

**Southeast Steuben County Library
Board of Trustees
Regular Monthly Meeting
January 18, 2024**

Trustees Attending:

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

Absent:

Kate Paterson

Guests:

Pauline Emery, Library Director
Brad Turner, Assistant Library Director
Lori Reenan, Library Business Manager
Marshall Hyde, Library PR Coordinator

Call to Order:

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

Public Comment:

There was no public comment.

Oath of Office/Conflict of Interest:

Library Business Manager Lori Reenan administered the Oath of Office to all trustees present: Barbara A. McLean, Lyndsie M. Guy, Jamie Curtis, Jeffrey Scott; Gail Bardhan, Julie E. Fromer, Nogaye Ka-Tandia, Kathryn C. Mack, Barry W. Nicholson, Louise Richardson, and Svetlana Short. These trustees were duly sworn in. **

Lori Reenan distributed to each trustee a copy of the library's Conflict of Interest Annual Statement. Trustees were asked to disclose any conflicts of interest or possible conflicts, and to return the completed statement.

*Attended the meeting via Zoom.

**Trustee Kate Paterson arrived at the library immediately after the meeting ended. Business Manager Lori Reenan administered the Oath of Office to her, witnessed by trustees before they departed. Kate Paterson was duly sworn in.

Consent Agenda:**Minutes of the December 21, 2023 Regular Meeting
December 2023 Financial Reports**

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

Director's Report:

Library Director Pauline Emery said library usage was up in all areas for 2023, except for NOVELny database use. New York State funding for NOVELny was cut in 2023, but may be restored. "The end-of-year statistics look great. Everything is on the rise, trending toward 2019 numbers." A Red Cross blood drive held in the library drew local television coverage. Children's Librarian Sue McConnell inspired a favorable write up on CPPSD social media. Skate and Flick drew close to 170 participants on January 13. Upcoming programs include a monthly feature film showing, an adult Dungeons & Dragons group, and seeds & gardening workshops.

Pauline Emery recognized Assistant Director Brad Turner. He reported that the Annual Campaign drew more than \$67,000 in donations so far. The fund drive started in November 2023 and ends on March 31, 2024. Brad Turner announced his retirement. His last day will be April 19, 2024.

Louise Richardson noted she attended the Southern Tier Library System's (STLS's) Library Advocacy Day kickoff workshop earlier today. This year Governor Kathy Hochul's budget proposed a 2.5% increase for library support. If adopted, NOVELny databases, accessible to all state residents, will be funded at \$3 million for the year. New York State Construction Aid for Libraries will be funded at \$34 million, the same as in 2023. Louise Richardson distributed advocacy postcards to trustees and said representatives from STLS member libraries and other libraries statewide plan to lobby legislators in Albany for increased library support on Wednesday, February 7.

Regarding future plans for disseminating information about the library levy vote in May, Pauline Emery said she met with staff on January 3. Staff may provide factual information about the vote. Library staff members may not campaign for a 'Yes' vote during working hours. Barbara McLean noted she attended the meeting and said staff supported the library effort with enthusiasm.

Pauline Emery said she met with Friends of the Library (FOL) members to garner their support for the library levy proposition. She will meet with other community members and stakeholders in coming days. Pauline Emery and Barbara McLean plan to meet with Corning-Painted Post Schools (CPPSD) Superintendent Michelle Caulfield next week.

Louise Richardson said the third in the series of FOL *Books Sandwiched In* book talks was held January 17 at the First Congregational United Church of Christ on Pulteney Street and was "really well received."

Finance:

(See Financial Reports for December 2023.)

The Finance Committee met on January 11, 2024.

Treasurer Jeffrey Scott said the Committee reviewed the end-of-year 2023 financial reports. The library came in \$54,066 under budget in expenses for the year and "Fund Raising was over budget by \$18,000." He predicted, "We may not have to take from the reserves."

Jeffrey Scott, a Corning Incorporated employee, nominated the library to receive a \$1,000 Vibrant Community Grant from Corning Inc.

2024 Budget Amendment

Barbara McLean said in order to provide a clearer and unified view of the library's expenses and responsibilities this year, the expenses for the area on the second floor of the building that the library is now using for its own programs will be reflected in the Library Operating Budget. The change was recommended by the Finance Committee.

