

Niagara Falls Public Library Board of Trustees

Minutes of Regular Library Board Meeting

Wednesday, March 30, 2022

CALL TO ORDER. The regular meeting of the Niagara Falls Public Library Board of Trustees was held in person on Wednesday, March 30, 2022, in the Makerspace Room, 1st Floor Main Library.

The meeting was called to order by Board President Carmen Granto at 3.00 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

Present

Absent

Ms. Bailey

Dr. Rahman

Ms. Glaser

Mr. Granto

Mr. King

Dr. Foote (arrived 3:26 p.m.)

Also present were Mr. Jim Roscetti, Library Legal Counsel; Ms. Sarah Potwin, Library Executive Library Director; Mr. Robert Difrancesco, Friends of the Library; Mr. Pat Brown, Library Clerk/accountant, Ms. Bridget Baker, Librarian- Makerspace, and Ms. Katherine Pierce, Library supporter.

OPEN HEARING.

Director Potwin introduced Ms. Katherine Pierce who generously donated \$5,000 to the Library for computers and related technology to provide access to those who otherwise would not have to it. Mr. Granto and the Board gave a warm welcome to Ms. Pierce thanking her for her very generous donation and support to the Library. Ms. Pierce lives in Lewiston, NY expressed her views as to the importance of Libraries to a community and to the City; libraries are central to a City/community.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA.

The agenda was adopted upon a motion by Mr. Granto was seconded by Ms. Bailey and carried.

REVIEW OF MINUTES.

A review of the February 23, 2022 regular meeting summary was presented. The minutes were adopted upon a motion by Ms. Glaser was seconded by Ms. Bailey and carried.

FINANCIAL REPORTS.

Mr. Brown reported on the January 31, 2022, financial reports consisting of operating and special revenue fund balance sheets, income and expense reports with comparison to budget and prior year and Dunlap Trust balance sheet. Check register for the period March 9, 2022 was also provided. He shared that the cash and financial position of the Library is strong but not much else to report as it is only one month into the year but expenses are about what one would expect running at about 8% of budget (one month out of the year is 8%). He noted when comparing expenses compared to last year (1/21) you will see significant differences in some lines as follows: computer maint/repair is \$6,979 lower due to 3 year subscription renewal last year for Barracuda (internet filter), makerspace expenses \$16,263 higher as project was not in place last year, workerscomp expenses for 1/22 are much higher than 1/21 as the 1/22 amounts are totals for entire year of 2022 while 1/21 amounts were one month estimates for year (total

w/comp expense 2022 is \$56,258 vs 2021 total for year of \$52,549) and employee benefits for 1/22 are actual vs 1/21 which were estimated as information from City last year was delayed and not received by Library until later in the year.

Mr. King asked if there are any areas of concern, Mr. Brown stated none at this time.

Mr. Granto asked if the amount of fund balance used in budget would be used. Mr. Brown said that \$120,823 of fund balance was budgeted for use in 2022 budget and based on past two years of not using any fund balance but in fact adding to fund balance he didn't think the Library would use the fund balance budgeted, possibly a portion of it but too early to tell.

The acceptance of the January, 31 2022 financial reports was adopted as presented upon a motion by Mr. King and seconded by Ms. Glaser and carried..

EXECUTIVE LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S REPORT.

Mrs. Potwin shared some of the items from her written report as part of the board packet.

- the HNY grant of \$5,000 was awarded to digitize a collection of oral history interviews and presentations from the 1990's to early 2000's on history of Niagara Falls. This will be exhibited as a virtual exhibit on the Library's website.
- Grants applied for and waiting:
 - o NHPRC submitted October 7, 2021 Archival Projects grant total cost of project \$130,000 with grant funding requested of \$119,445 and our cost share of \$10,555. If grant is awarded, project would not begin before July 2022.
 - o NYS Preservation grant submitted December 2021 for rehousing oversized material which was in the original inventory plan. These funds cannot be used for inventory project. Grant amount requested was the maximum \$40,000 total project cost is \$60,750 so our cost share would be \$20,750.
 - o CLIR grant of \$5,000 to digitize the Leon Van Patten Collection if awarded and funded would begin in June 2022
 - o State Farm \$25k Neighborhood Assist grant 4000 applicants are considered, reduced to 200 and then based on public vote 100 grants are selected to receive \$25,000 by June 7, 2022.

