

Minutes of the Stamford Library Association Meeting Monday, January 30, 2023

Present at the Stamford Library: Trustees Barbara Balliet, Millie Faulkner, John Hubbard, Stephanie Rubin-Ruquet (via Zoom), Linda Stratigos, Mike Teitelbaum, Ellen Thorn, Janet Wenner; Director Erika Eklund

Call to order: The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Barbara.

Election: An election of officers was held by voice vote. John made a motion (second by Mike) that the current trustees be reelected to serve until the beginning of the January 2024 board meeting; the motion passed.

- President: Barbara Balliet
- Vice President: Linda Stratigos
- Secretary: Ellen Thorn
- Treasurer: Millie Faulkner

The office of president is term-limited to three consecutive one-year terms; 2023 is Barbara's third year.

Reorganization issues: Having been distributed electronically previously, the following topics were updated or confirmed by trustees at this first meeting of the calendar year.

Contact info: An updated list of trustees and personal contact information was prepared and distributed, so trustees, 4CLS, the library's annual report, the LTA section of NYLA, and others as needed will have up-to-date access.

Meetings: The board agreed to continue to meet monthly while planning a new facility, at 5:30 p.m., on the fourth Monday of each month. Before each meeting is adjourned, the next meeting date is confirmed and included in each set of minutes for posting and distribution. Dates may be altered to avoid holidays or other inconveniences.

- Regular meetings for 2023 are scheduled for: January 23; February 28; March 27; April 24; May 22; June 26; July 24; August 28; September 25; October 23; November 27; December 18.
- Annual meeting is scheduled for September 25, at 5:30 p.m., with the Regular meeting to follow.

Membership: Association and lifetime membership lists were updated for the annual meeting in October. One need not be a member to attend any open meeting or to join and participate on a Standing committee.

Committees: The president is a de facto member of all Standing committees; membership is open to all trustees and to all Association members. Committee chairs are asked to inform all trustees when calling a meeting; and to report to the board on the progress and any recommended actions. Committees may have their own budgets but they still need trustee approval (collective authority) to authorize payments.

Trustees acknowledged these current committees and memberships:

- **Advocacy** (community public relations): Millie (chair), Barbara, Stephanie, Janet
- **Building** (planning, plant, and resources): Linda (chair), Barbara, John, Mike
- **Finance** (fiscal oversight): Millie (chair), John, Linda, Ellen
- **Fundraising:** Mike (chair), Millie, Stephanie, Janet
- **Personnel** (contracts, job descriptions, and reviews): Barbara (chair), Linda
- **Policy** (bylaws, policies, and rules): Ellen (chair), Millie, Stephanie, Janet

Legal notices: The board has identified the *Mountain Eagle* as the official newspaper for the library's legal notices. Notices are also posted on the library's website and on the bulletin board at the front desk.

Banks/financial services:

- **Legal name:** Wayne Bank has been instructed to change the library's legal name on all library accounts.
- **Bank accounts:** The board agreed to maintain SLA bank accounts — Checking, Investor, and Building Construction — as well as a safe-deposit box at the Wayne Bank branch in Stamford. Monthly account statements are sent to the library to the attention of Library Director Erika, who then provides copies to each trustee. Barbara, Linda, and Millie are authorized for (1) inquiry access, (2) transfer authorization, and (3) check signing for these three SLA accounts. SLA bookkeeper (Evening Star in Schoharie) is authorized to have online access for inquiries and to make online transfers within the library's accounts.
- **Escrow account:** The board agreed (motion by Linda; second by Millie) to establish an escrow account at Wayne Bank into which SLA will transfer monthly rent for the Village for library use of its portion of Churchill Building space, while a rental agreement is pending and before it is signed with the Village.
- **Bank safe-deposit box:** Barbara, Linda, Millie, Ellen, and Erika have access to the safe-deposit box, #318 at Wayne Bank.

- ***Bookkeeping service:*** Since May 2022, the board has employed Evening Star Bookkeeping in Schoharie to provide payroll, accounting, and tax services.
- ***Financial services institutions:*** The board agreed to maintain the investment account we have with Tompkins Trust. Linda and Millie are authorized for (1) inquiry access, (2) transfer authorization, and (3) check signing. The board also agreed to maintain the funds invested at Homestead Funds and an account at Homestead for a Building fund. Linda and Millie are authorized for (1) inquiry access, (2) transfer authorization, and (3) check signing. Evening Star Bookkeeping has inquiry access for SVA accounts at both institutions. Both financial institutions have been informed about the change in the library's legal name. All notices of the library's management have been provided.
- ***Investment policy review:*** The board reviewed, approved (motion by Millie; second by Linda), and dated the library's investment policy. The board may review the policy again after recommendations from meetings with Tompkins and Homestead agents. Wayne Bank, Tompkins, and Homestead should receive the updated policy.

Insurance:

- The Directors and Officers Liability insurance policy, through the insurance carrier Mount Vernon Fire Insurance Company (and through the Reynard Agency), is filed under Insurance at the library, is up-to-date, and is authorized for renewal in 2023 (current policy period from 3/15/2022 to 3/15/2023).
- The Commercial Package insurance includes liability insurance covering the new SLA property. It is provided through the insurance carrier Utica National Insurance Group (and through the Reynard Agency) and was added to our existing general liability commercial package. It is filed under Insurance at the library, is up-to-date, and is authorized for renewal in 2023 (current policy period is from 9/1/2022 to 9/1/2023).
- A copy of the Evening Star certificate of liability is on file with the library with a copy provided to Reynard for its records. A new certificate will be issued in February 2023.
- Reynard has been informed of the library's new official name.

