

FRANKFORT PUBLIC LIBRARY DISTRICT
BUILDING & GROUNDS COMMITTEE MEETING
FRANKFORT PUBLIC LIBRARY
October 24, 2023
4:15PM

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 4:10PM.

II. Roll Call

Present: Trustee Veach, Trustee Schneider, and Director Kowalcze; Trustee Drisko joined at 4:44pm.

Absent: None

III. Introduction of Visitors

Dan Eallonardo, Independent Construction Services, Owner's Rep; Assistant Director Melissa Rice, Business Manager Denise Wargowsky

IV. Minutes for Approval

The Minutes from the Buildings & Grounds Committee Meetings on June 14, 2023 were reviewed and approved by the Committee. Motion from Trustee Schneider and Trustee Veach, all ayes and motioned carried.

V. Old Business

None.

VI. New Business

A. Pest Control

1. Director Kowalcze relayed that the cleaning crew reported spotting a rat under the Circulation Desk on October 22. The Library called out our pest control company for an additional mitigation on October 24. No other sightings or signs have been reported by staff or patrons. Staff are continuing to be vigilant about food in the building and leaving nothing out.

B. Building Assessment: Compiled Project Costs

1. Dan Eallonardo from ICS presented the Compiled Building Costs spreadsheet that he put together from the Facility Assessment completed by StudioGC. Trustee Schneider asked for confirmation that all work on the spreadsheet still needs to be completed. Eallonardo confirmed and indicated that the work that was listed as deferred maintenance was determined by the standards for when the work should have been completed. The spreadsheet indicates approximately \$2.5 million dollars in deferred work, and an additional \$977,000 estimated for Years 2024-2029, and \$980,000 for years 2030-2034. Eallonardo stated that beyond 2034, it becomes difficult to estimate with any level of accuracy. Trustee Schneider confirmed that all things on the list are from the Required and Recommended levels of assessment. There was discussion that some items, like carpeting, could be left in place until there is a safety

hazard, but those items are minimum on the list. There was further discussion that some items will become more expensive if they are done in an emergency and not as part as planned maintenance projects. Eallonardo also stated that these numbers are only construction costs, and do not include design or permit costs, for example. These “Soft Costs” could be 15-20%, but those will be decreased if projects are grouped together for economy of scale.

2. Trustee Veach asked about the capability of our current finances to meet expected maintenance costs for the next five years, and what areas in the budget could possibly be cut to meet those expenses without having to ask for a referendum. The Library currently has \$135,000 in Special Reserve, there is currently around \$210,000 remaining in the Capital Projects Fund, and Director Kowalcze stated that around \$50,000 annually could also be dedicated from the regular Building Maintenance Line. The Committee discussed areas in the Operating Budget that could be adjusted to find additional funds, and items that are fixed such as Utilities, Insurance, Legal Fees and Ads, Loan repayment, etc. Trustee Veach requested that Director Kowalcze look into the Operating Budget and see what kind of cuts would need to be made to meet the needs of the Compiled Project Costs. The Committee determined that Director Kowalcze should look for \$700,000 in the annual working budget to cut, to meet expected maintenance costs for the next five years, in order to meet maintenance needs.

3. Eallonardo discussed options for limited budget or emergency situations, such as handling the projects as funds allow, but reminded that you lose the economy of scale for breaking out projects. Trustee Schneider added that in an emergency situation, library operations would also likely need to be interrupted until the situation was resolved.

4. The Committee also discussed that completing the items on the spreadsheet also only results in maintaining the status quo. None of this represents significant improvements in ways that would benefit Library services.

C. Architect Structural Design Proposals

1. The Committee shared the pros and cons of the four proposals that were received. Trustee Veach liked a focus that Williams Architects and Engberg Anderson had on reconfiguration and remodel, and didn’t jump right to new construction. Eallonardo shared that all four firms would probably be able to do the same types of projects, but they might not have the same starting focus. Eallonardo has personal experience with all four architects.

2. Product Architecture and Design

a. Trustee Veach was concerned that Product Architecture and Design did not give a comprehensive and thorough approach to the project. Trustee Veach reminded all the Committee that the Board needs to be safeguarding the community’s money by reviewing all possible ways to handle the maintenance needs, not simply jumping to a new building, and that a thorough process from the architect to evaluate different building solutions is important. Director Kowalcze shared that Product Architecture and Design has done very good remodels recently in our area, and that the

library directors of those projects shared that their flat organization structure made for good communication throughout the project. However, Product does not have much experience with larger construction projects or referenda, and mostly focuses on remodeling and redesigning existing spaces. There would also be a lot of consultants needed for this project. The Committee concluded that Product would be a great architecture firm to work with, but they are not the right fit for this specific project.

