

Present: Philip A. Bean (video), Evon M. Ervin, Carol W. Steele, Elizabeth Ellis, Paula J. Flisnik (video – didn't count toward quorum), Raina L. Goldbas, Darlene Mack-Brown, Linda T. Madore (video) F.X. Matt III, Dominic R. Passalacqua, Helen S. Schwartz, Christopher Sagaas, Sara Billman

Excused: Diana L. Koury, Julia A. Fernandez

Absent: Ruth A. Pugliese, Gabriel J. Hage

Evon Ervin called the meeting to order.

Conflict of Interest Review

There were no conflicts of interest.

Approval of the 1/16/2025 Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes.

On motion of Helen Schwartz and seconded by Carol Steele the 1/16/2025 Board Meeting Minutes were approved.

Old Business

- The final Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) payment should be forthcoming as Chris had to sign an amended contract to clarify that The Library met the state's threshold for Minority and Women Owned Business Enterprises (MWBE) requirements. A Statewide DRI group also just contacted The Library for use of its space for a meeting.
- Construction out back has hit a pause due to weather. The railing components have arrived and are being stored off site at Pike property. The lights are arriving this week. Everything is on target to be complete once the weather allows. Remaining construction payments of approximately \$230,000 are expected to be made by The Library as the project is completed. Chris will coordinate with The Chamber for a Ribbon Cutting Ceremony in the spring.

February 2025 Director's Report

Chris reviewed some of his activities during the last month.

- This is a busy time of year in regard to advocacy for library funding in New York State.
- Dr. Spence from Utica City School District reached out to Chris regarding expanding book opportunities to students, along the lines of Little Free Libraries. The Library's role would be to assist in choosing books and would be promoted as a Utica Public Library and Utica City School District collaboration. This still has to be approved by City Hall. Chris was also approached by the school district for a potential collaboration similar to the author event with Jacqueline Woodson that was held last June. This would be on a smaller scale. Chris is meeting with a school district librarian to go over details.
- This morning Chris and Diana met with Liz Ellis and Darlene Mack-Brown for new trustee orientation.
- Chris, Mandy Travis and Lisa Matte had a good meeting with County Executive Anthony Picente, Jr.
- Chris was approached by Sentinel Media to buy an ad in the 2025 Oneida County Tourism Guide. The Library purchased a half page ad and used the cover of the Annual Report for the graphic. Chris is hopeful this will increase visitors to The Library.

- Involvement as a Board member of Mohawk Valley Center for the Arts (MVCA) has picked up and there have been many ways for Chris to use his contacts in the Utica area to help raise the profile of MVCA.
- Feb 5th was Library Advocacy Day in Albany. Advocates expressed some concern for federal funding streams and the trickle-down effect on library funding in New York State. Most of our funding comes from our local taxpayers, but no legislators are certain of how things may evolve.
- Chris reviewed the New York State Deferred Compensation Plan and then requested Board approval to implement this plan for library staff.

On motion of Darlene Mack-Brown and seconded by Dom Passalacqua the New York State Deferred Compensation Plan was approved to be added as an available benefit for staff of The Library.

- Chris requested approval to open a bank account at First Source Federal Credit Union.

On motion of Carol Steele and seconded by F.X. Matt the Board approved opening a bank account at First Source Federal Credit Union.

February 2025 Financial Report

Carol Steele reviewed the February 2025 Budget Report with January 2025 data.

- Nothing significant, other than capital improvement expenses for the parking lot construction project, is noted.
- Oneida County and School Tax funding are both at 100% received for the fiscal year.
- Investments are doing relatively well.

On motion of Dominic Passalacqua and seconded by Raina Goldbas the February 2025 Budget Report was approved.

Carol reviewed January 2025 disbursements and confirmed that all expenses \$500 and over were approved by two Board Officers prior to payment. Payroll and utilities expenses do not require prior approval.

On motion of Dom Passalacqua and seconded by Helen Schwartz the January 2025 disbursements were approved.

Governance Committee

- The Committee has reviewed and is working on preparing an online fillable form for the Board Trustee Profile, formerly known as Board Asset Inventory. This is basically a demographic snapshot of the Board. Governance Committee can use that information when they are recruiting for new members. It has been a few years since one has been done. The Committee has updated and revised the form. This is to be emailed out in the next two weeks.
- Dom reminded the trustees that most of the committees are required to prepare a quarterly report on their activities, relative to the Long Range Plan. The first report will be due in advance of the March Board meeting. Chris will reach out to the committee chairs to ensure this is done.
- Chris, Sara, Fritz and the Governance Committee are working on a Trustee Portal alternative that is easier to access.

New Business

- Chris requested approval to utilize this year's Roger G. and Phyllis A. Haley Fund in the amount of \$2,485 to purchase additional e-content for Utica Public Library patrons through OverDrive.

On motion of Carol Steele and seconded by Raina Goldbas the use of the Roger G. and Phyllis A. Haley Fund to purchase additional e-content was approved.

- The New York State Annual Report has been submitted by Chris with the help of Diana and staff. Chris anticipates that the Board will see this in April for approval.
- March is the budget approval meeting for next fiscal year. Finance Committee will be meeting to review and approve the draft budget before the March meeting.
- The Library is still looking to fill positions and interviews are ongoing.
- Chris and Liz are discussing the possibility of Liz hosting staff librarians on her morning radio show to promote The Library.
- Annual Appeal follow up postcard was sent out in early February to people who had not yet given. So far the follow up appeal has yielded over \$2,000.

Adjournment

On motion of Carol Steele and seconded by Raina Goldbas the Board meeting was adjourned.

The next Board meeting will be held on Thursday, March 20th @ 4pm. Remote Meeting Procedures will again be in place for this meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Sara Billman