



**Skaneateles Library Association  
Board of Directors  
Regular Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, May 10, 2022  
Hybrid Meeting – Skaneateles Central Schools District Office & Zoom**

**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 Susanne Guske, Vice President Dave Hempson, Treasurer Maura Molnar, Secretary Meghann Sandak. **Trustees:** Karen Bedard, Kathryn Carolson, Ralph DeMasi, Scott Elia, Dave Lee, Paige Lynch, Bob Lotkowitz, Erin McCormack, Larry Palmieri, Amy Roller. **Staff:** Library Director Nickie Marquis, Librarian Andrea Snyder.

**Absent:** Manny Arroyo, Patti Carey, Andrew Hagen.

**Members of the Public:** Mary Giroux, Ed Kochian.

**Call to order:** 6:32 p.m. by President Guske.

**Public Comment Period:** (None)

**Approval of the Minutes**

President Guske called for comments on the April 12, 2022 meeting minutes. Hearing none, the minutes were approved.

**Guest: Ed Kochian (Immediate Past President - Board, Onondaga County Public Libraries)**

Ed Kochian gave an update of OCPL's priorities. He shared the biggest issue with libraries always is the circulation and delivery system. Despite some challenges over time, OCPL is monitoring the system regularly and everything seems to be improving. He commented on recent controversies regarding parents wanting books removed from libraries' shelves. OCPL approved NYLA's statement regarding censorship, affirming their position that parents have the right to decide what their child can read but they do not have a right to remove books from the library. He also shared that OCPL went fine free for all materials after having done so for a trial period for children's books and materials. Patrons are still obligated to return materials or else they will be charged the cost of replacement.

**President's Report**

All school district residents should have received a mailing from the district outlining the budget proposition, including the library's 4% levy increase proposition. This week's newspaper will also feature a short article. The vote is scheduled one week from today. President Guske

reminded attendees to encourage their friends and neighbors to vote, though we cannot tell them how to vote. We are expecting a higher than usual turnout because it is a contested school board election.

We have received notice of 50% receipt for the Fennell St. site and are waiting on other opportunities there.

Library Director Nickie Marquis has conflict of interest forms for all Trustees who have yet to complete them. All Trustees need to return this document.

We will continue to review policies once a quarter. The Executive Committee is currently looking at a policy for gifts and bequests to make sure that for larger gifts it is widely understood that it will be the Board's decision about how to use such gifts. We are also looking to update a Threshold of Approvals policy. The Board will be kept abreast of any major expenditures but would like to transition to having committee budgets and established thresholds so that not every expenditure needs to wait for board approval.

The Executive Committee has been meeting regularly and reviews the reserve account for planned and known expenses, making sure we have the transitional funds we need for the new building as well as matching funds needed for the current building. We also look at where we are in terms of upcoming activities and are working on a calendar for the Board.

On July 13<sup>th</sup> there will be a lecture in Library Hall for the native plant series. The Barrow Gallery, Library and Skaneateles Lake Association and others are sponsoring this event. A reception will follow at the Barrow. We hope to have all interior renovations done by then so that we can showcase the updates. In September we will plan to do some educational sessions for the Board. Library Director Maquis has identified a few sessions that she believes would be beneficial. President Guske shared that the Library will be featured on the cover of *Skaneateles Life* in October. She reminded Trustees to sign up for a donor kit review meeting either at 2 p.m. on May 19<sup>th</sup> or 6 p.m. on May 25<sup>th</sup>.

Mary Giroux shared an update on the annual book sale which will take place on July 7<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup>. The sale will be in the Village Bays for the last time. We are looking for help from board members, especially to be shift leaders and to count the proceeds each day. Our moving day is scheduled for June 7<sup>th</sup>, and we are looking for volunteers to help with that. The Skaneateles Rotary Club is going to help move the tables and sawhorses on Saturday, June 4<sup>th</sup>. We will also need help on July 10<sup>th</sup> when the sale is done. Signups will be circulated soon. Books have been coming in quickly over the last few weeks and the last day for accepting donations will be May 21<sup>st</sup>. Mary estimates that we have more books than we have in the past.

Mary also updated Trustees on the online book sales, which were started last October. Over six months the net revenue was \$998 and the average earnings per book sold is \$8.60. We are currently only scanning nonfiction of a limited set, so the results are particularly encouraging. These books are also the type that would be unlikely to sell at the book sale. It is extra work, but library staff has been helping and it has been manageable. As for the annual book sale, we have not yet decided whether we will raise prices. We will have higher prices on Thursday night as we usual do.

## **Library Director's Report**

Library Director Marquis reminded all Trustees to sign up for a donor kit meeting.

She reported that the Library just wrapped up the Poem in Your Pocket week with Waterman students (K-2), which was the first time since 2019 that we were able to offer this. The Library had 62 readers visit the Library and there were twelve other sites around the Village that children could visit and share their poems.

Librarian Snyder demonstrated Brainfuse, a service that OCPL is providing to all county libraries. The Library just got access to this resource two weeks ago. Brainfuse is an on-demand, online tutoring service. Tutors are available from 2-11 p.m. There is a writing lab where patrons can submit a writing sample that someone will review and return. Students can also receive assistance with ACT/SAT preparation and there are practice questions that can be accessed through the system. Other features include chess tutors and FAFSA assistance. A library card is required to access the free services through Brainfuse. We will continue to think about how to continuously promote to the school district.

