

**MINUTES OF A SPECIAL MEETING  
OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE LEMONT PUBLIC LIBRARY DISTRICT  
COOK AND DUPAGE COUNTIES, ILLINOIS  
HELD AT THE LIBRARY DISTRICT MEETING ROOM  
50 EAST WEND STREET, LEMONT, ILLINOIS**

**August 6, 2014**

**I. Call to Order**

President Vytenis Kirvelaitis called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m.

**II. Pledge of Allegiance**

**III. Roll Call**

The following trustees answered present: Thomas Burton, Jr., Patricia Camalliere, Daniel Geoghegan, Christine Hogan, Vytenis Kirvelaitis, Catherine Sanders and Michaeline Skibinski. Library Director Sandra Pointon also attended.

**IV. Renovation Financing Update**

As at the community meeting on July 22<sup>nd</sup>, a PowerPoint presentation summarized the salient points of the renovation plans, underscoring that enhanced library services would be accompanied by a reduction in the current debt service tax rate.

The renovation would include reorganization and refurbishment of current Library space, capital repairs and mechanical replacements, as well as a 1,600 square foot addition, featuring expanded meeting space.

Nick Yerkes, 1010 Warner Avenue, asked who had been appointed general contractor. President Kirvelaitis replied that no selection could be made until after the referendum, provided that the bond question was approved.

According to President Kirvelaitis, the Board had insisted on keeping construction costs under \$2.8 million, which was the cost of the original 1997 structure. He reviewed a cost breakdown.

The Board would be voting on submitting the question on whether to finance a \$2.8 million renovation through the issue of library bonds to voters during the November 4<sup>th</sup> election. A 15-year, level amortization schedule was being considered, with an estimated interest rate of 3.585 percent. Beginning in 2016, the annual debt service would be \$270,000, approximately 30 percent less than the original bond issue, which financed construction of the current structure. The typical Lemont home owner would see a \$17.40 reduction in the Library portion of his/her tax bill.

Gail August, 1240 118<sup>th</sup> Street, queried whether the upgrades would last out the 15-year bond period. They would. In fact, the trustees had required that Engberg Anderson Architects develop a flexible, adaptable design, with classic, sturdy, reconfigurable furnishings that resisted passing trends.

In their May 2013 facility assessment, Dewberry Architects recommended at least \$500,000-worth of physical and mechanical updates, including roof replacement, a new HVAC system, and upgrading electrical and data systems. The mechanical system was at the end of its expected twenty-year lifespan. The 1990's technical infrastructure was unable to adequately support improvements in information technology. Patrons complained about the lack of quiet space and the limited study and meeting rooms.

Kevin Cliff, 3 West Wend Street, inquired whether a referendum was really necessary to accomplish the renovation. Per President Kirvelaitis, without issuing bonds, the Library could not afford even the most critical replacements. The Library operated on a \$1.3 million budget and held three months of operating reserves, which had not sufficed in the past, when the Library had been forced to issue Tax Anticipation Warrants due to delayed property tax distributions. Accumulating sufficient funds would require substantial cuts to operating hours and services, as personnel salaries comprised sixty percent of the budget.

The Director highlighted some of the new features in both the schematic design and the 3-dimensional rendition developed by Engberg Anderson.

The renovation would protect the community's investment in its library, help meet increasing service needs, and ensure the Library's future role as a dynamic gathering place replete with print, digital and technological resources, free programs and year-round activities for children and teens. Moreover, the cost savings resulting from the updates was significant: fewer operating funds spent on repairs and maintenance; a 20 percent savings on electrical and lighting replacement costs; and 16-20 percent lower utility costs.

#### **V. Public Participation**

Kevin Cliff wanted to know if circulation figures had increased. Director Pointon responded that circulation had remained stable, but circulation was no longer a reliable indicator. Rising program attendance and meeting room use had to be taken into account. Statistics on Wi-Fi use were not available. The President reported that some 13,000 library cards had been issued in a district with a population of 21,685.

Rita Strossner, 901 Young Street, remarked that the Library had come a long way since 1991, when it was housed in a back room of Lemont High School.

Donna Schmit, 12821 Marian Drive, asked how many times per month the meeting room was being used. Director Pointon responded that the room had up to eight events scheduled *daily*. Meeting room rental fees did not contribute significantly to Library income, since Library programs took precedence over outside rentals. Revenues were only drawn from commercial or for-profit usage, as not-for-profit groups were not charged for use, per the Library Meeting Room Policy.

Mrs. Schmit's was not in favor of the addition. To illustrate her point, she proffered that all families had wish lists, but they often made due without unessential expenditures, like a new driveway apron or dead tree removal.

Kevin Cliff returned to the \$500,000 in capital replacements recommended by Dewberry. Could those be implemented without resorting to a referendum? President Kirvelaitis confirmed that the Library could not even cover the most immediate improvements on its own, without passing the referendum. A bank would impose a higher interest rate for a loan than the Library would pay in interest on a bond issue. If no mechanical improvements were made, the facilities would continue to depreciate and be mended incrementally, in a makeshift way—a process Director Pointon described as “operating in crisis mode”. Trustee Hogan stressed that the proposed bond amount over \$500,000 was not allotted to frivolous use. For example, the carpet was threadbare in areas, the 20-year-old furnishings and fixtures were breaking down. Director Pointon revealed that there had been 8,500 visitors to the Library in the month of July 2014 alone. The popularity of the Library's programs and resources came at a price: inevitable wear and tear.