Local History Inventory project and \$100,000 in funding. Under new business and to be voted on is a proposal from History Associates to continue work on local history project. Team of five archivists/collections managers on site for 3 weeks targeting the completion of the inventory of paper records, oversized paper material and audio-visual items. Work planned for June or July 2022. Approval to transfer \$30,000 from Dunlap Trust to Library has been voted on, will need approval for funding of remaining cost.

Mr. Granto stated that this project has been going on for 4-5 years and has to be completed as it will determine exactly what the Library has, where collection will be housed, space required etc. Hope is the project will be completed by December 31, 2022 but after this \$100,000 is spent another \$170,000 is

needed to complete the entire project by February/March 2023. Mr. Grant said this funding has to be identified/raised but is confident that won't be an issue.

NIOGA Library System

Ms. Potwin continued with her report discussing need for Niagara County rep on NIOGA Library System Board. Ms. Potwin has previously provided a list of names for consideration but nothing has happened since March 2021.

Desktop Computer Leasing

Ms. Potwin referenced the proposal in agenda package for leasing of computers through HP along with maintenance and setup. This will require approval under new business. Computers to be used by both staff and the public.

Highlights of the computer leasing program:

- Sale of current "new" computers to HP for \$1 to cover maintenance blanket and address City IT issues
- Just under \$4,500 per month for service, monitoring, repair and troubleshooting
- Fifty computers to be leased for 3 years at approximately \$15,000 per year

Additionally Library is looking at swapping out some office computers for laptops (less costly) as well as replacing the PACS with mounted HP tablets for cost savings. Estimate is 55 desktops, 4 laptops and 4 tablets will be required. Further plan to discuss future connectivity work is being discussed which will be covered 90% by ERATE and FCC grant of \$360,000.

Study Pods

Funded through a National Library of Medicine grant of \$27,000, expectation is by mid-end of April 2022 the pods will be arriving and installed on first floor of Main Library.

FCC Phase 2

To improve wifi signal around Library building and into park, still awaiting to hear approval of \$52,000. All questions have been addressed.

FCC Erate

Internet service at Main branch approved for E-rate coverage from July 1, 2022-June 30, 2023 but LaSalle branch could not be added in this round but will be in next cycle. This will upgrade speed to 300 Mbps from present level of 85-94Mbps. Cost is approximately \$100/month for main branch with 90% of the annual cost of \$1,308 paid for by Erate leaving Library only paying \$130 for the year.

FCC Connectivity Improvements

Mayor and City Administrator on March 21, 2022 were made aware of the Library's plan to spend \$360,000 over next 4 years to improve connectivity and support it as it fits their smart city plans.

Mission Ignite/WNYLRC/Lockport Library-Digital Navigator Grant

\$54,000 grant includes two university students to work as Digital Navigators to teach computer tech skills between June and December 2022. Pay approximately \$17.76/hour and access to \$1,200-\$1,300 in tuition bursary upon completion of 300 hours of service. NF and Lockport citizens eligible to participate and if program is completed participant will be able to keep computers. Budget is for 80 computers to be given out.

SAM Grant/NYS Library Construction Grant

To be reviewed, discussed and approved later under old business, upon consultation with the State and City, the planned use of grant funds has been changed from original intent of HVAC to various other improvements and repairs to enhance the experience for Library visitors. Project must be completed by June 30, 2022 or grant funds must be returned. The alternative plan for use of grant funds was reviewed with the Mayor and City Administrator on March 21, 2022.

- SAM grant: Library must advance/pay for \$50,000 of costs until receipts are provided then NYS will reimburse full cost.
- NYS Library Construction grant totaling \$166,474 of which \$149,826 has been received and remainder will be received upon project completion. Total project cost estimated to be \$240,000, City to contribute approximately \$74,000 to project of which \$128,000 presently is held in capital project fund for Library by the City.

