

Library Director's Report

February 2023

Audit

The annual audit of the Library's finances will be presented at our meeting by Ed Bysiek.

Trustee Election and Budget Vote Calendar

The Trustee Election and 2024 budget vote is scheduled for the first Tuesday in May (May 2, 2023) which will be held at the Library. Polls open at 9 am and close at 8 pm. Trustee Larry Sorokes' term expires in June 2023. We should reach out to the individual who expressed interest in running for his seat to be sure they pick up a petition and turn it in on time. Trustee Laura Whitford has to run to finish the term she was appointed to in 2022, of which one year remains. Therefore, one of the terms on the ballot will be for a one-year term, while the other will be for a five-year term. Whoever gets the most votes gets the longer term.

Petitions for nomination to the ballot for Library Trustee will be available at the Library on March 2nd, along with applications for absentee ballots. The budget hearing will be held on Tuesday, April 18th, at 6 pm.

2024 Budget Planning

Due to the fact we are asking for a tax increase for 2024, we will have to approve the 2024 budget in March 2023, which will be voted on by the taxpayers in May. Kathy Elser, Heather Angell and I have been reviewing 2022 revenues and expenditures, along with the 2023 budget, to try to forecast and develop a reasonable budget for 2024.

Many factors are being considered, including the likelihood of the NYS minimum wage and minimum exempt salary continuing to increase, as well as possible changes to State Aid, changes in revenues from library charges and fees, increased fuel and utility costs, postage, and other inflationary pressures affecting spending.

A Finance Committee meeting should be scheduled soon to review budget scenarios, including wages and salaries. Normally, the Finance Committee makes recommendations as to the wage and salary line, and then a Personnel Committee meeting is called to make its recommendations. The full board will vote on the budget in March. If for some reason there is not agreement on the budget at the March meeting, then a special meeting will have to be called afterwards to vote to approve a budget to put before the voters in May. Normally, this process starts sooner so that the full board can consider a proposed budget in February, but with not having a full-time accountant in the business office until mid-January, we were not able to work on this sooner.

There will be a public hearing in the Library on April 18th for constituents to ask questions about the proposed budget. While the Director runs the hearing, it is recommended that Trustees also attend, particularly the President and Finance Officer, to help answer questions and show support for the proposed budget. Usually, a reporter from the OTH attends and interviews Library officials about the budget. I have also requested the Treasurer and Senior Accountant attend the hearing.

NYS Construction Aid

On December 28th, \$228,122 was deposited into the Library's Broadband bank account. This represents 90 percent of the Construction Aid we were awarded this year to replace the two remaining rooftop HVAC units. We received 2 bids on the project, which were opened at the Jan. 18th Board meeting. We have 30 days to respond to the bids, meaning, a response should go out tomorrow (at latest on the 17th).

As reported to the Board in late January, I spoke with Jan Dekoff at CCLS and Lauren Cardinal from the Division of Library Development about the possibility of using the Construction Aid for a different purpose, even though there are still some significant unknowns to that alternative use of the Aid. Because we began work toward use of the Aid by putting a project out to bid, we are within the 180-day requirement to start the project. An application can be amended after the start date to change the parameters of the original project. We have until June 30, 2027, to complete the project, so there is plenty of time to consider other options. For these reasons, I suggest we turn down both of the HVAC bids until we have made a firm decision as to what project we plan to go with. Curt Wallace will provide me with a template to use to notify the contractors. He advised that an email notification should suffice.

Staff Development Day

We have a tentative date for this year's Staff Development Day (we have to get the mandatory NYS sexual harassment prevention training scheduled early). The date we are currently looking at is Friday, Sept. 15th from 8:30-4:30. As you may recall, last September a number of staff members requested the training be moved to September. August is problematic due to the busy Summer Reading Program, scheduled late summer vacations, and people involved in farming. Hopefully, we won't discover there are new problems with a September date. I'll get the date out to staff as early as possible, so they can try to arrange to have that day available to attend the training. As soon as the date is firmed up, I will notify the Board.

YMCA Partnership Opportunity

In January 2018, the YMCA approached OPL about entering into a corporate partnership with them, which entailed a membership discount to the Y for OPL staff. The Library could essentially offer a benefit to staff, wherein the Library pays \$10 toward each interested employee's monthly membership, while the Y also paid \$10 and offered a "no-join fee" option for the participating staff (at the time, depending on membership types, staff would pay out-of-pocket anywhere from \$9 to \$20 per month). The Board agreed it was a nice benefit to offer, especially as it helps to contribute towards a healthy workplace. A couple of staff members took advantage of the discounted program. In 2019, however, the Y contacted us saying they had to end the program for any employer who did not have at least 5 employees enrolled. We were unhappy with the Y's decision, given that we were offering many library-outreach programs to them and participating in many of their events.

The Y, whose management has largely changed since then, has once again reached out to OPL about reentering the program. They were very apologetic about how it was discontinued by prior management. It would entail the same \$10/\$10 contribution, and no-join fee, with employees contributing anywhere from \$26-\$43 per month, depending on membership type. The Board should decide whether or not they want to consider offering this as an employee benefit again.

Friends of the Library

The Friends will hold their annual beer-tasting fundraiser, FeBREWary, on Friday, Feb. 17th from 7-9:30 PM at the Library. Tickets are on sale now—one for \$20, two for \$35, and \$10 for designated drivers. All of the proceeds from these events go to the Library to help pay for presenters, programming supplies, circulating materials, furniture, technology, and many other needed items that are not covered by our normal operating budget. Thank you to the Board for donating a basket to the popular basket raffle – the raffle pulls in a lot of money at these events. As usual, the Library will also be donating a basket. I was interviewed by the Chamber for a Facebook Live event on Feb. 8th to help promote the event.

News from the Library

The Library was contacted by Healthy Cattaraugus County in January to do an interview on how the Library helps support young people, especially teens, to make good choices, especially around drugs and alcohol. I talked about our support of families in providing early literacy and STEAM programs to provide a strong head start to their education, including the Summer Reading Program and how it keeps young people engaged and learning throughout the summer months when they are out of school. We talked about our popular teen programming offerings, the dedicated Teen Room, and the Teen Advisory Board which gives teens a voice in Library offerings and resources we purchase for them. The Library is a safe space for teens to come after school and on the weekends. We also talked about programs for adults, as we have educational and recreational outlets for people of all ages. I mentioned the opportunity for HCC to partner with the Library to spread their message to the community through programs, displays, and outreach tables.