

Port Library Board of Trustees  
Special Meeting with Beloit City Council  
May 6, 2010, Guaranty State Bank Community Room

Administrative Assistant Marla Evert took minutes for the Port Library Board.

At 7 PM Mayor Becky Koster called roll for the City Council. Kerri Benson announced there was a quorum. Members of the Port Library Board present were Rick Larson, Kitty Wagner, Sally Williams, Connie Kopsa, Jeri Bates, and Director Rachel Malay. Three members of the media were also present, as were about 15 members of the public.

Mayor Koster asked Rachel Malay to introduce herself; after Rachel gave a short introduction, Rick Larson introduced Port Library Board members present.

Rick Larson was the first to speak from the Port Library Board, at approximately 7:04 PM. He presented the schedule for the Library Board portion of the evening, then passed out packets with information from the Library Board, with the help of Rachel Malay. At about 7:06 PM Rick started his portion of the packet information with a written introduction by the new president of the Library Board, Verlin Kolman. Rick then gave a history of the sites previously considered by the Library Board. After fielding a few questions during his portion of the presentation, Rick asked that all questions for him be held until the end of his presentation. Highlights from the discussion following Rick's presentation included:

- The Library Board is willing to look at either building on the old Youth Center grounds, or renovating the cafeteria, but the Library Board's first choice is a new construction on the 5<sup>th</sup> and Mill site.
- The 5<sup>th</sup> and Mill site would benefit from soil samples.
- The Library Board may lose some funds if a new building is NOT built on the 5<sup>th</sup> and Mill site.
- There was some discussion of building/housing a library on the Youth Center grounds if the jail decides to move to the Youth Center.
- There was a suggestion to do a risk assessment for either the 5<sup>th</sup> and Mill location or building on the Youth Center grounds.
- Questions of ADA compliance and adequate parking were raised; Rachel Malay answered for parking requirements (24 spaces; 2 handicap spaces) but ADA requirements would need to be addressed once a location is determined.
- Member of the media Charlene Watson voiced an opinion that as a graduate of the BHS site formerly located at 5<sup>th</sup> and Mill, she has a preference for that location.
- City Councilman James Crowley asked for definite numbers on what monies might be lost by using a location other than the 5<sup>th</sup> and Mill site, and to see what more definite estimations might be for renovation vs. new building options. He also offered the location of the old First Federal Building as an option to build/renovate.
- Councilman Matt Otte asked if preliminary ideas for a new library included plans for a basement. Rick Larson replied no, in place of a basement the library would construct a safe room on ground level.
- Councilman Craig Cousland and City Attorney Harry Gantenbein asked again what

amount of monies already raised by the library would be in jeopardy if the library did not build at the 5<sup>th</sup> and Mill location. Rick Larson replied there were no definite numbers at this time.

- A member of the public (Don Jones) voiced his displeasure that this meeting did not contain “meat and potatoes” of new library plans – he wanted to see internal building plans, not hear a discussion of possible locations and questions of funding. He also said he had no problem having the library near a jail.
- Rick Larson introduced the idea of a walking path along the west side of the high school stadium, should a new building be built on that side of the old Youth Center grounds.

At approximately 7:48 PM Port Library Board member Kitty Wagner began her portion of the presentation. Kitty showed some aerial photos of the 5<sup>th</sup> and Mill site, and what a possible building in that location would look like. She addressed some previous council questions on what size building would be appropriate, and gave a few assessor’s estimations on what a building approximately 16,000 sq ft in size would cost. Kitty brought up the idea that the stone steps on the 5<sup>th</sup> and Mill building site could be restored and used as a fund raising opportunity for BHS alumni. Kitty also introduced the idea that a safe room in a future library could be partially funded by FEMA. However, no one has talked to an architect yet, so definite building costs are not known. Discussion highlights after Kitty’s presentation included:

