

Town of Middlebury
Special Town Meeting
Ilseley Library Project Bond Vote
May 6, 2024
Meeting Minutes

Citing the warning to the legal voters of Middlebury, Moderator Susan Shashok called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. She said this would be an informational meeting only with and voting on the Article would be the following day on May 7th.

Shashok asked if there were objections to non-Middlebury residents Town Manager Kathleen Ramsay and Library Director Dana Hart speaking at the meeting, and there were no objections. Shashok then read Article 1:

Article 1 Shall general obligation bonds or notes of the Town of Middlebury in an amount not to exceed Sixteen Million Nine Hundred Ninety-Five Thousand Dollars (\$16,995,000), subject to an anticipated reduction of Eight Million Five Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$8,500,000) from available alternate sources of funding (including fundraising, grants, and energy efficiency rebates), and the anticipated use of local option tax receipts to make annual bond payments in an estimated amount of Four Million Dollars (\$4,000,000), be issued for the purpose of renovating and expanding the Ilseley Public Library at an estimated cost of Sixteen Million Nine Hundred Ninety-Five Thousand Dollars (\$16,995,000)?

Library Director Dana Hart gave a brief informational presentation and said this project has been in the works for many years, and the Ilseley 100 Project Team have been working on this for the past 3 years. She said the Team tried very hard to include the community in every step of the way and have gathered community feedback, so she hopes when the community will see their input when they look at the plans.

She said the plans will increase the library space by about 1/3, and briefly went over the drawings and renderings of the proposed project. She described the new interior spaces and how pleased they were with the proposed bright, first floor space for children, and the new spaces for middle and high school students.

Hart went on to give a breakdown of the way this project is proposed to be financed, with a combination of donations from a capital campaign, State, Federal and private foundation grants, and local option tax receipts. She said this will significantly lower the burden on taxpayers, making the impact on a 20-year bond for \$4.5 million equal to around \$39 per \$100,000 of assessed property value.

44 She then went over the timeline of the project with the hopes to go out to bid in January
45 2025, with construction beginning in April 2025 and completion in July 2026.

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47 Resident Natasha Sen asked for clarification about what the cost would be to not do this
48 project. Hart said early in the process the Team looked at a possible scope of work that
49 would include renovating the existing building and that estimate was around \$5.5 million.
50 She said short of a renovation, just to stabilize the structure and bring it up to code would
51 be between \$2 and \$3 million.

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53 Resident Linda Pitkin (via Zoom) asked if the plans being shown are the final ones, or can
54 modifications still be made. Hart said at this point the large things are pretty set, such as
55 the size and number of rooms and where the areas are located, but there are a number of
56 decisions that need to be made going forward.

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58 Resident Victoria DeWind asked what the next step is, what is the public process going
59 forward will be, and how firm are these designs, since she doesn't feel it's changed much
60 from the original proposal. She doesn't feel there's been much response to public input,
61 and she doesn't know how much input on design they've had, but she would hope there
62 would be opportunities going forward. Hart that there has been a large amount of public
63 feedback, and she feels the Project Team and the design team has taken them seriously,
64 and went on to cite a couple of examples where changes were made based on public
65 feedback, but she had no clear idea of what public meetings will be held going forward.
66 DeWind didn't feel the old part of the library had been integrated into the design well and
67 didn't see how all areas could be monitored. Hart said it would be impossible to have one
68 service desk be able to see all areas, but they feel just having a staff presence on both
69 floors is sufficient, and while it isn't perfect, she is confident the sight lines will be
70 tremendously improved with this design.

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72 Library Trustee member Meg Baker thanked Hart and the Project Team for the many hours
73 they've spent working on this and thinking of all the many attributes that needed to be
74 addressed with the design. She felt the solicitation for public feedback has been
75 incredible.

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77 Linda Pitkin said this design was not her first choice, and she asked for some highlights of
78 why the Team chose this design over the others. Hart said they are very grateful for the
79 other firms who competed in the design competition, and it was hard to have three good
80 designs and having to choose just one. She said the Project Team worked with an
81 independent architectural advisory group who presented feedback on all three designs and
82 while they liked things about all the designs, the thing that really helped move the
83 ReArch/Wiemann Lamphere design into the front was the two-floor scheme.

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85 There were no other comments or questions, so Brian Carpenter moved to adjourn the
86 meeting, and Farhad Khan seconded the motion, and the meeting adjourned at 7:24 p.m.

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88 Results of the May 7, 2024, Australian ballot vote on Article 1:

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90 Total votes: 1156

91 YES votes: 958

92 NO votes: 200

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94 The bond passed.

95

96 Respectfully submitted,

97 Beth Dow

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