

MEETING MINUTES
Olean Public Library Board of Trustees
March 19, 2025
5:30 p.m. – Conference Room

The mission of the Olean Public Library is to assist all people with their educational, informational and recreational needs.

Call to Order at 5:30 p.m. by Board President Lanna Waterman. In attendance were trustees Copella, McElfresh, Shumway, Tenglund, Waterman, and Whitford. From the Library: Angell, Steffen, K. Mahar, and Director La Voie.

1. Waive the reading of the minutes of the previous meetings and approve as mailed.
2. Voice of the Public/Correspondence: None
3. Approval of Warrant Sheets for February 20—March 19:
 #961 Operating Fund: \$95,007.35
 #334 Capital Fund: \$2,430.00

Discussion:

- There was a question about paying the disability and paid family leave policy in full near the beginning of the year. There are no substantial savings, and we might regret paying ahead if adjustments occur during the year.
- According to the utility company, there are increased demands for electricity, and they are repairing and improving the infrastructure, contributing to the increase in everyone's electricity bills. We could end up being \$11,000 over budget if these trends continue.

4. Review of Financial Statements

Discussion:

- Adjustments for personnel have already been made in the financial statements.
- The revenue and expenses for the new computer chairs have been included.
- Discussion continued regarding where items are counted and how things are reported. If a grant is noted at the bottom of a report, it shows a carryover. Grants are restricted because they generally have to be spent on something specific. If you did not budget for it but got a grant during the year, you either have to be able to add additional revenues or track them separately.
- We budget expenses for every revenue dollar, so if we reduce the revenue, we must reduce an expense. We talked about this previously. Would a school district change the overall revenue and expense with a grant? You have to make it equal out.
- The voters vote only on the tax levy, so changes due to grants do not matter in this way.
- It was decided to postpone the 2025 budget line adjustments to the next meeting so we could review previous minutes for the discussion.

MOTION (Tenglund, McElfresh): To approve agenda items 1, 3, and 4. The motion carried unanimously.

5. Director's Report

Trustee Election and Budget Vote Calendar

- After researching when we can legally hold our annual budget vote and when other local votes are scheduled, K. Mahar developed a calendar with a potential voting date of Thursday, June 26. The budget will be made available to the public in May, with a public hearing on Tuesday, June 10 at 6 p.m.
- There will be separate hearings for the bond vote to present the project to the public and answer questions.
- **MOTION (Copella, Shumway):** To approve the 2025 Trustee Election and 2026 Budget Vote Calendar. The motion carried unanimously.
- Bond Schoeneck King will work with us on the referendum language and ensure all our notices and ballots are legally compliant. Further research is being done regarding this. At this point, we are still in the position where we can go out for the tax increase. The attorney got back to La Voie about the language for it—we have language that goes into the notices in the paper and on the ballot if the increase exceeds the tax cap.
- As a type II SEQR action, we would not need to go through the planning board.
- Brochures and letters are being drafted to help inform the public about the project. We will need to be clear on the tax implications. We need to balance our budget and expand, so we must ensure people understand both. The increase for both will likely not hit during the same year because the project bond increase would likely not take effect until the following year.
- We will want to do a couple of presentations on the building project, separate from the annual budget meeting. We need to develop our talking points to help people understand the benefits.
- Trustee Ann Tenglund's term expires on June 30, 2025. She does not plan to run again. Nominating petitions will be available beginning April 28.

February Gifts/Grants/Donations

- **MOTION (Copella, Tenglund):** To accept, with gratitude, the following gifts received in February 2025. The motion passed unanimously.
 - \$14.00 in anonymous donations;
 - \$100 memorial donation for Carole O'Malley;
 - \$180.00 in memorial donations for the parents of Kathy O'Malley.

Friends of the Library

- The Friends' annual beer-tasting fundraiser, FeBREWary, was held on Friday, February 28. It was very successful, with around 120 people attending. That is the largest number for FeBREWary yet. The event grossed \$4,264, between ticket sales, the basket raffle, and the 50/50 raffle! These events typically cost very little, as most food, beverages, and baskets are donated. All of the proceeds from this event will go to the library to help pay for presenters, programming supplies, circulating materials, furniture, technology, and many other items.
- At their March board meeting, the Friends approved giving the library up to \$6,000 to purchase the remaining 32 chairs not covered by our request to CCLS for legislative Bullet Aid (CCLS approved \$3,163 for 10 chairs). The chairs being replaced by the Friends include 14 chairs for the conference room, 14 for the public computers, and 4 for the staff room. The existing chairs are all old, and some are in disrepair.

