

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

Niagara Falls Public Library 1425 Main Street, Niagara Falls, NY
Wednesday, December 13, 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, December 13, 2023, in the Conference Room, 2nd floor, Main Library. The meeting was called to order by Board President Carmen Granto at 3:04 pm.

ROLL CALL:

Present

Ms. Bailey
Dr. Carter
Dr. Foote
Mr. Granto
Mr. King

Absent/Excused

Ms. Glaser (Excused)
Dr. Rahman (Absent)

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, Mr. Robert DiFrancesco, Friends of the Library and Ms. Tammy Kinan, Friends of the Library/Library representative NIOGA board.

OPEN HEARING

Ms. Potwin introduced Ms. Grace Croop, who will be working as a contract archivist in Local History coordinating the digitization project of the collection and assisting with the deaccession list (please note that her last name was spelled incorrectly with a K on the agenda, directors report and personnel report and will be corrected). Ms. Croop discussed her education and previous experience with such work and provided an update on work to date which included progress made on deaccession list and hotel registers prepared for transportation to History Associates. She thanked the board for this opportunity. Ms. Potwin added that Grace stood out from others interviewed and her previous experience should serve us well. The contract archivist funding is from the Rawnye/Rebello portion of trust funds as discussed at the last meeting.

Mr. Granto asked if there were any questions as we will be voting on approval of the contract archivist position as part of the personnel report (agenda item VII) and as discussed at last month's meeting as part of directors report and presidents report to be approved retroactively.

- Mr. King asked if she lived in the City, Ms. Croop said she lives in North Tonawanda.

Hearing no other questions or comments and noting no other speakers, Mr. Granto welcomed Ms. Croop and Ms. Tammy Kinan and moved on to adoption of the agenda.

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. Foote, approved unanimously.

REVIEW OF MINUTES

The minutes of November 15, 2023 regular board meeting were reviewed and adopted upon a motion by Ms. Bailey seconded by Dr. Carter, approved unanimously.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Mr. Brown referred to the October 31, 2023 financial summary narrative and detailed financial reports in the agenda packet explaining variances and highlighted the following:

- Bank account balance of \$805,320 includes \$112,410 restricted for state construction grant expenditures for Main branch auditorium and ADA door at LaSalle, in good financial position, the

reduction in cash balance vs 10/22 mainly due to Rebello bequest received last year and since transferred to trust funds; all unpaid bills are normal accounts payable.

- Ten months of the year has passed expectations on an evenly incurred budgetary basis is that actual revenues/expenditures would be 83.33%.
 - Total revenues are 84.83% of budget or 1.50% higher than 83.33% expectation and 86.1% or 2.77% higher than expectation after making adjustments for unbudgeted and other revenues not evenly received during the year like removing unbudgeted grant revenues and adding ten months of state funding that comes all at once later in the year making revenues \$1,863,734. So revenues are doing well compared to budget.
 - Total expenditures are 77.86% of budget or 5.47% below expectation of 83.33%; since all expenditures are not evenly incurred during, after adjusting total expenditures for grant, ten months of computer lease, retirement and workers compensation total expenditures would be \$1,723,290 or 74.99% of budget and under expectation by 8.34% 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, digital printer/service and other items incurred by year end will increase expenditures and reduce budget percent of savings. All major expense lines at or below 83.33% expectation except for equipment which is 196.80% due to board approved purchase of server & conference room furniture not budgeted in this line but funding available from other budget lines, building operation & maintenance is 127.74% primarily due to unbudgeted grant expenditures of \$73,620 along with budgeted building maintenance & repairs, city insurance & security; without unbudgeted grant expenditures the expense category would be \$133,683 or 82.38% 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.
 - Based on above, it is/has been anticipated that actual expenditures will exceed budget amounts by year end in the equipment/furniture, grants, travel/training admin and security lines but available funding to cover these overages exist in other budget lines to permit budget transfers. In total, actual expenditures will be less than budget so this was not unexpected.
- Operating surplus (deficit) is \$27,324 or \$159,494 better than expected budget operating deficit for ten months of \$132,170. Taking into account ten months of state aid of \$83,333 operating surplus would be \$110,657 compared to budgeted operating deficit of \$132,170 for ten months or \$242,827 better than budget for ten 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.
- 2024 budget to be presented/approved at January 2024 meeting, some revisions from one presented previously and discussed CBA, Central Aid & Bullet Aid passed thru from NIOGA

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.
- Main Library 1st floor Agati table delivery expected by end of December 2023.
- ADA door opener at LaSalle work to be done by outside vendor by end of December 2023 (funding from NYS Construction grant); as a temporary measure an electronic doorbell was installed
- Newsletter for March-May 2024 is being planned, please e-mail anything you want added to Mfreeman@nioga.org before February 1, 2024.

