

**NIAGARA FALLS PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES
REGULAR LIBRARY BOARD MEETING**

Niagara Falls Public Library 1425 Main Street, Niagara Falls, NY
Wednesday, November 15, 2023 @ 3.00 p.m

Meeting minutes

CALL TO ORDER. The regular meeting of the Niagara Falls Public Library Board of Trustees was held in person on Wednesday, November 15, 2023, in the Conference Room, 2nd floor, Main Library. The meeting was called to order by Board President Carmen Granto at 2:57 pm.

ROLL CALL:

Present

Ms. Bailey

Dr. Carter

Dr. Foote

Mr. Granto

Mr. King

Dr. Rahman

Absent/Excused

Ms. Glaser (Excused)

Also present were Ms. Sarah Potwin, Executive Library Director, Mr. Pat Brown, Finance Manager, Mr. Robert DiFrancesco from the Friends of the Library, Ms. Cecilia Driscoll, Librarian I (Union), Ms. Courtney Geerhart, Librarian I and Ms. Elise Lia, Librarian I both from Local History Dept. Mr. James Roscetti, Library Attorney was excused.

OPEN HEARING

No speakers or comments.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Mr. Granto asked if there were any questions/comments on the agenda as presented, hearing none the agenda was adopted upon a motion by Mr. King seconded by Dr. Rahman, approved unanimously.

REVIEW OF MINUTES

The minutes of October 25, 2023 regular board meeting were reviewed and adopted upon a motion by Ms. Bailey seconded by Mr. King, approved unanimously.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Mr. Brown referred to the September 30, 2023 financial summary narrative and detailed financial reports in the agenda packet explaining variances and highlighted the following:

- Bank account balance of \$695,541, in good financial position; all unpaid bills are normal accounts payable.
- Nine months of the year has passed expectations on an evenly incurred budgetary basis is that actual revenues/expenditures would be 75.0%.
 - Total revenues are 77.99% of budget or 2.99% higher than 75.0% expectation and 79.95% or 4.95% higher than expectation after making adjustments for unbudgeted and other revenues not evenly received during the year like removing unbudgeted grant revenues and adding nine months of state funding that comes all at once later in the year. So revenues are doing well compared to budget.
 - Total expenditures are 68.91% of budget or 6.09% below expectation of 75.0%; since all expenditures are not evenly incurred during, after adjusting total expenditures for grant, nine months of computer lease, retirement and workers compensation total expenditures would be \$1,544,517 or 67.59% of budget and under expectation by 7.41% so expenditures are doing well and should be under budget for the year at present trend by about 10% but likely less as additional expenditures for computer server, Agati table and other items incurred by year end will increase expenditures and reduce budget percent of savings. All major expense lines at or below 75.0% expectation except for equipment

which is 106.82% due to unbudgeted but board approved purchase of conference room furniture, building operation & maintenance is 98.68% primarily due to unbudgeted grant expenditures of \$38,181 along with building maintenance & repairs, city insurance & security; without grant expenditures the expense category would be \$121,959 or 75.2% of budget and within expectations. Mr. Brown's report explained the reasons for the variances of all expense categories for current year vs budget & compared to prior year.

- Operating surplus (deficit) is \$87,231 or \$206,184 better than expected budget operating deficit for nine months of the year of \$118,953. Taking into account nine months of state aid of \$75,000 operating surplus would be \$162,231 compared to budgeted operating deficit of \$118,953 for nine months or \$281,184 better than budget for nine months of the year. Mr. Brown said this operating surplus will be reduced quite a bit in last quarter of the year with additional planned expenditures but expects to end the year with an operating surplus vs the budgeted operating deficit which was \$158,604.
- Mr. Brown also provided financial report for the Trust funds.

Mr. Granto asked if there were any questions on the financial report, hearing none it was received and filed.

