

Niagara Falls Public Library Board of Trustees

Minutes of Regular Board Meeting

Library-Conference Room

1425 Main Street, Niagara Falls, NY 14305

Wednesday, June 28, 2023

CALL TO ORDER. The regular meeting of the Niagara Falls Public Library Board of Trustees was held in person on Wednesday, June 28, 2023, in the Conference Room 2nd Floor Main Library. The meeting was called to order by Board President Carmen Granto at 2:56 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

Present

Ms. Bailey

Dr. Carter

Ms. Glaser

Mr. Granto

Mr. King

Absent/Excused

Dr. Foote (excused)

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 and Ms. Marilyn Lojek, President Friends of the Library, David Urban, CPA EFPR and a member of the general public was in attendance but did not give his name.

OPEN HEARING

Mr. Granto asked the gentleman from the public if he wanted to speak or had any comments, the man said he did not. Mr. David Urban, CPA and Partner with the Library's independent auditing firm EFPR was introduced to present and review the audit for year-end December 31, 2022. Mr. Urban thanked Ms. Potwin & Mr. Brown for their assistance during the audit and distributed an audit presentation handout summarizing the audit process timing and financial results (handout attached). Mr. Urban said he has been involved with the Library audits for the past ten years noting that this year's audit, similar to last year went very smooth with no unusual audit adjustments which was not the case with library audits prior to Mr. Brown as they use to be challenging and difficult at times. Audit team received all requested information timely facilitating the audit process. Referring to the audit presentation handout he reviewed the financial results (statements of net position & revenues, expenses and changes in net position) noting that there is an unmodified or "clean" audit opinion which is the desired and highest opinion for independent audits of entities. The library is in good financial position with no unusual liabilities and healthy net position of \$869,769 decreasing \$32,885 from 2021. Revenues and expenses increased over 2021 by \$1,046,295 and \$1,366,645 respectively primarily as a result of unrestricted bequest \$675,618 which was transferred to the trust fund, salaries & benefits were approximately 36% of total expenses for 2022 compared to 58% for 2021. Reviewing the Report to the Board, Mr. Urban said auditors review various documents from all board meeting minutes to bank and other account reconciliations for the year, there were no unusual adjustments nothing significant or not expected noting that Mr. Brown identified the adjustments to be made and has us make the adjustments, there are proper checks and balances (good internal controls). The adjusting entries were for governmental financial statement reporting (capital asset additions, depreciation/amortization and

lease liability) which do not impact the financials on budgetary basis so financial reports received for 2022 year end were not changed by these adjustments; reports received monthly accurately reflected the library's financial results. Mr. Urban thanked the board for having EFPR as independent auditors and asked if there were any questions or comments.

- Mr. King said he has been associated with the library for about 30 years, the bequest received during 2022 was largest he can recall and the library is in good financial position.
- Ms. Potwin asked about the library establishing a fund reserve for employee unused sick & vacation time that may need to be paid out upon retirement. Mr. Urban said it is appropriate and common practice for libraries to establish such a reserve, may even consider a separate bank account for the funds.

Mr. Granto asked for a motion to approve the December 31, 2022 year-end financial audit report as presented.

Resolution:

Mr. King moved for approval of the 2022 year-end financial audit report as presented by EFPR, seconded by Ms. Glaser and carried unanimously.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA.

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES.

The May 31, 2023 regular meeting minutes were presented and reviewed. Adopted upon a motion by Dr. Carter, seconded by Ms. Glaser, and carried unanimously.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Mr. Brown referred to the April 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 with nothing unusual to report and highlighted the following from the financial reports noting that revenues and expenditures as a percent of budget is consistent with prior month's reporting:

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 4/12 or 33.3% of annual budget for items incurred evenly throughout the year; some revenues and expenditures are not received/incurred that way.
 - Total revenues are 31.16% 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 and recognition of unbudgeted grant revenue. Estimating various revenues that come in later in year on budget basis of 33.3% and removing unbudgeted grant revenue of \$26,796 revenue would be 32.69% of budget and pretty much right on budget.

- Total expenditures are 31.57% of annual budget (about 2% below expectation) with all major expense lines at or below expected 33.3% 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 reporting.
3. Operating surplus (deficit), which is revenues less expenditures, is \$(58,939) or 37.16% of the budgeted operating deficit which is higher than expected 33.3% primarily due to unrecognized state/county aid that is received one time a year usually in the Fall. 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 \$50,271 higher than April 2022 and expenditures as of April 2023 are \$59,533 higher than April 2022. Detailed explanations for both provided in narrative report. There are no unexpected/unbudgeted expenditures other than grant expenses which are offset by unbudgeted grant revenue
 5. The Orrin E. Dunlap Collection Trust balance sheet as of April 2023 is \$1,213,804 compared to \$598,676 as of April 2022 increase reflecting the Rebello bequest received in September 2022. The April 2023 trust balance consists of \$113,179 remaining from original Dunlap bequest, \$436,850 remaining from original Rawnye bequest and \$663,774 from Rebello bequest. Monthly interest earned on account is allocated to each part in proportion to the total balance and Rawnye & Rebello funds. All funds are in Bank on Buffalo per board approval.

