

the Skaneateles Library



Skaneateles Library Association
Board of Directors
Regular Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, August 9, 2022
Library Hall

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 Carlson, Andrew Hagen, Dave Lee, Paige Lynch, Erin McCormack, Larry Palmieri, Bob Lotkowitz, Amy Roller. **Staff:** Library Director Nickie Marquis, Librarian Andrea Snyder.

Absent: Manny Arroyo, Patti Carey, Ralph DeMasi, Scott Elia.

Members of the Public: Diane Fellerman, Fran McCormack.

Call to order: 6:35 p.m. by President Guske.

Public Comment Period: None.

Approval of the Minutes

President Guske called for comments on the June meeting minutes. Hearing none, the minutes were approved.

President's Report

We are working on the budget for the coming fiscal year, making sure that our finances are in order for the October closing date on the Fennell St. property. We also continue to pursue New York State construction grants and are doing the prep work for the new building site.

We have drafted a social media policy and are working on the gift acceptance policy, using some committee members to weigh in. If you have any questions or comments, please try to send them in advance of meetings.

We have collected approximately \$27,000 in used book sales year to date, \$25,000 of which came from the Summer Book Sale. Special thanks to the volunteers who helped during the Curbstone Festival. While the weekend was not terribly profitable, we were able to consolidate our inventory of books. We will need to consider whether participation is worthwhile moving forward. Online book sales have contributed an additional \$1,600 in used book sales revenue.

Erin McCormack, Andrea Snyder and Jason Persse from the Communications Committee are working on refining trustee bios to make them more consistent in length and to reflect a professional face to the community and to donors. You may receive a revised version of your trustee bio for your review. We are also working on getting bios for those who are still outstanding. We may take trustee photos at the next meeting so that they are also consistent.

Library Director's Report

President Guske commended the library staff for resuming book delivery to the Village Landing and Gateway senior apartments.

Library Director Nickie Marquis sent out a standard library social media policy. As we are getting more active on social media, we want to make sure we have a policy in place to support our communications. The policy covers how employees use social media as not everyone speaks on behalf of the library; we have folks designated to make those statements. Our staff does engage with posts, but all in support of posts or comments and not as official statements. Members of the public who interact with social content must abide by the patron code of conduct or they could get blocked by the administrators at any time. Vice President Hempson made the motion to approve the policy, which was seconded by Treasurer Maura Molnar. Trustees voted unanimously in support and the motion carried.

During the pandemic many libraries decided to no longer impose fees and many now are evaluating whether to continue such a policy. Nickie provided a list of area libraries and the policy each is following. Only Jordan and Maxwell are currently charging overdue fees. Skaneateles and Solvay are both fine free for now. At last September's meeting we discussed whether to continue that policy. The Board voted to remain fine free and reevaluate a year later. Nickie explained that patrons still receive overdue notices and while they do not accumulate late fees, they will be billed for an item after thirty days. Nickie recommended that the library continue a policy of not assessing fines. Vice President Hempson made a motion to approve Nickie's recommendation and Larry Palmieri seconded the motion. Trustees voted unanimously in support and the motion carried.

Andrea introduced the Board to Creativebug, which is available with a library card and is accessible from the library's website. Patrons can use Creativebug to stream online classes that are arts and crafts focused but also covers broader skills like furniture refinishing and upholstery. There are many resources, such as crocheting patterns, available through this platform. Users can filter videos by skill level, time length, and more.

Financials

September is the end of fiscal year and at the next meeting we will approve the 2022-2023 annual budget. Treasurer Molnar gave an overview of financials year to date so that we can be most efficient in the September meeting. A draft budget will be circulated for review in advance of the meeting.

We are now ten months through the fiscal year, so we have a good idea of where we will be at the end of the year. The financials from the end of July reflect most of our income as we have received everything we expect to receive, including the annual tax levy, book sale revenue, etc. The only additional revenue that we could receive would be state aid of just under \$2,000.

