



Board of Directors
Regular Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, December 10, 2024

Present: Vice President Erin McCormack, Secretary Kathryn Carlson, Treasurer Maura Molnar

Trustees: Katie Armijo, Manny Arroyo, Karen Bedard, Ralph DeMasi, Kristin LaBeau, Susanne Guske, Bob Lotkowitz, Stephen McClintic, Larry Palmieri, Amy Roller, Meghann Sandak

Trustees-elect: Cristina Pietropaoli, Paul Torrisi, Jr.

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

Absent: President Dave Hempson

Members of the Public: Mr. Joe Steencken

Call to order – 6:33PM

Public Comment Period – Mr. Steencken spoke about his love of the history and character of Skaneateles and his feeling that the design of the proposed new library was not in keeping with this character. Acting President Molnar replied that she would relay this to the building committee.

Approval of the Minutes – Minutes were approved from the Library Board meeting held on November 12, 2024

President's Report

In President Dave Hempson's absence, Acting President Molnar welcomed Cristina Pietropaoli and Paul Torrisi, Jr., two of the three newly elected trustees. She reminded everyone of the volunteer reception on Thursday December 12 at 5-7pm.

Library Director's Report

Director Marquis referred to her Monthly Report sent previously with the board packet. Following discussion at previous board meetings about reporting more information on program attendance, she has included a new graph showing how attendance is distributed among age groups. While we do record how many people attend each program, it is not necessarily the most important indicator of whether that program is successful or worthwhile. Some programs by their nature attract many people and some are only designed for a small group. Trustee Bedard noted that After School Unwind was very meaningful.

Director Marquis stated that the staff had prepared the holiday cards and gift bags for the board members. Many thanks to them.

Financials

Treasurer Molnar reported that because we are early in our fiscal year, there is a lot of cash on hand. She reported that there was \$34K in operating reserves and \$479K in money markets drawing interest. In the Capital accounts (checking and interest bearing) there was \$631K. Interest income was down in October but up in November. The expenses for the first two months of the fiscal year were in budget. The capital campaign had spent \$90K this month to the architects and minor expenses for upkeep and insurance.

During the year accounting is done on a cash basis, but the end-of-year reporting is on an accrual basis

For the new trustees, she explained that the tax levy pays for about 75% of the operating expenses. The library began asking voters for public money in 2016. This has allowed for growth in hours, staff, programs and collections. For context, most other libraries in our region get up to 90% of their money from their tax levy; some get close to 99%.

She explained our process for taking money out of our investments to make up the difference. Book sales account for a month's worth of expenses.

It is recommended that every year as a board we vote to override the tax levy limit imposed by municipal law. The state doesn't release our tax cap information until mid-April, which is after we would need to approve asking taxpayers for an increase in the levy, so it is prudent to approve the override just in case. At this point any increase needed would likely go over the tax levy limit. She asked the board to approve the following resolution as a precaution:

Resolved that, pursuant to General Municipal Law section 3-c(5), the Board of Trustees of the Skaneateles Library Association overrides, for the purpose of the Skaneateles Library Association fiscal year 2025-2026 budget, the tax levy limit imposed by General Municipal Law section 3-c(5)

Motion was made by Trustee McClintic and seconded by Trustee Sandak. Motion was approved unanimously.

Governance

Trustee Arroyo reported on several suggested changes to the Association By-laws as reviewed by the governance committee. The committee recommended striking the reference to remote meeting attendance in Article 4 section 5 due to the onerous obligations this option required of the association. There were no objections. There was significant discussion regarding the granting of emergency powers to the executive committee and this was sent back to the governance committee for revision. Also referred to committee for research was the definition of standing committees.

Fund Raising Committee

Vice President McCormack reported that 48 people, including donors, has committed to attending the volunteer reception. She has sent out many end-of-year pledge reminders. It may be that donors are resisting giving their pledge due to the high stock market. Perhaps a direct communication about the tax benefit of a donation from their IRA would help. Trustee Torrasi volunteered to help draft such a letter. Donors might also appreciate more information about the project's finances.

They may also be waiting for a ground breaking to show that the project will really happen. This brought up the issue of building public awareness and belief in the project. There have already been some presentations to community groups. The large sign at the Fennell Street site should go up as soon as possible.

Vice President McCormack stated that the campaign so far has been wildly successful when compared to similar library building project campaigns. There have been over 200 donors and many successful grants. We need to continue the effort to make the project visible and the need evident. If we can win the public's hearts and minds, it may sway major donors. She will make a major recommendation in January.

Communication

Trustee Bedard reaffirmed the importance of such communications efforts as the large sign. The proposed microsite is to persuade and tell the story. The committee is looking to hire a new web designer with not-for-profit and campaign experience.

In the December issue of the Stroll magazine, President Hempson wrote a recap of the year's events. In January, the librarians wrote about "cozy winter reads." In February, Friends of the Library will be highlighted.

Barrow

Trustee Roller filled the new trustees in on the history of the separation agreement and said they finally have a document back from the attorneys to review. She is also looking into the unreasonably high bills they recently received. The Christmas party last Friday went well. She thanked the board members for 100% participation in giving.

Fennell Street New Building Committee

In the absence of President Hempson, Acting President Molnar reported that the architects will be presenting the final Design and Development plans on Monday at 5:30pm. A zoom option will be available and all trustees are invited. In January President Hempson will talk about next steps and what we expect to spend in the next six months. Money for this is available.

Public comments: Mr. Steencken remarked that he felt the library was in good hands and he thanked the board.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:00pm.

The library's annual meeting is scheduled for Tuesday January 14, 2025 at 6:30 P.M., followed by the regular meeting.