Ms. Potwin provided a list of meetings she has/will be participating in from Feb. 25-May 3rd 2022 and reported that the annual financial audit for the Library began March 28, 2022. Mr. Brown is working with auditors providing required information as requested. First Amendment Audit was discussed, Mr. Roscetti said he reviewed the draft policy and it is on point. Staff was complimented on how they handle all Library visitors and are always courteous and cooperative. Mr. Granto asked Mr. Roscetti and Ms. Potwin to make a recommendation.

Vacation Policy-Ms. Potwin stated as instructed at last meeting she provided Mr. Roscetti a memo regarding librarians in question as the awarded vacation time from the City is not adhering to library policy.

Library Treasurer

M&T Bank has been notified of the approved check signers and paperwork is being provided to make the changes. Northwest Bank has been contacted regarding the \$30,000 transfer of funds from Dunlap Trust to Library for Local History project. Mr. Ciacsoisa of Northwest Bank has been invited to April 27, 2022 meeting to discuss Dunlap Trust investments.

Noreen Hill Memorial- Per Mr. Granto's request Kim Thomas has been contacted regarding setting up a memorial to Noreen. Meeting will be held upon Kim's return to NF in May.

Annual appeal now up to \$6,302 in donations for 2021/2022 appeal.

Kinder Camp

In conjunction with Niagara University, the Library will be hosting a free Kinder Camp program July 11-14 second floor Main Library. Second floor will be closed to the public for security reasons those days

Other

Ms. Potwin points out that she has shared a number of links relating to library articles on a number of library industry issues for board members' interest along with next board meeting dates, board member contact information and Library statistics for meeting room, adult services and children's/teens programs for February 2022.

There were no questions for Ms. Potwin and Directors report was received and filed.

PERSONNEL REPORT.

Mrs. Potwin pointed out that the vacation time allowance given out to librarians hired after Spring 2017 has not been adhered to by the board's policy and thus both vacation and personal time is still owed to Bridget Baker, Richard Wade, and Tom Poehnelt from FY 2021. Additionally, the time is given in FY 2022 is not in accordance with the policy.

Mr. King asked if there is a Covid mask policy; Ms. Potwin said the Library receives/follows the State and City directives.

The acceptance of the personnel report was adopted as presented upon a motion by Ms. Glasser was seconded by Dr. Foote and carried..

PRESIDENT REPORT.

The New York State Construction grant and the SAM grant, both are nearing their deadlines of June 30, 2022. If the money is not spent funds will have to be paid back to the state with very negative consequences such as future construction grant applications for the next 4 years will not be accepted, Nioga Library System will receive less in construction aid affecting 22 members libraries not to mention the embarrassment of our Assemblyman who has sponsored the money and to the Library for losing out on grant funds. The use of grant funds had to be amended, Mr. Granto said he has met with the Mayor to review the list of improvements to be paid by grant. The grant, originally intended for HVAC has been amended and changed since HVAC project cannot be completed by June 30, 2022 to avoid losing the grant and returning the funds the grant had to be changed to cover various other necessary improvements and repairs such as windows, lighting, water fountains and flooring that Sarah will review next under old business. The HVAC project could not be completed due to no fault of the Library. Mr. Granto was very clear that the money has to be spent and he does not want to have to return any funds given the many needs of the Library. The State and City are aware of all of this and are on board with the Library's use of the grant funds. Since time is of the essence, some modifications and exceptions had to be made in soliciting vendor bids and quotes. Mr. Granto thanked Ms. Potwin on her very hard work at identifying and contacting vendors for the various work that needs to be performed in a very short timeframe.

