

Niagara Falls Public Library Board of Trustees

**Minutes of Regular Board Meeting**

**Library-Conference Room**

**1425 Main Street, Niagara Falls, NY 14305**

**Wednesday, July 27, 2022**

**CALL TO ORDER.** The regular meeting of the Niagara Falls Public Library Board of Trustees was held in person on Wednesday, July 27, 2022, in the Conference Room 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Main Library.

The meeting was called to order by Board President Carmen Granto at 3:15 p.m.

**ROLL CALL:**

Present

Absent

Ms. Bailey

Dr. Foote (via zoom)

Ms. Glaser

Mr. Granto

Mr. King

Dr. Rahman

Also present were Mr. Robert DiFrancesco, Friends of the Library, Ms. Sarah Potwin, Executive Library Director, Mr. Pat Brown, PT Finance Manager-Library in staff roles, Ms. Cecilia Driscoll, Librarian I and union steward. Mr. Roscetti, Library Legal counsel was excused from the meeting.

**OPEN HEARING.**

Mr. Granto noted there were no guests or speakers.

**ADOPTION OF AGENDA.**

The agenda was adopted upon a motion by Dr. Rahman, seconded by Mr. King and carried.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES.**

The June 29, 2022 regular meeting minute's summary was presented and reviewed. Adopted upon a motion by Dr. Rahman, seconded by Ms. Glaser and carried.

**FINANCIAL REPORTS.**

Mr. Brown reported on the May 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. He provided a detailed narrative analysis to supplement the financial reports, which was included in agenda packet, explaining balance sheet amounts, revenues and expenditures for operating fund and shared that the cash and financial position of the Library is good and there are no unusual accounts payables or liabilities. Being the 5th month of the year expectation would be generally for most revenues and expenses to be about 41.7% of budget (5/12 of budget). The Library is operating within budget for 2022 but still early in the year and he will be taking a very close look at the revenues and expenses over next couple of months to get a better estimate/forecast for year end. Most revenues are about at budget/expectations except county and state aid which comes later in year (August/Sept.); total actual



revenues are about 36.6% of budget excluding budgeted rent income and fund balance neither of which will have any actual revenue. He explained that the rent income has an offsetting rent expense so they offset and neither will be actually realized (rent income and expense removed from 2023 budget) and fund balance is a budgeted amount to balance the budget but also will not have any actual revenue against it. Total expenses are \$829,070 or about 38.3% of budget after adjusting out rent expense; the largest expense is payroll and benefits total payroll is about 37.8% of budget with full time at 42.1% and part time at 29.6% of budget respectively. Payroll and related taxes most likely will require a budget amendment. Benefits, except for social taxes, are within budget. Taxes may be about \$5,000 over budget by year end, budget amendment may be required. Library and office supplies, operational, maintenance and utilities are all under budget for the first five months.

Mr. Brown explained that the 2022 budget called for the use of \$120,823 of fund balance which means the budget was developed with the understanding that expenses may exceed revenues or operate in the red by this amount. While it is too early to estimate, it appears that the Library should be within this amount by year end. He also added that 2022 city revenue is \$25,264 lower than 2021 due to timing of funding requests and expenses are \$32,751 higher than 2021 (2021 ended the year with a surplus). The Library is operating within budget for 2022 but still early in the year and he will be taking a very close look at the revenues and expenses over next couple of months to get a better estimate/forecast for year end expecting to operate at a deficit and using some fund balance as budgeted (operating in the red). Mr. Brown said he does not see any major areas of concern as of May 31, 2022.

- Ms. Bailey asked if there is any estimate of the savings from the new LED lighting improvements completed with state construction grant project. Ms. Potwin and Mr. Brown explained there isn't one yet, the new lighting has just been completed and will be reviewing the electric bill for the period covering period of new lighting when received and comparing to last year to try and determine. Mr. Brown said since the current June/July electric bill covers both lighting and HVAC together, analysis may be a bit difficult as bill is impacted by air conditioning usage vs last year (we don't get breakdown of electric use by lighting/hvac).

