

RUTLAND FREE LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES
January 20, 2021
Meeting by Zoom

Attending: Jennifer Bagley _X_; Chris Booth _X_; Barry Cohen _X_; Clare Coppock _X_; Sharon Courcelle _X_; Anita Duch _X_; Sherri Durgin-Campbell _A_; Allyn Kahle _X_; William Notte _X_; Ed Ogorzalek _X_; Catherine Picon _X_; Stephanie Romeo _X_; Olivia Tipton _X_; Nancy Wennberg _X_; Randal Smathers _X_; Amy Williams _X_ (X is present, A is absent)

Presiding: __Sharon Courcelle__ Secretary: _Clare Coppock_

Acceptance of Meeting Minutes: Jennifer moved, and Will seconded the acceptance of the 12/16/20 meeting minutes, approved unanimously.

Agenda Addition(s): **Public Comment began at 5:18PM with Amy Williams welcoming the members of the community for joining us.**

Lyle Jepson: wants to listen in to get information to answer questions he is getting and to acknowledge the good work the library is doing

Marion Farrell, Rutland Town: all things considered, wants everyone in Rutland to be heard and listened to as decisions are made with this cherished landmark. Why hasn't the public been brought in earlier? Why do we want to hollow out Rutland? Why not consider doing for RFL what was done with the Paramount to bring it back? and, parking can still be an issue when it is "game night" at the rec center as experienced last year. **Randal response:** the library had set out to renovate 10 Court St, and has been working on a plan for 33+ years. Working with architects and engineers, a plan was devised and cost estimates were being looked at when the discovery was made of the CSJ property. The board again worked methodically to explore the property, addressing size, room for a children's room, other options for space (meeting rooms, offices, employee space), can we afford it, called in inspectors/engineers to assess the quality of the building. There were many hurdles to get past, and throughout the process, the board voted numerous times to move forward with the proposal.

Haley Russo: though no longer Rutland resident, has been following the issue. I don't think the library location has any bearing on what is happening with the downtown.

Joan Gamble, Rutland City: here to hear the dialogue. Has been on the board, lots of dealings with the building during her time on the board. Initial reaction was "Oh no"...but the more she has thought about it, this move does solve lots of the problems and needs of the current space which would be difficult and costly to improve. The library doesn't own the current building, trying to make enhancements and repairs was never easy. She also shares the concerns of downtown, but hopes this might be an impetus to finish the bike path.

Mary Ann Reis, Rutland City: acknowledged how much time the board has spent on building maintenance issues in past meetings. Would like more opportunities for community feedback. Hopes a portion of the library doesn't move from downtown where it now fits in the sociability of downtown. Concerned about the walkability/carbon footprint of locating outside of the downtown. Is very disappointed, this news hit her hard. If she had known about this she would not have voted for the Rec Center purchase. Asked about putting up flyers for the meeting.

Randal response: Paul Costello, from Rural Development will be moderating the first meeting

next Wednesday, Jan 27th, 6:30-8. The goal is to identify community needs that the library might be able to meet. **Olivia response:** she understands that there's a lot of comfort associated with the current space. One of the things she loves about living here is the connection points; at the same time, may need to leave the comfort zone to move forward and create new connection points.

Jean Steadman, former Friends board member and president: walked the bike path from Giorgetti to River St and it was 2.9 miles. She has spent a lot of time hiking around the campus, trying to envision what could happen there. Sidewalks on Dorr Dr nonexistent, going up Rt 4 is OK until you get to the train tracks. Has concerns that the two places that should be as accessible as possible, the library and rec center, require vehicles to get there.

Barbara Pulling, Rutland Town: wondering what the process is now. The trustees have voted to proceed with exploring moving to the campus, but how do these meetings with Rural Development fit into the process? **Randal response:** the goal was always to have public input. The idea is to spend a mtg talking about what the community wants/needs that the library could provide with the extra space it will have at the CSJ space. So far suggestions have included an electric charge station and murals to brighten the space.

Meadow Squires, Tinmouth: very excited about the idea of having a library that is more accessible. It would be closer and easier to bring kids. The current space is not necessarily easy for kids, it's difficult keeping them quiet and respectful. The new space feels like a look to the future, with opportunities for more enrichment activities and modern culture. It's not just Rutland's library, it's the other towns, too. Talked about visiting her husband's hometown of Wilmington, DE and it was painful to see all the different opportunities down there for kids.

Tricia O'Connor, Rutland City: very excited about the possible change in location. She brings her kids to the rec center and feels they will definitely utilize the library more with them being close together. She is hoping for further collaboration with the rec center, offering things like Bone Builder classes, educational classes, special interest groups, etc. She had noticed lots of elderly using the gym to walk and enjoying watching the kids' activities, and believes this will provide another opportunity for the elderly and kids to interact. The "clincher" would be a coffee shop.

