

**Skaneateles Library Association
Board of Trustees
Regular Meeting Minutes
(Special “Zoom” Meeting)
November 10, 2020**

Supporting Our Mission:

To inspire learning, enrich lives, and connect our community

Realizing Our Vision:

**To be the cultural and informational hub of a vibrant, thriving community
by creating spaces and experiences that are welcoming, enriching and sustainable.**

Present: President Dave Hempson, Vice President Susanne Guske, Treasurer Andrew Hagen, Secretary Danette Davis **Trustees:** Manny Arroyo, Karen Morrissey Bedard, , Scott Elia, Amanda Latreille, Bob Lotkowitz, Maura Molnar, Larry Palmieri, Amy Rolleri, Katrina Zepp **Staff:** Library Director Nickie Marquis, Deanna King, Librarian.

Absent: Patti Carey, Ralph DeMasi, Dave Lee, Tara Lynn, Laurie Spencer

Members of the Public in attendance: Kathie Dyson, Dee Maguire, Doreen Simmons, Carol Young, John Young

The meeting was called to order at 6:31 PM by President Hempson.
This meeting was held online via Zoom due to the Covid 19 pandemic.

Public Comment:

There were no public comments.

Approval of the Minutes:

The October 13, 2020 Regular Meeting minutes were approved.

President’s Report:

New Library – status recap: President Hempson explained that for at least 40 years the board of the library has recognized the shortcomings of the existing building. Besides space issues, lack of handicap accessibility and parking, the recent pandemic has also demonstrated the need for social distancing space, improved air circulation and the need for flexibility to meet future changing needs.

The Book Ends opportunity at Stella Maris a few years ago eventually failed although many in the public supported the idea of a new library building. Incorporating what was learned during that project, we are moving forward with a concept which is different than Book Ends.

The board recognized three possible options: 1) Do nothing 2) Build an addition onto the existing library 3) Build a new library.

The board has chosen to build a new library and will be negotiating with the Town for the purchase of property on Fennell Street. The current building will be repurposed and will be self-supporting. No tax funds will be used to support the 49 E. Genesee St. library building. It will be maintained by the Barrow Gallery expanding into some of the space, the Chamber of Commerce becoming a tenant, and a used bookstore area.

No tax dollars will be used to build the new library. Construction will be funded through a fund-raising campaign. Tax dollars are only used for the annual operating expenses of the library.

President Hempson clarified that all board members, including the president, are volunteers and are not paid.

The intent of a new library building is to meet the Needs Assessment which identified the following: a Community Meeting Room, small study rooms, adequate parking, handicap accessibility throughout, flexible space to meet future needs as libraries change over the decades, and air purification and social distancing space in anticipation of future epidemics.

Library Director's Report:

Director Marquis emailed the report to board members on Friday. Because staff at Central and some branch libraries have been furloughed, interlibrary loan deliveries are only received 2 or 3 times per week. With the 7-day quarantine period for items, there is a long delay for patrons to receive holds they have requested.

Miron gift: A generous donation was given by Jackie and Steve Miron which will be used to purchase an air purifier for the front desk, replace many of the baby board books which wear out quickly from frequent use, and provide Baby Bounce and Rhyme kits for patrons to borrow for story times at home with their children from birth to age 18 months. These kits will have shaker eggs, puppets, songs and information on early literacy. Children's librarian, Mary Beth, will check in with the families and will pull appropriate books for them to use with the kits.

PTC Collaboration: The library along with the school PTC will host a child psychologist for online sessions for Waterman/State Street schools and for the Middle/High schools. Questions will be collected ahead of time. The psychologist will discuss dealing with remote learning challenges during a pandemic such as anxiety and managing school work.

Internet and Computer Use Policy: Director Marquis had previously emailed the policy which needs board approval. This policy states that the library cannot control or monitor what is on the Internet. Patrons are responsible for their behavior and use of technology provided by the library and are not to damage library equipment or engage in any illegal behavior.

Trustee Palmieri made a motion to approve the policy.

