

Niagara Falls Public Library Board of Trustees

Minutes of Regular Board Meeting

Library-Conference Room

1425 Main Street, Niagara Falls, NY 14305

Wednesday, April 26, 2023

CALL TO ORDER. The regular meeting of the Niagara Falls Public Library Board of Trustees was held in person on Wednesday, April 26, 2023, in the Conference Room 2nd Floor Main Library. The meeting was called to order by Board President Carmen Grant at 3:10 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

Present

Ms. Bailey

Dr. Carter

Dr. Foote

Mr. Grant

Mr. King

Absent

Ms. Glaser

Dr. Rahman

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, Ms. Marilyn Lojek, President Friends of the Library, Mr. Robert DiFrancesco, Friends of the Library and Ms. Elaine Timm, City Historian.

OPEN HEARING

Mr. Grant noted there were no speakers or other guests.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA.

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES.

The March 29, 2023 regular meeting minutes were presented and reviewed. Adopted upon a motion by Mr. King, seconded by Dr. Foote, and carried unanimously.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Mr. Brown referred to the February 2023 financial narrative and reports which were provided in the agenda packet consisting of operating fund balance sheets, income and expense reports with comparison to budget and prior year and Dunlap Trust balance sheet. He noted that the special revenue fund has been combined with the operating fund so no separate reports for special revenue. Mr. Brown said the library is in good financial condition and highlighted the following from the financial reports:

1. All bank accounts are reconciled, were reviewed by the Ms. Potwin and available for any Board Member to review. There are no unusual items or unpaid bills outside of normal accounts payable.
2. Expect revenues and expenditures to be about 2/12 or 16.67% of annual budget for items incurred evenly throughout the year; some revenues and expenditures are not received/incurred that way.

- Total revenues are 14.62% of annual budget (about 2% below expectation) primarily due to state/county aid, trust transfer and friends of the library revenues are not received on a monthly basis but at different times as the year progresses.
 - Total expenditures are 14.71% of annual budget (about 2% below expectation) with all major expense lines at or below expected 16.67% except for worker's compensation which is at 100% as entire expenditure for the year was recorded in January. Property insurance and state retirement expense is estimated based on budget as actual amounts are received quarterly and later in the year respectively.
3. Operating surplus (deficit), which is revenues less expenditures, is \$(25,295) or 15.95% of the budgeted operating deficit so it is a little bit under than expected 16.67%. The total operating deficit budgeted for fiscal year 2023 is \$158,604 which means the 2023 budget was prepared and adopted to operate at a deficit (in the red) using some fund balance reserve.
 4. Total Revenues and expenditures as of February 2023 are comparable to February 2022.
 5. The Orrin E. Dunlap Collection Trust balance sheet as of February 2023 is \$1,233,607 compared to \$589,685 as of February 2022 reflecting the Rebello bequest received in September 2022. The February 2023 trust balance consists of \$113,161 remaining from original Dunlap bequest, \$444,718 remaining from original Rawnye bequest and \$675,728 from Rebello bequest. Monthly interest earned on account is allocated to each part in proportion to the total balance. All funds are in Bank on Buffalo checking account for now.
 6. Annual audit fieldwork was completed April 24, 2023 and auditors are expected to present their audit report for December 31, 2022 at the May board meeting.

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

EXECUTIVE LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S REPORT.

Ms. Potwin referenced her written report which was included in the agenda packet highlighting the following.