3. StudioGC
 - a. Eallonardo explained that the difference in the proposal from StudioGC may be from overfamiliarity with the project. They have a different approach, because they've already completed the facility assessment, and have come to some conclusions and mentally moved to the next step already. Eallonardo explained that his professional experience with StudioGC makes him confident they would still approach the project similar to the other architect firms discussed. Eallonardo shared that Williams and Engberg are more traditional architects vs StudioGC who may be more forward thinking for libraries. StudioGC and Engberg Anderson have stronger library teams than Williams would, because of the amount of library work that they perform as a percentage. StudioGC is the current preeminent library architect in our area.
 - b. Trustee Veach expressed some reservations regarding StudioGC based on previous experience. The written work had to be sent back for revisions, and the expected costs figures were inaccurate due to an error in the inflation multiplier, which required the Committee to need to ask for corrections. The Committee discussed the previous presentations, and Eallonardo shared that the team would probably be different depending on the shape of the project, and some of the other staff members have additional strengths.
4. Dan Eallonardo suggested a good next step would be to ask the Board to narrow the pool from four to two, and then ask those firms to do a sales pitch at the November Board Meeting. The Committee agreed that would be a good next step that would allow for a full understanding of the firm we might work with.
5. Trustee Drisko joined the Committee Meeting at 4:44pm.
6. Engberg Anderson
 - a. Eallonardo shared that they have a large library group and Engberg Anderson is a nationwide architect firm, vs StudioGC who are more locally based. Trustee Veach asked if they were the only local firm, and Eallonardo shared that he solicited proposals from two other firms who declined to submit proposals due to too much work right now. Eallonardo shared that their nationwide perspective allows for some different ideas on how to approach things.
 - b. Eallonardo stated that Engberg Anderson is going to be very data-driven for evaluation and would dive into statistics to assess what is needed and what

may be underutilized. They will make recommendations based on this process. Engberg Anderson will have a good feel for the pulse of what is coming in libraries. The look of an Engberg Anderson building may be more traditional.

- c. Engberg Anderson was the company that did a new building design project for us in 2007. Assistant Director Rice shared that she had a very good experience with them back in 2007 and that they did a great job of engaging with staff at that time. Eallonardo shared that all of the companies would do some level of staff engagement, but Engberg Anderson might be the strongest in that regard.

7. Williams Architects

- a. Trustee Veach liked the comprehensive, detailed, process-oriented approach of Williams, which considers all aspects. Eallonardo and Director Kowalcze shared that as library work is a small percentage of what Williams Architects does, so the design work may not be as library-focused. The detriment of this is that they will need to do more research to understand library space in a way that is second nature to more library-focused firms. Eallonardo shared that this company was one of the stronger in technical skills. They are very good at addressing technical building issues.

8. The Committee discussed the idea of the “Wow Factor.” Director Kowalcze explained that “Wow factor” doesn’t mean looking expensive, it means being an engaging and welcoming space, and something that the community and staff get excited to engage with. Eallonardo expressed that the Wow factor is important for community buy in on a large project. Trustee Veach cautioned that we can’t be too focused on wow factor. Trustee Schneider expressed that he’s seeing changing demographics in our area, and that we may be missing the engagement by not being a modern-feeling library space. He also cautioned that we also want to be focused on a level of timelessness, since we should be focusing fifty years ahead. The Committee discussed the ideas of light and bright spaces. Eallonardo talked about how you need to evaluate your community to make sure your space is aligned with their comfort levels. Assistant Director Rice stated that in general the community seems to like our library, but there are challenges in layout, the entrance location, and sound traveling, for example. Trustee Veach expressed that the community may not be aware of these physical challenges, and that the vast majority of the library users she has talked with overwhelmingly like the existing Library. She stated that if we ever decided to go for referendum, the physical challenges that exist at the Library would have to be explained to the public because the problems are not apparent. It is important that the community not think that the referendum and building project would be only to create a “wow” library.

9. Eallonardo suggested that if and when firms are invited to attend the Board Meeting, they should be given a bullet point list ahead of time to share what topics we want to be sure are covered. Examples given at this meeting were: referendum support and success at previous referenda, experience with green initiatives or energy

efficiencies, current workload and projects (would we be a priority?), how is quality control handled, and how is communication handled. The Committee agreed this was a good idea. The Board should identify what's important to them and ask the Firms to address those items.

