

Library Director's Report

December 2022

Personnel Updates

Kathy O'Malley and I interviewed 6 candidates for the full-time page position in the Children's Department. We ended up selecting a candidate with a strong background working with children and who seemed to have the right demeanor, perspective, and availability for the job. We offered the position to Nancy Shortz who will start on January 9th. We are hopeful this will be a big help for Kathy in continuing to provide a large variety of quality programs for families and children of all ages. Kathy was stretched very thin; Nancy will assist with program prep, running some programs, Summer Reading activities, weeding, shelving, and other activities.

Patty Shumway, Kathy Elser, and I interviewed 4 candidates for the new Senior Accountant position. We were impressed by their qualifications. We have made a decision on who we would like to offer the position to but are waiting on some things before we proceed with an offer. We hope to have someone in the position by mid-January. John and Diane have offered to help train the new person in the accounting software, ERS reporting, and other duties.

Kim Mahar and I will be interviewing candidates for the part-time library assistant position vacated by Stephanie Beneng (Steph is still working one evening per week, but the majority of her hours need to be reallocated to a new position). Stephanie held important responsibilities including press releases, the online events calendar, sending out notices of our board meetings to the media, and running genealogy programs. She will be difficult to replace; however, it seems that every library assistant we hire comes with unique qualifications that end up greatly benefitting the Library.

Property Tax Check

The 2023 property tax check in the amount of \$1,061,092.00 was received and deposited into the Exchange account on November 23rd.

CCLS E-Rate Reimbursement

As noted in an email to the Board on 12/10, a payment in the amount of \$22,915.80 was erroneously deposited by USAC into the Library's Exchange account at Community Bank. This was in actuality an E-Rate disbursement for CCLS. OPL used to apply for E-Rate reimbursements every year, and so USAC has our bank account information on file. In 2018 we also received CCLS' E-Rate reimbursement, so this is not the first time this has happened (although it was surprising it would happen again after so many years). The Library is cutting a check to CCLS in the same amount to reimburse them for this payment.

NYS Retirement System Bill

The bill for our 2023 Retirement System payment was prepaid in December 2022, in the amount of \$50,532. The prepayment saves us approximately one percent on the total amount owed, which would otherwise have been \$50,895 (we budgeted \$65,000). In the proposed 2023 budget, we have budgeted \$65,000 for the December payment for 2024. We recently received the estimate from NYSLRS for 2024 in the amount of \$59,814.

NYS Construction Aid

Bids for replacing the two remaining 30-year-old rooftop HVAC units were due to the Library on Monday, November 7th. However, our clerk-of-the-works for the project, Curt Wallace, did not show up for the scheduled time of 4 pm. I have since heard from him (he was ill that day), and per the Board's request, he will put out a new RFP soon. He was holding off until after the Thanksgiving holiday to repost it, so it should go out any day now. We only received one bid on 11/07, which the Board did not open. The unopened bid has since been returned to the company that submitted it. They can rebid in the next round without worrying that their original bid was viewed.

Friends of the Library

Giving Tuesday was a great success this year! The Friends raised their highest amount ever on this day—a total of \$4,625! This is approximately \$1,300 more than last year, and around \$4,300 more than the year before! It's so exciting to see the reach the Friends are gaining in this annual event, not to mention their two annual fundraising events at the Library (Read Between the Wines and FeBREWary). These 3 events alone are garnering nearly \$18,000 annually, and that's in addition to their 2 annual newsletter/membership mailings. We are so fortunate to have this hard-working group of volunteers partnering with us. Since May, they have given nearly \$20,000 to the Library in support of circulating materials, programs, services, technology, and more. Thank you to everyone who gave!

The Friends held their annual holiday dinner meeting on December 1st at the Bartlett Country Club. It was a wonderful time to celebrate their big successes this year!



News from the Library

On Tuesday, Dec. 12th, I attended an event, along with outreach librarian Sheryl Soborowski and page Bob Dandrea, at St. Bonaventure University to advocate for library funding in the upcoming NYS fiscal year. Senator George Borrello and Assemblyman Joe Giglio were in attendance, as were representatives from WNYLRC, Erie2 BOCES, CASLS, CCLS, local school districts, and SBU. We discussed how increased operating aid and Construction Aid have helped libraries across the state, especially with the massive increase in the cost of doing business; however, we are still at 2006 levels in terms of operating aid, and the question was

asked why libraries are treated so much differently than schools. Libraries are also chartered by the NYSED Board of Regents, yet schools have received much larger annual increases than libraries for many years now. Also, while Construction Aid has increased by \$30M in the past few years, it is grossly inadequate when compared to the needs of aging public libraries across the state.

I focused my points on the two construction projects we have coming up—the replacement of the two remaining HVAC units, and the security cameras and lighting. Without Construction Aid, replacing large mechanicals would take a huge bite out of our reserves; some libraries would not be able to do the upgrades at all. I talked about the increased investment we've had to make in security—cameras to monitor areas inside and outside of the building that are either unstaffed or high-traffic locations where problems are more likely to occur, and lighting outside, in part to help staff and patrons feel safer at night. I also pointed out that we've had to hire security for the majority of our open hours, as we've had a big uptick in drug use and violence in the Library over the past couple of years. The increased State Aid has provided slightly more revenue to help offset these costs, but it's not nearly enough to cover all of the increased costs we've seen in recent years.

Library advocates are asking for State Library Aid of \$147.1M (currently at \$99.6 million) and Library Construction of \$69.4M (currently at \$34 million).