## **Financials**

Treasurer Molnar reported that we are 60% through the year and are right in line with projected expenses and income. We continue to watch the capital reserve fund to make sure upcoming expenses are covered. We are lucky to get so much of our income at the beginning of the year. We should have a very successful book sale and we will probably not have to use everything we had planned to use from the reserve fund. We should be in good shape for the rest of the year. The mid-year budget report will look more closely at individual line items to check and make sure that if there are adjustments to make we can do so, and that will also help us prepare for the next fiscal year which begins in October.

## **Communication Committee**

The Committee met to discuss how to share information after the budget vote is completed. We are working with Lori Ruhlman to draft articles and are looking forward to highlighting our award-winning and nationally recognized staff, our community outreach efforts, improvements to the old building, and preparations for the new building.

We have been putting out information via the website and Instagram about the new lift. Social media engagement is up, and we continue to get more followers. We are working with *Skaneateles Life* magazine to get a series of articles and will also do some in the newspaper.

President Guske reminded the Trustees that improvements to the old building are only possible because of the decision to move the Library to a new site. Now that we have established future actions we can plan on how to make the current building as accessible as it can be. The lift has been fully funded and there will not need to be any library match. Grants, private donations and Nickie's NYLA award have covered the entire cost of this project.

The library newsletter currently has 1,400 recipients. Savannah will allow us to reach out to the 4,000 card holders in a more targeted fashion.

## **Fund Raising Committee**

Trustee Palmieri pointed to overview of capital campaign phases. We are in the process of completing the Pre-Campaign planning phase. Next we will get into the Quiet Phase, during

which we will approach higher potential donors. Trustee Palmieri shared that 100% of Trustees have committed to giving toward the capital campaign which will give us a great start and will make it easier for us to approach donors. He also reminded Trustees to make a gift to the Barrow Gallery, since Trustees of the Library are also Trustees of the Barrow. It may take a while to get enough commitments to allow us to go public.

President Guske thanked every trustee for contributing and allowing us to go out to the public with this kind of support behind the effort. We do not know what kind of timeline to expect moving forward but remain optimistic about reaching our goals in a timely fashion.

### **Fennell Street New Building Committee**

Vice President Hempson reminded the Board that we will be closing on the Fennell St. site in October of this year. He continues to meet with the Town to ensure a smooth transition. To advance the project in the meantime, the Building Committee feels that having a complete set of architectural drawings before we go out to bid makes the most sense. We have identified nineteen architectural firms with the requisite skills to design a library. We have contracted with a local surveyor to do a site survey, topographical survey and a utilities site survey.

Three Needs Creative has helped us focus in on design concepts that emerged from committee brainstorming sessions. “Naturally Curious” emerged as the leading concept with “Clean and Clever” close behind. The committee was drawn to the bright light, use of natural materials and inclusion of flexible space. Vice President Hempson is synthesizing feedback from the meetings to help narrow down a design strategy that will be included in the RFP package along with the use case and surveys. Vice President Hempson estimates 50% of the firms might be interested in the project. Once we get RFP responses, we will look at ultimately hiring a firm by mid-summer to come up with design ideas. Per the advice of a committee member with extensive experience in the field, we anticipate budgeting \$100,000 for the initial design and the interactions that go along with it. That will be next major expense for the Fennell Street property. The New Building Committee will recommend design back to the Board for evaluation and approval.

President Guske added in that we are working on an overall plan, which will have scheduling of these various initiatives incorporated. Our ideal opening date would be 2025, and so we will work backwards from there. It is important to emphasize to donors that this project will not get less expensive as time goes on.

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

President Guske thanked those who helped prepare the space for painting and for construction of the lift. She encouraged everyone to stop in and see the progress. We are working with a lighting engineer to finalize the lighting strategy for the first floor. Lighting for upstairs is in-house and just need to be installed.

We will pursue a 2022 New York State Construction Grant, likely to renovate the upstairs bathroom and make it accessible. Ralph DeMasi will help spearhead that effort. We expect the project to cost approximately \$25,000, and we need to submit an intent apply to OCPL by the end of May. We will need to budget for the 50% match of that expense. President Guske noted that all architectural fees are incorporated in capital reserve forecast as we recognized years

ago that no matter which path we pursued we would need transitional funds to achieve our goals.

President Guske reported that a sub-team has found positive comparable information which reinforces the viability of used book sales as an income stream. We hope to be able to take bigger items out of the current Library's building and store them on a building on the Fennell St. site, which will be made available to us before the closing in October. The 2023 book sale will be held on the new site, and we will not have to move books between sites.

The 49 E. Genesee Committee along with David Lee is helping to shepherd construction of the Barrow's entrance, including the masonry work, exterior lighting and grading which are now complete. The final steps will be completing construction of the entrance's covering and the landscaping.

### **Barrow Art Gallery**

Trustee Rolleri praised the exterior masonry work. She is working with the Skaneateles Garden Club to purchase boxwood shrubs that will line the walk as well as urns that will be on either side of the entrance. She shared David Lee's suggestion that we ask Jeff Murphy to help with installation of exterior lighting along the walkway, up-lighting on the sign, and a pendant light hanging from the new porch.

Docent training will be happening every month. We currently have 42 docents and more are joining.

Trustee Rolleri reminded trustees of the Barrow's May 12<sup>th</sup> Quarterly Meeting at 6:30 p.m. which will begin with an open house. The team is eager to show the new paint job and the rehanging of paintings.

**Public Comment Period:** (None)

**Adjourn Regular Meeting – 7:28 p.m.**

**Next Meeting: Tuesday, June 14, 2022 at 6:30 PM (It will likely be a hybrid meeting. The in-person component will either be at Library Hall or in the District Office.)**

**Submitted by Meghann Sandak, Secretary**