

# **Library Director's Report**

## **September 2023**

### **NYS Construction Aid**

New exterior lighting and upgrading of the existing exterior lights, which was part of our 2022 NYS Construction Aid application, has been completed. It has resulted in a huge improvement at night, with both parking lot areas, the green space, and the Laurens Street side of the Library being much better lit. This is especially helpful given that in recent months the Library's green space became a popular spot for drug users to hang out after hours. This was in part due to increased police presence in local parks at night, and to the presence of a "drug house" one block down on Laurens. The police have started patrolling around the Library at night, and they asked us to turn off our WIFI during our closed hours, which we agreed to do. They also asked us about adding more lighting, which we told them we were about to install. All of these measures seem to have mostly eliminated the problem.

The other part of the 2022 project is to install an upgraded security camera system, which will include additional cameras on both the exterior and interior of the building. That portion of the project was quoted at \$25,222, with our portion of the expense being 25 percent of that. Unfortunately, we just learned that the data cabling cost for the cameras was not included in the quote we submitted to CCLS as part of the grant, as we were told by Mike Jones at the time that he could get E-Rate reimbursement for the cabling. He recently notified us that it is not E-Rate eligible, meaning we will pay approximately \$15,000 for the data cabling, making our contribution towards the grant substantially more than originally anticipated. Work on the cameras has not yet started.

The State recently announced official approval of funding for the project, and we should receive 90 percent of the total within the year. Once the entire project is completed, we'll receive the final 10 percent of the funding (which is 75 percent of the total estimated cost).

### **Personnel Updates [Action Item]**

Teen and Adult Programming Librarian Alijah Fox submitted her letter of resignation on September 5<sup>th</sup>, with a final day of September 21<sup>st</sup>. We ask professional staff to give 30 days' notice when leaving but unfortunately were not given that in this case. We met with programming staff on Staff Development Day, with Alijah providing details of all of the upcoming programs and Gallery exhibits she has planned, and we now feel better equipped to ensure all of these are covered and will be well promoted. Her other responsibilities have been divvied up for the short term until we can figure out how we plan to hire for her position.

Kim and I are currently interviewing to fill the vacant evening building attendant position (i.e. security and cleaning). We hope to make a decision and offer the job to one of the candidates this week.

Nighttime cleaner Thomas (Chip) Dandrea is out on medical leave again. This has put a lot of pressure on our daytime building attendant to cover extra cleaning duties, which he has been doing to the best of his ability given his own work limitations he must adhere to. We hope with hiring the evening building attendant more of the cleaning duties will get done; otherwise, we may have to hire a temporary nighttime cleaner. Some duties have to be done when the building is closed, such as vacuuming and mopping, for noise and safety (slip and fall) reasons.

### **Annual NYS Property Tax Cap Filing**

On September 7<sup>th</sup>, I filed our annual tax cap form with the NYS Comptroller's Office. In our 2023 tax vote (for FY 2024) we included the available carryover from 2023 in the amount of \$16,482. With PILOTS and Retirement System exclusions, and a levy growth factor of 1.02 percent, our total allowable tax levy was \$1,102,687. We asked for \$1,098,796. Therefore, in 2024 our carryover amount will be \$3,891.

### **Employee Handbook Updates [Action Item]**

Under the "Probationary Period" and "Performance Review" sections of the Employee Handbook (pages 3-4; see attached), a couple of corrections should be made. Under "Probationary Period," the Handbook reads "Upon successful completion of the probationary term new employees become eligible for any pay increase that became effective on January 1 of the year following the date of hire." In practice, all employees receive the same percentage pay increase for their positions on January 1, regardless of provisional/probationary/permanent status. Under "Performance Review," the Handbook states "Pay raises may be based on performance reviews." We no longer base pay increases on performance reviews. Both phrases should be removed from the Handbook.

### **2024 Holiday Schedule [Action Item]**

The 2024 holiday schedule is attached for the board's review and approval. No changes have been proposed to the schedule.

### **CCLS Annual Meeting**

The CCLS Annual Meeting (see attached flier) will take place on Wednesday, October 11<sup>th</sup> from 3PM-@ 8PM. The first part of the meeting, 3-5 PM, will include workshops for staff and trustees. I was invited to present on our experiences and response to the First Amendment audits that took place at OPL. However, a conflict arose and so Kim Mahar will be presenting in my place. She'll cover the trainings and discussion we had at staff meetings prior to the audits, as well as the updates we made to our Photography and Videorecording Policy to better equip ourselves for those situations. The evening part of the meeting will run from 5:30-@ 8PM, consisting of a cash bar, the annual business meeting, dinner, and the keynote address, which will be given by Shelley Jack, owner of Shebe Marketing; she will discuss "Marketing for Non-profits." If any trustees wish to attend, please let me know as soon as possible. I must rsvp by October 2<sup>nd</sup>.

### **Friends of the Library**

The 5<sup>th</sup> annual "Read Between the Wines" fundraiser took place on Friday, September 8<sup>th</sup>. It was another huge success! While there were slightly fewer people in attendance than last year, earnings were actually higher this year, making it the most profitable fundraiser yet! They collected \$2,821 from ticket sales, \$1330 from the basket raffle, and \$237 from the 50/50. Everyone seemed to have a really nice time.

The Friends decided to cancel their September board meeting. They will meet again in October.

The beer tasting fundraiser, FeBREWary, is scheduled for Friday, February 9<sup>th</sup>.

### **News from the Library**

On behalf of the staff, I wish to sincerely thank the Board for the wonderful luncheon provided on Staff Development Day. Everyone really enjoyed it, and the choices allowed everyone to have something regardless of dietary restrictions. The staff truly appreciates it. Thank you also to trustees who were able to take time away from their busy schedules to spend some time visiting with and getting to know the staff. The day itself went very well. There were important trainings, staff asked a lot of good questions, and we were able to fit in planning time for temporarily redistributing Alijah's programming, social media, and Gallery responsibilities until we hire someone new.

On September 6<sup>th</sup>, a plaque was installed in the Gallery in honor of the Frances Bean O'Connell endowment. A couple of Kevin O'Connell's family members had visited the Library and wondered about a plaque, and so Kevin and I spoke and decided on one that we agreed would be fitting for the room. He wanted something modest in size and appearance, and he provided the wording. It is very nice. Take a look at it the next time you're in the Library. I plan to do a short writeup about in the October newsletter.