



MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING 3/21/17

The Board of Trustees of the Meridian Library met for a special meeting at 6:00 pm on Tuesday March 21, 2017 in the Large Conference Room at the Library on Cherry Lane.

PRESENT: Megan, Doug (left 6:50pm), Christina, Dustin (left 6:48pm), Howard (arrived 6:20pm)

LIBRARY STAFF PRESENT: Gretchen Caserotti, Audra Green, Macey Snelson, Megan Egbert

GUESTS: Alex Dunn, Brian Cronin and Nicole Kinney from Strategies 360

1. Call to Order: Larsen called the meeting to order at 6:02pm
2. Polling questionnaire presentation:
 - a. Alex Dunn, Strategies 360. Conducted research, questionnaire designed to understand the issues and get at the underlying reasons difficult to pass the bonds capital funding. Goal to understand “no” voters, assess potential future options, connect with voters.
 - b. 8 of 10 voters satisfied with the library, 50% VERY satisfied. Satisfied who visit library once a week is 97%, once a month 91%, once a year 90%.
 - c. A majority believe the district needs more locations, though infrequent visitors are less convinced.
 - d. Belief in the societal benefit provided by libraries tends to depend on frequency of use. 57% significant value to entire community 40% benefit those who use them.
 - e. Support climbs as voters learn more about the measure and hear the needs-case for it. Yet even after positive messaging it falls short of the 2/3 requirement. Before Informed: 54% Support, 38% Opposition. After informed: 62% Support, 35% Opposition – for future, would want to see higher numbers as the base for future campaigns.
 - f. Only among Democrats (70%) and frequent patrons (76%) does support cross the 2/3 threshold. 11% think the library can get by, 82% more capacity needed.
 - g. Not a huge difference in clarifying question on the measure language (from 54 to 56% which means straightforward and clear messaging). When we communicate just how small the tax increase would be, moves needle only tiny bit.
 - h. Asked follow up questions to “no” voters. The survey categories are coded based on open-ended question. Transcribed responses, then categorized the responses and grouped into categories. For most of the “no” cohort it is about money (13% no more taxes, 7% too expensive). Then other objections include Unnecessary, Can be more efficient, etc.
 - i. “No” voters still have a high satisfaction with libraries (74% vs 82% supporters). 31%

don't believe libraries benefit entire community. "No" voters less likely to be library patrons. 42% never visited MLD. Perceptions aren't being driven by actual use/understanding. Please follow up on the demographics of the 42% never use the library (Christina/Alex).

- j. Fiscally conservative electorate rates efficiency and cost savings as the most persuasive argument, followed closely by Meridian's growth and the skyrocketing demand for libraries (not industry standard or other city comparison). Communicating the growth issue to those not seeing it first-hand may be challenge but could be effective.
- k. Efficiency argument performs best overall though differences emerge by frequency of library use. Again, overcrowding rates higher with frequency of use (weekly/monthly). For those who never use library, 31% is not a high number, but they prefer the efficiency message (want their money to go far).
- l. Driving support, 20% important to community; Community, growth, children and education. 15% children & education.
- m. Reasons to oppose the bond; used rhetoric from opposition to test language. 13% can't afford it, 12% can't afford + Freedom Foundation, 10% Irrelevant, 9% no new taxes. These numbers indicate general feeling of confidence about the library. Even if not willing to raise taxes, still expressing overall positive feeling of the library.
- n. Limited opposition messaging and the assumption that a yet-to-be-defined school measure would accompany the library bond on the same ballot reduces support by nearly 10 points. The impact of co-terminus asks for revenue issues is enough to make our measure fail. 59% in 2016 election is impressive given the circumstances.
- o. In a November 2017 projections, 62% support, 53% is another educational measure on the same ballot. Reaching 67% total support would require increasing support among frequent patrons to very high levels and persuading at least a bare majority of non-patrons back to the bond. Not just about persuading no voters, it's about driving up the margins of the folks who are in here a lot. Going to be tough to pass at 24% of library users aren't behind it. Need to do some communication work with those who use the library now.
- p. Co-location question – over 1/3 MORE likely to support, 22% MUCH more likely to support the measure. 45% say no difference. Co-location does not appear to be the deciding factor for many. Co-location is related to the efficiency message that tested well.
- q. Message recommendations Dos and DON'Ts – pull from the slides (pg 43). 30-40% strong no voters (depends on the election). Considerably less likely to use libraries on a regular basis (if at all), few show an understanding of the district's challenges, objections tend to be rooted in knee-jerk reactions to raising taxes.
- r. Q how many polled were voters? Polling firm used voter files, screening respondents first by voter history, looking at past behavior is more indicative of future behavior than asking about their predictions for behavior. Never got above 62% support here.
- s. Q what about 2 libraries vs 1? A yes some responses related to irrelevancy, total cost (too much).
- t. The 2017 election was highly unusual in turning out so many uninformed voters. Tend

- to vote no when don't understand measures.
- u. Q: Are there key words or terms that DO resonate with fiscally conservative community? Answer: Yes, (pg 48) "smart long-term multiple generations, work for future generations. Cost-Efficiency section.
 - v. Question on library to school comparison – Respondents 13% vote only library and 19% only schools, 40% support both.
 - w. Discussion about potential impact of LYNX and many libraries in proximity, Helps increase access for citizens but possibly limiting in support since perception is libraries are bountiful.
3. Next steps discussion
 - a. Request to take time to absorb numbers and think about strategy before making a commitment on focus groups or follow up activity.
 - b. Caserotti email pdf of slide presentation to board – Caserotti will send memo to library staff. Put on the April board meeting agenda for further discussion.
 4. Larsen adjourned meeting at 7:01pm

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED AND APPROVED

Gretchen Caserotti, Library Director

Megan Larsen, Board Chair