

MEETING MINUTES
Olean Public Library Board of Trustees
May 31, 2023
5:30 pm – 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 pm by President Lanna Waterman. In attendance were trustees J. Mahar, Shumway, Sorokes, Tenglund, Waterman, Whitford, Treasurer Elser, Assistant Director 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:
 - Correspondence from Ryan Palmquist regarding an incident in April at the Library.
3. Approval of Warrant Sheets April 20-May 31:
 - #937 Operating Fund: \$136,774.34
 - #312 Capital Fund: \$1,355.00Discussion:
 - Everything was in good shape. It is helpful to have all the details in the report.
 - A payroll error was fixed; when an employee was hired a while ago, the social security number was inadvertently entered incorrectly. This was fixed and required filing new quarterly reports.
4. Review of Financial Statements
Discussion:
 - We received the Burt Foundation grant and a refund from Utica.
 - The second O'Connell check was deposited (more details below).
 - There was no significant change to the balance sheet.
 - Diane and Kathy met with Heather to go over the chart of accounts. Heather has also attended additional training to set up the balance sheet not to look so corporate and instead reflect better on how public funds are tracked.

MOTION (Sorokes, Tenglund): To approve Agenda Items 1, 3, and 4. The motion carried unanimously.

5. Director's Report
 - 2023 Trustee Election/2024 Budget Vote
 - The vote on the tax increase was successful, with 147 in favor and 38 opposed (a 79 percent approval rating, which is very good). There were 143 ballots cast in person, while 42 absentee ballots were mailed in.
 - Trustee Laura Whitford was elected to a 5-year term; this is the term opening up with the retirement from the Board of Trustee Larry Sorokes at the end of June. Laura received 136 votes. Gretchen Copella was elected to a 1-year term, which is what remains of the term Laura filled after John Bartimole resigned from the Board in 2022. Gretchen received 130 votes. Both terms begin on July 1. Sadie Jay-Edwards, a third candidate who ran for one of the two open seats, received 72 votes.

NYS Budget

- Library funding levels were held flat at FY 2022-2023 levels. The governor had proposed a cut of \$3.5 M, while the Assembly and the Senate pushed for an increase.
- Library Construction Aid will remain at \$34 M.
- With increased fiscal pressures due to inflation and significant annual increases to the minimum wage, flat funding will mean libraries will likely have to cut spending to stay within their budgets.

Grants

- As reported in April, the Library received a check in March from the Frances Bean O'Connell Art Program Fund at the Erie Community Foundation in the amount of \$3,846.00. This is an annual grant that we receive from the endowment set up by Frances Bean O'Connell's son Kevin O'Connell to support arts and crafts programs at the Library. In addition, K. O'Connell said the Library would receive a second check for \$5,336.00 from another donor-advised fund to supplement the first grant. We received the second check in May; it was written from the O'Connell Family Fund, also at the Erie Community Foundation, bringing the total 2023 grant to \$9,182.00. This funding allows us to offer high-quality arts and crafts programs that draw many participants; many of these offerings have long waiting lists. Because we have this gift to work with, we have begun offering a second class for the ones with long waiting lists to serve our patrons better.
- We also received two checks for \$100 each from the Bush Family Charitable Fund. These are grants we receive annually from the donor-advised fund. They are unrestricted, so the funds can be used wherever they are needed most.
- We are so grateful for this generous support. Thank-you letters have been sent out to both benefactors.

Gifts and Donations Policy [Action Item] [SP Goals 1&2]

- While the Library has written guidelines and procedures for accepting gifts and donations, there is no official policy in place. We have had numerous requests in recent years from people wishing to give gifts of items other than circulating materials, including furniture and artwork. While we make every effort to accept all gifts and donations offered, not all are ideal for the Library, so having a policy explaining our rationale for accepting or rejecting gifts would be helpful.
- Additionally, when artwork is donated to the Library, it is not unusual for donors to request appraisals of the work so they can include it when they do their taxes. We cannot provide appraisals, as they are cost prohibitive, nor do we accept artwork for its monetary value, but only if it is of local interest. We also get questions/complaints from donors when they discover that a book donated to the Library as a memorial years earlier has been weeded from the collection.
- The Board reviewed a draft policy.
 - In the interest of kindness, it was suggested to change the word "reject" to "decline" at the bottom of page one, under the gifts of furniture and equipment section.
- **MOTION (Whitford, J. Mahar):** To approve the Policy on Gifts and Donations. The motion passed unanimously.

Non-Resident Library Card Fee [Action Item] {SP Goals 1, 2, 3}

- For years, the Library has charged out-of-state residents a \$10 annual fee for signing up for and renewing their library cards. This does not apply to out-of-state residents who work or attend school in NYS.

- Neighboring libraries, including Allegany and Portville, have eliminated out-of-state card fees, so Pennsylvania residents go to those libraries to sign up for a card to avoid the OPL fee.
- Given that other libraries are eliminating the fees and there is no law requiring that we charge, the director recommended that OPL also eliminate the fee.
- **MOTION (Tenglund, Sorokes):** To eliminate the non-resident fee for obtaining a library card. The motion passed unanimously.

