

**Southeast Steuben County Library
Board of Trustees
Regular Monthly Meeting
Via Zoom Interactive Platform
April 21, 2022**

Trustees Attending:

President: Barbara A. McLean
Vice President: Julie E. Fromer
Jeffrey Scott: Treasurer
Secretary: Jamie Curtis
Gail Bardhan
Nogaye Ka-Tandia
Kathryn C. Mack
Barry W. Nicholson
Louise Richardson
Svetlana Short
Geoffrey Steenberge

Absent:

Kate Paterson

Guests:

Pauline Emery, Library Director
Brad Turner, Assistant Library Director
Lori Reenan, Library Business Manager

Call to Order:

President Barbara A. McLean called the meeting to order at 4:33 p.m.

Public Comment:

There was no public comment.

Consent Agenda:

**Minutes of the March 17, 2022 Regular Meeting
March 2022 Financial Reports**

On a motion by Kathryn C. Mack seconded by Nogaye Ka-Tandia, trustees voted unanimously to accept all items on the Consent Agenda.

Director's Report:

(See Library Director's Report for March 2022)

Library Director Pauline Emery called attention to the May 17, 2022 Corning-Painted Post School District (CPPSD) vote. The library's \$888,456 levy request will appear as Proposition No. 3 on the school district ballot. NYS Education Law, Section 259 allows the library to place its levy proposition on the school district ballot, saving taxpayers the cost of a separate vote. The proposed tax rate for homes assessed at full value was 37.06 cents per \$1,000 of assessed valuation. "It

is about an 86 cent increase total for homes assessed at \$100,000." The proposed increase does not exceed New York's 2% tax cap.

There were 8,856 library visitors in March 2022, a big increase over March 2021 visits. "Things are increasing. Today felt like the good old days; very lively."

In response to a question about mask-wearing in the library from Nogaye Ka-Tandia, Pauline Emery indicated that mask use was currently optional. The CDC Community Level for Steuben County was still low. Most staff members and many patrons were wearing masks.

Program highlights in March included *Science Time with Miss Abby, Take & Make Bags*, and a *Mini-Maker* drop-in project. The drop-in format limited the number of participants gathered at any time and allowed for safe social distancing. *Take & Make Bags*, a hybrid offering, has been another successful pandemic programming adaptation. "We are reaching a demographic that we didn't before the pandemic," Pauline Emery said.

School libraries and public libraries have faced an increase in calls for book bans. Pauline Emery urged trustees to visit <https://uniteagainstbookbans.org>. The American Library Association reported more than 729 attempted bans of 1,597 individual books in 2021.

Calling attention to an online event held April 20, Pauline Emery said the library helped to publicize an Earth Day-related *Community Conversations* interactive sponsored by Humanities New York and Civics4Action. The event topic was "Community & Environment." There were roughly 30 attendees, according to Assistant Library Director Brad Turner.

Library advocacy efforts in March succeeded in convincing New York State legislators to increase library funding levels significantly over what was initially proposed by Governor Hochul. Local Library Services Aid increased by 5.8% under the agreed plan. Construction Aid remained flat. Roughly \$865,000 will be available this year to libraries in the 48-library Southern Tier Library System. "It was a welcome surprise that STLS got a 5.8% increase."

Looking ahead to the 2022 Summer Reading Program, "Oceans of Possibilities has been designated as the children's theme. The Children's Department will be decorated accordingly. "It is a great way to say goodbye to the old space before renovations transform the space into the Mary Lu Walker Children's Room."

A partnership with the Rockwell Museum will bring sculpture to the library.

Barbara McLean called attention to last month's Community Read featuring Corning Community College (CCC) Visiting Scholar Sonia Nazario, award-winning author of *Enrique's Journey*. Nogaye Ka-Tandia said Nazario's "powerful" April 7 presentation at CCC cast light on the perils facing youngsters from Central America seeking to join family members in the U.S.

Financial Reports:

(See March 2022 Financial Reports)

The Finance Committee met on April 7.

Treasurer Jeffrey Scott reported on the March actuals. "Everything is in line and looking great," he said, noting the budget was showing a modest surplus. Business Manager Lori Reenan and Pauline Emery have been working with the independent auditors. The library received its EIDL loan. Geoffrey Steenberge will work with the Finance Committee on long range scenario planning.

Facilities – Bid Process:

On behalf of Facilities Committee Chair Kate Paterson, Pauline Emery reported that a construction bid package for the Mary Lu Walker Children’s Room renovations was being prepared by HUNT Engineers and will be reviewed by our lawyer and by the Facilities Committee. Bidding was anticipated by the end of May. The Committee will review an updated Facilities Master Plan drafted by Consultant Bob Drew.

Committee Updates:

- **Fund Development** – Chair Louise Richardson said the library purchased DonorPerfect data software. The Committee met April 14 and reviewed an early draft Case Statement prepared by the Chair, with “good feedback.” The library’s 2021-2022 Campaign raised \$98,833.
- **Scholarship** – Vice President and Scholarship Committee Chair Julie Fromer said the Committee received three scholarship applications to date. May 6 is the deadline. Two \$1,500 Scholarship will be awarded.
- **Friends of the Library** – Friends of the Southeast Steuben County Library Liaison Julie Fromer said the Spring 2022 Book Sale will be held in the library. It will open June 4 and continue through June 25. Volunteers were needed. Sales tax will be charged at the book sale.
- **Strategic Planning** – Barbara McLean requested that trustees complete a strategic planning questionnaire posted on Google Docs. Library staff members responded to similar questions earlier in the process.

Executive Session:

Barbara McLean called for a motion to go into Executive Session to receive information about tenant contract discussions. On a motion by Svetlana Short, seconded by Barry W. Nicholson, trustees went into Executive Session at 5:13 p.m.

Adjournment:

Barbara McLean ended the Executive Session at 5:53 p.m., with no action proposed or taken. The regular meeting was adjourned immediately thereafter.

The next regular meeting of the Library Board of Trustees was scheduled for May 19, 2022 at 4:30 p.m.