EXECUTIVE LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mrs. Potwin referred to her written report in the agenda packet highlighting:

- Upcoming library closures, meetings she has attended noting days she has scheduled off.
- Library furniture updates:
 - Flag room DPW to install presentation screen/smart tv
 - Main Library 1st floor Agati table delivery expected by end of December 2023.
 - ADA door opener at LaSalle proposal signed as of October 30, work to be done by outside vendor by end of November 2023 (funding from NYS Construction grant)
 - New server installed on server rack not fully wired, old server will be sent to LaSalle as a backup
- Children's library desk and stools purchased with Rebello trust funds are assembled, pictures provided, each has computer work and play area.
- Staff holiday celebration luncheon will be Dec. 6 thanks to the Friends of the Library, invitation for Board Members distributed.
- Flag room window covering priced out, 1 presentation screen/smart tv on order to be installed
- DPW building repairs/issues
 - Waiting for D.V. Brown to come out and test the boiler though not in the loop did hear reference to a \$600 piece required
 - 2 Smart screens to be installed on 1st floor Main Library which will display programming, closure dates and other library information
- Auditorium seating and carpeting samples were presented, any preferences/thoughts as to color etc from Board Members are welcomed. Funding from NYS Construction grant.
- NYS Human Rights Claim filed against the Library and Ms. Potwin as Director for inoperative LaSalle Library ADA door was received Nov. 6, 2023, forwarded to City Corporation Counsel & Mr. Roscetti along with emails and grant forms documenting attempts/challenges to obtain funding and reporting issue to John Kinney, DPW Director spanning from Spring of 2022 to signing proposal from Imperial Door on October 30, 2023. Ms. Potwin reminded the board that this is a city-owned building and not Library property and I am doing what I can.
- Trustee training resources and upcoming courses/dates; the annual state report asks if trustees have completed training. Trustees with certificates of completion in their folders are Bailey, Foote, Granto, Glaser & Carter. Ms. Potwin is available to assist anyone in accessing webinars.
- Main Library locks had to be re-keyed for safety & security due to a recently terminated employee's refusal to return keys. The bill will be sent to former employee seeking reimbursement as holding of final pay was not an option.
- Upcoming travel plans was provided including NYLA Annual conference.

- Local History Digitization project update included:
 - Bi-weekly scheduled zoom meetings with employees from HIA, Crowley and Ms. Sara Capen
 - Hotel registries will be 1st items packaged and sent out to Maryland during the week of 11/27/23 with HIA personnel here to package per insurance regulations and generate a manifest, truck to be here December 1 to pickup and deliver. Preference is to have 1st half of the registries completed and returned before 2nd half goes out.
 - Advertising & reviewing applicants for Contract Archivist (to be paid from Trust funds) on Nov. 13, plan to hire someone to begin working on/by December 1, 20 hours per week (though could be 30 hours depending on phase of work) \$30/hour as an independent contractor until August 30, 2024 when the Ralph Wilson grant is to conclude. There will be approximately \$100k worth of work to finish the collection in its entirety so it could be extended to October 1, 2024. Ms. Capen has agreed that she will pay half of the \$100k since the library is financing the contract position. The contractor will be responsible for the shipping, manifests and inventory record location of the artifacts as well as de-accessioning. Ms. Geerhart has been charged with continual de-accessioning as she works with the collection as well.
 - Photo collection work will be completed onsite during January-February 2024.
- State Budget Aid from Assemblyman Morinello has not yet been received nor do we know the amount. NIOGA receives the funds then passes it on to us but can't tell us when or how much we are to receive. An e-mail was sent to Mr. Morinello on Nov. 7, 2023 regarding this matter.
- Ms. Tammy Kinan has filled out required paperwork to be NIOGA rep, a vote is needed under new business.
- Statistic reports for adult, children/youth programs and meeting room for month of October '23.

