

Niagara Falls Public Library Board of Trustees

Minutes of Regular Board Meeting

Library-Conference Room

1425 Main Street, Niagara Falls, NY 14305

Wednesday, May 31, 2023

CALL TO ORDER. The regular meeting of the Niagara Falls Public Library Board of Trustees was held in person on Wednesday, May 31, 2023, in the Conference Room 2nd Floor Main Library. The meeting was called to order by Board President Carmen Granto at 3:01 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

Present

Ms. Bailey

Dr. Carter

Dr. Foote

Ms. Glaser

Mr. Granto

Dr. Rahman

Absent

Mr. King

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 and Ms. Marilyn Lojek, President Friends of the Library.

OPEN HEARING

Mr. Granto noted there was one guest and no other public speakers turning meeting over to Ms. Potwin who introduced the guest speaker Mr. Paul Kudela from Security Solutions, LLC the company that provides security for the Library to update the board on Library security issues and answer questions. Ms. Potwin said incident reports are prepared and provided to the security company as well as more recently to the board with copy kept on file in the Library. Mr. Kudela is the co-owner of the company and a Lt. with the Niagara Falls City police department explaining that he is speaking today strictly in his role of private business owner of the security company and not as a representative of the City police department thus anything he says is not on behalf of and/or represents the city police department in anyway and added he can't comment on any City police department policies or actions. He noted that the city has changed significantly in his opinion as it is very common for him to drive around the city not knowing/recognizing the majority of people when at one time he would have. The city sadly has many more homeless people and nomads and since the Gospel Mission opened next door to the Main library the number of incidents at the Library have increased. The library policy has been to welcome them as it does with all visitors giving them opportunity to use the library according to the rules and the average removals of people is three-four/week probably could be four times that. Security personnel are all trained active and/or retired police officers that use de-escalation measures in all circumstances. Given the size of the main library, he feels two security personnel would be the ideal but understands budget constraints; demand for security services all over Niagara/Erie counties is very high as it is around the country. Mr. Kudela said he thought it would be best if board members asked questions for him to better address concerns etc.

Ms. Bailey asked if library staff has had training and if the security company has done any security analysis; Mr. Kudela said no they have not completed a security analysis and the library sets the procedures/process but at all times de-escalation techniques are used first, police called when that doesn't work. Ms. Bailey would like to have a security analysis completed with suggestions on what is needed and staff training. Dr. Foote agreed with Ms. Bailey as we have been reactive to situations and do need a security analysis completed. She said it appears many of the incidents are mental health related and need support and trained staff to be more proactive. Ms. Bailey asked what the process is when police are called, Mr. Kudela said that is a last resort, security staff is up against the wall and when police are called it is a point of no return and it is completely out of the hands of library security. Ms. Bailey asked if an appearance ticket is issued and is it on record Mr. Kudela said appearance tickets are of limited value in reality and it is totally up to the police officer to issue ticket as security cannot make police issue one. Ms. Glaser asked what happens if a person is issued an appearance ticket and does not show up, Mr. Kudela said a bench warrant would be issued. Ms. Bailey spoke about the importance of having written record of banning of people and incidents and/or warnings given to individuals as documentation is important. Ms. Bailey asked if banned people come back and how are incident reports organized, Ms. Potwin said yes they sometimes return and incident reports are filed with most recent on top with video picture if applicable attached to it; Mr. Kudela added controlling access at the door is best option to prevent someone who is banned from entering. Mr. Granto said it appears the library and security staff's hands are somewhat tied asking how many people are banned in a year and asked Mr. Kudela what is his biggest security concern, Ms. Potwin said two-three a week sometimes and Mr. Kudela said the size of the building is a lot for one person, security staff are by themselves with no backup readily available so staff safety is a concern especially if more than one situation is occurring at same time trying to handle the situations and keeping staff/others safe.

Dr. Rahman gave credit to the security staff from what he has seen they are very professional and well trained in their work.

Mr. Granto said the library faces many challenges as most every situation is a bit different so not just one solution to the problems, Ms. Glaser added that the library is hiring the judgment and expertise of security company to handle situations. Dr. Foote said a security analysis is needed to improve and assist security team and Ms. Bailey asked for an estimated cost for a security analysis. Mr. Granto said seems all are happy with the security being provided but there may be room for improvement asking Mr. Kudela to provide suggestions/options to the library for improvements such as building hardware needs etc. Mr. Kudela said he would provide options/suggestions to improve security, having a social worker at the library, possibly partner with college/other agencies to provide this as many incidents involve mental/societal issues with people. Ms. Bailey asked Ms. Driscoll how confident she and staff is with security, Ms. Driscoll said she is confident in security and staff are glad to have security so they can do their jobs.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA.

