

**Belmont Public Library
Belmont, Massachusetts**

2016 JUL 29 AM 9:20

June 29, 2016

Flett Room: 7:00 PM

Minutes

Taken by: Hannah E. Fischer

7:05 PM Meeting called to order by Committee Co-Chair Nancy Dignan

In Attendance

- Elaine Alligood, Pat Bruschi, Clair Colburn, Nancy Dignan, Jenny Fallon, Hannah E. Fischer, Gerry R. Boyle, Kathy Keohane, Anne Paulsen, Peter Struzziero

Introductions

All Belmont Public Library Feasibility Study Committee members gave brief introductions to newest Belmont Library Trustee, Corinne Olmsted, who observed the meeting.

Review of Minutes

Minor corrections to the minutes submitted by Gerry R. Boyle. Meeting minutes approved with a motion from Jenny Fallon, second by Kathy Keohane and approved by all as amended.

Review of June Activities

Peter Struzziero provided an update on the activities of the subcommittee

- Since the last meeting of the entire committee, the subcommittee reviewed all proposals submitted in response to the RFQ for Designer Services for the Conceptual Design Feasibility Study. All three firms that submitted proposals were invited to make presentations on June 20, 2016. One firm, Lerner Ladds Bartels, withdrew prior to the interview. Johnson Roberts Associates, Inc. (JSR) and Verner Johnson, Inc. (VJI) were interviewed by the subcommittee.

Review of Interviews

- VJI came with their team of contractors and demonstrated a clear understanding of the project's needs. They detailed many of their recent projects. However, they have not done a public library and have not done a public building in Massachusetts in the last 5 years. JSR also had a strong interview and the participants at the interview were known to several of the subcommittee members from previous

Belmont Public Library studies. JSR has extensive library experience, completing 31 libraries in Massachusetts alone. Concern was raised by the subcommittee members about JSR's ability to come to the table with "fresh eyes." The subcommittee voted 5-1 that JSR should be ranked as first choice of firms.

- Jenny Fallon encouraged "push-back" for JSR on thinking outside the box and figuring out what new things can be done. Anne Paulsen has visited a local JSR building and commented that most of their buildings are on large sites and while they have received awards, not many of them have been on "constricted sites."
- Peter Struzziero read an email from Joel Semuels which stated that he preferred the JSR proposal.
- Kathy Keohane asked about the one dissent vote in the subcommittee ranking. Pat Bruschi explained that she was that vote, as she was very impressed with VJR and liked that they emphasized bringing something new to the table. During their interview, VJR actively discussed collecting public input from the beginning of the process and Pat thought they would be a great firm to do the study.
- Gerry noted that LLB, the firm that withdrew their proposal, would have provided a good contrast because they have done some really exciting projects. He also reinforced that WE are responsible for partnering with JSR to come up with new ideas. JSR's library experience was exceptional.
- Clair Coburn brought up the point that portions of a feasibility study, such as systemic items (roof, plumbing, etc.) are the same from study to study, so fresh eyes aren't always advantageous.
- Peter Struzziero noted that because JRA wouldn't be starting from scratch, there isn't a need to re-do all the work that has been done and there may be room for monetary negotiations.

Review of Reference Checks

Peter Struzziero detailed the reference check process of the subcommittee. In addition, he read all of the reference questions that were uniformly used when calling library directors, trustees, and town officials of three of JSR's projects (Lithgow, Maine; South Hadley, Massachusetts; and Concord, Massachusetts).

- Peter Struzziero, who did reference checks with the three library directors, reported that the references were overwhelmingly positive and "glowing." JSR was noted for their great vision. Elaine reported on the reference checks for library trustees at the three towns and also found the references to be positive. In particular, JSR's "collaborative" working style and shared oversight were mentioned. The library projects had been completed on time, JSR was adept at suggesting alternatives and promoted sustainable approaches to building. In addition, JSR had an extremely small percent of change orders. Overall, JSR was found to be creative in their design

and helpful with community fundraising. Pat Brusch is waiting to hear back from town officials, many of whom are currently on vacation.

- Gerry Boyle noted that the draft memo handed out to committee members needs to mention reference checks. Summaries can be sent to Gerry and will be made public.

Process Going Forward

- Elaine Alligood discussed that there is more room for creativity this round because the plans will not be dictated by MBLC. Gerry Boyle cautioned that it is prudent to guide the process with MBLC in mind and JSR should keep in mind that the plan might, at some point, go to MBLC. If the town doesn't allocate money for the library, the plan might be shelved and brought out again in 2021 or whenever the next MBLC grant cycle occurs. Jenny Fallon asked if there are different program needs in the library today, as opposed to when JSR did the last study. The group was unanimous in saying that yes, there is now an emphasis on flexibility within the library, as well as use of technology.
- Gerry Boyle suggested that he make initial contact with JSR to go over proposal expectations and to start negotiations. Emphasis should be on tweaking portions of the study and not re-creating the earlier study. Ongoing negotiations could be done by a working group of the subcommittee. It was decided that the working group would consist of Kathy Keohane, Anne Paulson, Elaine Alligood, and Gerry Boyle.

Vote to Enter Negotiations for Hire

- Nancy Dignan moved that the Feasibility Committee enter into contract negotiations with JSR as recommended by the subcommittee. This was seconded by Jenny Fallon, Pat Brusch abstained, and the motion was passed.
- Gerry Boyle will contact VJI to tell them about the committee recommendation.

Next Meeting & Other Business

- Nancy Dignan opened the floor to community members observing the meeting. Library Trustee, Corinne Omstead, agreed with the committee that citizens will be more comfortable hiring the firm that has the most library experience.
- It will take approximately 2-3 weeks for negotiations with JSR and that a public meeting will hopefully be scheduled in 4-6 weeks.
- Pat Brusch, a member of the High School Building Committee (HSBC), shared that the MSBA is aware of the library study. They have requested that any questions about melding the high school and library project should be submitted to the MSBA. Pat offered to compile questions and get them to the HSBC. Questions about a joint library/school project have already been raised by a few citizens. A few questions were brought up by the committee, including: Security – how would students be

kept safe in a public building; Process – how would a joint project be funded; History – has a joint library/school project ever been funded. Peter expressed the need to have these questions answered, if possible, before they are asked at a public meeting.

- Anne Paulsen discussed the library rain garden concept that was previously brought to the committee's attention by Anne Marie Lambert. JSR has done some of this work in Mashpee, MA and it would be great to have them include this as part of the library study. It may be cheaper to do the rain garden as part of a larger project.
- Gerry Boyle mentioned that the committee should publish documents to the website. Peter Struzziero noted that they have been posted on the library site under the "About the Library" section.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 8:40 made by Nancy Dignan, second by Elaine Alligood and approved by all.

The meeting adjourned at 8:40 pm.

Submitted by Hannah E. Fischer