- Dates for holiday closures, meetings and days off
- Library furniture needs for Flag and Conference rooms to be paid out of 2023 budget, design/layout provided in agenda under new business from Buffalo Office Interior for consideration totalling \$30,906.17 (New York State contract pricing).
- AIS conference room technical equipment for wall mounted screen, sound bar, microphone, projector and camera was ordered totaling \$4,600 per quote; funds budgeted in 2023. Screen to be mounted by city DPW. The items were received April 25, 2023 and hopefully will be installed during May 2023.
- Rebello memorial furniture approved at last board meeting totaling \$14,142 for two parent carrel desks for Main and one set of children's stools for LaSalle to be paid out of Rebello funds as a memorial to Mr. Rebello was ordered and expected to arrive in July 2023.
- Long Island University Post Master's certificate was completed by Ms. Potwin who thanked the board for their support and opportunity to complete this program. She received an "A" keeping her GPA at 4.0. One more course left in Fall 2023-Libraries & Facility Management.
- Partnership with the Niagara Beautification Commission to promote the Library's Tool Library at their May 5th registration table at Power City Eatery in preparation for Clean Up Day May 6th. The goal is to partner up with another community organization to aid in city wide cleanup, promote the Tool Library and increase library memberships. Our new ipads will be programmed by then to support mobile card registrations.
- Ms. Potwin thanked Mr. Granto, Ms. Glaser, Dr. Foote and Mr. King for signing the required bank card for the new savings account at Bank on Buffalo for trust funds. Savings account expected to earn approximately 3%/year, under new business we will be discussing and a decision needs to be made regarding how much should be transferred to savings account from the checking account and how

much to leave in the checking account. The funds in the savings account are liquid and available if needed to be transferred back to the checking account at any time.

- Ms. Potwin discussed the Noreen Hill Scholarship to be awarded to a native student and thanked Mr. DiFrancesco for his work in finding a student in the city school district reminding the board of the upcoming annual awards dinner. Ms. Hill's family is to verify the student's native status. Dr. Foote asked when the dinner is, Ms. Potwin said May 3rd Antonio's. Ms. Potwin thanked those who donated to the scholarship fund: Dr. Foote, Mr. DiFrancesco, Ms. Glaser, Friends of the Library, Mr. Roscetti, Kim Thomas, Judy Martin, Mr. King, Mr. Granto, Noreens' son Todd and sister Joey Hill and herself. Three tables of ten have been purchased by the Library, Ms. Potwin provided the names of those she had down as to attend.
- Trustee Training sessions were provided, this is a question on the annual report. A certificate is issued when seminar is completed. Ms. Bailey said it is absolutely necessary that board members complete the required training seminars to avoid consequences such as removal from board seat and/or loss of state funding etc.
- Library industry issues and related links were provided for board members reading (mergers highlighted).

Other Items

- DPW building repair progress
- NIOGA Board member open seat and annual dinner
- Statistic reports for March 2023

Comments and Questions on Directors Report:

Mr. Granto asked if there were any questions on the Director's report.

- Ms. Bailey said she represented the Library at the Town of Niagara/Outlet Mall charity fund check distribution ceremony on April 11 and received a \$1,500 donation to the Library. The check had to be deposited within two weeks, Ms. Bailey asked if it has been deposited, Ms. Potwin said it has been deposited.
- Mr. Granto asked if there have been any inquiries to ban books, Ms. Potwin responded no.
- Dr. Foote said in reference to mergers of libraries that Erie County had received backlash when talking about merging libraries.
- Ms. Bailey asked about the process in place to address loitering, trespassing and removal of people from the library. Ms. Driscoll said there are policies in place and posted, for example no food is permitted so staff will tell visitors that no food is allowed. Ms. Bailey asked if incidents are documented as it is critical that they are, Ms. Driscoll said yes more serious/flagrant issues are documented in incident reports. Ms. Bailey said documentation and warnings of no trespassing is critical. Ms. Potwin said she feels incidents are increasing/heating up, Ms. Driscoll agreed. Ms. Driscoll said staff gives gentle reminders to patrons to follow rules as warranted. Ms. Potwin said the security company will be at the May meeting to further discuss security at the Library. Mr. Granto feels the atmosphere at the Library is pretty good and Mr. DiFrancesco said he is in the Library often and complimented the Library staff for how calmly and professionally they handle difficult situations and people. Ms. Potwin said she would share future incident reports with the board members to keep them informed.
- Mr. Granto said the newsletter is very nice, well done and good work to those involved. Ms. Potwin said Mignon Freeman is the primary person responsible for the newsletter.

Executive Library Director's report was received and filed

PERSONNEL ACTIONS

Part time Library Clerk, Lisa Knight was terminated, last day of employment was 5/3/22. New hire Part time Library Clerk Tierra Hill, first day of employment 5/1/2023.