The acceptance of the May 31, 2022 financial reports was adopted as presented upon a motion by Dr. Rahman and seconded by Mr. King, motion carried.

#### **EXECUTIVE LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S REPORT.**

Ms. Potwin shared some of the items from her written report which was included in the agenda packet.

##### **Covid-19 Update**

Some staff and much of the public opt to continue wearing masks and patrons are advised it is optional for them to wear a mask. Staff has been reminded to use PPE and practice social distancing and to remain home and get tested if not feeling well. One visiting archivists from HIA tested positive and had quarantined immediately. All other members of HIA tested negative; Library staff were advised.

##### **Holiday Closures and Director time off**

Library will be closed Saturday Sept. 3<sup>rd</sup> and Monday the 4<sup>th</sup> for Labor Day



Ms. Potwin will be off July 22nd<sup>(1 day)</sup>. Staff has her contact information.

## **Grants**

Updates for the following grants was provided:

- Digital Inclusion Innovation grant, due June 1, 2022 maximum \$75,000 applying to fund Chrome book vending machines with one at each branch to promote digital connectivity. Should hear by end of July 2022
- NYS Arts Council grant to purchase ukuleles and cover the cost of an instructor applies for June 22, decision expected end of August 2022 requested amount \$5,000

## **Local History Inventory**

HIA (History Inventory Associates) archivists are here from July 11-mid/end of September scheduled work to be completed on time in September, still on schedule and is not adversely impacted by the one archivist who tested positive for Covid.

## **American Landmarks in History Grant**

Preliminary discussion held on July 12 with Sara Capien about this future NEH grant worth \$200k. Once the local history project is completed this seems like a good jumping off point. Initial application due in December 2022, the program would be held during the Summer of 2024 consisting of 2 one week learning lessons for elementary & high school teachers (40 per program) from across the country to travel to Niagara Falls and learn from our history and give educators a hands on approach to history, access to original historical documents and artifacts all while enhancing their lesson planning and knowledge to be taken back to their classrooms. Program would dovetail nicely with our local history collection, Underground Railroad Heritage Center, Niagara University and Niagara Falls City School Board. Sara and I will be discussing this further in late summer/early fall to begin crafting application.

## **Community Annual Report**

Mignon Freeman will be taking over the 12 hr/wk duties as Library Specialist beginning August 1<sup>st</sup> in lieu of her PT Library Clerk position. Her first job will be to compile the data for our community annual report and working with Compu-mail to print it, and then from there she will be compiling bi monthly newsletters in house.

## **Meetings attended and upcoming**

- A list of meetings attended or to be attended by the Library Director from July 5-Nov. 5 was provided.

## **FY 2023 Budget**

Meeting held on July 21, 2022 with the City Administrator, Controller and Human Resource Director to review the Library's proposed 2023 budget which is included along with a city funding 2% inflation chart in the agenda package for information. Any coordinated lobbying effort that Board members can do is appreciated. Maintenance of effort was emphasized and the budget includes estimates for large expense items like health insurance benefits. Overall the meeting with the city seemed to go well but I may be asked back as the budget process moves along. Mr. Brown added that the Library funding from the City has to increase annually and that the Library may not have adequate fund balance to balance budgets a few years from now. Dr. Rahman referenced newspaper article reporting that City revenues are up which is good news. Ms. Potwin plans on presenting the budget proposal to the Library board during the September 2022 meeting but also attached the proposed budget with estimates in this meeting's notes.



### **Civil Service-Business Manager/Account Clerk-Library**

Civil Service Commission met July 21 and has suggested that the position be labelled "Finance Manager-PT-Library which will be reviewed with the personnel report later on.

