

**Skaneateles Library Association  
Board of Directors  
Regular Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday September 14, 2021  
(Special Zoom Meeting)**

**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, Patti Carey, Ralph DeMasi, Scott Elia, Dave Lee, Bob Lotkowitz, Maura Molnar, Larry Palmieri, Amy Rolleri, Meghann Sandak, Laurie Spencer, Katrina Zepp. **Staff:** Library Director Nickie Marquis

**Members of the Public:** Diane Fellerman, Fran McCormack, Doreen Simmons

**Call to order:** 6:32 PM (Meeting held via Zoom due to increased cases of Covid).

**Public Comment Period:** No comments.

**Approval of the Minutes:**

The August 10, 2021 Regular Meeting Minutes and the August 30, 2021 Special Meeting Minutes were approved.

**President's Report:**

**Fennell Street Site Update:**

President Hempson stated that we should have the environmental assessment report from Plumley Engineering in about a week. Doreen Simmons commented that there did not appear to be any problems that would need to be reported to the DEC.

The Town is fine with us putting a sign on the property: "Future Site of the Skaneateles Library".

**Online Book Sale Pilot:**

As books are donated they will be scanned. If a book is in demand and could be sold for more than at the book sale, it will be sent off. Mary Giroux and Paula Conan are working with Director Marquis on this trial program.

### Director's Annual Review:

President Hempson and Vice President Guske did the annual director's review. Director Marquis received an excellent review.

President Hempson stated that ongoing work needs to be done to show the library's relevance to the community. We want to expand our digital footprint and to identify more constituents and ways in which the library can provide services for them. Director Marquis agreed that making the library visible and relevant to for the entire community is an important goal for many libraries today.

### Library Director's Report:

The Director's report was emailed to trustees on Friday. Trustee Elia asked if circulation is expected to return to pre-Covid levels. Director Marquis reported that it is rebounding slowly but that it will take time. Circulation is partially dependent on having in-person programs. When people attend programs there are more patrons in the building and they check out more items. During Covid, when people placed a hold on specific items and picked them up on the porch, they did not browse and pick up additional items.

Trustee Spencer is pleased that we are advertising for an assistant director position. Director Marquis would like the person to increase community outreach.

Trustee Bedard commented on the pop-up tent that can be borrowed by patrons. She asked how many other unusual items we circulate and how we can better advertise them. Director Marquis responded that we have about 15 items, including a new pass to the Everson Museum of Art in Syracuse, and that we need to repeatedly promote these items in different ways.

### Monthly Policy Review – Fine Policy:

Director Marquis had emailed this policy to board members. Overdue fines were suspended during Covid. The Finance Committee was asked to examine the possibility of permanently eliminating fines. They felt it was an operational decision, not a budget decision as the amount collected has been less than 1% of income.

Director Marquis stated that in 2018-2019, when we eliminated fines on children's and teen materials, we collected \$4,000 in fines. The year before it had been \$5,400. During the Covid pandemic the amount had been \$1,500.

Ten suburban libraries in OCPL have permanently eliminated fines. OCPL recently changed the schedule of overdue notices that are sent out: The first overdue notice is sent when an item is 7 days overdue. Notices are sent at 14 days and 21 days, and at 30 days the account is charged. Borrowing privileges are restricted when fines total \$15 or more.

Director Marquis proposes eliminating fines until the end of 2021-22 and then evaluating the data to see if it significantly affected returns. Fines would continue to be levied on some items such as Hot Spots.

Trustee Spencer expressed concern about the lack of revenue. Director Marquis stated that it is a question of why fines are assessed: to raise money or to get items back on time.

Vice President Guske felt extending the suspension of fines for another year would be good PR as we work to increase the library's visibility and relevance in the community.

Trustee Lotkowitz asked if fines get popular items such as bestsellers returned sooner. Director Marquis believes it depends on the individual as some people keep items past the due date and pay the fine. For others, it is an incentive. Trustee Zepp stated that she keeps overdue items until the fines total \$5.00 which is the minimum amount to be able to pay the fine online by credit card.

President Hempson made a motion to suspend overdue fines through the fiscal year 2021-2022 and to then examine how this affected revenue and timely return of items. Vice President Guske seconded the motion. The motion passed with 16 votes for, and one opposed (Trustee Spencer).

#### Grant Application submitted:

Two applications were submitted for the NY State Construction grants:

\$413,000 acquisition of the property on Fennell Street

\$98,609 vertical lift to provide accessibility to the second floor

We will most likely only receive a 50% match. Skaneateles does not qualify for the 75% match due to demographics. Director Marquis reported that we have also applied for a Main Street Grant which is for projects that would improve property in a downtown or commercial area. We have applied for \$206,000 (50%) for the Fennell Street site.

We have set aside 50% of the cost of the lift in the capital fund but are also pursuing other grants for this project. We just received a pledge of \$10,000 from a donor for the elevator project.

