

Library Director's Report

December 2023

HVAC Maintenance - Update

We signed the agreement with Mazza to perform the annual maintenance on our HVAC system. We decided on the guaranteed lifetime protection package for an annual cost of \$15,840 that includes all repairs throughout the year. Given what we've been spending on repairs, we felt this was the more economically prudent option and will allow us to more predictably budget for building operations and maintenance. The initial kickoff meeting was held on Friday, 12/15. Heather, Kim and I attended, as we are the ones most likely to place calls and interface with the maintenance crew members.

Mazza will repair the 3 failing crankcase heaters in the rooftop units late this year or early in 2024 to prevent refrigerant from migrating into the oil. They identified two other repairs that need to be made that are outside of the maintenance agreement (in other words, they pre-existed the agreement). Once these repairs are made, including a fairly costly repair to the AC system scheduled for the spring, the contract will then completely cover the entire HVAC system. They also offered to give pricing on replacement of the two older units. If we go that route then we wouldn't complete the AC repairs in the Spring.

Property Tax Check

The 2024 property tax check in the amount of \$1,098,796 was received and deposited into the Exchange account on November 14th. Jenny Bilotta also notified us that our 2024 PILOT amount will be \$1,942.80 which we should receive in late December/early January. We had budgeted \$1,182 for 2024, which was what we received in 2023.

NYS Retirement System Bill

The bill for our 2024 Retirement System payment was prepaid on November 13th in the amount of \$65,097. The prepayment saves us approximately one percent on the total amount owed or close to \$500. We budgeted \$65,100 for this payment. In the adopted 2024 budget, we budgeted \$80,518 for the payment we will make next December for 2025. This amount was based on the estimate we received this fall. We are hoping the actual bill will be less.

Collection Development Policy and Reconsideration Form

Given the situation that just occurred in Cuba (and is happening at an alarming rate across the country), I thought the Board would like to take a look at our Collection Development Policy which is posted on our website:

<https://www.oleanlibrary.org/about/library-policies/collection-development>. This policy makes reference to "Reconsideration of Library Materials," stating the following:

Questions concerning the selection of library materials will be directed to the Library Director. A formal complaint may be made by filling out a *Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials* form available at the Information Desk.

The Olean Public Library feels strongly that intellectual freedom, the freedom to view, the freedom to read and reach decisions independent of coercion or censorship of any kind is extremely important and the basic privilege of all the library's patrons. Censorship

or parochial thinking is not appropriate to an institution dedicated to preserving free expression of ideas and the search for the truth.”

I uploaded the “Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials” form for the Board’s review.

2023 Central Library Book Aid (CBA)

At year’s end, we have approximately \$11,895 remaining in CBA money after renewing several databases we purchase on our own or in partnership with Prendergast. This is more than we typically have left over and is due in part to CCLS now taking the payment for Ancestry directly off the top of our CBA allotment rather than us paying for it at the end of the year. We also gave our remaining 2022 CBA funds to CCLS last year to use as a credit against Overdrive, Kanopy and other resources, so we didn’t have to pay as much money for those things this year.

If NOVELNY is not funded by the State Library/DLD next year, we may have to pay a significant portion of our CBA funds to subscribe to databases to make up for that loss. NOVELNY is a compilation of databases providing access to peer-reviewed journal articles from many disciplines, thousands of newspaper articles, encyclopedias, and other trusted resources that is made available free to libraries across the State. The State uses federal IMLS funds to support this resource. If DLD decides not to fund this resource next year, NYS will be the only state in the country without a freely available database of research resources for use in libraries of all types.

If NOVELNY is funded, then we will be able to make decisions as to how we spend CBA money. In years past, remaining CBA monies were given to CCLS at the end of the year to purchase an Overdrive credit for materials for the following year. This year we decided to purchase that credit on our own, allowing us to keep control of the money internally; in other words, we spend the money, not CCLS. It still helps all CCLS patrons, but we make the purchasing decisions. This will also help make it obvious to other member libraries that OPL puts a significant portion of CBA towards Overdrive, something that has not been transparent when the money is given to CCLS to spend. We will be able to fill patron requests, fill holds, and use the money to supplement our e-resources budget, such as for e-audiobooks. We have more flexibility as to how we can spend CBA now that the State changed the rules that used to require it only be used for nonfiction resources.

Hamlin Bank Donation

We received the annual gift of \$1,000 from Hamlin Bank and Trust Company on November 6th. As in years past, it came with the request that the funds be used for programs that serve low to moderate income individuals. I always send a thank you letter detailing some of the programs and services provided over the past year that serve those individuals (really, that is everything we offer!).

Appraisal of Coughlin Donation

The Royer family, who donated over 20 paintings to the Library by local artist Marion Coughlin, had requested that the gift be appraised for tax purposes. I notified them that we do not provide appraisals of gifts of art work. However, I decided to reach out to Mikel Wintermantel to see if he would be willing to do an appraisal of the work because it was such a substantial gift, and I thought it might be worthwhile for our purposes as well. It turns out he was willing to come in and do an appraisal free-of-charge, although he did suggest that we give a gift to the

Tri-County Arts Council in lieu of payment. He appraised the collection at approximately \$13,000 and will provide a letter to the Royer family with this information. He gave an individual price estimate for each painting which we have documented in case it ever becomes helpful for insurance purposes.

Friends of the Library

Once again, the Friends participated in Giving Tuesday this year and did better than ever! They won their Power Hour which was between 6-7pm, getting a \$500 prize sponsored by the Hedley Brook Agency. Tom Jacobs interviewed programming staff members Cherish Inman and Amy Chaffee during the Friends Facebook Live event during Power Hour. They raised \$4,770!

News from the Library

On December 1, I sent out a couple of emails regarding the crowd lined up at the Library doors at opening time, and the phones ringing off the hook – people trying to register for our arts & crafts programs (adult and children's). They filled up within just a couple of hours. Some patrons asked if we can come up with a fairer way to sign up, helping to ensure everyone has a chance to get in instead of the same people signing up for all the programs. We instituted a maximum of 2 people per signup (unless it is the parent of multiple children); however, we discovered there was still the problem of the same 2 people signing up for every program. We have now developed a new procedure of allowing 2 people to register for a single program; after that, we will add their names to the waiting lists of the other programs they are interested in. We are implementing this change in January, so we'll see how it works out. We had a group of 11 registering for all of our programs, so they are definitely affecting the situation. They are not happy with the new procedure, but they have to understand that we serve the whole community and not just their group.

I let Kevin O'Connell know of the popularity of the programs sponsored by the endowment he and his wife created for the Library. He was very pleased and notified me that after the 1st of the year, he intends to merge the Frances Bean O'Connell endowment with the O'Connell Family Fund, meaning there will be around \$300K in the endowment. He said that should provide about \$12K annually going forward, and it will continue to grow.