- Trustee training resources (Online Trustee handbook) 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.
 - Dr. Carter did not receive handbook, Ms. Potwin to follow up with NIOGA.
 - LIU course completion, Ms. Potwin thanked the board for their support and the opportunity to complete this course. She will be in Poughkeepsie, NY 11/28-11/30/23 presenting LIS 704 Capstone program and expects certification to be conveyed in mid-late January 2024.
 - Lunch with FOL President Sullivan Dec. 12, 2023 was very positive and productive.
 - Library Website construction is complete; scheduling two webinars to learn how to edit it with the designers with goal of having a mock-up to board in January 2024.
 - Statistic reports for adult, children/youth programs, makerspace and meeting room for month of November '23.
 - Ms. Potwin wished everyone a happy holiday season.
- Mr. Granto asked if there were any questions/comments on directors report:
- Dr. Foote inquired about the status of Ms. Erika Edwards of N.U being appointed to the board. Ms. Potwin reached out to her on Nov. 21 via e-mail for her to submit her cv and made it clear it is the Mayor's appointment. Mr. Granto & Ms. Bailey to reach out to Mayor. Mr. King asked if she was a resident of the City and if a student, Dr. Foote said she knows Ms. Edwards as she is employed by NU and lives in the City.
 - Dr. Foote asked who will be maintaining the Library Website going forward, Ms. Potwin is working on it as it needs some tweeking and will then assign it to staff.
- The directors report was received and filed.

PERSONNEL REPORT

FMLA/City Extension Leave of Absence

- Tom Poehnelt, FT Librarian 1 returned to work December 4, 2023. City extension of leave (unpaid and no seniority earned) allowed employee time off from July 27, 2023 to December 3, 2023 based on a medical note from a licensed medical doctor.

Contract Archivist (note last name misspelled with a K to be corrected in all places)

- Grace Croop to begin November 27, 2023 until August 30, 2024 with the possibility of an extension
 - \$30/hr on contract, paid bi-weekly, paid out of Trust Funds (Rawyne & Rebello portions)
 - To work as contact between History Associates, Capen and Library to record manifests of shipments and deaccession LH items that do not enhance the mission of LH
 - Estimate 20 hours/week though possible for some weeks to be up to 30-32 hours depending on workload and shipments/deliveries.
- The contract as independent contractor as prepared by Attorney Roscetti is on following page of agenda (VIIa) signed by Ms. Croop for Mr. Granto to sign as Board President.

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. Granto:

- Formally welcomed/introduced and thanked Ms. Tammy Kinan, Treasurer of the Friends of the Library who will be serving as the Library's representative on the NIOGA Board. In this role Ms.

Kinan will represent the Library and our interests/positions and bring back any information to us from NIOGA. Ms. Kinan is welcome to attend any/all of our meetings

- Reported on the passing of Ms. Glaser's brother, Thomas W. Heim asking for a moment of silence.
- Asked about the E-Newsletter as he thinks it is a great idea. Ms. Potwin said Elise Lia is responsible for it, and sends it out Bi-weekly, primarily for Librarians of the central library system offering information on NIOGA news, programs, grants, jobs and spotlights that any Library wishes to have included.
- Niagara County Historical Association receives so much more press/attention than us and asked if the city/we have a Historical Society; Ms. Geerhart said no there isn't one. Mr. Grant suggested starting one up and possibly having Elaine Timm as Director. Ms. Potwin said Elaine Timm was the City Historian but hasn't been reappointed by the Mayor.
- Brief discussion regarding potential new Board Members, Dr. Foote said she has a list of names for consideration.

OLD BUSINESS

NONE

NEW BUSINESS

NONE

Mr. Grant went around the room asking each in attendance if they had anything else to discuss or need for executive session.

- Ms. Potwin said the City had a boiler consultant come in, City Carpenter (in lieu of HVAC staff) accompanied them.
- Ms. Bailey:
 - suggested the Board Meeting time of 3:00 may be making it more difficult to attract new members and may be inconvenient for those who work as it breaks up the afternoon. She would like to discuss change of time for meetings.
 - Gaskill Prep Librarian may consider being a Board Member but present time of meetings would not work for her. Also, she apparently e-mailed the Library regarding digital member E-card but never received a response. Neither Ms. Potwin or Ms. Driscoll were aware of this e-mail.
 - Member cards policy regarding two forms of identification needs to be revisited to make it easier for one to obtain a card with one form of identification
- Dr. Foote:
 - Agrees with Ms. Bailey as to changing the time of Board meetings
 - Putting together list of names for Board Member consideration to be provided to Ms. Potwin.
- Mr. King didn't know Dr. Rahman's term had expired and would like him to remain on the Board as he has been a dedicated member and is at the Library often.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NONE

NEXT MEETING AND ADJOURNMENT. The next regular meeting of the Library Board is scheduled for 1/31/2024 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 in honor of Ms. Glaser's brother Tom Heim at 3:40 pm was made by Mr. King, seconded by Mr. Grant, and carried.

Recorded by: 
Patrick D. Brown, PT Finance Manager

Approved by: _____
Don King, Secretary