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES.

The April 26, 2023 regular meeting minutes were presented and reviewed. Adopted upon a motion by Ms. Bailey, seconded by Dr. Rahman, and carried unanimously.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Mr. Brown referred to the March 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 3/12 or 25% of annual budget for items incurred evenly throughout the year; some revenues and expenditures are not received/incurred that way.
 - Total revenues are 23.01% 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 22.79% 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. State retirement expense is estimated based on budget as actual amounts are received quarterly and later in the year respectively.
 - Both revenues & expenditures being 2% below expectations is consistent with prior months and last year.
3. Operating surplus (deficit), which is revenues less expenditures, is \$(31,551) or 19.9% of the budgeted operating deficit which is under the expected 25.0%. 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 are \$56,292 higher than March 2022 and expenditures as of March 2023 are comparable to March 2022. Detailed explanations for both provided in narrative report.
5. The Orrin E. Dunlap Collection Trust balance sheet as of March 2023 is \$1,213,710 compared to \$598,676 as of March 2022 reflecting the Rebello bequest received in September 2022. The March 2023 trust balance consists of \$113,170 remaining from original Dunlap bequest, \$436,817 remaining from original Rawnye bequest and \$663,723 from Rebello bequest. Monthly interest earned on account is allocated to each part in proportion to the total balance and Rawnye & Rebello funds were reduced for the \$20,000 annual transfer of trust funds to operating fund in March 2023. All funds are in Bank on Buffalo per board approval.
6. Annual audit fieldwork was completed April 24, 2023 and auditors are expected to present their audit report for December 31, 2022 at the June 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 has a renewable three month parking permit for NU parking
- Furniture options for conference and flag rooms selected and attached to my report, any opinions please let me know by June 2nd as order is to be placed. Dr. Foote expressed concern with cream colors, Ms. Potwin said the furniture material is cleanable and not light colored.
- Ms. Potwin discussed the Noreen Hill Scholarship dinner thanking those who donated and/or attended but expressing disappointment that the recipient/any representative did not attend as members of Ms. Hill's family were there.

- Security cameras (HIK Vision) are an issue as a number of them are not working and/or are down and maintenance/support for them is not readily available; backup battery (surge protector) has been replaced as it was damaged during March storm. U&S gave a preliminary assessment of our camera system and will be providing a quote on replacing existing cameras, Ms. Potwin is a bit concerned about the cost estimate. They informed me that our HIK Vision cameras are not recommended and could affect federal grant eligibility as all federal buildings have pulled them out of service since HIK Vision is owned by the Chinese Communist Party and prone to being hacked. Most companies do not want to touch/maintain our cameras due to this so present camera system virtually has no support. Mr. Granto asked how many cameras there are, Ms. Potwin said about 90 all HIK Vision, inside cameras installed by DFT Co. in 2016 for \$60,372 and the outside cameras installed in 2020 by Amherst Alarm (Buffalo Alarm) for \$33,979 (Total cost of all cameras presently installed was \$94,351). Due to expected cost of camera replacement U&S was asked to provide a five year phase-in plan of replacement with a system that can be professionally maintained, expect price quote and plan in mid-July.
- NYS Construction budget projects was discussed which includes flooring replacement in doorways to be discussed with the Mayor July 6th.
- NIOGA April board meeting and related correspondence to/from NIOGA was discussed
- Trustee Training sessions were provided; this is a question on the annual report. A certificate is issued when seminar is completed, trustees who have certificates in their folders are Bailey, Foote, Granto, Glaser & Carter.
- Library industry issues and related links were provided for board members reading (mergers highlighted).
- Statistic reports for adult, children programs and meetings for April 2023
- DPW building repair progress

Comments and Questions on Directors Report:

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

- Dr. Rahman asked if the library received any passes for the Aquarium as NIOGA has given them to other member libraries, Ms. Potwin said she did not receive any, not aware of this.
- Ms. Bailey asked about technology for conference room (video screen), Ms. Potwin said she has request into DPW to mount it. Ms. Bailey and Mr. Granto said if DPW can't get to it just have it installed.

Executive Library Director's report was received and filed

PERSONNEL ACTIONS

Capton, Eiza,

Part time/seasonal Library Specialist funded thru WNYLRC Diversity Internship grant, rate per hour \$18.53 plus \$.47 cent stipend to bring total hourly rate to \$19.00/hour to meet grant requirements for twenty-five hours/week beginning June 5th and ending August 15, 2023 (ten weeks). City residency and education for job code waived to comply with grant requirements.

