

**Southeast Steuben County Library  
Board of Trustees  
Regular Monthly Meeting  
November 16, 2023**

**Trustees Attending:**

President: Barbara A. McLean  
Vice President: Julie E. Fromer  
Treasurer: Jeffrey Scott  
Secretary: Jamie Curtis  
Gail Bardhan  
Lyndsie M. Guy  
Nogaye Ka-Tandia  
Kathryn C. Mack  
Barry W. Nicholson  
Kate Paterson  
Louise Richardson

**Absent:**

Svetlana Short\*

**Guests:**

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

**Call to Order:**

President Barbara A. McLean called the meeting to order at 4:31 p.m.

**Public Comment:**

There was no public comment.

**Consent Agenda:**

**Minutes of the October 19, 2023 Regular Meeting  
October 2023 Financial Reports**

On a motion by Kate Paterson, seconded by Barry W. Nicholson, trustees voted unanimously to accept all items on the Consent Agenda.

**Director's Report:**

Library Director Pauline Emery said that on a month over month basis, the library was seeing increases in patron visits, circulation, program attendance, public PC use, Wi-Fi sessions, Digital Literacy, Creation Station use and in Digital Circulation. Compared to October 2022, library use was up last month in all categories except database use. The library was an official polling place during early voting and on Election Day. Steuben County Board of Elections requested to use the library because the library building meets its access and security requirements. "We

\*Observed the meeting via Zoom.

get to see people we don't normally see," Pauline Emery said. The library has hosted several Red Cross blood drives this year.

"FLX Gives starts at 6 p.m. tonight." WENY broadcast a story on the library's participation in FLX Gives. (FLX Gives is the annual, regional 24-hour online fundraiser for nonprofits hosted by the Community Foundation of Elmira-Corning and the Finger Lakes.) Other WENY news spots aired focused on the library's collection of winter clothing items for The Great Giveback and on Red Cross Blood Drives in the library. The FLX Gives video was shown to trustees.

### **Finance:**

(See Financial Reports for October 2023.)

The Finance Committee met on November 15.

Treasurer Jeffrey Scott said there was "nothing too exciting" to report this month. The library was about \$8,000 under budget on expenses for the month of October and about \$75,000 under for the year. "The Friends of the Library gave us \$20,000 and will match FLX Gives donations up to \$4,000." Noting the tenant vacancy on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor and the resulting loss of income, Jeffrey Scot said, "This year our building budget shortfall will be covered by operational reserves and by capital reserves."

### **2024 Budget Update:**

Barbara McLean updated trustees on developments in the 2024 library budget. Trustees were emailed a tentative draft in their board materials packet. "The Finance Committee has been talking about solutions for the budget gaps that we have in 2024." Barbara McLean urged all trustees to attend a December 12 online class with Southern Tier Library Director Brian Hildreth. "It will be really important for everyone to attend. It will be on Zoom and recorded. Brian will be presenting data and context that will inform us in moving forward." Trustees will need to decide on the library's levy proposition for the May 2024 ballot.

Kate Paterson asked whether the full board had gone over the proposed budget "in this room." Barbara McLean said the tentative draft had been distributed to trustees and indicated that trustees would vote on a final draft at the December 21, 2023 meeting, or in January 2024.

Pauline Emery noted that expenses will be covered in 2024, despite the shortfall due to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor vacancy.

Vice President Julie E. Fromer asked about the timeline for creation of a teen space in the vacant office suite. Pauline Emery noted that Corning Incorporated Foundation provided funds for design of the envisioned teen space by Hunt E|A|S. "We should have the Hunt E|A|S teen space report by April."

Barbara McLean said, "There will be much more discussion around that to come. If there are gaps in information, please let us know and we will get you what you need to make informed decisions."

### **Records Access Policy Revision:**

On behalf of the Policy and Personnel Committee, Barbara McLean introduced its reworked Records Access Policy. She noted the proposed policy was "very specific on what people can have access to."

