Library Committee Meeting with representative of MSA, March 25, 2024

Meeting took place on MS Teams

Present: Kallie, John, Marguerite, Earl, Curt

Guests: Eric Barclay (engineer), Kianna Lindh (grant specialist)

*Note: I’m not sure I got exactly the correct titles for Eric and Kianna, but they are in the right category!*

The Teams meeting started promptly at 1:00 pm.

Eric quickly introduced himself and Kianna, then asked her to discuss the grant opportunity. Very importantly, the specific guidelines have not been released and the dates have been turned into “Spring and Summer”.

There is a very large pot of Federal money available in Wisconsin ($107M? $200M? big number…) and *at least* $20M is going to be allocated for libraries. As we have heard before, the maximum grant size is $4.25M and no matching funds are required. However, if a project exceeds that maximum amount, as ours undoubtedly will, then there is going to be some requirement to demonstrate that we can actually come up with the extra amount. This could be a statement from a bank saying that the Village is authorized to take out a loan but without actually doing that. There should be ways to allow us to energetically do fund-raising so that the Village would not be forced to take out a loan, but we will probably need to have something much more specific than “We will kick our fundraising into high gear.” At this point, the deadline for completion of construction is September of 2026.

Kianna explained that although a lot of details are not yet known, she does know that improving connectivity is an emphasis of this grant. Thus, something that the committee could do in anticipation of applying for this grant is to start telling the story of how this new facility will improve connectivity. Will the internet access be faster? Will there be more ways for the public to connect? John noted that we will have smaller rooms that could be used by patrons for telemedicine. Earl suggested that the large general purpose room should have capabilities for internet presentations to larger groups. Curt noted that physical accessibility is a big driver of the project and Kianna said that is a good point to include.

Kianna and Eric explained that MSA will determine their fee once they learn how complex the grant application will be. Curt asked for a ballpark figure and Kianna said it is was hard to be too specific, but in the range of $6k to $15k is typical for grants.

John asked if MSA will have the personnel capacity to take on our grant if there is a flurry of grants? Eric assured us that they are keeping an eye on this, and Kianna explained that they have a team of 12 people specifically for writing on grants. They were very confident.

Eric and Kianna think that we are in a very good position thanks to all the work that has already been done. Nonetheless, they anticipate it will be very competitive. Marguerite asked about the success rate, but as this is the first time for this particular grant, there is no way to quote any odds, other than “it will be highly competitive” and “you have done a lot to put yourself in a good position.”

MSA does have a lot of experience helping municipalities look for funding, so they will be able to help us look for other grants and foundations to assist with our fund-raising. And to look for other sources if the big grant falls through.

Eric noted that he is scheduled to be on the agenda for the Village Board meeting this evening, and he asked if it was okay to mention that he talked with us? We agreed!

Meeting adjourned at 1:32 pm.

*Minutes recorded by Earl*