Bartel, Preston & Giordano, Katrina

Oral history interviewers for 12.5 hrs per week May-Aug. 24, 2023 \$16 per hour hired and paid as employees of Niagara University, Oshei Grant.

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

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Mr. Granto said he is waiting for final approval for digitization funding through the Niagara Falls Heritage Foundation and wants to see more history department programs similar to other history departments in Niagara County. He regularly reads about such history programs and news items in the Niagara Gazette about other history departments in the county and wants to see the library's history department getting more publicity as it is a great asset of ours. Ms. Potwin explained that all press releases etc. must go through the City Administrators office; Ms. Glaser added that Oakwood Cemetery could possibly partner with the Library with press releases and promoting history programs. Dr. Rahman added that the library's history department is our biggest asset and we have auditorium to use for various presentations.

OLD BUSINESS

- a. Trust resolution as amended (approved 4/26/23 Dunlap & regular meeting)

Ms. Bailey asked for clarification on wording in 2nd to last paragraph votes or should say voting record; it was clarified that it should read voting record.

Mr. Granto asked for a motion to approve final amended trust resolution.

Resolution:

Ms. Glaser moved for approval of the Trust Resolution as amended, seconded by Dr. Foote and carried unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

- a. Security Cameras

This was discussed under Executive Library Directors Report no action needed at this time as it will be addressed at future meeting.

- b. Closing of Special Revenue bank account

Ms. Potwin & Mr. Brown requested the closure of the M&T Bank special revenue account as it isn't required and is used the same as the general fund checking account so these funds could be transferred to general checking and have one less bank account to monitor and reconcile. The balance is \$20,213.13 consisting of remaining bullet aide and RBDB funds.

Mr. Granto asked why board has to approve this, Mr. Brown said board members are signors on account and bank usually requires a resolution to open/close accounts. Mr. Granto asked if there were any questions, hearing none he asked for a motion to approve account closure.

Resolution:

Dr. Rahman made a motion to approve the closure of the M&T special revenue bank account of \$20,213.13 and transferring all the funds to the library general fund checking bank account as presented above, seconded by Ms. Glaser and carried unanimously.

- c. Approval of policies for Confidentiality, Customer Service, Copyright, Unattended Children

Dr. Foote asked that these policies be reviewed and approved individually as she has some changes to consider.

1) Confidentiality of Library User Records Policy

Mr. Grant asked if there were any questions and/or changes to this policy, hearing none he asked for motion to approve it.

Resolution:

Ms. Glaser moved for approval of the Confidentiality of Library Records policy, seconded by Dr. Foote and carried unanimously.

2) Customer Service Policy

Mr. Grant asked if there were any questions and/or changes to this policy. Dr. Foote suggested that it be amended by moving the last bullet point up to be part of the policy statement opening paragraph of the policy. Mr. Grant asked if everyone was good with this change and/or if any other comments, hearing none he asked for motion to approve amended policy.

Resolution:

Ms. Glaser moved for approval of the Customer Service Policy as amended, seconded by Dr. Rahman and carried unanimously.

3) Protection of Copyright Policy

Mr. Grant asked if there were any questions and/or changes to this policy. Dr. Foote suggested that policy be amended the last paragraph by replacing the word movies with media and removing i.e SWANK movie rights. Mr. Roscetti asked why is policy required, Ms. Potwin said it is required by NYS. Mr. Grant asked if everyone was good with this change and/or if any other comments, hearing none he asked for motion to approve amended policy.

Resolution:

Ms. Glaser moved for approval of the Protection of Copyright Policy as amended, seconded by Mr. Grant and carried unanimously.

4) Unattended Children Policy

Mr. Grant asked if there were any questions and/or changes to this policy. Dr. Foote suggested removal of reference to Brooklyn Library in the policy statement. Mr. Grant asked if everyone was good with this change and/or if any other comments, hearing none he asked for motion to approve amended policy.

Resolution:

Dr. Rahman moved for approval of the Unattended Children Policy as amended, seconded by Ms. Bailey and carried unanimously.

- d. 2023 Annual Appeal & Annual Report cost estimates from Compu-Mail of \$3,707.35 plus postage and \$1,782.00 respectively were provided for informational purposes and received and filed.

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

None.

NEXT MEETING AND ADJOURNMENT.

The next regular meeting of the Library Board is scheduled for June 28, 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 4:18 pm on a motion by Mr. Granto, seconded by Dr. Rahman, and carried unanimously.

Recorded by: _____

Patrick D. Brown, P.T Finance Manager-Library

Approved by: _____

Don King, Secretary