

the Skaneateles Library

Skaneateles Library Association
Board of Directors
Regular Meeting Minutes
Thursday, January 26, 2023
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, Patti Carey, Kathryn Carlson, Ralph DeMasi, Scott Elia, Andrew Hagen, Dave Lee, Paige Lynch, Erin McCormack, Larry Palmieri, Amy Roller. **Staff:** Library Director Nickie Marquis, Assistant Director and Adult Services Librarian Andrea Snyder, Librarian for Kids & Teens Mary Beth Schwartzwalder.

Absent: Manny Arroyo, Bob Lotkowitz.

Members of the Public: Fran McCormack, Diane Fellerman.

Call to order: 6:33 p.m. by President Guske.

Public Comment Period: None.

Approval of the Minutes

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

President's Report

President Guske emphasized how much more has happened with each passing year since we made the decision at the end of 2019 to build a new library. All of the committees are very engaged in the work and the speed will not slow down in the months to come.

Library Director's Report

As an addition to the circulated report, Library Director Nickie Marquis invited Trustees to the Tiny Art Show reception that will take place on February 10th. To date, 75 canvases have been given out for children and adults to paint and return to the library for the show.

Financials

Treasurer Maura Molnar updated trustees that we are at the end of our first quarter of the fiscal year and everything is in line with projections. Our accounting expenses hit early, which throws

that category off at this point in the fiscal year. Maura reminded trustees that last month we started breaking out the cash accounts differently to be more transparent. Investments are slowly growing.

The Finance Committee and the Executive Committee recommend to the full board that we request an increase in the tax levy of 4%, which will add \$14,600 in revenue. This increase would bring our public funding from \$364,000 this year to \$378,560. Packets distributed to trustees include a history of our tax levy, which was first awarded in 2016, to give newer trustees background and to outline the reasons for the request. The documents also illustrate the impact for an individual in the community depending on the value of their home. Maura referred to Chart D in the packet, which compares our levy to neighboring libraries. As an example, last year Cazenovia asked for an 8% increase and received it. They typically ask for a 2% increase annually. Currently 73% of our budget is covered by the tax levy, as compared to 87-99% for neighboring libraries. We do have investments that we withdraw from each year. Maura recommends asking for a small increase every year as the school district does, which is much easier than asking for a more significant jump once. The Finance Committee continues to discuss the long-term plan and goals for public funding. Most libraries have continued to ask for small annual increases to keep up with increased expenses.

Dave Hempson made the following motion:

Shall the sum to be raised by annual levy of a tax upon the taxable real property within the Skaneateles Central School District for the purpose of funding the Skaneateles Library Association be increased by \$14,560 to the sum of \$378,560 annually?

Larry Palmieri seconded the motion. All present trustees voted in favor of the motion with no objections or abstentions, and the motion carried.

Maura finished her report by reminding trustees that every year at this time we receive a calculation of the average balance of our investments over the last 12 quarters and we take 4% as a withdrawal. Last year that amount came to \$99,568 and this year it will be \$99,154. We are putting that money in a money market account at M&T Bank that will earn 4.2%.

Fennell Street New Building Committee

Dave Hempson thanked the Committee for their time intensive work over the last year. Dave gave an overview of the process of selecting an architectural firm, from initial research and contact to the first and second rounds of RFPs. Four firms were invited for in-person visits to Skaneateles to present to the Committee. Site visits were conducted to three firms to tour libraries they had designed. The committee unanimously and enthusiastically chose Oudens Ello from Boston. The Committee felt that Oudens Ello embraced the concepts of “outside in” and building pandemic resistance into the building. Their projects take full advantage of natural light, feature spaces of civic scale as well as intimate settings, have elements of surprise and delight, and are well organized. They follow six design attributes for a successful library: strong connection to the community, strong relationship to the landscape, ease of supervision and way finding, civic yet approachable, abundant natural light, and adaptable spaces and use patterns.

The Committee’s recommendation was based on Oudens Ello’s excellent RFP responses and responsive communication, as well as the consideration that their projected costs are in line with

the other finalists. All of the feedback from those who worked with them previously was positive and their beautiful libraries were filled with elements of “surprise and delight.” The Norwell Library was “perfection” according to those who visited.

Dave made a motion to engage Oudens Ello on the project. Karen Bedard seconded the motion. All voted in favor without any objections or abstentions. The motion carried.

Communication Committee

Karen Bedard gave a quick recap of the Internal Communications Training held earlier this month. Approximately 40 people attended and we received positive feedback from attendees who felt more educated and empowered to speak about the new building.

The Committee Chairs created a content calendar to help us keep up with a rigorous communications plan including *Skaneateles Stroll* articles, social media and other outreach.

Fundraising Committee

The Committee continues to meet weekly. Andrew reminded the Board that as trustees that we are all informal members of the fundraising team. Please continue to make suggestions about people in the community that we can reach out to about the project.

49 East Genesee Street Committee

Major work in the building is winding down. Downstairs lighting still needs to be installed and has been delayed by the receipt of incorrect parts by which the lights would hang.

We continue to research the viability of running used book sales and what the transition process looks like. Susanne thanked volunteers who have helped clean up the building on the Fennell Street property. We will need more volunteers, including on Saturday morning. We will soon be able to accept used books on that site.

Public Comment Period: Fran expressed her excitement about the selection of the architect. Diane echoed praise of the Communications Training. She loves the examples shared during Dave’s presentation and liked how the design was contemporary but not modern, and feels like it will fit into our community.

Adjourn Regular Meeting – 7:28 p.m.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, February 14th at 6:30 p.m. (In Person – Library Hall)

Submitted by Meghann Sandak, Secretary