James August, 1240 118<sup>th</sup> Street, requested to see the cost of the addition alone. Trustee Hogan explained that separating new addition costs from total construction costs proved to be misleading. Whereas the prices for roofing and carpeting materials could be divided by square footage, how could installation and labor be apportioned? By what formula would you allocate HVAC capacity or electrical wiring between new and existing structures? President Kirvelaitis added that trying to renovate within the building's original footprint would actually cost more per square foot. The addition permitted the reconfiguration.

Nick Schmit, 12821 Marian Drive, objected to the cost breakdown, saying the categories were too vague. He asked the Board to elaborate on the "Contingency", "Fees/Permits" and "Building Maintenance" lines. President Kirvelaitis explained that the contingency was a percentage of the overall project budget, set aside as a buffer for the unexpected. Fees would have to be paid to the architects, attorneys, underwriters, contractors, inspectors, etc. The Library hoped that the Village might waive some building permit fees, but had budgeted for them nonetheless. Building maintenance referred to site preparation, regrading, installation of safety precautions (so the Library could remain open), temporary and movable lighting, landscaping modification, etc. For instance, cracks in the cement flooring underneath the carpeting were visible from the basement and would require reinforcement. The Library, as a public entity, was also obligated to pay the prevailing or union wage and fulfill many code requirements that were not applicable to residential properties.

Rita Strossner commented that the Village of Lemont had repeatedly remodeled the Village Hall without soliciting taxpayers' opinions.

Ted Hogan, 103 Doolin Street, wondered what would happen to the contingency monies if they were not needed. President Kirvelaitis assured him that, if any funds remained once the renovation was completed, they would either be transferred into the bond reserve fund or refunded to taxpayers. Use of the bond money was restricted to construction costs; the Library could not lawfully redirect these funds to cover unrelated expenses.

Donna Schmit inquired whether the repairs would be made if the referendum did not pass. President Kirvelaitis regretted that the unavoidable repairs could not be undertaken without the bond issue. Any major systems crash would necessitate a bank loan and service cutbacks.

Kevin Cliff asked the overall number of visitors to the Library was growing. Director Pointon was pleased that the Library was, indeed, being heavily used. Computer and scanner use was up; printing services were reliably tracked; and program attendance had increased consistently, especially over the last few summers. The meeting room was used over 2,900 times in each of the previous two fiscal years. President Kirvelaitis noted that library software limited detailed statistical analysis, as it was designed to safeguard patron privacy and First Amendment rights.

Ted Hogan understood why some of the terms seemed vague in the cost breakdown, but oversimplification was the flaw. He advised clarifying the categories, so the public could better comprehend the expenditures.

Nick Yerkes deemed the renovation project well worth the cost. His young family would benefit over the years from a first class facility.

At this point, Trustee Camalliere decided to state her view not as a Library trustee but as a Library patron. For \$55 in annual library taxes (through 2015), Patricia Camalliere, 423 Jane Court, had enjoyed free access to all of the Library's materials, computers, technology classes and most programs. If the referendum passed, her tax amount would decrease to \$38 in 2016, with no loss of services. She

could not even purchase two books at Barnes & Noble for that price. Meanwhile, without intending to offend another local public body, Mrs. Camalliere observed that Lemont Park District taxes were higher, and she had to pay additional fees for pool use and programming.

Trustee Sanders, likewise, paid monthly fees for membership in The Core, as well as exercise classes. Director Pointon remarked that the Library, unlike the Park District, was unable to generate revenue from its services, except from late fees. Historically, revenue generation is not a library's mission as it conflicts with free access to all residents, the cornerstone of the public library.

James August also agreed with Trustee Camalliere. He thought that the renovation should be "sold" to the community in terms of the alternatives.

As a Lemont taxpayer for the previous 22 years, Trustee Burton shared in his fellow citizens' frustration with increased taxes, but the Library was proposing to lower taxes instead. He understood how a new addition could elicit consternation but unlike the Village, the Library had consulted its patrons. Members of the public had contributed to the design process at two meetings, and their demand for modernization exceeded Board expectations.

Nick Schmit was most concerned about the cost. Given the government's reputation for waste, he predicted that the price tag would escalate.

Trustees Burton and Skibinski guaranteed that the project cost, by law, could not and would not surpass \$2.8 million. An eight percent contingency was built into the budget to protect the Library from unforeseen circumstances. Underwriters George K. Baum and Company anticipated that, given its financial strength, the Library would receive a credit rating of AA or A (an A rating was assumed in analyzing bond terms).

Trustee Camalliere reminded everyone that there was a precedent for downsizing the renovation, if necessary. After the 1996 referendum was passed, the District sent the original plan out to bid and discovered that it had insufficient funds because of an upsurge in materials prices. The construction project was scaled down from a full to a half basement.

As a banker, Nick Yerkes estimated only a three percent bond interest rate but commended the Board for planning conservatively.

President Kirvelaitis thanked all members of the public for their sincerity and invited them to a special Board meeting on Tuesday, August 12<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m., where the trustees would consider an ordinance submitting the proposition of issuing library bonds to District voters at the November 4, 2014 election.

Susan Donahue, 804 Hickory Street, asked whether questions would be welcome at the August 12<sup>th</sup> meeting. The President welcomed members of the public to all Board meetings. A public participation segment was included in every agenda. The Director requested that anyone who intended to speak longer than five minutes at the meeting advise her beforehand, so he/she can be added to the agenda.

Finally, President Kirvelaitis encouraged participants to seek further financial and renovation information on the Library's website. The website provided an email address for improvement plan feedback as well as contact information for the Director's and all of the trustees. In addition, the last Power Point slide featured President Kirvelaitis and Director Pointon's phone numbers.

## **VI. Adjournment**

Trustee Hogan made a motion, seconded by Trustee Burton, to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 p.m. Voice vote: all ayes, no nays. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Ramona Stephens-Zemaitis