

Niagara Falls Public Library Board of Trustees

**Minutes of Regular Board Meeting**

**Library-Conference Room**

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

**Wednesday, January 25, 2023**

**CALL TO ORDER.** The regular meeting of the Niagara Falls Public Library Board of Trustees was held in person on Wednesday, January 25, 2023, in the Conference Room 2<sup>nd</sup> 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

Mr. King

Dr. Foote (left 3:31pm)

Ms. Glaser

Mr. Granto

Dr. Rahman (via telephone, left 3:40pm)

Also present were Ms. Sarah Potwin, Executive Library Director, Mr. Pat Brown, PT Finance Manager-Library, Mr. James Roscetti, Library Attorney, Ms. Cecilia Driscoll, Librarian 1/union steward, Mr. Robert DiFrancesco, Friends of the Library and Dr. Tanyetta Carter.

Mr. Granto requested the Agenda be rearranged and not taken in the order as presented so an executive session and action items under new business will be moved up to accommodate board members who have to leave the meeting early; there was no objection to this.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Mr. Granto moved to go into executive session at 3:01, seconded by Dr. Foote and carried. The executive session ended at 3:14 pm and the regular meeting resumed. Ms. Driscoll did not return to the regular meeting.

**Regular meeting**

**OPEN HEARING.**

Mr. Granto noted there no other guests or speakers. Ms. Potwin introduced Dr. Tanyetta Carter, PH.D., ED. M, LMSW, new board trustee appointee of Mayor Restaino. Dr. Carter has been at Niagara University for ten years, her current position is Faculty Fellow Professor Coordinator of Field Practicum Social Work Department. Dr. Carter utilizes the library extensively in her social work and sees an opportunity for programming to serve and improve the library's integration in the community. She very much wants to support the library and feels her education and background in social work will be beneficial to the library and community. Dr. Carter shared that she was hired by the Niagara Falls School District under Superintendent Granto in her early years in social work and also remembers Mr. DiFrancesco from her high



school days. All welcomed Dr. Carter. Mr. Granto said Dr. Carter shares the library's mission and keeping the library as an important part of the community and the more the library is integrated into the community better it is for assisting in leveraging funds for it.

#### **Resolution**

Mr. Granto made a motion to accept the Mayors appointment of Dr. Carter to the board of trustees, seconded by Ms. Bailey and carried unanimously.

#### **ADOPTION OF AGENDA.**

The agenda was adopted upon a motion by Mr. Granto, seconded by Dr. Foote and carried.

#### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES.**

The December 14, 2022 regular meeting minutes were presented and reviewed. Adopted upon a motion by Dr. Foote, seconded by Ms. Glaser, and carried unanimously.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

- a. **Approval of Policies:** (1) Laptop borrowing  
(2) Collection Development  
(3) Trustee Education.

It was noted that policies (1) and (2) above were tabled at the December 14, 2022 meeting.

#### **Resolutions**

Remove from table

Dr. Foote moved for removal of the two tabled policies, seconded by Ms. Bailey and carried.

#### **Approval of Policies**

Mr. Granto made a motion to accept all three policies, seconded by Ms. Glaser and carried.

- b. **Approval of FY 2023 Library Budget**

Ms. Potwin and Mr. Brown reviewed the 2023 Library budget which is pretty much the same as the draft budget reviewed previously in December 2022. City funding increased \$135k, no increase in full time staff, more funds budgeted for electronic materials, computer infrastructure improvements, contingency line is for retiree buyouts for unused vacation and sick time. Concerns as in past years are with utility costs and medical insurance/other employee as well as retiree benefits. Mr. Granto commended Ms. Potwin on her work to improve the relationship between the city and library. He added that in the past there have been bookkeeping, budget and financial management issues since 2009 and financials were not always well maintained. Mr. Granto commended and thanked both Ms. Potwin and Mr. Brown on their work straightening out the financial management, bookkeeping and budget reporting and thanked them for the monthly financial reports adding the library is fortunate to have Sarah, Pat and Treasurer Judy Glaser serving in their roles and asked for a motion to approve the FY 2023 budget.



### **Resolution**

Ms. Glaser moved for approval of the FY 2023 Budget, seconded by Mr. Granto and carried.