### **Noreen Hill Memorial**

Contact has been made with family regarding establishment of a scholarship memorial in Noreen's name through the NF Educational Foundation. The family was of the understanding that they would not have any say in who received the award or setting of boundaries for award eligibility and would like to be involved in both (desire is recipient to be Native American in absence of intertribal agreements). Noreen's daughter Kim has offered to donate a portion of the \$1,000 minimum required to establish the award; I explained that my feeling was board members may also like to contribute also.

Ms. Potwin is asking Mr. DiFrancesco and Ms. Glaser to assist with this. Mr. DiFrancesco said he will speak with Kyle (Keybank Lewiston bank manager) to get all the details but generally donor sets the rules for eligibility and the Foundation selects the recipient(s); selections are generally annually in December/January so we have until end of the year but we will need Kyle to provide information. Ms. Potwin suggested if a \$1,000 scholarship is set up, \$500 donated from Kim Hill and asked if the board members would donate remainder. Dr. Rahman asked if the Friends of the Library could donate. Dr. Foote said she has been chair of scholarship committees in the past and we need more information and once we have the information she would be happy to entertain board participation. Mr. Grant and board members agreed more details and information is required.

### **Main Library Back Parking Lot Drain**

Ms. Bailey called our attention to the collapsing drain in back parking lot as well as the numerous potholes/overall poor condition of the parking lot at the June meeting. Request to water board for repair was denied as they said it was private property and not their responsibility. City DPW was contacted and the drain was repaired on July 11. A work order to DPW-Streets to fill around the drain and work order to water board to clean out the drain submitted July 11 as well.

I attempted to have the parking lot pot holes addressed by contacting DPW to have the pothole killer machine fill some of the potholes but was told the machine is no longer in town.

### **Policy Creation**

Work has started on creating a modern policy manual to bring us in compliance with State regulations. Goal is to have by end of December for review and approval by the board. It would be helpful to have another set of eyes look it over.

### **Trustee Training**

Mandatory during fiscal year 2023, it is currently a question on the NYS Annual Report. **Beginning January 1, 2023 each trustee elected or appointed of a public library or association library will be required to complete a minimum of two hours of trustee education annually.** NYS Library recently issued guidance and trustee education requirements links and information sources were listed in the report.



### **Computers**

DPW has been contacted to have electricians complete the wiring for new computers for public use. New version of Peachtree accounting software has been purchased and installed on Pat's computer and information is backed up daily both on and off site. AIS will be out the first week of August to install leased computers in various Library departments.

### **New Website**

I have requested \$20k in the 2023 budget to set up a new website as we are having difficulties with current site host's security certificates. The plan is to create a refreshed page with modern look and easier for our Librarian Specialist to up date with programs and dates. Presently website is being maintained by one of our Librarians as best she can and when time permits but this work is not within the Librarian's civil service job classification and not her expertise.

### **Other Items**

- Assemblyman Morinello has been invited for a tour of our improvements and photo op, date not set
- Ken Hamilton paperwork for membership on the NIOGA Library System Board has been provided to Mr. Bindeman.
- Main Library lighting project will be completed and all lighting will be LED (more efficient and cost savings). Final phase of it not covered by state construction grant will cost about \$23k and will be fully reimbursed to the Library by the City's Capital Project account. This was approved by the Board at the June 2022 meeting.
- City request for reimbursement of \$80,088 local share for state construction grant was made July 16 and received July 21<sup>st</sup>.
- City Administration permission requested to apply for 2022-2023 state construction grant for HVAC refurbishment, auditorium seating and flooring, LaSalle refurbishment of Mitsubishi HVAC and ADA door openers. NIOGA has \$905,000 in state construction grant funding allotted to them out of \$34 million state wide for this cycle.
- Various Library industry issues and links provided for reading pleasure
- Dates to mark-next board meeting Wed. August 31, 2022 @ 3:00pm Conf. room Main Library and next Dunlap meeting Wed. October 26, 2022 @ 2:30pm Conf. room Main Library
- Reports for June 2022 adult services, childrens/youth programs and meeting room attendance provided

### **Comments and Questions on Directors Report:**

- Ms. Bailey asked what happens if board members do not complete/meet the training requirements; Ms. Potwin said the board would have to address it in form of a policy.

