

**Southeast Steuben County Library
Board of Trustees
Regular Monthly Meeting
Via Zoom Interactive Platform
May 19, 2022**

Trustees Attending:

President: Barbara A. McLean
Vice President: Julie E. Fromer
Jeffrey Scott: Treasurer
Secretary: Jamie Curtis
Gail Bardhan
Kathryn C. Mack
Kate Paterson
Louise Richardson
Geoffrey Steenberge

Absent:

Nogaye Ka-Tandia
Barry W. Nicholson
Svetlana Short

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 4:30 p.m.

Public Comment:

There was no public comment.

Consent Agenda:

**Minutes of the April 21, 2022 Regular Meeting
April 2022 Financial Reports**

On a motion by Kathryn C. Mack, seconded by Kate Paterson, trustees voted unanimously to accept all items on the Consent Agenda.

Director's Report:

(See Library Director's Report for April 2022)

Library Director Pauline Emery reported increases in patron usage for the month of April 2022, compared to April 2021. The library circulated 14,854 books, digital books and other materials. "It was nice to see our statistics rising, and a semblance of normal," she said, adding, "More patrons are coming in and I am really happy about young adult programming." There were 8,737 library visitors in April, more than double the draw in April 2021. Public PC usage and Wi-Fi usage were up as

well. "People are going to our website and using its resources". Among web based offerings, library databases picked up 1,202 uses in April.

On Earth Day, Corning Incorporated employee volunteers performed landscaping and cleanup in the plaza outside the library. Also on April 22, Youth Coordinator Kayla Crane escorted a group of middle school student to Fallbrook Park for an Earth Day gardening program by the Market Street-based business, Pixie Moss Meadows.

On May 17, the library's levy increase proposition passed with a wide margin: 70.62% in favor. 'Yes' votes numbered 1,836, with only 764 'No' votes.

Looking ahead, the library will host a Juneteenth poetry reading featuring Akua Lezli Hope. Children's Librarian Sue McConnell and staff were preparing for the Summer Reading Program, making elaborate decorations and backdrops to transform the children's area into a pirate ship. ApireHope NY, Inc., a volunteer-based a peer-to-peer counseling service out of Bath plans to have an outreach table in the library on May 24. The group helps raise awareness about mental health issues. The Friends of the Library Book Sale will be held in the library June 4 - 25.

Barbara McLean noted the library's Annual Meeting will be held on June 16 this year. "For the past two years during COVID, we held the Annual Meeting in October. We will switch it back to June again because it is less far removed [from the year reported on during the meeting]."

A draft of the 2021 Annual Report was submitted for review by trustees, with the Director's Letter still to come.

Financial Reports:

(See April 2022 Financial Reports)

The Finance Committee met on May 16.

Treasurer Jeffrey Scott related that the review of the annual independent audit of the library will take place in June. The April 'Budget vs. Actuals' report showed a deficit of \$10,391 for the month, due to an early bill payment. However, the annual operating budget was in the black, with a year-to-date surplus of \$30,239. The EDC Building Management budget was currently under review. On the income side, Corning-Painted Post School District turned in about \$1,000 in library levy late payment fees, and the library received the last 10% of its Health and Safety grant from New York State. Trustee Geoffrey Steenberge has prepared long-range financing scenarios as part of the ongoing strategic planning process.

Jeffrey Scott introduced a bank transfer resolution recommended by the Finance Committee. Without discussion, trustees voted unanimously to approve the following resolution:

The Southeast Steuben County Library's Board of Trustees, upon the recommendation of the SSCL Finance committee, approves the transfer of \$34,300 being held in the Community Bank, Corning, NY (*formerly Elmira Savings Bank*) Grant account to the Community Bank Capital Reserve account.

Facilities:

Facilities Committee Chair Kate Paterson reported on library building updates and introduced a consultant's long range facilities plan.

a) **Updates** – A second floor tenant has not renewed its lease and plans to vacate by June 30, 2022. The Facilities Committee and the Finance Committee will talk about the implications of the vacancy. The library’s architectural plans for the future Mary Lu Walker Children’s Room, prepared by HUNT E|A|S, were reviewed by library consultant Bob Drew (RDE Engineering) and the city of Corning Code Enforcement Officer. “We seem to be on schedule for June bidding,” Kate Paterson assessed.

Two Indiana limestone panels cladding the City Hall building collapsed recently. The library (circa 1974) has a similar design, complete with limestone panels. Both buildings are part of Nasser Civic Center Plaza and were constructed after the Hurricane Agnes Flood. “The city will have a study done of the outside of City Hall and I think it makes sense for us to piggy back on that.”

b) **Facilities Plan** – In introducing the document to trustees, Kate Paterson indicated the *Updated Building Condition Survey and Facilities Master Plan Update* prepared by RDE Engineering was “a very large document.” Trustees will review the report in detail next month. The RDE report was based on the library’s original 2017 *Building Condition Survey and Facilities Master Plan*, prepared by HUNT E|A|S and extensively updated by RDE. Many building deficiencies were identified and prioritized by RDE. “The finance Committee is working with the Facilities Committee to come up with a plan [to address these issues].” Close to \$10 million in needed improvements were identified.

Strategic Planning

Barbara McClean thanked trustees for responding to the strategic planning survey. She called on Trustee Geoffrey Steenberge to talk about long term financial planning. He said the major question to be addressed was how to pay for building improvements that will be called for in the forthcoming Strategic Plan.

After playing out various alternatives including grants, fundraising and increased utilization of earnings from the library endowment, Geoffrey Steenberge said, “The only way to raise the [bulk of the] money we are talking about is a voter supported bond resolution.” He emphasized that obtaining voter approval for a 20-year low interest bond issue from the Dormitory Authority of the State of New York (DASNY) would allow future levy propositions to stay within New York’s 2% Tax Cap.

Barbara McLean thanked him and called for comments or questions.

Louise Richardson, chair of the Fund Development Committee, said she agreed, “Were we to do Capital fundraising, there is always a concern about compromising fundraising for operations.” When appealing to a core group of library supporters, that issue can be managed to a certain extent with conversations, she said, emphasizing that an involved core group of supporters was an important element in Capital campaigns.

Pauline Emery invited trustees to attend an August 4, 2022 Zoom meeting with a library Director from Long Island “who has just done a bond.”

Barbara McLean indicated that the ideas and issues presented above will be addressed at future meetings.

Committee Updates:

- **Fund Development** – Chair Louise Richardson said the Committee was still working on a case statement for the children’s area. Data has been transferred to the library’s cloud-based fundraising platform.
- **Scholarship** – Vice President and Scholarship Committee Chair Julie Fromer said 10 applications for the Nancy Douth and Friends of the Southeast Steuben County Library Honorary Scholarships were received by the May 6 deadline, and two \$1,500 scholarships will be awarded. She thanked Committee members including Gail Bardhan, Jamie Curtis, Margo Brown, Anna Rice, Jill Palmer and Mary H. Bacalles for their work in selecting the winners. Julie Fromer requested that in future years trustees reserve additional funds to allow for a third scholarship if an exceptional case arises. The question will be considered during the next budget cycle.
- **Friends of the Library** – Friends of the Southeast Steuben County Library Liaison Julie Fromer said volunteers were working with Friends organizers to mount the June Book Sale.

Adjournment:

Barbara McLean adjourned the regular meeting at 5:37 p.m.

The next regular meeting of the Library Board of Trustees was scheduled for June 16, 2022 at 4 p.m. via Zoom interactive platform.

The Annual Meeting of the Membership will follow the regular June 16 meeting. On August 4, 2022 the board will meet in a workshop session via Zoom.