



Board of Directors
Regular Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, March 11, 2025

Officers Present: President Dave Hempson, Vice President Katie Armijo, Secretary Kathryn Carlson, Treasurer Maura Molnar

Trustees: Ralph DeMasi, Jennifer Feeney, Susanne Guske, Kristin LaBeau, Bob Lotkowitz, Stephen McClintic, Larry Palmieri, Cristina Pietropaoli, Amy Roller, Meghann Sandak

Staff: Library Director Nickie Marquis, Assistant Director and Adult Services Librarian Andrea Snyder

Absent: Manny Arroyo, Karen Bedard, Paul Torrisi, Jr.

Members of the Public: none

Call to order at 6:31 pm

Public Comment Period – no comments

Approval of the Minutes – Minutes were approved for the regular board meeting held on February 11, 2025

President's Report

President Hempson announced that Trustees Feeney, Carlson and Pietropaoli, as well as Director Marquis, had volunteered to be on the proposed strategic planning committee. Others are still welcome to sign up.

President Hempson also reported that it is important to contact our state and federal representatives about the importance of funding for libraries. An email will be sent with links that are easy to access and use.

The legislature has recently released their versions of the state budget and the lines for libraries has been increased over the Governor's proposed budget. Andrea will send a model note that can be personalized.

Library Director's Report

Director Marquis referred to the report she had previously submitted and asked for any questions or comments. She commented that there had been a substitution of performers in the latest event in the guitar series, and the scheduled performer would hopefully perform in a later concert.

There was a question about attendance numbers for one of last month's events, which she clarified by explaining it was a cross-promoted and sponsored event.

She also stated that the summer schedule of programs was being revamped with fewer overall events to better direct staff time and resources.

She and Assistant Director Snyder presented a tutorial on the library's collection of decodable books and kits. This is a reading instruction method that is basis of the Science of Reading theory. It is based on a structured approach to sounding out letters and letter combinations. The books and kits build sequentially on this phonetical approach. Research has shown that while some children can pick up reading through pattern recognition, about 20% need specific instruction. Context as a component is added later. The library and school district partnered on a series of lectures on the science of reading last year when the collection was introduced. The school uses the Wilson program, which is a specific brand of phonics instruction. The library's collection is meant to complement the school's program and can be used by parents of children in school, or by home-schooling parents. The trustees were appreciative of the tutorial and agreed the library needs to keep promoting this in the community.

Financial

At five months into the fiscal year, cash reserves sit at \$333K with \$33K in checking. There is \$558K in the capital fund which is enough to pay for the construction documents. The investment accounts had gone up in February. March is uncertain.

The monthly income was \$5500 from merchandise sales and contributions. The expenses were \$37K. The capital project had a monthly income of \$1900 from interest, and expenses of \$95K, mainly for architect fees.

Treasurer Molnar reminded the trustees of the library tax levy vote on May 20, in conjunction with the school tax levy vote. The library has proposed a \$25K increase in the annual levy. There will be school budget presentations in which the library participates, although the attendance has historically been small. Perhaps the new assessments will stir more interest. We will publish our tax information in April when the district distributes their budget newsletter.

Fundraising Update

President Hempson reported on fundraising. A committee meeting was held the two Thursdays ago, in which Fundraising Director Erin McCormack reported on her recent efforts to meet with potential donors. The sign on Fennell Street has been approved for one year as an 8'x4' V-shaped sign with a simple message and a QR code. The microsite is being quoted this week. She and a member of the communication committee are developing a survey to gather data on the community's desires for the new library. She and President Hempson are working on a pie chart to illustrate how we will reach our total goal. She will coordinate the next meeting to solidify a unified message for marketing purposes.

Communication Committee

Fundraising Director Erin Mc Cormack and Communications chairperson Trustee Bedard will be meeting to coordinate the efforts of the two fundraising and Friends groups in collaboration with library staff.

Barrow Art Gallery (BAG) Update

Barrow President Rolleri reported that the separation agreement petition is now in the hands of the library's attorney and it should be reconciled by April 1. If that is the case, the Library/Barrow Board should have it by the April meeting. Therefore, there would need to be a 6:00pm Barrow Board

meeting followed by the 6:30pm regular Library Board meeting. We would also have to vote on the search committee for the new Barrow Board.

She also reported that the gallery would be open seven days a week during its season. Last year it recorded 1500 visitors and it hopes to see 2500 this year.

Fennell Street New Building Committee

President Hempson reported that the planning board of the village has requested some changes in the design to be more in keeping with the character of Skaneateles. This is after several renderings had already been presented to them with no objections. The architects have been informed and are revising the plans for review by the building committee. This may affect costs, which are rising due to inflation and other factors. Suggestions were made for ways to reduce costs and keep the desired features. We are good at overcoming obstacles and this is not insurmountable by any means. The village wants a final design before issuing the building permit.

President Hempson reminded the trustees that we have a good story to tell and we should “supercharge” our communication about that story.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 7:37 pm.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday April 8, 2025 at the library at 6:30 PM.