- The Friends also approved up to \$200 for flowers and soil for the outdoor planters, which Lanna Waterman has agreed to select and plant again this year.
- We are so grateful for the Friends' generosity.
- The date for the annual Peg Bothner Bookmark Awards Ceremonies will be Saturday, April 5. One ceremony will be held at 11 a.m. and one at 1 p.m. The bookmarks will be on display in the Gallery throughout April. This annual event is very popular, with hundreds of local schoolchildren participating. The ceremonies usually pack the house, with approximately 125 people attending each one.

News from the Library

- La Voie attended the Cattaraugus County Nonprofit Hub's meeting on federal and state grant opportunities, covering grant opportunities available to nonprofits and where to find them, best practices for applying, and demonstrating federal and state resources available to nonprofits.
- Angell and La Voie attended a webinar on Innovations in Employee Benefits. Much of what was covered were benefits the library already offers. Other suggestions were not necessarily feasible. However, some ideas to consider would be bringing back our annual staff awards party, and offering "structured fun" and/or "structured quiet" days, which could boost morale without adding cost.

6. Committee Reports

CCLS Board meeting (McElfresh)

- The final funding numbers are in, and the two counties have increased funding (Cattaraugus is up 2%, and Chautauqua increased 3%). It is important that counties are raising funding levels. Increased library system funding must come from the state or the two counties.
- A new state representative joined the board. The board still needs another Cattaraugus County representative.
- CCLS is getting a new phone system, which should provide substantial savings. They might roll it out to the whole system. There is an upfront cost to purchase phones; the rest is subscription-based.
- Randolph is going for a referendum to move to more sustainable funding, and other libraries are doing the same.
- Construction Aid in the Governor's budget is down, while library funding has increased. The library system received just over \$1 million last year in Construction Aid. Our library should consider applying to fund a project that fits our overall building plans.
- The board discussed establishing an assistant director position to allow the director to do more advocacy work.

7. Old Business

Library space needs – updates

- Some discussions on space needs are reported under the Director's Report portion of the minutes.
- We hope soon to have an answer to the proposition and ballot language, along with guidance on the bonding question.

- We are waiting for the architect to prepare the final drawings and cost estimates.
- If we do not have to take the project to the Planning Committee or Zoning, we will still need to notify the code office.

Strategic planning

- The staff looked at it, and not many gave feedback, but those who did, like it. Some would be interested in serving on a branding committee.
- Teens have made statements about how much the library means to them. We can use some of their statements for promotion.
- The last time we did a strategic plan, we put it out for public comment. Copies of the plan and an online form were provided for comment. Overall, we had good feedback.
- The strategic plan would go out before the vote.

CRCF donor bequest

- The attorney executor of the donor's estate is out of town and will be back in early April. After he returns, we will set up a meeting and arrange for Steffen to be a signatory.

2025 Trustee Election and the 2026 Budget Vote Calendar

- This item was covered in the Director's Report section.

Trustee training

- Trustee training will be held on Monday, April 21, at 5:30 p.m.
- The training will cover experiences with a building project capital campaign and typical board training.
- The treasurer and accountant should also attend.

8. New Business

Annual Report to Community

- The annual report is almost finished and will be emailed to the board for review.
- There is no official deadline regarding when the report needs to be finished. Our tradition has been to have it ready before the budget vote.
- The board can formally approve it at the next meeting.

Government Funding Cuts

- Recently, cuts to the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) have been announced. IMLS provides funding to the NYS Division of Library Development (DLD), which is then sent to the systems and regional councils. From there, it is distributed to libraries for certain programs and in the form of grants.
- We are uncertain if these cuts could impact our Central Library Aid. It could also result in a redistribution of library services in a region, with central libraries taking on more if smaller libraries close.
- We do not know how this will turn out, but we must watch these areas.
- Another area of federal funding at risk is the eRate reimbursement for Internet and cable. CCLS files for the eRate funding for all of the member libraries. If this funding is lost, it will hurt every library.

- We need to stress that libraries have been here for everyone during tough times, including recently with the COVID-19 pandemic. We need funding to serve the people.

MOTION TO ADJOURN (Whitford, McElfresh): at 6:33 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Ann M. Tenglund