- A community member (Don Jones) voiced his opinion that the library should be made a community project, that more effort should be made to raise money from the community for a library. He also stated again that he was more interested on what would be inside a new library than building site or construction costs. He gave several examples of projects the Beloit community has been enthusiastic about in the past, and suggested bringing in local businesses like Sunflower, as larger participants in the construction of a new building. He ended by saying the community needed the same enthusiasm for a library as Beloit residents had for a wellness center.
- Kitty Wagner welcomed suggestions from other members of the audience and Bob Richard voiced his concern about asbestos removal and other site preparation costs.
- Council President Pat Struble wondered about furniture and computer costs for the interior of a building, and if the community could donate funds for those furnishings.
- A member of the public, David Chase, voiced his agreement with Don Jones that more information on costs for the interior of a new building would be needed, and agreed with Pat Struble that the community could take on the costs of interior furnishings.
- Member of the public Don Jones then brought up a discussion of a stick building vs. steel, and suggested that after the walls were put up that local contractors should be used for plumbing, electrical, etc. He suggested keeping the new building simple and cheap.
- Member of the public Jackie Larson stated she was on the committee for the last building, and nothing in those plans were fancy. Mr. Jones replied that the public was not well-enough informed of the costs of a simple functioning building.
- City Attorney Harry Gantenbein suggested we use the cost of the recent hospital expansion as a starting place for estimating building costs..
- An audience member asked about the future possibility of the fire station needing to expand at the 5<sup>th</sup> and Mill location. Kitty replied no one was sure where the debris field on that site started, but agreed future expansion of the fire station should be taken into

consideration.

- Pat Struble reminded everyone that a future library should be thought of as more than just a building to house books.
- Councilman Rick Brown and Kitty Wagner had a short discussion on various building/renovation sites, and James Crowley reminded everyone that this was the point of tonight's meeting; to discuss different building options and sites.
- Councilman James Crowley said he would like to see a cost comparison of building on the 5<sup>th</sup> and Mill location and renovating the Youth Center cafeteria.
- After someone inquired whether the Youth Center cafeteria was an option, City Administrator Glen Rodden replied, "All options are open."
- Several conversations started at once about options for building on the Youth Center campus, the 5<sup>th</sup> and Mill site, and renovating the Youth Center cafeteria. The discussions ranged to estimates on the Youth Center cafeteria heating/AC system renovations, energy efficiency of any new building, and more.
- After the discussions, Kitty Wagner and members of the city council agreed that the Library Board and City Council needed to know definite expenses for building new at the 5<sup>th</sup> and Mill location vs. renovating the old Youth Center cafeteria.
- Member of the public David Chase then said he would also like to see a new building location at the old Youth Center also considered.
- Kitty gave figures for site preparation at the 5<sup>th</sup> and Mill site from the last report from architect Donnie Marrs, and discusses a slab construction vs. a basement.
- Member of the public David Chase then asks Councilman Craig Cousland about a City Council meeting where the "worst case" scenario happens, meaning that dangerous asbestos is found under the 5<sup>th</sup> and Mill location.

At approximately 8:30 PM Port Library Director Rachel Malay started her portion of the presentation. She agreed on the 16-17 thousand sq. ft. building size, and said she would not have a problem with future plans so long as they do not violate Kansas Standard for Public Libraries. She gave current financial figures of what the Library Board has available for a new building. She also mentioned that additional staff would be needed in a larger space. Rachel then went on to discuss possible programming in a new library space, the library's current mission statement, and the average number of people who use the library currently. She wrapped up her presentation by saying a new building would protect the collection better, and allow the library to better archive the local historic documents it holds. Discussion after Rachel's presentation included:

- Member of the public David Chase asked if Rachel Malay would be involved with new building plans. The answer is yes.
- Councilman Rick Brown asked if a survey could be done to see what the citizens of Beloit would like to see for programming in a new space. Rachel Malay said she would be willing to do such a survey, but the city may need to help in administering the survey.

At approximately 8:43 Port Library Board member Jeri Bates introduced herself and made comments about how a new library in Beloit would affect the lives of young families. She also reminded those present that communities smaller than Beloit had effectively built new libraries. She thanked the public for their suggestions during the evening, and thanked the City Council for

attending. Discussion after Jeri Bates' remarks included:

- Member of the public Don Jones asked if the library could double the square footage of the old Youth Center cafeteria with its own money now and expand when needed in the future.
- Member of the public David Chase reminded Mr. Jones that ADA laws must be followed in any new space, and that a new building fitting ADA requirements would cost in total around \$3 million. A short discussion on library square footage between the two men ensued.

At approximately 8:49 Mayor Becky Koster read a letter from member of the public Dina Budke. (Mrs. Budke was not present.) Another letter from Patty K. Ord was read; both letters were in support of a new library building. Mayor Koster then raised the idea of adding an optional donation opportunity to city utility bills so that members of the community could donate to the new library project now if they wanted to. The Mayor also expressed her support of a new building. Mayor Koster and the council discussed briefly the need to know the amount of money involved at each site discussed during the evening so that funding options could be explored. After cost and funding options are determined, then a vote to the public could be considered. Councilman Bob Richard reiterated once the city council had estimates of new building on either the 5<sup>th</sup> and Mill site or renovating the old Youth Center cafeteria, the council could act.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:56 PM.