#### OCPL Memorandum of Understanding introduction:

Director Marquis reported that member libraries have been working with OCPL on this MOU for over a year. The Board needs to approve the MOU for the library to continue using the library system's shared services such as the online catalog, interlibrary loan and delivery. With the new MOU, the fee that we pay would increase from \$4,400 to \$6,700.

President Hempson made a motion to approve the MOU with OCPL. Trustee Elia seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

## **Treasurer's Report:**

### **Operating Report and Financials:**

The financial reports were previously emailed to the board. Treasurer Hagen stated that we are on track and that the fiscal year will be ending at the end of September.

### **2021-2022 Annual Budget Review:**

The proposed Operating budget as well as Capital Planning budget were emailed last week. Director Marquis explained that she would like to bring staffing back to pre-Covid levels. She plans to increase programs and outreach to increase the library's presence in the community, and to increase E-resources.

Trustees Lotkowitz and Elia questioned the 3% increase for payroll. It was determined that this was a typo and Director Marquis will correct the error.

Trustee Elia asked if we should consider asking for a tax levy increase. We have never asked for an increase, and he feels we should routinely request a small increase in tax funding. Discussion followed regarding rising costs and the increasing rate of inflation vs. the timing of asking for an increase when we are also planning a capital campaign. Director Marquis and Trustee Elia said that a decision should be made before the end of the year since the School District asks for 6 months' notice if we are going to ask for a tax increase during the school ballot vote. Trustee Bedard feels it would be important to show the actual dollar amount of a tax increase for a household.

Treasurer Hagen said that the Finance Committee will discuss this and make a recommendation.

President Hempson made a motion to approve the 2021-2022 fiscal year budget. Treasurer Hagen seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

## **Communication Committee:**

Vice President Guske stated that the committee has been continuing presentations to community groups, and will continue to promote the "Library of Things" which are available for borrowing. The committee has updated the Case for Support and will be supporting the fund-raising campaign for the new library building.

We are entertaining a consultant's proposal which would assist us with the communication strategy for the fund-raising campaign, including social media and the name and graphic for the project.

## **Fund-Raising Committee:**

President Hempson stated that the George Development Group will meet with the committee at 8:45 AM on Thursday to review the ongoing strategy. Trustees are welcome to attend.

We are preparing to interview for a Director of Philanthropy position. Once the contract with GDG ends, this position would lead the fund-raising campaign.

Trustee Spencer thanked President Hempson and Vice President Guske for all their efforts. She is not enthusiastic with the work done by GDG and had hoped we would be further along with fund-raising. She feels that the Director of Philanthropy is an important position and hopes that we offer a competitive salary. Trustee Spencer asked that the Board be kept updated on fund-raising progress.

President Hempson said that we had been under the impression that GDG had local connections for the feasibility study, but instead they are relying on us to make donor contacts.

Trustee Elia asked who the Director of Philanthropy would report to. President Hempson responded that it would most likely be the Board President and chair of the Fund-Raising Committee.

#### **49 East Genesee Street Committee:**

Vice President Guske reported that the front steps will be finished soon and the chimney repairs will begin. Renderings are available for the lift if anyone would like to see them.

A community member is assisting with a business plan for a used bookstore. We are also looking at other ways to increase year-round sales, such as online sales. We will continue to hold the annual summer book sale.

We will not hear about final approval of the NY State Construction grant applications until Spring and the funds would come in the Fall. Director Marquis explained that we can start a project before the grant funds are received. She will email details of the NY State grant process and timetable.

#### **Barrow Update:**

President Hempson reported that \$50,000 has been raised for the new entrance to the gallery. Trustee Lee has agreed to be the construction manager.

President Hempson said that Trustee Rolleri has been instrumental in fundraising, including pop-up sales of merchandise donated by Patience Brewster. A surprise thank-you reception was held for Trustee Rolleri last week at the Barrow Gallery. A Barrow painting was reframed in her honor. President Hempson thanked Trustee Rolleri for all she has done for the Barrow Gallery and thanked those trustees who serve on the Barrow Management Committee.

**Public comment period:**

Fran McCormack praised Trustee Rolleri's fundraising sales of Patience Brewster merchandise. She wondered how the sales had been advertised. Trustee Rolleri responded that it was word-of-mouth and social media.

Diane Fellerman congratulated the library on the acquisition of the land on Fennell Street. She asked if the public was invited to the meeting with the George Development Group. President Hempson responded that they were welcome to attend. Diane believes we need to remain positive about fund-raising. We also need to be careful with the timing of a tax increase for the operational budget if it is at the same time as a capital fund-raising campaign.

Vice President Guske said that the Board's goal is to complete the new library in Diane's lifetime.

President Hempson thanked Doreen Simmons for her help with the land acquisition process.

**Adjourn Regular Meeting – 8:05 PM**

**Next Meeting: Tuesday, October 12, 2021 – 6:30 PM, Zoom Meeting**

**Submitted by Danette Davis, Secretary**