

Library Director's Report

February 2024

Audit

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

Trustee Election and Budget Vote Calendar

As a reminder, 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 will be running 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. Incidentally, Vicki Zaleski, the District Clerk for the Olean City School District, contacted me asking if the Library would be holding its vote at the school this year (we were on their ballot for 2 years during the pandemic, so she now checks in with us every year, which is nice). I told her no, but that Kim was wondering about a new law that went into effect in NYS regarding early mail-in ballots for school district elections. While I have a question in to Jan Dekoff to make sure this law also pertains to school district public libraries, for now we are going with the assumption that it does. The law requires that we have separate absentee, military and early voter applications. Vicki emailed Kim a copy of the early voter application the district is using which we can use as a template. We must also order separate oath envelopes and ballots for absentee voters versus early voters. The language is a little different on each. This will be an additional cost to the Library, due to printing and postage costs.

The budget hearing will be held on Tuesday, April 23rd, at 6 pm. It is good for Trustees to be present at the hearing, if possible, to show support for the proposed budget and to help answer questions if members of the public or the press show up. While the Director runs the hearing, the Finance Officer, Treasurer and Business Office Manager may help answer specific questions related to the budget.

NYS Construction Aid

The security camera project for which we received aid last year is moving forward. The data cabling was completed a couple of weeks ago, which was needed for the additional cameras we will be installing. FSC, the company that handles our building alarm system, will be out in about a month to do the camera installations, which will include new/additional cameras, as well as upgraded cameras for ones that are no longer working or are older and don't perform as well as the newer models. FSC bid on the project and was selected due to having the most competitive pricing and the fact that we already have a positive working relationship with them.

We are waiting for a quote from Mazza on replacement units for the 2 older rooftop units for which we received grant money a couple of years ago. They said they would get something to us in time for the February board meeting, but as of now we have not received anything from them. Heather will follow up before our meeting.

Personnel Updates [Action Items]

Library page Rebecca Russell has submitted her resignation. Her last day will be February 23, 2024. She has accepted a full-time job at Canticle Farms. Becca is an exemplary employee and will be greatly missed. The Board should approve her resignation for the minutes.

We hired a new part-time library assistant, Sarah Bean, whose first day was February 14, 2024. She was hired to replace some of the hours lost due to Stephanie Beneng cutting her hours back to focus on her full-time job. Sarah is also replacing some of the hours Cherish worked on the desk; Cherish's desk hours were reduced when she was made full-time so she could focus more time on programs. The Board should vote to approve hiring Sarah. She is a provisional hire pending results of the Civil Service exam, which has not yet been scheduled.

Purchasing Policy Update [Action Item]

Heather and I updated the Purchasing Policy to include a section on staff purchases on behalf of the Library. This is a fairly common practice, as staff will run errands to pick up food and/or supplies for programs they run that can't be quickly or easily ordered online. The business office maintains a list of stores and online sites where we have a tax exempt certificate on file, and staff who make purchases are regularly updated on the stores they can use. We have credit lines at some area stores, such as Ried's and Walmart, where staff make the purchases on credit and provide the receipt to the Library. Other stores only have the tax exempt certificate on file, so if a staff member shops there, they use their own money and are either reimbursed with petty cash or with a check after the following Board meeting. The updated (attached) policy clarifies what is needed in order for staff to be reimbursed for purchases. The Board needs to vote on whether to approve the change.

Grant Writing Policy [Action Item]

At the January Board meeting, it was requested that the Library develop a policy for staff who are involved in grant writing. This type of policy is common in universities and other large not-for-profits where grant writing is an important source of funding and where multiple people and/or departments are involved in submitting grant applications to different agencies. The policy is meant to centralize the process so that staff do not unknowingly submit multiple applications to a granting agency, and to ensure that grants that are being written are in line with the organization's mission and are sustainable in the future. OPL has a number of staff who write grants, and so it was felt a policy of this sort was important to prevent problems and to ensure that everyone understands how the process works. The Board should review the attached policy, and unless changes are suggested, vote to adopt it.

Policy on Acceptance of Gifts, Grants and Bequests to the Library [Action Item]

At the January Board meeting, it was requested that we develop a policy on acceptance of gifts and grants. While we already have a public-facing Gifts and Donations Policy, we did not have one explicitly for staff. The idea is to be sure staff understand the formal rules around asking for and accepting gifts and grants, as well as the Board's role in approving and accepting them.

It is critically important that staff go through the proper channels and not approach community members for gifts or donations without first getting permission from the Library Director. The Director and the Board need to be aware of all gifts/donations and grants received by Library staff for a multitude of reasons. The attached policy clarifies the protocol and will be distributed to staff. This policy does formalize gift and grant acceptance to require Board

approval, which has not been standard practice in the past. The Board should review the policy and vote on whether to adopt it.

Friends of the Library

As a reminder, the Friends' annual beer tasting fundraiser, FeBREWary, is Friday, Feb. 23rd. It will run from 7-9:30 PM at the Library. Tickets are on sale at the Library. The price is the same as the wine tasting--one for \$25, two for \$40, and \$10 for designated drivers. In addition to a variety of craft beers that will be available for tasting, there will be food, music provided by Alex Cole, and the ever-popular basket raffle.

News from the Library

On January 31st, the Times Herald ran an article about the Library's new program registration policies which were developed to help more people successfully register for our programs. The problem we addressed was people calling or coming in and registering for every one of our programs the day registration opened. The same people were getting into all of the programs, while other people repeatedly could not get into any. These people asked us to come up with a fairer registration process so more people could enjoy our offerings. It appears the new procedures have been successful, as it was reported by Amy Chaffee, our primary arts & crafts programmer, that 15 new people attended her adult programs in January! There were a number of complaints over the change, but these were from the people who had been registering for all of the programs. We plan to keep the new procedure in place and will monitor if anything needs to change going forward.