

Library Director's Report

May 2024

2024 Trustee Election/2025 Budget Vote

As previously reported, the vote on the tax increase was successful, with 83 votes in favor and 26 opposed (a 76 percent approval rating, which is good). There were 70 ballots cast in person, while 37 absentee ballots were mailed in. We received far more yes votes from the in-person voters than those who submitted absentee ballots (91 percent versus 46 percent).

Trustee Gretchen Copella was elected to a 5-year term which begins on July 1st. She received 95 votes. There were 4 write-in candidates, each receiving 1 vote. Ten voters did not vote for trustee.

NYS Budget

There is good news on the NYS Budget for libraries for FY2024-25. State Operating Aid for Libraries increased \$4.252M from FY-2023-24 to \$103.852M. Construction Aid increased by \$10M to \$44M (CCLS will have \$1,031,857 to distribute to member library projects).

NOVELny, a comprehensive set of databases available to all NYS libraries free of charge, was fully funded thanks primarily to the efforts of NYSED's advocacy (NOVEL is very important to K-12 school libraries, although it is an important resource to academic, public, and special libraries as well). The Love Your Library Fund (funded through special license plates) will have \$100,000 distributed to library systems across the state. A new allocation is the Dolly Parton Imagination Library, which has \$500,000 in competitive grants available to NYS libraries. The bill reads "Grants shall be available on competitive basis based on need and children served. Grants shall be awarded in amounts not to exceed \$50,000 to provide up to fifty percent of an eligible entity's required matching funds to participate in the...Program. Funding shall be available to libraries, library systems, non-profits, school districts and boards of cooperative educational services to participate in the...Program."

There was also an update on the Open Meetings Law. The expiration of the current videoconferencing provisions was extended to July 1, 2026, meaning trustees may only videoconference in to a meeting if they are in an emergency situation (at least in order to be able to vote/count towards a quorum).

HVAC Problems

When the temperatures rose this spring and we started running the AC, we noticed the building was not cooling as it should be. Both patrons and staff complained it was too warm. We contacted Mazza to investigate. In the pre-inspection they did in December, they found one stage was flat in one of the old units (RSZ1); the quoted cost to repair that was \$5,442, which we planned to do this spring. When they came to troubleshoot the problem on May 2nd, they found 2 stages were flat in RMZ1, which is the other old unit and also the largest of the 4 (it is essentially two units in one). We asked if this would be covered by our agreement, but they said it would not be. Refrigerant is not covered in the agreement, and retrofitting the unit to use contemporary refrigerant is also not covered. The problem (leak) occurred after the pre-inspection when the unit was not running.

Heather, Kim and I met with two Mazza representatives to discuss the issue, as we are very disappointed to have another big repair bill coming after paying for the agreement. The repair (retrofitting and refilling the refrigerant) will cost \$7,425! Between August and November of 2023, we spent over \$8,000 on repairs on that unit, most of which were related to the same issue – leaking refrigerant. Mazza reviewed the documentation left by the former maintenance contractor who did the repairs last year. They said they have no doubt that mistakes with those repairs caused this leak. They said "if you do it right, you KNOW there are no leaks." The

chances of a major leak of the kind we have is almost impossible if repairs are done correctly (which include pressure testing to guarantee there are no leaks).

Because we have Construction Aid funds to replace the two old units, I have not approved this repair. Instead, while we wait for the architect to give us an idea of when we can replace them and where they should be located (given the expansion), we can probably cool the areas that are overly warm with small portable AC units that would be far less expensive than the repair. We have also shut down the AC function on RMZ1 and are only using the blower, which will save us quite a bit of money on the electric bill. Mazza will give us a quote for the small units soon.

April Gifts/Donations [Action Item]

Per our Policy on Acceptance of Gifts, Grants and Bequests to the Library, the Board must formally accept the following donations to the Library: in April, we received a donation of \$50 from Elaine Kwiatkowski, which was undesignated. We also received \$100 in memorial donations for John Martello.

Staff Development Day 2024

In order to get trainings set up in time, we have set the date for our annual staff development day to take place on Friday, September 13th. It is a full day of training for staff, including the mandatory annual sexual harassment prevention training. Our Employee Assistance Program provides that training to us free of charge, along with the Narcan administration training. The Board has provided lunch to the staff at this event for many years, so I am letting you know the date now so you can plan. The staff really appreciates this gesture on the part of the Board, and also enjoys having lunch with any trustees who are available to eat with the staff.

Friends of the Library

At their May meeting, the Friends approved the annual \$1,500 donation to help support the Summer Reading Program. The money is used to pay for presenters for children's programs in July and August. They also agreed to cover the cost of flowers and soil for the outside planters, up to \$200. Lanna has volunteered to do the planting.

The annual Bookmark Awards Ceremonies took place on Saturday, May 4th, 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. Attendance is always good at this event, as the contest is beloved by area students and their families; however, the Friends feel that holding the ceremonies in May has negatively affected attendance due to conflicting with spring sports and other activities. They are planning to move the ceremonies to early April when there are fewer conflicts for families. Next year Easter is in later April, so school vacations should not conflict with the ceremonies. They used to be held in March prior to Covid, but were moved to May when restrictions were lifted a few years back. The bookmarks are on display in the Gallery throughout the month of May.