

Minutes April 8, 2016

Edward U. Demmer Memorial Library

Library Board of Trustees Meeting – Joint Meeting with Town of Three Lakes Supervisors

Trustee Attendance: Dianna Blicharz, Paul Kaiser, Catherine Marshall, Vicki Reuling, Laura Wipperman

Town Board Supervisors attendance: Dr. Bill Martineau, Ed Starke, Pat Volk, Stella Westfall.

Absent: Steve Garbowicz, Kathleen Olkowski

Other Attendees: Erica Brewster (Library), Sue Harris (Town)

Vicki Reuling called the Library Board meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.

Agenda:

Motion by Trustee Marshall, seconded by Trustee Kaiser, to approve the agenda in any order. All ayes, motion carried.

Discuss Town Office, Police, Library & Historical Museum building project:

Review draft referendum questions: Chair Westfall reported that following the past board meeting a smaller group met with Becher-Hoppe to discuss the possibility of further revisions. The Library Board then met and chose not to put additional funding into new additional designs. The decision was made to forgo additional designs at this time, and the groups then began working on draft referendum questions.

Chair Westfall then asked the Library Board to clarify their preference for proceeding. The President Reuling stated that the Library Board felt that the \$900,000 was the amount needed to work with the plan developed by Becher-Hoppe. Chair Westfall asked what would happen if the referendum failed. President Reuling stated that she believed they would need to return to the Three Lakes Public Library Foundation and the donors to determine the plan.

Discussion between Supervisor Volk and President Reuling of the impact per \$100,000 valuation for each tax payer over 10 or 20 years followed. Supervisor Starke inquired whether there was any possibility to downside the project to \$1 million. President Reuling stated that there had been an informal conversation with advisor architect about what could be done with one million; the opinion was that there could be a good remodel of the existing building. Based on \$165/square foot mid-level estimate given by Becher-Hoppe, the 4,000 square foot addition would cost \$660,000 alone.

Supervisor Starke asked about the need for a library, citing concerns about the future population of the community and the changes in technology. There was a question about the relative size of the proposed expansion compared to neighboring libraries, specifically Minocqua. The Minocqua Library added 12,000 square feet in 2011 at a cost of \$1.6 million; the population of the Minocqua Township is approximately 4,400. President Reuling stated that the Library Board was focused on the needs of Three Lakes as a unique community and called on Director Erica Brewster to detail some of the current needs of the library, which are based on current DPI standards for libraries. Reuling also reiterated that while books will continue to be a cornerstone of libraries for years to come, they don't expect to increase the number of volumes held beyond what the library currently has. Brewster acknowledged that technology was changing the way the library is used, but listed the following as immediate and future needs in spite of, or often due to, changing technology and population:

- Only enough floor space to accommodate 3 public computers. Individuals are bringing more of their own laptops and devices, but many do not have computers with internet access at home. Four or five rely on the library for daily access, often coming at the same time. The Demmer will not need 10-15 computers as some libraries have, but Brewster believes 6 is necessary for routine and summer demand.

- People with their own laptop computers and tablets increases demand for seating space. In the summer, there are times when people are seated on the floor.
- The busiest times in the library are 9 AM – 12 PM and 3 PM – 5 PM. The afternoon times are when students come from the school. Brewster is working to accommodate the middle and high school students in the lower level when there aren't meetings. Space for a young adult collection is very limited, allowing for only 600 books, with high turnover. The library has added Young Adult programming duties to one of the current staff members and is looking to increase opportunities for this age group to participate in library programs, but this will put pressure on available space.
- The library proctors professional exams and currently those exams are given on one of the public computers in the open space. The Becher-Hoppe design includes 4 individual study rooms, and at least two of these could be used for proctoring professional exams, including those that require private exam space. Other rooms would allow for quiet work, small group/individual tutoring, professional and educational conference calls, online/phone interviews for jobs or school.
- Handicapped accessibility continues to be a concern with many parts of the existing library. Remodeling would allow for more flexibility in use of existing space, allowing for more access for more people, and reduce the needed square footage in new space. This is already included in the Becher-Hoppe design.

Discussion continued about timing of the referendum, whether it would be better to hold the referendum in August at a low-turnout election (currently only a primary for county clerk is scheduled) versus the larger presidential election in November. Chair Westfall pointed out that there would be a much larger voter turnout for the presidential election, so it would be more likely to hear from the larger portion of the electorate. Seasonal residents would have the opportunity to vote by absentee ballot. Director Brewster emphasized the opportunity to engage seasonal residents who were not local voters if the referendum was held in August.

The boards next addressed the wording of the referendum, first as to whether the question be for \$2.7 or \$3.6 million for the entire project or \$900,000 for the library only. President Reuling asked if the Library expansion was presented on a referendum alone, how would the Town present their portion of the construction process. Clerk Harris clarified that the library could be included in the motion to approve construction presented to the electors at the Annual Meeting on April 19. However, the electors only have power to approve construction, not the amount to be allocated to that. The intention of the approval at the Annual Meeting would be to move the project forward, to eliminate the option to repair, to commit the Town to constructing a new building.

Trustee Kaiser affirmed that it would make sense to wait for the outcome of the vote of the electors at the Annual Meeting before pursuing any further detailed discussion of the referendum questions. Library Board members asked for clarification of the agenda item for the Annual Meeting; Clerk Harris indicated the agenda for the Annual Meeting would state an approval to construct a Town building to include the Library, Historical Society, but not include specific dollar amounts.

President Reuling restated the desire of the Library Board to assist with an educational campaign to bring the information to the public.

Trustee Marshall stated that she agrees with the wording "approving to construct..." however, noted that some person will ask what the amount will be. Chair Westfall said that the amount would be at least \$2.7 million and at worst \$3.6 million. An explanation with the motions could include information that the cost of construction would be at minimum \$2.7 million dollars and no more than \$3.6 million.

Decision to delay discussion of the referendum and referendum questions until after the April 19 Annual Meeting.

Public Comment:

Question was raised as to whether approval of the town building is being brought to the electors because it was required, or whether it was something the board felt an obligation to do. Clerk Harris clarified that there are specific items that the electors have the authority to decide, and limits on what the electors can direct the Town Board to do. In summary: the electors approve the total levy at the Annual Budget Meeting, but the Town Board has authority to determine how the levied monies are allocated and spent; and the electors approve specific actions as defined in state statute, including approving the construction of town buildings, but the Town Board has authority to develop the designs and determine the amount to be spent.

A question was raised about the design developed to date and whether it contained enough detail (including type of construction materials, etc.) to be confident in the amounts the Town Board was considering for all aspects of the project. Response was that the Becher-Hoppe proposal did include general descriptions of types of materials to be used in construction and interior, which was calculated as an average price per square foot, based on upper-middle standard office grade materials.

Motion by Trustee Wiperman, seconded by Trustee Marshall, to adjourn the Library Board meeting. All ayes. There being no further business, the Library Board meeting was adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted: Erica Brewster, Director