With no further comments or questions the Executive Library Director's report was received and filed

### **PERSONNEL REPORT.**

The report provided the names, positions and term of employment for two new hires and job/position changes and rates of pay for three others. Civil Service Commission has approved (July 21, 2022) the position PT (Part Time) Finance Manager instead of the Library approved position title of PT Business Manager (May 25, 2022).



Position remains confidential exempt with no benefits and pay schedule is the same as approved by the Library Board May 25, 2022. The acceptance of the personnel report was adopted as presented upon a motion by Ms. Glaser, seconded by Ms. Bailey and carried.

## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Mr. Granto said he is pleased that the history inventory project is moving along and will be completed by end of September as it is very important we have the report and information to plan and move forward.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

State Construction Grant Reimbursement request to City for local share totaling \$80,088 submitted was received and filed.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **a) Dunlap Trust Funds/LPL Investment Account**

The authorized signatories and only names to be on the account are Carmen A. Granto, Don J. King, Judith (Judie) Glaser, Dr. Chandra Foote and names to be removed from the account are Danielle M. Zona, Robert J. Kazeangin, Noreen Hill.

#### **Resolution:**

Mr. Granto asked for a motion to approve the authorized signatories and removal of names above. The motion was adopted as presented upon a motion by Ms. Glaser, seconded by Mr. Granto and carried.

### **b) Annual Appeal**

Ms. Potwin has completed the work in the past but is requesting assistance with the annual appeal as she feels it is more of a board responsibility and they would work with Mignon Freeman to get letters out. "Ask" letters should go out 1<sup>st</sup> week of November, Compu-mail does the mailing.

Mr. Granto asked for volunteers to assist with the annual appeal. Ms. Glaser and Ms. Bailey offered to help with the annual appeal.

### **c) Noreen Hill Scholarship discussion took place under Executive Library Directors report, no action for now pending receipt of more information-tabled.**

### **d) Sale of Van**

Ms. Potwin requested approval to sell the 2006 Library van to maintenance employee Greg Mort for \$1,500 which is the Kelly Blue Book value. The van is no longer needed as it has been replaced by a 2022 Equinox purchased with SAM Grant funds. Mr. Granto said he recalls the Library attorney advising the Board during June 2022 meeting that since the registration/title is with the Library it was fine to sell or donate it without any issues.

**Resolution:**

Mr. Granto asked for a motion to approve the sale of the 2006 Library van. The motion was adopted as presented upon a motion by Mr. King, seconded by Ms. Glaser and carried.

Mr. Granto asked if any board members had any comments or questions on the agenda or other matters.

- Ms. Bailey feels more board members are needed or at least the vacant board position held by Noreen Hill be replaced to assist with work such as By-laws and policy updating, revision and development. Presently there are six active members, one vacancy, she suggested possibly going to nine board members from the present seven. Board members are appointed by the Mayor.

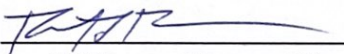
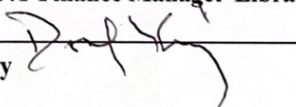
**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**None.**

**NEXT MEETING AND ADJOURNMENT.**

The next regular meeting of the Library Board is scheduled for Wednesday August 31, 2022 at 3:00 p.m. in-person Main Library Conference Room, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. The next Dunlap Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday October 26, 2022 at 2.30 pm in person, Main Library Conference Room, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor.

Meeting adjourned at 3:49 pm on a motion by Ms. Bailey, seconded by Dr. Foote, and carried.

Recorded by:   
Patrick D. Brown, P.T Finance Manager-Library  
Approved by:   
Don King, Secretary