

**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**

July 22, 2014

I. Call to Order

President Vytenis Kirvelaitis called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

III. Roll Call

The following trustees answered present: Thomas Burton, Jr., Patricia Camalliere, Daniel Geoghegan, Vytenis Kirvelaitis and Catherine Sanders. Trustees Christine Hogan and Michaeline Skibinski were absent. Library Director Sandra Pointon and Suburban Life/Shaw Media reporter Dan Farnham also attended.

IV. Renovation Financing Update

Board President Kirvelaitis and Director Pointon conducted a PowerPoint presentation, elaborating on salient points and emphasizing that the public would experience enhanced library services with a reduction in the current debt service tax rate.

The renovation would address repairs needed to the well-worn building, including roof replacement, a new mechanical (HVAC) system, upgrades to electrical and data systems, and parking lot repaving. These repairs would also achieve long-term savings, reducing repair and maintenance expenditures, minimizing electrical repairs and light replacement, and lowering utility costs.

The facility update was, likewise, meant to protect the community's investment in the Library, tackling concerns and aspirations voiced by patrons during community planning meetings earlier in the year. Technology updates, better public access, and more efficient use of space would ensure the Library's future role as a vital gathering place, offering patrons print and digital media, technological resources, free programs and year-round youth activities.

A facility assessment by Dewberry Architects in May of 2013 confirmed that substantial capital replacements would be required in the near future. Consequently, the Board contracted Engberg Anderson Architects to conduct a space planning study and develop a conceptual design for the Library. The design concentrates on the Library's changing service needs, reconfigures the existing space, and recommends a modest expansion.

The President reviewed the cost breakdown for the project. The trustees had stipulated that the total construction cost had to be kept below \$2.8 million, the cost of the original 1997 structure. Calculations were conservative and fiscally prudent, providing for any contingencies and fluctuations in currently favorable interest rates.

The renovation would be financed through the issue of library bonds on a 15-year amortization schedule, which was less than the anticipated useful life of the expansion. The Public Finance division of George K. Baum and Company anticipated an interest rate of 3.585 percent and estimated the annual debt service, including principal and interest, to be \$270,000, starting in 2016. The Board was considering submitting the bond question to voters on the November 4th election ballot.

The bond measure was being proposed because the Library was, otherwise, unable to finance the renovation. The Library operated on a \$1.3 million budget. Ninety percent of revenues were derived from local property taxes, which represented 2.471 percent of current tax bills, including bond rate. According to the 2012 LACONI (Library Administrators Conference of Northern Illinois) survey, the Lemont Public Library's tax rate ranked as one of the lowest in the Northern Illinois (95th of 112). A pie chart illustrated what percentage of taxes each Lemont agency collected in 2013: i.e., the library district paled in comparison to the school districts, which received half of taxes paid. Other revenue sources were small: meeting room rental, overdue materials fees, etc. The Library held three months of operating reserves, upon which it had been forced to draw in the past, due to delayed property tax distributions. Accumulating sufficient funds would require years of cuts in services and operating hours.

A chart summarized the estimated tax impact on home owners, based on a home's market value, 2015 (current) taxes for existing debt service and anticipated 2016 taxes for the new debt service. Debt service taxes would actually decrease approximately 30 percent over current rates.

Before taking questions, Director Pointon and President Kirvelaitis encouraged those gathered to seek further information on the Library's website and offer their feedback. The last slide featured both of their email addresses and phone numbers.

V. Public Participation

Sandra Leach, 331 East Logan Street, asked when the existing bonds would be paid off. Director Pointon responded that the final payment would be made in December 2015. The Library still owed approximately \$700,000. Ms. Leach was astounded at the \$300,000 budget line for permits and fees. Mrs. Pointon explained that the Library was required by law to pay engineer, inspector, architect and attorney fees. Ms. Leach also wondered where the computers would be relocated. The Director indicated the area on the conceptual design, adding that the data center would be moved from the cramped, unventilated closet where it was now housed to the roomier basement.

Tom Culcasi, 415 Freehauf Street, declared that he was "100% behind the program". He noted that the benefits and, especially, positive tax repercussion should be offered throughout town at community organization meetings and posted prominently in public places. He opined that this issue would be decided at local restaurants and shopping venues "by people who never attended a meeting".

Steve Reardon, 389 Fourth Street, inquired why a 15-year amortization schedule was selected over a 20-year one, which would result in even greater tax savings. Besides, after twenty years, further mechanical replacements might be needed, and the public would prove reluctant to pass a new referendum after five bond-free years. President Kirvelaitis agreed with Mr. Reardon. The 15-year schedule was being used only as an illustration and was "not etched in stone". A 20-year period would, indeed, increase annual savings but result in a total higher debt, due to an additional five years of interest payments. Depending upon interest rates, even an 18-year schedule could be considered.