On a Finance Committee motion to incorporate the expenses for the 2nd floor suite into Expense Lines 6020 (Cleaning), 6030 (Maintenance & Repair – Building), and 6070 (Maintenance Contracts), trustees voted unanimously to amend the 2024 budget.

Public Communications Policy:

The Policy & Personnel Committee met on January 11.

Barbara McLean said the Policy & Personnel Committee recommends approval of a Public Communications Policy. She said the policy determines who is responsible for speaking on behalf of the library and when.

Following brief discussion, trustees voted unanimously to approve the following policy and to designate *The Leader* as the official newspaper:

SOUTHEAST STEUBEN COUNTY LIBRARY PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

The Library Board of Trustees has a responsibility to promote public awareness of library services and programs, to develop public understanding and support of the library and the vital role it plays in the support of community well-being.

The Board of Trustees recognizes that effective public relations involve every person who has a connection with the library. The Board urges its own staff, volunteers, and friends to remember that they represent the library in every public contact and that professionalism and good service enhances good relations.

Official statements to the public and media will be made by the Library Director or the Board President in consultation with the Library Director. If it is necessary for anyone other than the Library Director or Board President to provide the public with information, such information will be reviewed and approved by the Library Director and Board President prior to its release.

The Board of Trustees will designate the official newspaper to be used for all public announcements at its annual Organization Meeting each year.

Social media platforms, including mass email communication services, play an important and active role in library communications. Designated library staff are responsible for posting information to all library subscribed social media sites.

Staff will adhere to the board approved Social Media Policy when sharing information or images. Staff in consultation with the Library Director manage overall social media content. The library will not answer questions pertaining to Library Board matters through social media. These questions should be directed to the Library Board during Public Comment at a regular meeting.

Library staff and trustees are entitled to a safe and protected work environment both within the library building and online. Communication, specifically from the public, sent to staff or trustees that contains concerning, harassing or threatening language will be handled by the Library Director in discussion with the Board President.

All incidents that pose a risk to human well-being will be documented and reported to the authorities.

Adopted by the Southeast Steuben County Library
Board of Trustees on January 18, 2024

Committee Updates:

- **Facilities** –Chair Barry W. Nicholson said the teen space upstairs was the “priority of the moment.” Two HUNT E|A|S alternative designs for converting vacant office space on the second floor into a young adult space were proffered. HUNT E|A|S will meet with teens next week to get feedback and ideas. HUNT will make another revision to the concept design after the input. Concerning ongoing problems with the LG HVAC system, Postler & Jaeckle Corp. has been working with Taitem Engineering, PC to solve the problems. “They are still working on it.” The library was also working with HUNT and Elmira Structures, Inc. on the building facade.
- **PR/Advocacy** –Barbara McLean said the Committee was meeting frequently to plan for public information dissemination and library advocacy leading up to the levy vote in May. The Committee was also working on the Request for Proposals for a revamped library website.
- **Fund Development** – Chair Louise Richardson extended thanks to Brad Turner for his work on the Annual Campaign.
- **Nominating** – Barbara McLean said “a former trustee” expressed interest in joining the Board. “We will be meeting with him next month.”
- **Policy & Personnel** – Barbara McLean said the Committee met this month. Along with drafting the Public Communications Policy, members reviewed starting salaries for staff positions. The annual evaluation of the Library Director was being planned.
- **Scholarship** – Chair Julie E. Fromer said she was working with PR Coordinator Marshall to renew the online application forms for the library scholarships. She said she will reach out to high schools, BOCES, Pathways and the Community Foundation to help publicizing it. Svetlana Short has joined the Committee. Svetlana Short mentioned that the Corning Museum of Glass will open a two-year technical certificate program that may be of interest to library scholarship applicants.
- **Friends of the Library** –Friends of the Library Liaison Julie E. Fromer said the Friends Annual Meeting went well. The Holiday Shoppe was successful.

Now, Valentine's Day giftwrapped book bundles are on sale in the library

- **Strategic Planning** – Chair Lyndsie M. Guy said the Committee had its first meeting yesterday. Committee members reviewed the current Strategic Plan and were looking toward the next plan and identifying basic questions for outreach to the community. The date range of the next plan has not yet been determined.

Other business:

There was no other business.

Adjournment:

Barbara McLean adjourned the meeting at 5:25 p.m.

The next regular meeting of the Library Board of Trustees was scheduled for February 15, 2024 at 4:30 p.m. in the library.