



**Marcellus Free Library
Board of Trustees Meeting
January 27, 2021-- 7:00pm**

Attendees: Jake Widrick, Beth Anne Piper, Pat Dailey, Martha Fiacchi Gary Germain, Shawn Gillen-Caryl, Penelope Anderson, Shane Ventura, Mary Drabot, Katie Reilly, Michele Merwarth

- Meeting Call to Order 7:00pm
- Additions/Changes to Agenda None. Introduced new board member Shane Ventura. Acknowledged Gary Germain's last meeting.
- Review and Approval of Minutes from December 2021
Approved. Motion to approve Pat Dailey. 2nd Katie Reilly.
Will include electronic vote 12/21 to approve Pat Dailey and Beth Anne Piper as signatories for Investment portfolio
- Director's Report

Local and System Updates

-Book challenges at the local level have been making news nationwide. Recently there was concern raised about a book at a school district meeting in Auburn:

https://auburnpub.com/news/local/education/school-book-ban-debate-arrives-in-auburn/article_0b533780-efde-5efe-947a-f4b0134c1744.html

-OCPL's Executive Director, Christian Zabriskie, put together a comprehensive guide on the history of book challenges and why this topic is of crucial importance to us as library advocates. There are many great talking points. I have attached the document as a separate PDF.

-MFL does have a Request for Reconsideration of Library Material form, which is the first step if a patron ever does have an issue with a book in our collection. We have had some complaints. For example Wheel on the Bus. Find books behind other materials on shelves. We never agree re any issues materials. First ask if have read the material and what are your specific objections to the material. If form is completed process would include review of objection at board meeting. There tends to be more issues/complaints re materials in school libraries.

-NYS Annual Report Portal will open on Thursday, 1/27. The preliminary deadline to submit the report to the state is March 15th. The MFL Trustees need to approve the report before I can submit it to Amanda Schiavulli for review at OCPL. I will get the report to you with plenty of time to review before it needs to be voted on and accepted at our March meeting. Report includes info re items in the collection, programing and attendance, circulation statistics, board membership, loan info.



Library Updates

- The library will be offering more in-person programs over the next couple of months. In February, we are bringing back the popular Thursday afternoon movies for seniors. We are also going to be offering a four-week fly-tying workshop, a seed sharing/seed saving project with three accompanying lectures, and various guest speakers such as Matt Kosty, President of the local Wild Birds Unlimited franchises.
- February also marks the return of in-person story times and Awesome Art classes. Popular recurring programs such as Alyson Esposito's card classes continue to produce good attendance numbers.
- February is Library Lover's Month and our Friends helped us with our Blind Date With A Book Display at their meeting Wednesday.
- Saturday, February 5th is National Take Your Child to the Library Day. We'll be highlighting our recolored children's area and our revamped 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten program. Kids (and adults) can pick up their Winter Reading Challenge BINGO sheets and complete them for a chance to win prizes.
- Saturday, February 12th Alyson will be around for a special Valentine's Day craft activity.
- Teen activities in February: Drawing Club on 2/10 and Friday Gamedays. A Valentine's Day craft on Friday, 2/12. The TAB will be helping Miss Sophia create St. Patty's Day and Women's History Month decorations for the library spaces.

Construction Update

- The Library looks great with a fresh coat of paint and new LED bulbs. Closing to the public while the work was completed transpired without any issues. Lobby pickup was a fine option to fall back on. Total cost \$4825.
- The tutoring room downstairs is being converted to a Teen Room. At some point in the future we will upgrade the furniture to make it more comfortable for them.
- First piece of furniture for the conference room was delivered. The media room credenza is now in place.
- A survey of the property was completed earlier this month. Keplinger Freeman Associates are reviewing options for the placement of our Creekwalk patio/boardwalk. We remain on track to start construction this spring. Pending report. Will have meeting regarding options. Will look to start in the spring. State came back with some questions which Jake has provided response. Expect award notice in June.

- **Committee Reports**

- Friends Report by Michele Merwarth President

Membership is currently at 134, down from last year (137) and pre-pandemic membership of 150.

Membership usually accounts for about 1/3 of our fundraising totals-last year it was 46% of fundraising, this year is currently at 46% but will decrease as fundraising totals increase through June

Fundraising for this year is at \$7700. Last year was at \$8300.

Plans for 2 more fundraisers this year-A Spring Raffle and Old Home Days Book Sale. Not doing Old Home Day Basket Raffle this year to avoid asking local businesses still recovering pandemic for a donation.

Board Vacancies- Vice President, Basket Raffle Chair, Historian.

