

**NIAGARA FALLS PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES
REGULAR LIBRARY BOARD MEETING**

Niagara Falls Public Library 1425 Main Street, Niagara Falls, NY

Wednesday, July 26, 2023, @ 3.00 p.m

Meeting minutes

CALL TO ORDER. The regular meeting of the Niagara Falls Public Library Board of Trustees was held in person on Wednesday, July 26, 2023, in the Conference Room, 2nd floor, Main Library. The meeting was called to order by Board President Carmen Granto at 3 pm.

ROLL CALL:

Present

Mr. Granto
Dr. Foote (online via Zoom)
Ms. Glaser
Dr. Carter
Mr. King
Dr. Rahman

Absent

Mr Robert DiFrancesco,
Mr. Pat Brown

Also present were Mrs. Sarah Potwin, Executive Library Director, Mr. James Roscetti, Library Attorney, Ms Cecilia Driscoll Librarian 1 / union steward, Mr Robert DiFrancesco, and Ms. Marilyn Lojek, President, Friends of the Library.

OPEN HEARING

Mrs. Potwin set up the new Video Conference board, and Dr Chandra Foote attended electronically. Mrs. Potwin explained that she would try to take notes during the absence of Mr. Brown, who was on a (much-deserved) vacation.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA.

The agenda was adopted upon a motion by Ms. Glaser seconded by Ms. Bailey and carried.

REVIEW OF MINUTES.

A review of the June 28, 2023 meeting summary was presented. The minutes were adopted upon a motion by Dr. Carter seconded by Ms. Glaser and carried.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Mrs. Potwin explained that everyone has the May 30, 2023 report in their packet. Without reading Mr. Brown's detailed report to everyone, she suggested that any questions be directed to Mr Brown via email. She did highlight that the spending was at 39.32% of budget below expectation by 2.35%. Revenues are at 42.75% or 1.08% higher than expectation. The state and county revenues traditionally arrive in early to late Fall 2023. By the end of May, 41.67% of the year has passed. Also included in the minutes is a final copy of the yearly audit.

EXECUTIVE LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S REPORT.

Mrs. Potwin shared some of the items from her written report as part of the board packet. Mrs. Potwin's report included upcoming library closures, meetings she has attended, a reminded that new furniture for the Flag and Conference room will be arriving mid-August, that she is awaiting DPW to fix a number of items in the building, assemble furniture, that AIS continues to upgrade the Main Library computer infrastructure and its impact on staff. Mrs. Potwin reminded trustees of upcoming professional development opportunities and reminded them to email her the certificate of attendance. Mrs. Potwin is excited about upcoming projects such as digital printing and a new library website. She explained that NFPD officers will be conducting an audit of security camera placement as part of a future upgrade to our security camera system to create more efficiencies in coverage.

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

ROLL CALL:

Present

Mr. Grant
Dr. Foote (online via Zoom)
Ms. Glaser
Dr. Carter
Mr. King
Dr. Rahman

Absent

Mr Robert DiFrancesco,
Mr. Pat Brown

Also present were Mrs. Sarah Potwin, Executive Director,
Ms Cecilia Driscoll Librarian 1 / union steward,
President, Friends of the Library.

OPEN HEARING

Mrs. Potwin set up the new Video Conference board. Mrs. Potwin explained that she would try to take a (much-deserved) vacation.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA.

The agenda was adopted upon a motion by Ms. Potwin.

REVIEW OF MINUTES.

A review of the June 28, 2023 meeting summary was presented. The motion was carried upon a motion by Dr. Carter seconded by Ms. Glaser and carried.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

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Mrs. Potwin shared some of the items from her written report as part of the board packet. Mrs. Potwin's report included upcoming library closures, meetings she has attended, a reminder that new furniture for the Flag and Conference room will be arriving mid-August, that she is awaiting DPW to fix a number of items in the building, assemble furniture, that AIS continues to upgrade the Main Library computer infrastructure and its impact on staff. Mrs. Potwin reminded trustees of upcoming professional development opportunities and reminded them to email her the certificate of attendance. Mrs. Potwin is excited about upcoming projects such as digital printing and a new library website. She explained that NFPD officers will be conducting an audit of security camera placement as part of a future upgrade to our security camera system to create more efficiencies in coverage.

SARAH BAILEY was in
A PRESENT AT 7/26/23
MEETING BUT MINUTES
DID NOT REFLECT IT.
SEE MINUTES FOR 7/30/23
REVIEW OF 7/26/23
MINUTES - COMMENT NOTED
THIS

Mrs. Potwin asked if there were any suggestions for names to submit to the NIOGA board. No one had any ideas. Also, Mrs. Potwin shared that the LH speaker series is shaping up and will be held at Lasalle once a month in the Fall. She is asking the Friends of the Library to fund the \$150 per speaker fee as well as help with the press releases, sent under the FOL umbrella.