Former Library Board trustee and co-president of the Friends of the Library, Pam Nogal, 45 West Eureka, Drive, hoped that the new meeting room could be used after Library operating hours. Director Pointon said that, unfortunately, there was no way to lock off the rest of the building and disable the alarm system in just the meeting room. Of course, after-hours events could be held if staff members were present but, for now, the weekly 68-hour operating schedule seemed to suffice.

Tom Culcasi suggested comparing the current monthly meeting room-generated revenue with post-renovation projections. The Library should benefit from the lack of premium meeting space in town, and Trustee Camalliere mentioned that few places offered the technical support the Library was capable

of. However, the President and Director thought that the increase in revenue would not be substantial. Only \$3,500 in fees was collected in the last fiscal year because Library programs take precedence over outside rentals. Revenues were only derived from usage by commercial or for-profit groups, as not-for-profit groups were given usage at no cost, per the Library Meeting Room Policy.

Kathy Saylor, 1261 Chestnut Crossing, asked about the construction time frame, presuming a successful referendum. President Kirvelaitis responded that a bond must be issued within five years after being approved by voters. He and the Director expected that the financing paperwork would be completed by February or March of next year. Once construction bids were reviewed and a contractor selected, construction would commence in late spring or early summer of 2015. The addition would be built first, and then interior remodeling could begin. The construction work should be completed within a year, during which the Library would remain open. The basement, which was not approved for public access, would provide additional storage and could temporarily house staff offices.

Andy Taylor, 13110 Fox Hill Drive, inquired how personnel services would be affected. The Director anticipated the same staffing and service needs, especially since the redesign would result in greater efficiency and better sight lines. In fact, the number of full-time employees had been reduced over the past several years; most Library employees worked part-time. Salaries comprised approximately one half of the Library's operating budget, and the Library was prohibited by law from using bond funds for any purpose other than renovation-related matters. In the interest of full disclosure, staff salaries were posted on the Library's website.

Former Library Board trustee Charles Ray, 341 Ashbury Place, was amazed that the air conditioning had lasted up to this point. He remembered how the HVAC system had already begun experiencing problems during his tenure. New components were simply not compatible with a twenty-year-old system, and it was inefficient to replace parts piecemeal, as they broke. President Kirvelaitis cited the example of a used automobile. At some point, the owner must determine whether it is more worthwhile to repair it or to replace it.

Retired Library bookkeeper Joyce Koon, 1111 Kim Place, asked if the wall between the two meeting rooms was permanent or collapsible. Mrs. Pointon replied that the wall would be fixed, as installing a movable partition would have added \$30,000 to the cost of the project. If construction costs came in lower than estimated and funds became available, this matter could be reconsidered. For now, the only movable dividing wall was between the two children's activity rooms.

Lila Ward, 1005 State Street, expressed concern that the shelving seemed to be blocking the windows of the adult area. Per Director Pointon, the collections would be reconfigured with lower shelving, allowing patrons to enjoy more natural light and better views. Ms. Ward observed that the computer tables were round. The Director confirmed that the tables were circularly arranged to accommodate eight people but could just as easily be divided into cubes. Upon contracting Engberg Anderson, the trustees specified that the design had to be adaptable and the furnishings—classic and movable in order to avoid a rapidly dated appearance or compel yet another redesign in the near future.

Ms. Ward was further troubled by the loss of four computers in the adult section. President Kirvelaitis attributed the reduction to declining usage of desktop computers. Many patrons were already bringing along their own portable devices. Checking out a laptop from the front desk afforded greater flexibility, too: users were not tethered to a single location. The renovation would offer improved Wi-Fi reception and more outlets. Additional desktops could be installed, as needed.

Dave Leach, 331 Logan Street, proposed different interior colors for the new sections. The Director noted that the shades depicted in the conceptual design were purely for illustrative purposes.

Joyce Koon inquired whether the basement was included in the renovation. President Kirvelaitis answered that construction activity in the basement would be limited to replacement of the equipment in the mechanical room, relocation of the servers and, possibly, rearrangement of shelving. Mrs. Koon also wondered about Library security. Director Pointon replied that the new design featured more secure, lockable staff areas.

As there were no more questions, Trustee Camalliere requested that attendees encourage their friends and neighbors to attend a second community meeting about renovation financing on August 6th at 7:00 p.m. President Kirvelaitis urged participants to consider joining a citizens advisory committee, if the Board were to vote in favor of the referendum.

VI. Adjournment

A motion was made by Trustee Burton and seconded by Trustee Geoghegan to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 p.m. Voice vote: all ayes, no nays. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Ramona Stephens-Zemaitis