Our largest expense is wages, and we are right where we would expect to be at this point in the year. When we budgeted last year our staffing levels and the individuals filling those roles were

slightly different. Wages are currently higher than projected, but we also had some months where we did not have some positions filled. Staff benefits look a little high compared to wages. Full-time employees are offered health benefits, which we always budget for. This year an additional employee accepted those benefits.

Buildings and grounds expenses will end up lower than we budgeted for by about \$10-15,000. We budgeted a larger amount anticipating expenses associated with painting the interior and construction of the lift.

Professional services (i.e., payroll, human resources, accounting, legal) are on budget. Programs came in below budget. After COVID we hoped to have programs ramp up again, but the capital improvements caused us to close Library Hall for a large amount of time and we couldn't hold as many programs as hoped. The collections budget appears low, but we expect we will use all of that. The tech budget is a little higher due to the implementation of Savannah.

Overall, we will be underbudget on both income and expenses. When the budget is created, we know that the tax levy and book sale will not cover everything we need expense-wise to cover programs and collections. We always plan to take 4% from investment revenue out of our reserves. We will likely not have to dip into reserves this year but next year we will need more funds for operational support.

Nickie and Maura worked to make the budget easier to read by putting them into functional categories. The budget is broken down into three categories: patron services, building, and administration. This will be helpful as we approach the silent and eventually public phase of the campaign. Maura is happy to speak to anyone who might have questions.

Please look at the budget proposal in advance of the next meeting and feel free to reach out to Nickie and Maura with questions in advance so that we can be efficient in the discussions that we anticipate will take place. We will go through the budget with the finance committee next week and then we will send it out.

For the upcoming budget, the increase in the tax levy of \$14,000 will certainly help on the revenue side and we also anticipate an increase in book sale revenue. We plan to return to doing book sales during Dickens. On the expense side, our largest expense is always wages and we will see increases due to cost-of-living increases, having staff with different qualifications versus the prior year, and changes in benefits being utilized by staff. We will also see an increase in legal fees due to the separation process with Barrow. Repairs and maintenance expenses were high this year but will come down in the next budget. Collections, materials, and technology will need to increase slightly. We also want to prioritize budgeting for training and seminars, which staff has largely missed out on over the last few years. Committee chairs will share estimates on what they will need in the coming year to accomplish the goals of their groups as we move toward committees act more autonomously in approving expenses.

Communication Committee

Skaneateles Life magazine, now Skaneateles Stroll, has published two of three human interest stories. The first featured Mary Beth and the second, which just came out this week, featured Andrea. Special thanks to Lori Ruhlman and Karen Bedard for writing those pieces. Lori and Susanne submitted the third article yesterday, which will feature Nickie. The Library will be featured as the cover story for the October issue and will celebrate 145 years of dynamic growth

for the library. The article will help lay the groundwork for the future of the new Library as well as give an overview of capital investments that have been made in the current building.

Fundraising Committee

The Capital Campaign remains in the silent phase and we have received two significant commitments, both of which are multi-year gifts. We anticipate that we will have the funds to cover the purchase of the property from this year's gifts, those gifts that have not yet been determined, trustee commitments, and construction grants. We are testing Little Green Light, donor contact software that allows for multiple users. We will use the software to keep track of each donor, who has spoken to them, what the next steps are, etc. Software will prompt follow up actions such as phone calls at a date requested by donor. The cost of the software is nominal.

Fennell Street New Building Committee

We will close on the Fennell Street site in October and are in frequent contact with Town of Skaneateles. They are working diligently to empty the buildings in advance of the closing. We have shared a proposal in case they need more time in the space and we have had similar conversations with the folks at Laker Limo.