Terms will be ending in June for President, Treasurer and 2 Directors.



Friends have donated \$4000 thus far to the library-\$3000 in October for the newly formed Teen Advisory Board, Nintendo Switch games, Label Writer Printer & Special Collection materials. \$1000 this month for updating graphic novels in the young adult section and new book case.

Have been trying different meeting times-morning, afternoon and evening to get more membership participation. Last meeting about a dozen members attended including 7 board members.

Have been adding more social events in addition to business meetings-picnic, make a pumpkin out of a book, Christmas ornament swap and making a Library Lover's Hershey kiss candy roses for patrons.

Next meeting February 23 at 7pm-Jake will have a "Library Lovers" Trivia Night followed by our Business meeting.

Board thanked Friends for their ongoing donation of time and energy and funds to the library.

- Finance

Reviewed budget. Tax levy vs revenue library. Restricted grants cause variance resulting in great increase in variance. No longer charging fees over due books but will look for Annual Fund raiser to balance out this amount. Expenses include building related expenses and depreciation and bond payment and wages. Increase in budget for 2022 includes increase re rate per hour wages which will increase 2%. Net surplus is indicator of how good we are doing. Notes on budget provided by Pat Dailey show expected costs from budget. Agreed will have specific conversation prior to signing the contract for the outdoor project as unlikely will get grant funding approval until June 2022. Jake advised NYS has money available so not a great risk. Library did not qualify for the employee retention discount. 2021 did not finish with any surprises. Annual Fund contributions being calculated. New financial advisor agreement signed and working on clearer policy statement for investments.

- Building and Grounds

No new information. Lighting Change and painting came out well. All lights are LED now. Discussed Creek walk and our outdoor project. The new Paul Street Project plans to build a path to the library. Discussed possibility of a drive up window for the library.

- Nominations Committee

Beth and Jake met with Shane Ventura nominated as new board member on Monday. Beth made motion to approve. Approved Shane as new member.

- New Business

- 2022 Board of Trustees Meeting Dates Approved



January 27
March 10
April 7
May 5
June 9
September 8
October 6
November 10
December 8

- 2022 Committee Assignments

Discussed moving back to more formal committee assignments in 2022 as covid restrictions are lifted and we can move back into more normal operation.

Discussed committees and agreed board members will review the list provided by Jake and we will discuss further at later date. Building and Grounds will need a chair. Development Committee needs a chair especially to address fund raising which has been hindered by Covid. Finance: Pat Dailey current on committee. Personnel and Policy: Martha Fiacchi currently on committee. Board evolution: No VP. Need to appoint VP who usually will step into the Presidency.

- Discussion and Vote on Tax Levy for 2023 Budget

Discussed motion to ask for increase in Levy. This would be the third fiscal year with no increase if not approved. Discussed if ask and not approved what happens. We would get the previous levy amount. There is a historically low turn out for voting and our part has a low profile over all. Our previous votes to not increase during past 2 years gives a positive argument for asking for increase now. Increase would result in about \$1/100000 assessment value. Pat Dailey made motion to approve request for 2% increase. Beth 2nd. Motion passed to request increase. We also discussed again the 10% loss in town funding every year until 2027 and that this is also a talking point re requesting increase in levy. Also discussed requesting funding from the town covid money.

- Discussion and Vote to Approve Investment Policy

Reviewed investment policy. Requested examples of similar documents other clients. Should include target goals. Gary discussed cash in account. Former adviser kept 150-175K cash in account. Basis of this was that not sure when we would ask for money. Gary suggests we ask for a monthly disbursement from investment account to reach the amount needed annually which looks to be about \$56000 in 2022 depending on other donations. Need to consider monthly vs lump sum disbursement. For example could consider 4-5K monthly case disbursement which would be dividends. Construction project will require funds until get the grant money so need to decide what we need ahead of time so don't have to sell in a down market to access funds. Let advisor know ahead of time so can get funds



out an opportune time. The projected cost of the project is \$200K and will require deposit. The levy check is due in October and the project grant money also would be received in October also. We have a 3 year window to complete the outdoor project so could delay starting till next spring when have funds.

Motion to approve the investment plan was approved.

- Maternity/Paternity policy update for Employee Handbook. Jake will circulate some samples from other libraries for review. Must comply to FMLA 12 weeks at 66% pay, 4 weeks STDB. Committee will make recommendation for Board approval
- Questions/Comments from the Public None
- Other Business none

Motion to close public meeting was made by Shawn and seconded by Pat.
Public meeting closed.

- Executive Session

Next Board Meeting Date: Thursday March 10, 2022