Trustee Elia seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

Communication Committee:

Vice President Guske reported that the committee has been meeting monthly and includes representatives from the Village and Town boards and community members. The committee will hold small “porch meetings” around the community to share library plans and to gather feedback. Facebook traffic has increased and we are sharing more there while continuing to communicate through the local newspaper and the library website and email newsletter. Director Marquis and Librarian King are working to reorganize the website so that information can be found easier.

Trustee Bedard added that the committee is working on more ways to be present on social media to share information and answer questions. The committee recognizes that inaccurate information is sometimes shared on social media and we want to be able to provide up-to-date, accurate information. We have been receiving quite a bit of positive approval on the Fennell Street site.

49 E. Genesee Street Committee:

Vice President Guske showed a design for the front steps which will be of stone, will make the entrance into the Sphinx accessible and will make the ramp comply with code. The work will not be able to start this Fall. The design will be available on the library website. We have received approval for a \$78,000 NY State construction grant which will be used for the front step work as well as new lighting and chimney repairs.

The committee has been working on a 3-5 year financial analysis for the building to be self-supporting. Plans include a used book sale and reading area at the front of the building to maintain the library atmosphere. The committee is also researching possibilities for rebuilding the Barrow Gallery west entrance as well as an overall interior master plan and installation of a lift/elevator.

Site Committee:

President Hempson reported that the library and the Town had eighteen 10-foot deep preliminary monitoring pits dug at the Fennell Street site for soil samples. No contamination problems were determined in this preliminary examination, but an environmental assessment will be conducted. We will also be getting an appraisal of the property’s value.

Treasurer’s Report:

Operating Report and Financials: These reports were sent previously to board members.

Treasurer Hagen stated that the Finance Committee determined that the Capitol reserve account is better held in a checking rather than a savings account. He noted that the library received its tax funding this fall from the School District which collects it on our behalf. Many nonprofits have faced financial problems this year due to the pandemic.

Treasurer Hagen explained that before receiving tax funding, the library had been on an unsustainable financial footing. We had been relying on small donations, the used book sale and large withdrawals from the endowment in order to run the library. With the Skaneateles taxpayers voting to provide tax funding, the library’s future became secure. The tax funding is currently \$350,000 annually. If the library board decides that additional funding is needed, a tax vote would be held to approve an increase.

Trustee Elia noted that with inflation eating into the initial approved amount, an increase will need to be requested at some point. Treasurer Hagen responded that the Finance Committee decided not to request an increase in tax funding this year due to the pandemic challenges which everyone has been facing. Vice President Guske added that tax funding is only part of the amount needed to meet the library's annual operating budget, and that we still rely on withdrawals from the endowment as well as donations and the book sale (which we were not able to hold this year).

Treasurer Hagen also reported that the Finance Committee will be meeting with Buffington and Hoatland accountants to discuss future uses of the existing library building and the financial implications.

Director Marquis added that Buffington and Hoatland are in the process of reviewing the library's finances for the past year.

Barrow Gallery Update:

President Hempson reported the fundraising goal this year is \$40,000. One thousand requests have been mailed and he encouraged everyone to consider supporting the Gallery. Last year we were able to repair the roof.

Projects for this year include the State Street entrance into the Barrow Gallery which was designed by John Barrow. The steps are not to code and there is no landing at the top, which requires stepping backwards down the steps once the door is opened. An entrance vestibule is needed to keep the temperature and humidity from changing every time the door is opened. This has an adverse effect on the paintings. This exterior entrance into the Gallery, as opposed to having visitors walk through the library, is important during the pandemic to control the number of people who can be allowed in at one time.

Plans are to reopen the Barrow Gallery the Saturday after Thanksgiving. Visits will be by appointment. A Covid plan for reopening has been developed which includes training for the docents and installation of plexiglass and an air purifier.

Barrow Gallery quarterly board meeting: Thursday November 19 via Zoom.

Public Comment: There were no public comments.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:36 PM

Next Meeting: Tuesday December 8, 2020 at 6:30 PM EST – online via Zoom

Submitted by Danette Davis, Secretary