Rescinded job offer to Brandi Alexander as employment paperwork was not picked up/completed as of April 26, 2023. Mr. Granto asked how people/students are hired/recruited for jobs. Ms. Potwin said all jobs are advertised/posted on website, social media, sites like Indeed, Handshake. Students generally come via Niagara County and/or Niagara University. Mr. Granto asked if the Library will be meeting the new minimum wage laws, Ms. Potwin said we are on track with pay plan to satisfy minimum wage requirements and will be reviewing the new requirements just passed in state budget.

Mr. Granto asked if there were any other questions or comments; hearing none he asked for a motion to approve the personnel action report.

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

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Mr. Granto said he had nothing to report but will addressing some items in executive session.

OLD BUSINESS

a. Noreen Hill Scholarship

- o Ms. Potwin referred to her director's report. Mr. DiFrancesco reminded all that the awards dinner is Weds. May 3rd, 5:30. Mr. Granto asked how many are attending representing the Library, Ms. Potwin said approximately 30 including family members of Noreen.

b. Policies to update

1) Timekeeping, Library Bill of Rights

- o The above polices were reviewed for updating where necessary.

Mr. Granto said we have had time to review these and asked if there were any questions, comments or amendments for any of the above policies. Hearing none, he asked for a motion to approve all of these policies as presented.

Resolution:

Mr. King moved for approval of the Timekeeping and Library Bill of rights policies as presented, seconded by Mr. Granto and carried unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

a) Approval of Conference Room/Flag Room furniture (page X-A)

A proposal and price quote from Buffalo Office Interiors, Inc. totaling \$30,906.17 (State contract pricing) was reviewed. Ms. Potwin reviewed the proposal and furniture to be purchased. Mr. Granto asked where the money will come from to purchase this furniture, Ms. Potwin said funds are available in the 2023 budget furniture/equipment line as well as savings from retiree medical insurance budget line. Mr. Granto asked if the City will own the furniture since it owns the building or does it belong to the Library. After some discussion, Mr. Roscetti said he thinks it would belong to the City. Mr. Granto said that is why he is not in favor of the Library purchasing furniture. Ms. Potwin said she agrees but the furniture in these rooms is very, very old and outdated from 1970 and the new furniture

will be on wheels making it easier to move and wired for technology. Mr. Granto asked if there were any questions, hearing none he asked for motion to approve funding of the furniture.

Resolution:

Ms. Bailey made a motion to approve the payment for the furniture as presented above, seconded by Dr. Carter and carried unanimously.

b) Naming of Trust

A resolution renaming The Orrin E. Dunlap Collection Trust (the Trust) was reviewed, discussed and approved by the Trustees of the Trust April 26, 2023 just prior to this meeting. It was approved unanimously to change the name of the Trust to "**The Dunlap-Niagara Falls Library Collective Trust**" to reflect the donations from others to the trust fund. Mr. Granto asked if there are any questions or comments, hearing none he asked for a motion to approve the Trust name change.

Resolution:

Mr. King made a motion to approve the Trust name change as presented above and approved by the Trustees of the Trust at their April 26, 2023 meeting, seconded by Dr. Foote and carried unanimously.

Mr. Granto went around the room and asked each person present if they had any other questions, comments or anything they want to say. None noted.

Executive Session

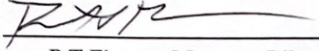
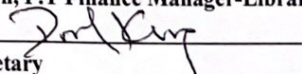
Mr. Granto made a motion to enter into executive session at 3:48pm, seconded by Mr. King and carried unanimously. Mr. Granto noted that no further action would be taken after the executive session so those in attendance who have to leave for the executive session will not have to return to regular meeting. Ms. Driscoll and Ms. Timm left the meeting.

Executive session ended at 4:06pm, regular meeting resumed.

NEXT MEETING AND ADJOURNMENT.

The next regular meeting of the Library Board is scheduled for May 31, 2023 at 3:00 p.m.in-person Main Library Conference Room, 2nd floor. The next Dunlap-Niagara Falls Library Collective Trust Meeting (Third Quarterly meeting 2023) is scheduled for Wednesday July 26, 2023 at 2.30 pm in person, Main Library Conference Room, 2nd floor.

Meeting adjourned at 4:07 pm on a motion by Mr. Granto, seconded by Dr. Carter, and carried unanimously.

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