

Montague Board of Library Trustees -- Building Subcommittee
28 June 2023 -- Town Hall

Attendance Tricia Perham, lydia ievins (by telephone), Will Quale, Caitlin Kelley, Walter Ramsey, Steve Ellis, David Detmold, (two additional community members?)

Call to order.

4:03pm Meeting called to order.

lydia is present by telephone (quarantining with covid), so votes will be by role call. Given time constraints (meeting room reserved for a different meeting at 5pm), reviewing and approving minutes from past committee meetings will happen after other business if time allows or be postponed to the next committee meeting (spoiler alert: this was postponed).

Review and discuss feedback from potential consultants for the Construction Application Advisory Committee.

Tricia and Walter met with Barbara Friedman. Two other potential consultants replied as not available. Both Tricia and Walter had extremely favorable views on Barbara. Steve reminded us that no matter how many or few job candidates or bids one receives, "you only need one good one" and we shouldn't be shy about making an offer. Specifically...

Tricia appreciated that Barbara was well-versed in the MPLCP grant application process and criteria had visited our Carnegie Library, understands the particulars of small libraries, had good questions for us, gave interesting feedback, and wasn't shy about thinking outside the box. Barbara didn't come in with a pre-conceived notion about what we should do, which is good -- instead, she had an "if it's this, how do we look at this? if it's that, how do we look at that?" mindset. We told her we will have a few local challenges (in that there are both people extremely attached to the Carnegie building and people who think it would be ridiculous to stay in the Carnegie building), and Barbara acknowledged there will always be strong opinions in the community and gave us confidence that she has experience working successfully in such circumstances.

Walter thought Barbara was sharp, well-spoken, a good public-process leader, and knowledgeable about the Massachusetts library program. He observed that of the many communities vying for an MPLCP grant which she could choose to consult for, she seems to want to work with Montague because she sees good potential here and feels we're well prepared. Walter recommended we extend an offer, and Steve concurred noting that it sounds like Caitlin will have a good working relationship with Barbara which is also a key to success. Caitlin confirmed this and noted she has received two great recommendations for Barbara from other area librarians.

We received an estimate from Barbara -- \$15,000 for 5 hours a week, 30 weeks as an estimate -- which we felt may be low. Steve suggested a "not to exceed" contract that can be amended, to provide guardrails. Walter and Steve can draw up or revise a contract for this.

Vote to select a consultant.

Will made a motion, seconded by lydia, to extend an offer to Barbara Friedman of Ashburnam, Mass, to be our consultant for the MPLCP grant application. Role call vote was unanimous in favor.

We then discussed the scope of the consultant's work in more detail, working from and modifying a proposed scope given by Barbara.

Barbara's opinion of the advisory committee was different to ours: five people, including members with building experience, financial savvy, town hall connections, and charismatic community leadership. Barbara said in

Erving these were people who made a written four-year commitment to committee service and were appointed by the Selectboard. Once these people were on-board they really did feel committed.

Steve asked whether this committee have project management structure with expertise on building design, whose mission is to engage with the community, or instead will have community voices but not such expertise? Steve thinks the former is more efficient and less messy, but the burden is then on those committee members to listen to the many voices of the community. He related that the DPW garage committee had 7-9 people and never felt like too many or too few.

Five (Barbara's concept) feels like too slim to all of us, especially if we were to lose one person. Steve gave the example that the DPW garage committee had both Ken Morin and Jason Burbank, whose complementary expertise meant one could be absent without the committee faltering. Moreover, Caitlin recalled the MBLC webinar said seven committee members was the sweet spot.

Ideally, our library tours can include both the formal committee and a focus group of diverse community members -- more people than just "the committee". Our goal will be to form the committee in late summer or early fall, with recruitment beginning as soon as our consultant is on board. (Barbara reminded us in her interview: "it's never too soon to start reaching out to people, and it's never too soon to start fundraising.")

We considered fundraising questions, including what structure is needed to receive donations. The Friends (501(c)3) could do it, but setting up a gift account would also be easy for the town to do. We will get guidance from our consultant and also review whether Caitlin (or other town employees or Trustees) can directly raise money.

As a course of action, we resolved that Caitlin would call Barbara to notify her of our intent to extend her an offer, and that Walter would draw up a contract taking points discussed above into account by the end of the week, making sure the scope of services is very well defined.

This led to a discussion of scope in more granularity. How many focus groups, for instance. With a "not to exceed" contract, we could say "up to five", for instance, without advance precision, which is good because any precise number named now could be wrong. Also, the process for surveys -- who develops questions, who types them in (to the town's surveymonkey account?), can we do this collaboratively, who translates them, etc. (Also, clarify that the data is owned by the town.) And Barbara's expectation was that she would attend two Trustee meetings; we hope to have a closer connection possibly including additional meetings via Zoom. (Also, clarify how travel expenses are handled.)

Caitlin will ask Barbara these questions and get enough answers codified at the outset so everything feels clear and copacetic.

Other items not anticipated.

Anticipated unanticipated items (reviewing past minutes) were postponed for time constraints.

No unanticipated unanticipated items were put forth.

Next meeting.

Monday 24 July 4pm at Town Hall.

Adjournment.

Adjourned 4:57.