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
- Conference room tech video screen/large screen tv installed by City DPW on June 7th which is like a large IPOD, the camera may be stationary or sound activated to move/focus on one speaking. Camera/sound bar and technical setup/training for use of the equipment provided by AIS (Alternative Information Systems).
- Computer/tech Infrastructure upgrades by AIS (Alternative Information Systems) mostly will happen in July 2023 with 85% of the \$60K cost to be covered by FCC grant with library being responsible for about \$10K. The work will include replacing internet switches, upgrade of firewall and upgrading wireless drops (like the one hanging on the wall in conference room). The infrastructure upgrades will result in reliable service for patrons and no dropping of the workflows system for staff.
- Newsletter is prepared by Mignon Freeman who is doing a great job on it; it represents the library well. If anyone has anything for the Sept.-December newsletter please e-mail information to Mfreeman@nioga.org before August 1, 2023.
- Special Revenue Account with M&T (account ending #2050) was closed on June 2nd and all funds transferred to the general fund per board approval on May 31. All unused checks (#1050-1150) were destroyed.
- Assemblyman Morinello filmed his monthly video message promoting summer reading programs for both NIOGA as well as his to constituents using the Children's room. We were pleased to host him, as of June 12, 175 children have signed up.
- Elise in the Local History Dept. has been charged with pulling together a program of speaker series planned for Fall 2023.

- Website improvements is the next project; proposal will be shared with anyone who wants to see it. Funds are budgeted, goal is to have it up in Fall 2023
- Mayor's summer program for children, which includes several organizations beside the library as community partners, were printed and to be distributed in both libraries.
- Library industry issues and related links were provided for board members reading.
- Statistic reports for adult, children programs and meetings for May 2023
- DPW building repair progress checklist

Comments and Questions on Directors Report:

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

- Mr. King asked if anyone has been in touch with Sara Capin, Mr. Granto said he hasn't been.
- Ms. Glaser asked how people receive the newsletter, Ms. Potwin said it is on website and printed copies are available at both branches.

Executive Library Director's report was received and filed

PERSONNEL ACTIONS

Larissa Spears

Summer student sponsored by Niagara County Work Force (no cost to the Library) as part time 20-25 hours/week from June 26-August 25 as employee of the County and covered under County workers comp etc. will be assisting with summer programming and summer lunch distribution.

Mr. Granto asked if there were any questions, hearing none he asked for resolution approving personnel actions.

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

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Mr. Granto did not have a formal report but said focus is on finding a building for the local history department.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

a) Approval of Museum Pass Policy

Mr. Granto asked if there any questions or comments.

- Ms. Bailey asked if there will be a list of participating organizations/entities and how it will be determined to include/exclude an organization. Ms. Potwin said the policy is general and could apply to any/all entities. Since these passes are for patron use free of charge, she felt the policy is required to set the rules and to be fair and consistent in distribution of them.

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

Resolution:

Ms. Glaser moved for approval of the Museum Pass Policy, seconded by Ms. Bailey and carried unanimously.

Mr. Grant went around the room and asked each person present if they had any other questions, comments or anything they want to say.

- Ms. Glaser thanked Ms. Potwin & Mr. Brown for their work on the annual financial audit
- Ms. Lojek spoke about the Friends of the Library, it is a 501 (c)(3) not for profit corporation that supports Library programs and activities. It is governed by a board of 13 and they raise funds by memberships and book sales primarily. Funds raised are used for various library programs such as the spice of the month and she feels the library has been creative in programs offered.

Ms. Lojek said she is especially proud that this year the friends awarded a scholarship (first time) of \$1,000 to Hailey Weatherston. It was based on essay submitted (it was shared with the library board) and Ms. Weatherston shared how libraries have been important to her and she hopes to become an author.

Ms. Lojek said the board of the friends meets monthly with an annual membership meeting this year to be held Nov. 2nd. The friends are waiting for the City to move excess furniture out of the room they use and asked if anyone can assist with this it would be appreciated.

Ms. Bailey said she is happy to hear of the activities of the friends and it seems to be more active and will be more responsive than a few years ago when she came to the City and joined the friends.

- Mr. King asked about security, if it is being increased and have there been any unusual incidents or challenges. Ms. Driscoll responded that there have not been any new/unusual incidents than last month when security was discussed in detail. Ms. Potwin said security hours have been increased noting that has helped. Ms. Driscoll said when there is no security, word seems to get around, people know it and often things happen vs when there is security presence it is much calmer feeling with sense of order.
- Ms. Bailey commented on the trailer issue at LaSalle that was unusual asking if a formal complaint form was filed/was license number documented etc. Ms. Potwin said she went out there and did get license number, Mr. Grant added that the individual is well known in LaSalle area. Ms. Bailey added that we need to have formal police reports filed for such incidents and if the police won't file a report, the library should go to police department and file formal police report for all such incidents so it is officially documented.
- Mr. Grant expressed his concern with the parking lot at LaSalle being used during off hours by bar patrons/others. Ms. Potwin said she has brought this up with the police, they suggest chaining it off but she has to work with the City as it is their property.
- Ms. Bailey asked if the library is indemnified by the security company and for a copy of the security contract and when it expires, Ms. Potwin to provide.

Executive Session

None.

NEXT MEETING AND ADJOURNMENT.

The next regular meeting of the Library Board is scheduled for July 26, 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 3:39 pm on a motion by Mr. Granto, seconded by Mr. King, and carried unanimously.

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