



Skaneateles Library Association
Board of Directors
Regular Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, October 10, 2023

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, Secretary Meghann Sandak, Treasurer Maura Molnar. **Trustees:** Katie Armijo, Karen Bedard, Kathryn Carlson, Ralph DeMasi, Andrew Hagen, Kristin LaBeau, Steve McClintic, Erin McCormack, Larry Palmieri, Amy Rolleri, Stephen Thomas. **Staff:** Library Director Nickie Marquis, Assistant Director and Adult Services Librarian Andrea Snyder.

Absent: Vice President Dave Hempson, Manny Arroyo, Bob Lotkowitz.

Members of the Public: None.

Call to order: 6:30 p.m. by President Guske.

Public Comment Period: None.

Approval of the Minutes

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

President's Report

We will hold a holiday reception to recognize our many dedicated volunteers on Thursday, December 14th from 4:30-6 p.m. in Library Hall. Tomorrow night, Amy Rolleri will be recognized as Citizen of the Year. Kristin, Maura and Susanne visited Cazenovia's Book Barn and Library last week and were very impressed by their operation, which now grosses over \$100,000/year (including \$30-40k in online sales). We will want to pursue that potential revenue source in the new building.

Library Director's Report

We are hosting a diaper drive to support a local organization that gives out diapers to 20-25 kids every month.

We recently received a bequest in Dick Sheridan's will of a small collection of sheet music practice books. We will add them to our collection.

We had over 71,000 circulations this year. Nickie's long-established goal has been 70,000. This is another indication that we are getting back to pre-COVID numbers.

Andrea shared a demo of Kanopy, a platform through which you can borrow movies. Patrons currently have access to four views per month, though they are changing to a ticket platform moving forward. Different content will have a different “ticket price.”

Financials

September is the final month of our fiscal year. In the balance sheet you’ll see we are very cash heavy as we received our tax levy before October 1st. This revenue will be recognized in October. Investments were down slightly this month, but overall in the fiscal year we are up by \$164k. That increase is after we took almost \$100k out as we always do from our investments. We are projecting that our 4% withdrawal for this coming year should be near \$100k again. We were close to budget in terms of expenses which were just shy of half a million dollars. We were over in legal fees and buildings and grounds. Our tax levy covers approximately 75% of our operating expenses, so we have to make up the rest in fundraising and book sales. We thought we would need to use \$82k but we ended up using just over \$60k.

Betsy has started to provide profit and loss by class that enumerates budgets for both the current building and the capital project. We brought in \$635k, \$313k of which was the New York State grant we used to purchase the building. In terms of expenses, we bought the land for \$411k and then we had about \$175k in additional expenses above the purchase of the land, \$140k for architectural services, \$21,000 for fundraising, \$8,100 for maintaining the property, and some for engineering and the work done to hire the architects and construction managers. In total we spent \$587,000 on the new building this year.

Communications Committee

Karen referred to an email she sent the Board yesterday regarding messaging for a Barrow fundraising event. Karen and the Barrow staff had a great collaborative session to prepare for the event and to sharpen the language around the partnership and separation.

Erin and Karen have been trying to help the Fundraising Committee with articles and other written pieces that can be useful to them. Karen shared copies of the recent *Stroll* article as well as a piece entitled *Think Outside the Books*. We still have a way to go to convince people how this new building will be different in terms of what it provides for our community in the areas of socioeconomic equality, social infrastructure, future of work and lifelong learning.

J.D. Barrow Art Gallery

The last two Thursdays we’ve had very successful events. The first was the cocktail party hosted by John and Kim Mezzalingua. Kim spoke first and invited guests to join her and John in supporting the Barrow. Elsa spoke beautifully about the relationship between the two institutions. Ali spoke about the Path Forward. People were very enthusiastic. About 40 people attended the event.

Last Thursday we had a sold out concert with Andrew Russo. We cut it off at 67 so it wouldn’t be overcrowded.

November 14th at 6 p.m. will be the quarterly Barrow meeting and we will need to approve the budget.

Susanne added that we are hoping to finalize the separation agreement in the very near future, and in its current form it is much more simplified.

Fundraising

We have received some new commitments totaling \$175k. We have some key meetings in the works right now with some lead donor candidates. We have currently received about \$1.2M in commitments, \$2.5M with the Barrow component folded in.

We have an event scheduled for next Thursday in the Barrow for committed donors and prospects. It is a sponsored event through Woodbine and the Thomas family, and food will be provided by American Food & Vending. We are targeting 25 guests. We have sent out personal invitations via email and will follow up with phone calls to finalize the list.

Many of us have made multiple year commitments, and as the year comes to a close we want to remind everyone to get their payments in. Payments can be given to Nickie.

The focus of the campaign right now is to do as much as we can between now and Memorial Day of next year to get ourselves in a strong position for a public launch of the campaign. The Fennell street account currently stands at \$288k which is good considering that we've already spent over \$500k.

Kristin asked a clarifying question regarding named gifts. Susanne suggested we send the most recent version of the naming opportunities to the Board. One recent commitment was made for the reading porch off of the children's wing and another for the welcome desk.

Fennell Street New Building Committee

Susanne referenced the updated designs that were circulated to Board members. At this point we are stopping the design process because we don't have adequate funding and we want to be sure these are the designs that we want and need, and that our donors and Board are fully supportive of the plans. The further along we get in the planning process, the more difficult it will be to change things. We are still aiming for groundbreaking spring 2025 and opening mid-year 2026. It is still conceivable that if we get some more funding soon, we could potentially open at the end of 2025. On the construction management front we have interviewed all four construction manager finalists. We feel we cannot make a bad decision. We are checking references and will meet on Monday to try to make a final decision. We will then want that firm to cost out the designs that we have. This will give us a much clearer sense of how much we will need to fundraise to achieve our goals.

Public Comment: None. Susanne acknowledged the passing of Diane Fellerman, who had been a longtime supporter of the library, and her many contributions.

Adjourn Regular Meeting – 7:46 p.m.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, November 14th at 6:30 p.m. (In Person – Library Hall). Please note the Barrow Quarterly meeting will precede the SLA Meeting at 6 p.m. and all trustees are strongly encouraged to attend.

Submitted by Meghann Sandak, Secretary