

Library Director's Report

January 2024

Trustee Election and Budget Vote Calendar [Action Item—see attached]

The Trustee Election and 2025 budget vote is scheduled for the first Tuesday in May (May 7, 2023) and will be held at the Library. Polls open at 9 am and close at 8 pm. Trustee Gretchen Copella's term expires in June 2024; she must decide if she plans to run for a full 5-year term, as the term she was elected to fill in 2023 was only for 1 year (she was completing the term vacated by John Bartimole in 2022).

Petitions for nomination to the ballot for Library Trustee will be available on March 7th, along with applications for absentee ballots. The budget hearing will be held on Tuesday, April 23rd, at 6 pm. The Board should review and vote whether to adopt the attached Schedule for the Trustee Election and 2025 Budget Vote.

Personnel Updates [Action Items]

The following staff were hired as library pages: Jim Riesdorph (12/13/2023), and Sherri Lothridge (12/18/2023). Unfortunately, Sherri, who has a degree in social work, has since accepted a full-time job elsewhere. Her last day was 1/12/2024. The board should approve these appointments and accept Sherri's resignation.

We are seeing a changing trend in people seeking full-time employment with benefits. Whereas for the past 5 years or so, it's been very difficult to recruit for full-time positions, we are seeing a sudden change to people having a strong preference for full-time work, especially due to the need for paid time off and health insurance benefits. We have several part-time library assistants and pages who are actively searching for full-time positions elsewhere.

2025 Budget Planning

Due to the fact we are asking for a tax increase for 2025, we have to approve the 2025 budget by March 2024, which will be voted on by the taxpayers in May. We usually ask for a 2 percent increase (last year we also asked for the carryover amount that was available from the prior year tax levy increase due to coming in under the allowed amount). There is a smaller carryover amount of \$3,891 available to include in this year's tax levy increase (for 2025) if the Board wants to include it. The Board also votes to approve overriding the tax cap in case our increase ends up being more than the allowable tax levy. This usually occurs in March when the Board approves the proposed budget.

As the Board is aware, we have to plan far in advance, not knowing how inflationary trends will develop over the course of the year, what the tax cap will be set at in September, and any other number of factors that could affect the 2025 budget. Heather and I have worked on a proposed budget (see attached). It includes a 2 percent across-the-board wage increase for staff (except for 3 full-time staff who receive the minimum NYS exempt salary which is set to increase by 3.3 percent).

The tax levy in the proposed budget does not include the \$3,891 in carryover available to use. If the Board wishes to include that, that will reduce use of fund balance by the same amount. Once the voters approve the budget, the Board has the authority to move monies from one budget line to another, but not to increase spending above the total approved budget for the year voted on.

The Board has several options: it can discuss the proposed budget and if it is satisfied with it, vote to accept it as the budget that will go out to the taxpayers in May; or, a Finance Committee meeting can be scheduled to review it in greater detail and possibly suggest changes; or, the Board can table discussion until February and decide then if it wishes to accept it or schedule a Finance Committee meeting in February to bring a budget to the Board to vote on in March. Each of these scenarios has played out in past years.

There will be a public hearing in the Library on April 23rd for constituents to ask questions about the proposed budget. While the Director runs the hearing, it is recommended that Trustees also attend, especially the President and Finance Officer, to help answer questions and show support for the proposed budget. The Treasurer also attends the budget hearing. Often a reporter from the OTH shows up and interviews Library officials about the budget.

Conflict of Interest Forms

Each year Trustees, the Treasurer, and staff must fill out the Conflict of Interest form (see attached). Please fill this out and scan and email it back to me, or drop it off at the Library/bring it to the Board meeting with you.

2023-2025 Strategic Plan [Attached]

The 2023-25 Strategic Plan was approved by the Board in February 2023. It's good to keep the plan on the radar throughout the year, but I also thought it would be good to take another look at it early this year to discuss its continuing relevance and whether or not it needs updating.

Friends of the Library

Due to lack of volunteer availability, the Friends have rescheduled the annual beer tasting fundraiser, FeBREWary, to Friday, Feb. 23rd. It will run from 7-9:30 PM at the Library. Tickets will be on sale soon. The price will be the same as the wine tasting--one for \$25, two for \$40, and \$10 for designated drivers.

As they do at every event, the Friends are requesting basket donations for the basket raffle. If the Board is interested in donating again, it would be greatly appreciated by the Friends. 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.