Kathryn C. Mack asked "Why are we not subject to FOIL?"

Pauline Emery responded that Association Public Libraries were not covered under FOIL, according to NYS law.

After further discussion, the Records Access Policy Revision was put to vote. Trustees voted to approve the following policy revision unanimously.

#### **Records Access**

The Library Director is designated as the Library's Records Access Officer. The Southeast Steuben County Library is an association library; therefore, not subject to New York State Freedom of Information Law (FOIL). However, with a commitment to transparency, the library has pledged to provide the following records within 10 business days upon written request.

- a. Board Minutes
- b. Monthly board packets
- c. Monthly board financials
- d. Audits
- e. 990

Records access requests apply only to residents within the Southeast Steuben County Library's service area. The Records Access Officer may deny a request for records if the volume of such records creates a hardship for staff to reproduce or the request fails to sufficiently identify the document being requested. For paper copies of any records a fee of \$.25/page will be charged.

Board minutes can also be found on the library's website [www.ssclibrary.org](http://www.ssclibrary.org).

– Adopted by the Southeast Steuben County Library  
Board of Trustees on December 20, 2018  
– Revised November 16, 2023

#### **Committee Updates:**

- **Facilities** –Chair Barry W. Nicholson said the Committee met in November. Repairs to the building facade will cost less than anticipated. Repairs should fall in the \$30,000 range, to address all safety considerations. HVAC repairs have been ongoing and seem relentless. "We may have to push back on multiple suppliers. It is causing us lots of money and we don't feel it should be." Pauline Emery explained that the Community Room, for example, was "freezing" due to bad coils and leaks. Manufacturer LG pays for parts under warrantee, "but we have to pay labor." Barry Nicholson noted the committee also looked at a preliminary study on parking lot remediation and was considering that in connection with emergency generator installation. Upgrades to the public elevator will be needed.
- **PR/Advocacy** –Barbara McLean said the Committee was drafting a Request for Proposals for library website redesign. "We are anticipating needing to do a bigger marketing campaign to garner library support and increase library visibility." Kate Paterson asked whether outsourcing to a P.R. firm was being considered. Pauline Emery said the library "hopes for funds to cover that."

- **Fund Development** – Chair Louise Richardson reminded trustees that FLX Gives starts at 6 p.m. and urged trustees to participate. The Annual Appeal was set to go. Thanks were extended to Secretary Jamie Curtis and to Lyndsie M. Guy for adding personal notes on many of the fundraising campaign letters.
- **Policy & Personnel** – Barbara McLean said the Committee was looking at surveillance policies, and also looking at the library’s salary matrix.
- **Scholarship** – Vice President and Committee Chair Julie E. Fromer said the library scholarship application form will be revised upward in January.
- **Friends of the Library** – Friends of the Library Liaison Julie Fromer said the Friends gave \$20,000 to the library and committed to match FLX Gives donations up to \$4,000. The Books Sandwiched In lineup for January and February 2024 has been set.
- **Strategic Planning** – The Committee will meet in December. Lyndsie Guy will chair. Barbara McLean invited trustees to join the Committee.

**Other business:**

Hunt E|A|S will hold an information gathering session for its teen space concept design on Monday, December 4 at 11 a.m. Lyndsie Guy asked whether HUNT E|A|S will consider alternative locations for the teen space, other than the vacant office suite on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. Barry Nicholson expressed concern that remodeling the vacant space as a teen space would preclude finding a new tenant. He said he wanted to assure sustainability.

Pauline Emery suggested there might be grant funds available for teens. She said, with reference to the vacancy, that renting was itself unsustainable. “You never know. We didn’t think United Way would move.”

Barbara McLean said there will be future discussion around the issue. She posed the rhetorical question, “What is our Mission?” before answering, “It is not to be a landlord.”

**Adjournment:**

Barbara McLean adjourned the meeting at 5:33 p.m.

The next regular meeting of the Library Board of Trustees was scheduled for December 21, 2023 at 4:30 p.m. in the library.