Friends of the Library [SP Goals 1, 2, 3]

- The Friends approved the annual \$1,500 gift to help support the Summer Reading Program. The money is used to pay for presenters for children's programs in July and August.
- As mentioned in April, the Friends approved a \$1,331 gift for cabinets in the Children's play area and \$352 for a revolving media tower to display Manga books that are popular with teen patrons.
 - The cabinets have been installed and helped keep the area neat and organized. Sorting and organizing toys in the cabinets is also a brain-building activity for children.
 - The Manga media tower is located outside the Teen Room, and the teens are using the collection.
 - We are grateful for the generous support of our Friends Group.
- The Friends paid for flowers for the Library's outside planters and did the planting this past weekend.
- The annual Bookmark Awards Ceremonies took place on Saturday, May 6, with one ceremony at 11 am and the other at 1 pm. The morning event celebrated winners from the Olean school district, and the afternoon event celebrated winners from the Portville and Allegany-Limestone districts. Approximately 125 people attended each ceremony. The contest is beloved by area students and their families. The bookmarks were on display in the Gallery throughout May

News from the Library

- The League of Women Voters donated two upholstered reading chairs, a decorative shelf, and a quilt in honor of Barbara Chew, who passed away in 2022. The donation is housed in the Children's Department. The LWV held a ceremony on Saturday, May 20 to dedicate the new reading area. Approximately 75 people attended, many of whom were Barbara Chew's relatives who came from all across the country to participate in the ceremony.
- The Library observed National Library Week from April 24-29. Thirty people wrote on hearts (what they love about the Library), which were turned into a display. Seventeen children and teens participated in daily scavenger hunts throughout the Library. They learned where to find things in the Library and earned a prize for completing the hunt. There were three raffle baskets, one for children, one for teens, and one for adults; 354 tickets were put in by patrons hoping to win.
- Alijah Fox has been updating the Teen Room using the recently awarded Burt grant funds. She purchased nine new chairs/seats to replace the old bean bag chairs. The new seating will accommodate more kids in the room, as the bean bags took up a lot of space. She also purchased a new Nintendo Switch Lite, allowing the teens to play various new games in the room. The Teen Advisory Board has been assisting in deciding what to purchase for the room to keep it fun and appealing to that age group.

6. Committee Reports: None

7. Old Business

Library space needs – updates [Strategic Plan Goals 1&3]

- **MOTION (Whitford, Sorokes):** To enter executive session to discuss library space needs at 5:45 pm. The motion carried unanimously.
- **MOTION (Tenglund, Whitford):** To leave executive session at 6:04 pm. The motion carried unanimously.

Library investments (Shumway/Elser) [SP Goal 2]

- Investment guidelines require us to safeguard our funds in the public interest. If, for example, bank or trust fees were to exceed interest, we would lose principle, which would not be protecting our funds.
- As each of our CDs mature, it would behoove us to move them from the trust account to the commercial side of the bank to reduce fees and therefore any risk of losing principle. One matures in August and two in November. Two additional CDs will mature in 2024.
- As a public entity, we cannot invest in the market.

8. New Business

Approval of Voting Results: Trustees and Budget

- **MOTION (Sorokes, Tenglund):** To approve the results of the May 2, 2023 vote on the Library budget increase for 2024 and to elect two Library Trustees as follows: Budget vote increase for 2023 of \$37,704 passed with 147 Yes votes and 38 No votes. Elected to the Library Board of Trustees to a 5-year term, Laura Whitford – 136 votes; elected to a 1-year term, Gretchen Copella – 130 votes. The motion carried unanimously.
 - Under election rules, the library clerk has to certify this within 24 hours of the vote next year. The Board will need to hold a special meeting to certify the election and budget vote results. At that same meeting, permission can be given to send the letter to the school district.
- **MOTION (Whitford, Sorokes):** To authorize the Library Director to notify the Olean City School District by letter that the Olean Public Library requests an increase for its 2024 budget of \$37,704 and to request the school district raise by tax levy the annual appropriation of the sum of \$1,098,796 as authorized at the May 2, 2023 vote by school district voters. The motion carried unanimously.
- **MOTION (Tenglund, Shumway):** To appoint Sorokes to present a slate of officers at the June 21, 2023, reorganization meeting of the Olean Public Library Board of Trustees. The motion carried unanimously.
- **MOTION (Sorokes, Shumway):** To appoint Diane Weatherell as Treasurer, whose term will begin on July 1, 2023. The motion carried unanimously.
 - She has government accounting background and has worked with our business office in the past.
 - Elser has put together a duties list and a calendar of duties throughout the year.
- **MOTION (Whitford, J. Mahar):** BE IT RESOLVED that the Olean Public Library hereby establishes the Standard Work Day for all Library employees as 7.5 hours/day. The motion carried unanimously.
 - The need for this was noted when retirement system issues were studied. It is in the employee handbook, but there also needs to be a board resolution.

Personnel Matters [Action Items]

- **MOTION (Whitford, Tenglund):** To move the Coordinator of Children and Family Programs to exempt status. The motion carried unanimously.

Meeting Rooms Policy updates [Action Item] [SP Goal 3]

- The Library has had requests to have after-hours events. It has been a long time since there was an after-hours event, and it is good to update the policy.
- Part of the reason for a charge is the need for a staff member. We would charge only for the extra hours past closing.
- It was decided to raise the hourly fee from \$30 to \$50.
- We are limited to four alcohol permits per year, which are used by the Friends or groups such as the Chamber with a Business After Hours. These events were not held in a meeting room. The no alcohol policy would apply to the meeting rooms.
- A discussion ensued regarding whether it would be good to have an after-hours policy. The motion is to update the existing policy. The policy requires the director's permission.
- **MOTION (Tenglund, Whitford):** To update the Meeting Rooms Policy as follows:
 - Raise the fee from \$30 to \$50.
 - Add after the second sentence in item #4: "Alcoholic beverages are strictly prohibited."
 - Add at the end of item #5: "Access is limited to the meeting room, restrooms, and building entrances/exits only. After-hours use will only be permitted if a Library staff member is available to unlock and lock the building and must be present in the building for the duration of the event."
 - The motion passed unanimously.

MOTION TO ADJOURN (Tenglund, Sorokes): To adjourn at 7:01 pm. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann M. Tenglund