OLD BUSINESS.

a. SAM Grant Spending

Referred to as Grant #1 on spreadsheet provided in package this is a \$50,000 grant from DASNY which is a reimbursable grant meaning the Library first spends the money first and will be reimbursed from the state upon submission of receipts/documentation required by the State. Grant is for equipment, moveable furnishings and a vehicle to be spent as follows:

- 1) Buffalo Office Interiors (NYS Contract pricing) \$11,315 for reading chairs and tables at LaSalle branch and Main Library computer tables and chairs.
- 2) Shelving and assembly 1st floor Main Branch LH Storage
- 3) Vehicle replacement \$28,293 for Equinox to replace 2006 dodge van (Heinrich Chevrolet)
- 4) LaSalle Branch book drop \$8,000 Demco (NYS Contract pricing)

The spreadsheet indicates results of bids, Ms. Potwin said State Contract vendors and three bids were obtained where possible to get best pricing.

Mr. Granto asked for approval to spend the SAM Grant funds as outlined was adopted as presented upon a motion by Dr. Foote seconded by Ms. Glaser and carried..

b. NYS Library Construction Grant Spending

Referred to as Grant #2 on spreadsheet total project cost of \$240,000 to be paid with \$166,474 (grant #0386197858) and requiring NF City match of \$73,526, 10 year occupancy and site specific to 1425 Main Street (Dept. of Library).

- 1) Repair of 17 broken windows estimated cost of \$51,000
- 2) Exterior LED lighting at Main branch to be completed by City electricians estimated cost of \$3,080
- 3) Interior LED lighting at Main branch, 1st floor public area and 3rd floor estimated cost of \$89,561. City electricians reviewed work and they are not able to do it due to size of job and time. Work sub-contracted to unionized electrician.
- 4) ADA drinking fountains and installation (8) estimated cost of \$45,925. Requested City plumber to do work but did not receive response. Installation work by unionized plumber.

As of this date, these are the estimates in hand and other work and vendor estimates will be forthcoming as Library is awaiting a couple of other quotes for various other work for remaining grant funds available.

Ms. Potwin and Mr. Granto reiterated that this grant was previously for HVAC but had to be amended so funds could be used for these purposes since the HVAC project could not be completed by deadline of June 30, 2022 at which time the grant funds would have to be returned. Ms. Potwin referenced a memo she wrote on January 6, 2022 to the City Administrator with copy to City Engineer Robert Buzzelli regarding the SAM and NYS Construction Grants and consequences of not having these projects completed by June 30, 2022. These are very much needed improvements and have been reviewed with the City administration, State and City Department of Public Works and union which have approved the plan. Ms. Potwin assured the Board she is doing everything to get best possible price, keeping the City unions involved and offering any work to them first, doing work at both branches to spread it around and that where and whenever possible using State Contract vendors, obtaining quotes/bids were requested/obtained from as many vendors as possible and she has documentation on it. Mr. Roscetti said it was ok to do project as Library is doing due to the circumstances. Mr. Granto added that the project has gone on long enough and has to get completed due to timeframe and need of repairs and we are not sending the grant money back.

Mr. Granto feels oversight of the project is necessary and suggested the use of a project manager to make sure work is completed properly-possibly a retired engineer/architect and it may cost \$5,000-\$10,000. Trustees were in agreement. Mr. Granto also asked that Trustees to be ready to participate in oversight and prefers to have a subcommittee of the board be established to assist the Ms. Potwin in timely addressing any issues such as change orders where a quick decision is required since it can't wait for a regular board meeting. This sub committee then would report to full board but have authority to act as required as time is of the essence.

Ms. Bailey suggested reaching out to UB School of Architecture and Mr. Difrancesco suggested contacting BOCES for possible support in contractor oversight.

Mr. King asked what is the Board's responsibility/risk with a project like this; Mr. Roscetti responded board is responsible to assign someone to oversee the work.

Mr. King brought up with the floors buckling/shifting is it worth doing this work if the flooring continues to buckle/shift etc. Mr. Granto said it is a City owned building and Ms. Potwin added that the flooring will be repaired by the City as it is a huge project part of an estimated \$5 million plan is it will be paid for out of American Rescue Funds that City was awarded. (City plan includes flooring, roof, elevator and parking lot repairs).