10. Trustee Drisko stated that he was pleased with the work that StudioGC has completed for the Library already, although it is not as polished as the other firms. Trustee Veach brought up the errors on the feasibility study spreadsheet. The Committee discussed that errors occur, but that it is concerning that the mistake wasn't addressed in a timely manner, and that it took several weeks for corrections to be made, rather than an expected 24-hour turn-around. The Committee discussed that this made a conversation about quality assurance and communication an important part of evaluating an architect firm. The Committee also discussed that minor projects get less attention, which is why discussion of workload is important as part of the assessment.

11. Trustee Drisko stated that Williams was a strong candidate if we are not planning on changing the existing footprint. Williams also has a relationship with Frankfort Park District, so they know our community. Director Kowalcze is going to follow up with Frankfort Park District Director Gina Hassett for any input. The Committee discussed space needs for the Library, and the layout of the Library. Since we may need to move the entrance or make other structural changes, the Committee decided that Williams may not be as strong as Engberg Anderson or StudioGC for reinvisioning library operations.

12. The Committee decided to recommend Engberg Anderson and StudioGC to the full Board for a full presentation. Eallonardo suggested that whichever firms are selected would be invited to a full Board Meeting and given a start time and an end time. Eallonardo's suggestion was for 20 minutes to present and 10 minutes for questions, but the Committee discussed setting a different time limit, and Eallonardo stated the times were merely a suggestion. Trustee Veach stated that a longer period of time might allow for a more thorough presentation. The firms would be invited to the same meeting and done back-to-back. Eallonardo said that they could be ready in time for the November Board Meeting, particularly if they were given the list of things to address ahead of time.

D. Building Project Discussion

1. Director Kowalcze asked the Committee to confirm what we are hiring the firms to do. "Evaluation of current library design and facilities, and recommendations to improve those and tackle maintenance needs." Trustee Veach confirmed that we have an understanding of our maintenance financial needs, the firms would be developing a plan for a building project to allow us to compare those maintenance costs vs remodel costs. Trustee Drisko briefly outlined the current building's limitations and design limitations. Assistant Director Rice stated that the architecture firms would be able to come up with options to fit our needs.

2. Director Kowalcze asked the Committee what information the Committee believed was needed for the Board Meeting to allow the full Board to make an informed decision. Committee stated that Eallonardo's spreadsheet outlining the full maintenance costs met that need. Trustee Veach confirmed that Director Kowalcze would bring the

information regarding what kind of budget cuts would be needed to find \$700k in the budget to meet the maintenance costs internally.

3. Trustee Veach stated that we would need to confirm that any firm we work with will be looking at multiple solutions on a sliding financial scale. Trustee Drisko stated that StudioGC's proposal did specifically outline that they would address multiple versions. Trustee Drisko asked if we would be asking for repeat work if we hired them to do this again, but the rest of the Committee agreed that they could explore these ideas more fully. Trustee Drisko expressed that the Facility Assessment presentation included projects that would be at the "maintenance" level of project. Director Kowalcze flagged that Engberg Anderson does not credit their fees forward for a future building project. Williams and StudioGC would credit part of their fees forward to a future project.

4. The Committee returned to the question of what additional information or steps are needed before a decision could be made about if we need to ask the public for funding for a building project. Director Kowalcze stated that this conversation needs to be made by the full Board. Eallonardo stated that the firms we would be inviting need to know how this project would be funded, to guide their work, and if it would be funded via a potential referendum. Trustee Veach stated that we need to look at all alternatives to funding, and not just look at a referendum. Trustee Schneider referenced the StudioGC Facility Assessment presentation and the Jamie Rachlin financial presentation as the preliminary work that has been done to get us to this point.