Liz Wiedermann, Rutland City: has been a resident of both buildings, as a library user and a teacher at CSJ. She has walked every inch of both buildings and feels this would be a wonderful use for our community. She acknowledged the staircase at RFL is "scary", there are dark corners in the current space, the elevator/restrooms are all issues. The college is centrally located for the county, the library is not just Rutland city. Great opportunity for intergenerational activities, both within the library and utilizing the outdoor space and rec center.

Trent Brogan, junior at RHS: HS students are using the HS library, or ordering online. Thinks the move to CSJ will bring more opportunities with students and the rec center, providing a place to study. Closer access to Loretto Home could bring those residents. Feels it could get a younger crowd back to the library.

Pat Hunter, Rutland Town: was on library board for six years at the time when architects were brought in to look at improvements to the current space. At that time, learned that libraries are so much more than just a place to pick up a book. The type of opportunities that you could have for kids, teens, maker space, groups to meet, then to have all that space around the building

outside. The opportunities around the proposed location are great. Understands the discussion around downtown, but described staying at the current library as restraining and holding back on what a library could be. We are going to be losing people coming to the library if we don't stay in the modern era.

Lopi LaRoe: moved here in 2018, and the 2 most important places were (are) the library and food coop, engaging in the health of the community based on those two. Thinks keeping it where it is is super important to the heart of downtown, "having to drive" is counter productive in regards to exercise and climate change. It's so convenient to downtown access, strongly propose that the library consider staying in the same location, listen to what the community wants.

Will Notte, Library Trustee: we need to be accurate about what we are saying. The library is not a part of downtown, grants for downtown projects are not available to 10 Court St. As a downtown business employee, does not feel the library brings business to the downtown. Most of the elderly and parents with children who visit downtown drive.

Anita Duch, Library Trustee: admitted she did not immediately jump on the bandwagon for the CSJ location, but now sees the space as opening up to all kinds of possibilities. Her first words when touring the space: "Wow! This looks like a library!". Feels this space will avoid having to ask the city to put out a bond for improvements, will bring in more out-of-towners as there is space and it's more comfortable, and it will provide walking access to a different population.

Sharon Courcelle, President Library Trustee: thanked all for their comments, and reminded that the board members are open to comments at all times.

Public Comment Period Closed: 6:24PM

Director & Assistant Director Updates: Randal: feedback from the public, with about 75 comments from people with names, both cardholders and non-cardholders, is running 3:1 in favor. Most common issues include: 1) better space utilization to offer programs from the community 2) kids/youth space 3) quiet space 4) accessibility: many expressed concerns that others may not be able to walk...they have a mental image that people should be able to walk to the library, not that "I" walk to the library. Currently we can "hear everything/not see all" with the new space the plan is to "see everything, not hear all".

RFL is very close to being part of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, which sends books to children every month from birth to 5 year. We've been approved as a site, and goal is to be able to announce it on Town Meeting Day. Cost is \$20-30,000 per year, which has been partially funded by Joan Gamble. We are not doing the fundraising for this. A volunteer coordinator has been lined up, Darby will help with bookkeeping. It will fall under our 501c3 for managing.

Hopefully the library will be done with curbside in March, and ready to receive patrons again. Stats: circulation is down 40%, curbside is a lot of work, but has provided good patron interaction and is providing more experiences to patrons

Amy: struggling with Help desk coverage. Karen is posting new items to Facebook which is helping with circulation. Music Streaming is up and running...NO ADS!!! Canopy is adding more social relevant filming. Online is blowing up. Starting to look into how to physically move/transport to new space

Financials (report and committee): Barry reported we are six months into the fiscal year and all is currently on track, with income at 51% of year expected, and expenses at 47% expected. Contributions are at 75% of projected for the capital campaign. Anita moved to approve, Will seconded and financial report was approved unanimously.

Committee Reports and Actions:

Executive: Sharon: met to discuss the move and public meetings

Personnel: Stephanie: did not meet. Children's librarian position to be posted soon .

Development: Catherine: close to meeting our campaign goal. Jennifer has been working diligently on Vermont Bound. Alison Bechdel event will be held in February with RHS students, Lenny and Uncle Dave event and Yvonne and Stephanie event are still in the planning stages

Building: Barry: another AC unit has died. This brings the building to 1 operable unit. Both boilers are back on line and hope to make it through the winter. The \$19000 stairwell work has been tabled. There is still mold in the basement affecting the collection down there and falling plaster on the unusable third floor.

Policy & Planning: Will: presented the "Documentation Retention Policy" which has been updated with better wording and keeps us in compliance with state statutes regarding employee records and other documents. Will moved and Nancy seconded the approval which carried unanimously.

"Gender Neutral Language" documents need to be inclusive, Will moved and Anita seconded that any new policy developed, and as old policies are updated, that gender neutral language be included to use the term "they" when referring to people. Motion carried unanimously

Executive Session: Will moved and Nancy seconded a motion to go into executive session to include Amy and Randal at 7:02PM

Stephanie moved, Jennifer seconded out of executive session at 7:19PM

New Business: None

Adjournment: 7:20PM

Next Board Meeting: Wednesday, February 17th @ 5:15 pm