



**Board of Directors
Regular Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, May 13, 2025**

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

Trustees: Karen Bedard, Ralph DeMasi, Jennifer Feeney, Susanne Guske, Bob Lotkowictz, Stephen McClintic, Larry Palmieri, Cristina Pietropaoli, Amy Rolleri

Staff: Library Director Nickie Marquis, Assistant Director Andea Snyder

Absent: Manny Arroyo, Kristin LaBeau, Meghann Sandak, Paul Torrisi, Jr.,

Members of the Public: none.

Call to order at 6:30 pm

Public Comment Period – no comments

Approval of the Minutes – Minutes from the April 8, 2025 regular board meeting were approved.

President's Report

President Hempson reported that the Strategic Planning Committee had met and agreed on a process for going forward. The committee would review and possibly suggest updates to the Library's mission, vision and values. It will identify key stakeholders and gather input through surveys. It will condense the input into themes and refine the themes into strategies, goals and objectives. The Board will be involved and informed at every step.

He also reported that there would be coordination between the Library and the Barrow in fund-raising going forward.

He reported that the fund-raising event at the Country Club for donors to the study rooms was a success with 25 participants who left with information, energy and a mission to tell others. The presentations by President Hempson and Campaign Director Erin McCormack were well received and inspirational. Campaign Director McCormack was left with many new opportunities for contacts and follow-up. President Hempson thanked the librarians and noted that the key that made this library special was the connection to the community that the librarians did so well. A survey about what people were most looking forward to in the new library was tested by the participants with good results.

Library Director's Report

Director Marquis referred to her report in the board packet and highlighted the good news for libraries in the state budget. Operating aid and construction grants funding either stayed steady or increased. Advocacy for policy initiatives will continue.

Assistant Director Snyder gave an update on federal actions impacting libraries. Twenty one state attorneys general are suing the government over the removal of funding for the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS). The Librarian of Congress and the head of the US Copyright Office were fired from their positions by the White House, although there is debate about whether the firings were legal. The Librarian of Congress is a legislative branch employee and appoints leaders to other positions under it, such as the assistant librarian and the director of the Copyright Office. The library manages the nonpartisan Congressional Research Service, which responds to tens of thousands of requests from Congress each year. Communications are confidential from disclosure under the speech or debate clause of the U.S. Constitution.

Trustee Carlson reported on the latest staff development event by the Trustee Advisory Council (TAC). At the meeting it was announced that the former member services director, Amanda Perrine, had been appointed as Executive Director of the Onondaga County Public Libraries (OCPL). Her replacement as member services director is Amanda Schiavulli, who had previously held that position. They together announced their intent to resurrect the concept of liaisons for all the county libraries, so there will be a person who comes to meetings and represents OCPL to the local library board. The meeting also provided opportunity for board members across the county to interact and learn from each other.

Director Marquis explained the chart on member charges to the OCPL which was in her report. Each library is charged for the use of OCPL services based on the average circulation over a three-year span, plus a 2% inflation factor each year.

A question was asked about the A/B testing on our e-newsletter and Assistant Director Snyder explained that small changes were made to the same newsletter for two different random groups and the Savannah software could record which version got opened more.

A question was asked about the spike in computer usage in March and it was explained as program usage and more young people at the library during spring break.

Cost for legal services is up due to the Barrow separation work and memorandum of understanding. Work on this continues between the attorneys.

Financial Report

Treasurer Molnar reported that the library had closed one checking account and opened a different checking account because the fraud protection service had detected one of the library's checks for sale on the dark web. No money was lost and the fraud has been reported to the police and the FBI Cyber Crime Unit.

She also reported that the cash balance for the new building was \$629K and for the operating budget was \$286K. Investments went up a bit in April. Expenses for professional services were at %118 of the budget due to work on the separation agreement and the addition of a bill that was sent late and belonged in last year's

budget. The new building account received a \$50K donation and about \$2000 in interest in April. The bill for Architect fees was \$22K. In total we have received \$1.9M and spent \$1.28M on the new library project.

She reminded the board members that the tax levy vote was next Tuesday May 20. The library increase is \$25K. Information is on our website and in the school district budget brochure. The board has previously approved going over the tax cap. Remind your friends to vote. Friends of the Library were sent an email reminder as well.

The book sale is a big part of the operating budget. The dates are July 10-13. Hours have changed slightly. Prices remain the same. Sign-ups for duties will occur next month.

Fennell Street New Building Committee Report

President Hempson reported that the committee understood that the goal was to reduce the cost to \$15M, which couldn't be done with the current design. The committee, the architect (OEA) and the construction manager (CM) jointly are recommending a two-story building with reduced square footage (14,000 sq. ft.) with the ability for additions in the future. They are aware and have accounted for all previous naming opportunity donations.

Sketches and floor plans of the possible new design were shown. The building design will hopefully pass the "character of Skaneateles" test. The new design allows for a 40-space parking area.

A suggestion was made that it might be possible to build the frame first and design the interior later to avoid escalating materials costs. It is feasible from an architect and CM perspective, but will need to be explored.

Fund-raising Update

Fund-raising Director McCormack reported that the sign is up at the Fennell Street location and has generated good conversation. The QR code directs people to the new building website.

The event at the Country Club was a good gathering and showcased how many people had donated. This is important for attracting new investors. Eight new donor names were generated. The survey was beta-tested and results indicate that people are looking forward to (#1) the cafe, (#2) the bookstore and (#3) the children's area.

The June Stroll article will be about the Library/Barrow connection.

Major donor letters went out with more to come. Follow-up should be the following week.

There should be a push to have people who have already pledged to fulfill those pledges soon. Director Marquis sends out letters if pledges are due. People tend to wait until the end of the year to pay. They must be kept informed of the progress regularly.

There will be a major donor symposium similar to the study room donor event. It will be at the library after plans for the new design are completed.

The public phase of the campaign will be twelve weeks long. Fund-raising Director McCormack showed a timeline of events during those three months. An outreach to businesses will occur quickly thanks to Trustee Guske's work. There will be a microsite and donation portal. If there is a donation thermometer, it will be for

\$15M. Matching donations is a good tactic. The public campaign, which tradition says is at the very end of fund-raising, will be a bridge to the end in this case. Communication will be important.

Trustee Guske stated she felt that the time was right to go to the public and trustee Palmieri said he agreed.

Barrow Art gallery Update

Trustee Roller reported that the attorneys are still ironing out the separation agreement. Barrow committee members have worked on a matrix to identify the type of people who would be a fit for the new upcoming Barrow Board. The board should have 7-11 members. Eight people have indicated an interest. Interviews are upcoming.

Membership renewal is this month.

Thank you to the garden club for the landscaping for the building. New boxwoods are going in.

Public comments: none

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 8:03 pm.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday June 10, 2025 at 6:30 pm at the library.