Ms. Bailey asked what is the timeframe for the repairing of the floors, Ms. Potwin said 2024-2026. Ms. Bailey asked about the 10 year occupancy requirement of the grant, if Library moves who is responsible for the grant funds? Ms. Potwin said the City has signed off and City would assume responsibility for grant if Library relocates within the 10 years.

Ms. Bailey wants to make sure we get the required work completed as the Library's calendar deadline of June 30, 2022 is dictating the process. She asked about timeline for vendors and if City union workforce was contacted to do work?, Ms. Potwin said all would be ready to go by mid April 2022 but she has to get final approval from State which is expected by then-all vendors know work must be completed by June 30, 2022 and stated she has worked closely with City union to have them do whatever work they felt they could do given their regular work demands. She met with City Dept. of Public Works management and union representatives to go over this final plan and they did not express any issues/problems with it since the opportunity was given to City unions first to do any of the work and vendors using union workers are being used where possible.

Two resolutions relating to NYS Library Construction Grant spending:

- 1) Mr. Granto asked for approval to spend the grant funds as outlined was adopted as presented upon a motion by Dr. Foote seconded by Ms. Glaser and carried.
- 2) Mr. Granto asked for volunteers from the board for Ms. Potwin to consult with and seek guidance/advise as need to address any changes/issues that cannot wait for regular board meeting. Ms. Bailey, Dr. Foote and Mr. Difrancesco volunteered to serve in this capacity on behalf of the board along with Library attorney and accountant Jim Roscetti and Pat Brown respectively as required.
 - a) Mr. Granto asked for approval to form a sub committee of the board consisting of Ms. Bailey, Dr. Foote and Robert Difrancesco to advise/consult with Director Potwin as needed and which has the authority to act in place of and on behalf of the board for this project.
Approval to form sub-committee was adopted as presented upon a motion by Mr. Granto seconded by Ms. Bailey and carried.

NEW BUSINESS.

- a) Recording in Library building policy was tabled
- b) Local Inventory Project approval
 - Mr. Granto asked for approval of \$100,000 as outlined was adopted as presented upon a motion by Mr. King seconded by Dr. Foote and carried.
- c) Approve State Annual Reprt FY 2021
 - Mr. Granto asked for approval of the State Annual Report for FY 2021 was adopted upon a motion by Ms. Glaser seconded by Ms. Bailey and carried.
- d) Computer Leasing

Ms. Potwin reviewed the proposals for computers and support from Alternative Information Systems (AIS) to be used by staff and the public.

- Maintenance and support by AIS \$4,478.50 per month (Quote #3890)
- 4 HP Laptops \$3,677.88 (Quote #3935)
- 4 Microsoft Surface Go2 \$1,503.56 (Quote #3936)
- One time charge of \$2,691.27 (Quote #3932)
- HP three (3) year lease of 55 computers and monitors \$15,094.31 per year

Lease vs purchase reviewed with City MIS Dept (Peter) who was in favor of it and use of the support offered vs City support as MIS resources are spread thin. To purchase the 55 computers and monitors it would cost \$51,325.45 vs 3 year leasing total of \$45,282.93; leasing saves \$6,042.52

Mr. Granto asked for approval of quotes #3890, #3935, #3936 and #3932 plus the computer leasing program as outlined was adopted as presented upon a motion by Dr. Foote seconded by Ms. Bailey and carried.

- e) Collection Development Policy

The policy was reviewed by Mr. Roscetti who feels it is on point and appropriate.

Mr. Granto asked for approval of the computer leasing program as outlined was adopted as presented upon a motion by Dr. Foote seconded by Ms. Bailey and carried.

NEXT MEETING AND ADJOURNMENT.

The next regular meeting of the Library Board is scheduled for April 27, 2022 at 3:00 p.m. in-person Main Library Auditorium.

The next Dunlap Meeting is scheduled for April 27, 2022 at 2.30 pm in person, Main Library Auditorium

Meeting adjourned at 4:21 pm by Mr. King, seconded by Ms. Glaser, and carried.

Recorded by: Patrick D. Brown
Patrick D. Brown, P.T Library Clerk
Approved by: Don King
Don King, Secretary