Mrs. Potwin explained that she is applying for a library construction grant for 155K, to replace library counters at both branches, with the city matching 15K (90/10). Dr. Rahman asked if the library is ADA-compliant. Mrs. Potwin answered that much of the building has been addressed, though not fully. Dr. Rahman asked why. Not fully ADA. Mrs. Potwin explained that the building was built at a time when ADA was not a requirement, yet efforts have been made through the NF City as well as NYS Library Construction grants to mitigate this.

Get well flowers were sent to Bobby D and Tom Poehnelt and in condolence to the funeral of Ralph Guerucci.

PERSONNEL REPORT.

Nothing to report.

OLD BUSINESS.

None to report.

NEW BUSINESS

Mrs. Potwin asked the board for a motion to approve of 2023 Library Construction application for Lasalle and Main Branches. This application will allow for the construction of a new circ counter at Lasalle, a new circ counter, a new flag room counter, and a new staff lounge counter at Main. All with the goal of improving the visitor experience. The total project cost combined is 155K, with a 90/10 match by the NF City. NF City will pay 15K of this total cost.

Motion: A FY 2023-2024 application for NYS Library Construction grant of \$155 630 to replace service counters at Main and Lasalle was adopted upon a motion by Mr. King seconded by Ms. Bailey and carried.

PT LIBRARY CLERK MINIMUM WAGE INCREASE

As Mrs. Potwin alluded to in her director's notes, the hiring and retaining of part-time library clerks are becoming increasingly difficult. A part-time employee wage chart has been approved for all part-time employees, which keeps pace with the rate of minimum wage. Currently, the minimum wage is \$14.50, yet we pay a part-time library clerk \$14.38. On January 1, 2024, this pay rate as well as minimum wage will be \$15.00 per hour. Mrs. Potwin reminded those present that is the 'in the door' rate, employees who have longevity received an additional sum to reflect the step they are employed under....these steps could involve a 10-cent or 15-cent raise.

All part-time employees receive a raise on January 1 of each year. Full-time employees receive their union bargain raised either January 1 or July 1, depending on which half of the year they were hired. Changes in NYS minim wages are legislated to be January 1, 2024, \$15.00, January 1, 2025, the minimum wage will be \$15.50, January 1, 2026, the minimum wage will be \$16.00

Mrs. Potwin produced a comparative chart showing the budget line item costs for part-time library clerks starting @ \$16/hr, \$16.50/hr, and \$17/hr in the door. Mrs. Potwin listed a number of entry-level jobs in NF currently available and their rates of pay....all were over \$16, currently. It is acknowledged that this small increase will not revolutionize how candidates are attracted to the job, though feels it to be a positive step towards recruiting and retaining quality candidates.

Discussion ensued between library board members. Members want to see more information. Members asked to see a copy of the job description, some members felt that employees do benefit from not wearing a required uniform, nor leaving work smelling of restaurant smells and that it is a pleasant work environment. The matter was asked to be brought up again at the next meeting with more information.

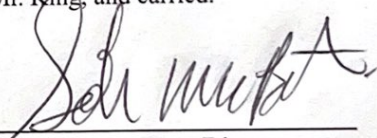
PRESIDENT'S REPORT

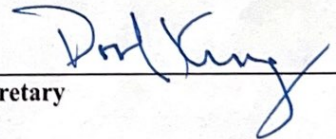
Mr. Grant expressed appreciation to the Local History staff for arranging a speaker series and would like to use it as a vehicle to forward the local history department, as well as promote oral histories in our city. He sees value in Mr. King's videos being promoted at these events. Mr. Grant thanked the library for these efforts. Mr. Grant did address the issue of moving and shared that the Mayor has discussed it as well.

Mr. Grant reminded everyone that a board election will be held in January 2024 and feels that it is time to step down from his presidential role. Mr. Grant would like to remain on the board as a member.

NEXT MEETING AND ADJOURNMENT. The next regular meeting of the Library Board is scheduled for 8/30/2023 at 3:00 p.m. in the Meeting room. The next Dunlap Meeting is scheduled for 10/25/2023 at 2.30 pm in the conference room.

The meeting adjourned at 3.35 pm by Ms. Glaser, seconded by Mr. King, and carried.

Recorded by: 
Sarah Potwin, Executive Library Director

Approved by: 
Don King, Secretary