The Building Committee has determined that the best next step is to hire an architectural firm. We culled through firms with library experience and solicited eighteen of them. Fourteen of the firms have followed up, which will result in eleven proposals as a few are working collaboratively. The firms were impressed and enthused by the work we had done in the RFP, the allocation of space study, and the work with Karen's company on design strategy that all pointed to a human-centered library. They were happy that the Board is thinking of this as human-centered and not book-centered facility. The Committee is looking at the eleven exceptionally prepared proposals and are drafting a Stage 2 proposal request for firms selected to move on. The Stage 2 proposal request will include more information about the fee structure, a profile of the architect that would be assigned to the project, etc. The Committee's goal is to select a firm by November of this year. We expect to meet next week and pick four or five firms for Stage 2. We will be doing reference checks and will visit examples of some of the library projects the firms have completed. We will also be hiring a construction manager. Six of the candidates are local and understand the building trades and sub-contractors in our area.

49 East Genesee Street Committee

By the end of this month the new upstairs lights will have been installed. For the downstairs, we have finalized the design and have quotes. There will be eight weeks of lead time in advance of the installation. The goal is to have that done during the winter.

We are seeking funding through a 2022 New York State Construction Grant to update the library's bathrooms and make them accessible. Most of the work will be focused on the second floor now that it is accessible via the lift. The initial estimate for the project is \$36,000 and we are getting final quotes for the application to be submitted by the end of the month. These grants require matching funds from the library. Based on the estimates received, we will budget \$40,000 for the project to allow for unforeseen expenses. The Board needs to approve setting aside \$20,000 as matching funds for the project. Vice President Hempson made the motion, which was seconded by Larry Palmieri. The Board approved the motion unanimously and the motion carried.

We anticipate this project to take place in the later half of 2023 so as not to disrupt programming too much. To complete the application, the Board will need to certify that we in fact own the

building and are allowed to do the work in addition to affirming that they will provide the match. We also need to verify that this is a capital improvement and not general maintenance. President Guske made the motion to certify these assurances. Vice President Hempson seconded the motion. The Board approved the motion unanimously and the motion carried.

Barrow Art Gallery

The new exterior entrance is just about finished, and the pendant light will be installed this week. We are still waiting for the copper for the roof and hope it will be in place in September.

Since reopening the Gallery we have had tremendous number of visitors, many of whom noted that the entrance drew them in and that they were previously unaware of the Gallery's existence. Last week the Skaneateles Garden Club continued their work of planting shrubs that they have donated. The ribbon cutting for the P.J. Lemp Garden will be held in the near future.

Amy Rolleri reminded Trustees that the Barrow's quarterly meeting will begin at 5:45 p.m. on September 13th, to be followed immediately by the Skaneateles Library Association meeting.

Trustees should have received a postcard invitation to "An Evening on the Judge," the upcoming fundraiser for the Barrow Art Gallery on September 21st. Amy encouraged Trustees to support the work of the Barrow.

Public Comment Period: Diane Fellerman acknowledged the work of staff and the Finance Committee for the way the financials have been presented on the website, and also expressed that she felt the June/July newsletter was terrific and very comprehensive. She inquired about whether the Fundraising and Communications Committees were considering joining. President Guske responded that while there is a lot of overlap, we are not looking at combining these committees formally. Diane also inquired about the status of the Director of Development position. President Guske replied that right now we are finding that we can manage the meetings we have, but it is not off the table that we will hire someone. Diane asked about the Building Committee's engagement with Three Needs Creative and whether they would create a building strategy. Karen explained Three Needs Creative brought together the ideas of the committee to create a visual interpretation of the space as well as some language that would help bridge the ideas of the committee. This specific process would likely be more costly and inefficient to do with a firm. The piece created is really a decision-making tool and alignment piece. Diane asked when we anticipated getting a rendering of the new site. Vice President Hempson suggested perhaps in the first quarter of next year we would have that. We are still 3-4 months from a decision on the firm. Diane asked about having a sign on the new location, which Dave responded would likely happen once an architect had been chosen. The focus for now is closing on the property.

Adjourn Regular Meeting – 8:30 p.m.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, September 13, 2022 at 6:30 PM (In Person – Library Hall)

Submitted by Meghann Sandak, Secretary