Wilch moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:10 PM. Joe McVeigh seconded.

The next regularly scheduled meeting will take place Monday, April 8, at 5 PM.