#### **c. Approve FY 2023 security fee**

Dr. Foote asked for clarification on the security guard narrative in the Directors' report as to the rates per hour. Ms. Potwin explained that presently the library pays \$34/hour to the security company and is asking for it to be increased to \$38/hour which would allow the security company to pay their employees \$32/hour vs the present rate of \$28/hour adding that the reason for the fee increase request is that it is very competitive for security service and this will help the library be more competitive in attracting the service and hopefully improving security coverage. Ms. Bailey asked if there is any assurance that there will be improved security coverage/always a security person at the library if higher rate per hour is paid. Ms. Potwin said she can't give that assurance. Ms. Bailey said she really wants a commitment from security company for coverage saying if we can't get such assurance why pay more. She would like to see a plan of coverage from the security company. Ms. Bailey and Dr. Foote would like a report after six months as to security coverage and if the higher rate per hour resulted in more coverage-both stating that they will be watching this because if we pay higher rate/hour and still don't get increase/better security coverage it doesn't appear to be worth it. Mr. Granto added that the need for security is very competitive due to the increase in need for it in public places. Dr. Carter said a rate of \$38/hour seems very good. Ms. Glaser asked if it is possible to put a premium rate on certain hours with greatest need of security. Ms. Potwin said it would be difficult to schedule security that way and keep track of the different rates of pay. Ms. Bailey asked if certain days are worse than others and higher rate can be paid for those days/hours; Ms. Potwin said Wednesday's seems to be the worse but again doesn't think different rates/hour for different times is practical/may not work or if security company would operate that way. Mr. Granto asked if the security is effective, Ms. Potwin said yes it generally is. Dr. Rahman said he feels our security is good and very important and supports the higher rate per hour.

Mr. Granto asked for a motion to increase the security hourly rate per director's report.

### **Resolution**

Ms. Glaser moved for approval of the security fee increase to \$38/hour, seconded by Ms. Bailey and carried. Ms. Bailey stated again she would like to see some reporting/assessment/comparison on security coverage under the new hourly rate being paid vs present security coverage under old rate.

#### **d. Increase of LaSalle service hours**

Ms. Potwin explained that presently the branch is open 32 hours/week, she would like to increase total hours by 9/week bringing the total hours that the LaSalle branch is open to 41 hours/week effective May 1, 2023 given the increase in city funding and that we have the staff to do this.



Mr. Granto asked for a motion to the LaSalle branch increase hours of operation by 9 hours/week for a total of 41 hours/week.

#### **Resolution**

Ms. Glaser moved for approval to increase hours of operation for LaSalle library by 9 hours/week to a total of 41 hours/week effective May 1, 2023, seconded by Dr. Foote and carried.

#### **PERSONNEL ACTIONS**

Voluntary separation of Kate Wilson, PT Library Clerk effective December 29, 2022.

The acceptance of the personnel report was adopted as presented upon a motion by Ms. Glaser, seconded by Ms. Bailey and carried unanimously.

#### **FINANCIAL RPORTS**

Mr. Brown referred to the October and November 2022 financial reports which were provided in the agenda packet 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 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> months of the year expectation would be generally for most revenues and expenses to be about 83-91% respectively of budget (10/12 & 11/12 of budget) if budget evenly spread over the year but noted some items in both revenue and expenses come in once and not evenly throughout the year. The Library is operating within budget for 2022 and he doesn't see any major issues or problem areas.

The Library budgeted to use \$120,823 of fund balance (operate in the red) for 2022 and is operating within budget. Mr. Brown noted receipt of \$675,618 Rebello bequest is reflected as a revenue in the October and November financials but will be shown as an expense in December 2022 based on the December 14, 2022 board resolution to transfer it to trust funds.

The acceptance of the October and November 2022 financial reports was not formally adopted as a detail review of them was passed on due to time and other issues to be addressed but was received and filed.

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

Ms. Potwin referenced her written report which was included in the agenda packet. A detail review of it was not given due to time constraints. The security service fee increase was discussed, see new business item c.

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

Executive Library Director's report was received and filed



## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Mr. Granto said he had nothing to report at this time.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

No items discussed.

Mr. Granto went around the table asking all in attendance individually if they had any additional comments, questions on the agenda or other issues/matters they wished to discuss. Mr. DiFrancesco thanked the board for having him attend the meetings as a member of the Friends of the Library. Dr. Carter thanked the board for their vote of her trusteeship and feels welcomed and looking forward to serving. Ms. Bailey congratulated Ms. Potwin on her course grades and mentioned her article she wrote for CNN. Mr. Brown said he is working on year end 2022 closing and expects there will be an operating deficit given the use of operating funds to pay for Phase IV of the local history inventory project bill paid to History Associates which originally was to be paid by Dunlap Trust funds. The operating deficit for 2022 will be well below the budgeted amount of \$120,823 for appropriated fund balance. Without this use of operating funds, he said the library would show an operating surplus and expects expenditures to well within budget (about 10% under budget) and would operate at a surplus. Ms. Potwin reported that the Noreen Hill Scholarship donations are \$750, Mr. DiFrancesco said \$1,500 is required for the scholarship award and provided a brief update of the scholarship process for new trustee Dr. Carter. Mr. Granto asked when are the funds needed by, Mr. DiFrancesco said by April. Mr. Granto asked about the annual appeal, Ms. Potwin reported that about \$4,100 has been collected thus far.

## **NEXT MEETING AND ADJOURNMENT.**

The next regular meeting of the Library Board is scheduled for February 22, 2023, 3:00 p.m. in-person Main Library Conference Room, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. The next Dunlap Meeting (First Quarterly meeting 2023) is scheduled for Wednesday February 22, 2023 at 2.30 pm in person, Main Library Conference Room, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor.

Meeting adjourned at 3:57 pm on a motion by Ms. Glaser, seconded by Ms. Bailey, and carried unanimously.

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