Comments/questions on directors report:

- Dr. Rahman suggested that staff attend future NYLA/other conferences.
- Mr. Granto:
 - advised the board that a resolution retroactively approving the contract hiring for Archivist will require approval at December meeting asking if there were any issues with this, none noted.
 - regarding the monthly statistic reports is the Library up/down in programs vs last year, Ms. Driscoll said she would say they are up specifically noting children's programming. How do we compare to other libraries, Ms. Potwin said that would show up in annual reports filed by each Library, Mr. Granto said in the past it seemed like North Tonawanda counted/reported statistics differently.

The directors report was received and filed.

PERSONNEL REPORT

FMLA-2nd Extension/Leave of Absence

- Tom Poehnelt, FT Librarian 1 to December 4, 2023. City extension of leave would allow for one year to July 27, 2024 based on a medical note from a licensed medical doctor.
- Contract Archivist advertising began Oct. 27th with first review of collected applications Nov. 13th. Pay rate \$30/hr on contract paid out of Trust funds anticipate getting incumbent in place for Dec. 1, 2023.
 - Mr. Granto noted that this will have to be approved retroactively at December 13th board meeting

Mr. Granto asked if there were any questions or comments on the personnel report, hearing none he asked for a motion to approve the personnel report. The acceptance of the personnel report was adopted as presented upon a motion by Dr. Foote, seconded by Ms. Bailey and approved unanimously.

BOARD PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Mr. Grant noted:

- glad to see the local history dept. speaker series getting publicity in the newspaper and asked how the attendance has been. Ms. Lia reported that approximately 20-30 people have attended previous events but the most recent on held Nov. 13th was only about 9 most likely due to Bill's Monday night game. Upcoming speakers include Armenian Heritage on Dec. 4th by Edward Miller from NU Castellani Art Gallery and Feb. 10th 2024 Black History which will be moderated by board member Sharon Bailey. Mr. Grant suggested reaching out to Castellani Gallery to assist in promotion.
- glad to see the digitization of the local history collection is moving along and ongoing review of items for deaccessioning.

OLD BUSINESS

NONE

NEW BUSINESS

Xa. Ms. Potwin presented color fabric samples for auditorium chairs/carpeting seeking ideas/preferences of board members as she has to place the order by Dec. 1, 2023 since it takes about 30 weeks to get them. Dr. Foote said the darker the better, Ms. Bailey asked if the old chairs could be repurposed, Ms. Potwin said they are city property so will be up to the city.

This was a receive and file item, no board action required.

Xb. Approval of Ms. Tammy Kinan as City representative on NIOGA Board of Trustees

Mr. Grant explained that a meeting was recently held with Tom Binderman and Charles Begley from NIOGA to discuss Central Library business which included the need to for a City rep. to be appointed to NIOGA board as it has been vacant for some time. Ms. Kinan volunteers with the Friends of the Library and was put forth to us by Marilyn Salviski (Lojek). Dr. Rahman said Ms. Kinan is a very dedicated volunteer.

Mr. Grant asked if there were any questions/comments on this appointment, hearing none he asked for a motion to approve the appointment of Ms. Tammy Kinan to the NIOGA Board of Trustees.

A motion to approve the appointment of Ms. Tammy Kinan as presented was made by Mr. King, seconded by Dr. Rahman/Ms. Bailey and approved unanimously

Mr. Grant went around the room asking each in attendance if they had anything else to discuss or need for executive session, hearing none he asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NONE

NEXT MEETING AND ADJOURNMENT. The next regular meeting of the Library Board is scheduled for 12/13/2023 at 3:00 p.m. in the conference room. The next Dunlap-NF Library Collective Trust meeting is scheduled for 2/24/24 at 2.30 pm in the conference room.

The meeting to adjourn at 3:28 pm was made by Mr. King, seconded by Dr. Rahman, and carried.

Recorded by: Patrick D. Brown
Patrick D. Brown, PT Finance Manager

Approved by: Don King
Don King, Secretary