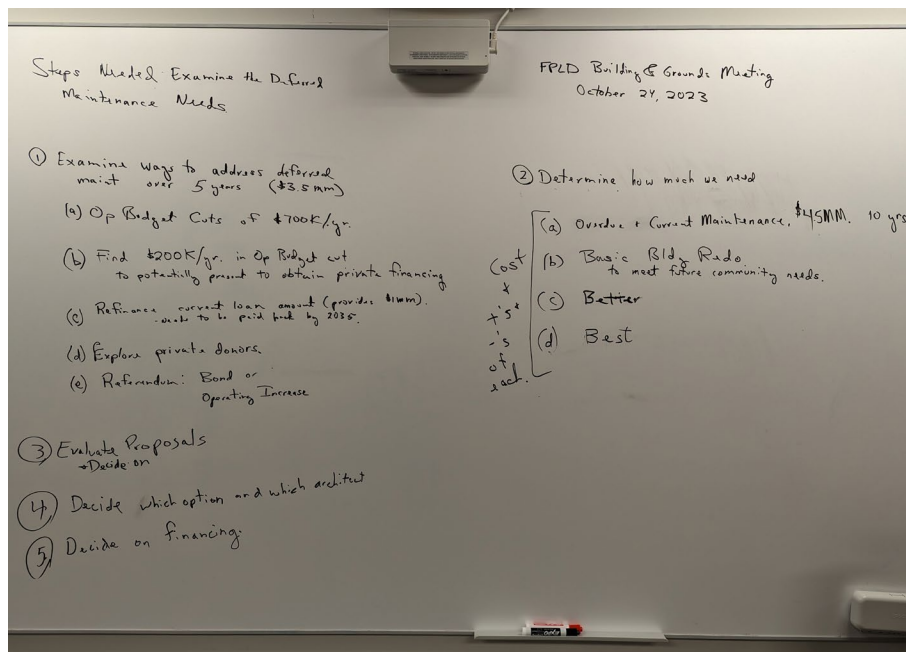
5. Director Kowalcze reminded the Committee that the rest of the Board has not been present for all of the Building conversations, so asked what information the Committee believed should be compiled for the full Board Meeting, because she thought it was important to make sure that the full Board was fully up to speed on all information. Trustee Schneider outlined a recap of the full Building and Grounds Committee.

6. The Committee stated that we are looking at ways to fund the deferred maintenance. Director Kowalcze needs to check the budget to see what an annual \$700,000 cut for five years would result in. The Committee discussed private financing though a separate private loan at about \$200,000 per year in interest payments. The Committee discussed refinancing the current loan and increasing it back to the cap. Director Kowalcze advised that we need to repay the loan in the next ten years, per legal 20-year requirements, and raising the principal at this time would make it difficult for us to repay it in 10 years. The Committee discussed private giving/private donors. Trustee Veach, in discussing fundraising as an option to help cover maintenance expenses, raised the issues of the Library not having an existing foundation, and the lack of anyone spearheading the effort to establish a Foundation, as the person previously spearheading this effort is no longer actively involved. The Committee finally listed referendum a funding source, and the Committee discussed the difference between a bond referendum and an operating increase. Director Kowalcze shared that in the late 1990s, the Library went for 5 operating increases and failed at each vote. The Library went for a bond vote in 1997 and that vote did pass. Director Kowalcze reminded the

Committee that if we moved forward with a bond issue, part of our contract with Jamie Rachlin is that he would be the person we would go through to get the bonds issued.

7. Assistant Director Rice reminded the Committee that drawing out the maintenance projects will also lead to additional library closure time. The Committee reiterated that the purpose of the architects would be evaluating the cost effectiveness and benefits of renovation vs a building project vs the maintenance costs, in order for the Board to make the best decision for the community. Trustee Veach stated that we need to be thinking about not wanting to invest money into something that would then need to be replaced in the short term.

8. The Committee reviewed the list of what they wanted to see on Thursday, outlined below. Eallonardo confirmed that could not attend the October Board Meeting, but is available for the November Board Meeting:



Steps Needed Examine the Deferred Maintenance Needs. FPLD Building & Grounds Meeting 10/24/23

- 1) Examine ways over to address deferred 5 years (\$3.5M)
 - (a) Op Budget Cuts of \$700k/yr.
 - (b) Find \$200K/yr. in Op Budget cut to potentially present to obtain private financing
 - (c) Refinance current loan amount (provides \$1M). -needs to be paid back by 2035.
 - (d) Explore private donors
 - (e) Referendum: Bond or Operating Increase
- 2) Determine how much we need
 - (a) Overdue & Current Maintenance, \$4.5M / 10 yrs
 - (b) Basic bldg redo to meet future community needs
 - (c) Better
 - (d) Best
- 3) Evaluate & Decide on Proposals
- 4) Decide which option and which architect
- 5) Decide on financing

VII. Public Comment
None.

VIII. Adjournment
Meeting adjourned at 6:17PM.

Recorded By:

Amanda Kowalcze
Library Director