Contracts:

- ***4CLS Services:*** SLA signed an agreement with Four County Library Services for 2023 services. This includes our Automation contract, Circuit program, Online research center, and the Download Zone. Costs remain the same as in 2022, except for the Automation contract, which dropped from \$6,908 to \$6,844.
- ***Webmaster:*** A letter of agreement for hosting, backups, security, maintainance, and updates for 2023 has been signed with CMS Internet Solutions of Bovina. It is filed physically and electronically in the library.

- **Lease:** With the ownership of the Churchill Building passing from the school district to the village, and the school no longer responsible for maintaining the premises for the Stamford Library Association, the village mayor forwarded a lease to SLA. The initial lease is under review with the library's legal counsel. In the interim, SLA decided to show its commitment to reaching an agreement with the village by creating an escrow account for monthly rental fees. Trustees and the library director have provided comments for consideration.
- **Library Director:** Per the library's bylaws, Erika needs a contract as the library's director. This can be worded to renew annually, subject to a performance review near the time of the Reorganization meeting and subject to satisfaction by both the board as a whole and the library director being satisfied with working conditions and performance.

Other issues

Website: The domain name <SVLnY.org> will be retired as soon as Erika is assured the replacement is up and running. Generic Compositors, which has been hosting that site, can install an automatic forward if notified to do so.

Mileage reimbursement: Staff and trustees traveling for library business are authorized for reimbursement at \$0.63.5 per mile for 2023 business travel (up from \$0.58.5 per mile for 2022). Invoices must be submitted that include date, mileage distance and calculation, and business purpose.

Personnel policy signatures: Some library policies require annual trustee and staff signatures before these signed policies are filed within individual personnel files maintained by the library (e.g., anti-sexual harassment; whistle-blowing). (A convenient way to keep up-to-date is to have trustees sign these at the annual Reorganization meeting; and to have staff sign them as each attends an annual performance review with the library director). A list of these policies should be added to the annual Reorganization issues.

Regular meeting items

Minutes: Minutes of the December 28, 2022, Regular board meeting were approved (motion by Mike; second by Linda).

Financial reports

Financial reports were distributed electronically in advance of the meeting.

P&L statements through December 31, 2022 show total income as \$189,378 (vs. a budgeted income of \$141,252). Total expense for the year is shown as \$168,764 (vs. a budgeted expense of \$163,597), resulting in a net income for the year of \$20,614.

Wayne Bank Checking account statement on 12/30/22 had a balance of \$35,756. **Wayne Bank Investor** account statement on 12/30/22 had a balance of \$49,780, which includes interest for the 2022 year of \$101. **Wayne Bank Business checking (construction)** account statement on 12/30/22 had a balance of \$8,601.

Millie reviewed the check sequence, deposits, and bank statements.

Erika provided up-to-date employee information to Evening Star.

Homestead Funds Regular account statement for 2022 lists an ending value of \$187,350. (The beginning value was \$224,029.) **Homestead Building Fund** account statement for 2022 lists an ending value of \$48,022. (The beginning value was \$55,745.)

Tompkins Financial Advisors account statement for 2022 lists an ending value of \$2,348,403, with a year-to-date income and capital gain distributions of \$60,851. (The beginning value was \$2,992,573.)

The **Balance Sheet** as of December 31, 2022, lists total assets at \$2,810,823. Millie confirmed that the assets and balance sheet match. The board voted (motion by Millie; second by John) to accept the year-end P&L.

2023 Budget: Erika brought a revised budget draft to the meeting for the board to review. The Finance Committee wants time to review and discuss before board approval and sharing with Evening Star. Evening Star will include actual vs. budget line items on the monthly P&L statement for board review.

Taxes: Barbara will confirm with Mike West which tax payments — Town, Village, School — are required from SLA on the new property. Tax to Town of Stamford has already been paid, but can be reimbursed if appropriate.

Library director's report

Erika distributed a written report and expanded on it at the meeting.

Operations

Hours of operation: Erika suggested changing the hours the library is open on Tuesday and Thursday to 12 to 6 (instead of from 1 to 7). The board approved (motion by Barbara; second by Janet).

Grants: We submitted a Holiday Match grant application to Stewart's for \$1,750 for children's programming. (Last year we applied for \$2,000 and received \$1,500.) Award will be announced in March.

We submitted a grant application to Robinson Broadhurst for \$127,400 for the purchase of property for a new library.

We received an O'Connor Foundation grant for \$2,100 to match the cost for Hartgen Archeological Associates of Rensselaer to do phase I of the investigation of the 1.56 acre property on which we plan to construct a new library, parking, and areas of potential future expansion.

Tax cap: Erika got tax cap information from Steve Bachman at 4CLS, which was shared with the board. He said we can avoid the mandated cap — around 3 or 4% ($4\% \times \$45,000 = \$1,800$) — when asking for a raise in our current dollar

amount if (1) 60% of our board votes to exceed the cap and (2) if school district voters pass it with a simple majority.

Library credit card: Amazon has provided the library with a business credit card through American Express. (If this is satisfactory, it will replace Erika's use of Linda's personal credit card.)

Amazon Smile: This source of donations is being retired in February, to have a greater impact on fewer recipients. Erika encourages everyone to make Amazon purchases before the deadline.

Color printer: The new printer finally arrived in late December. We've set the cost of black & white printing at 20 cents per page and color printing at 40 cents per page after researching other libraries.

Building keys: Stinson has reworked and oiled the current locks and cut 10 new keys. A new list of key holders is in the works. The school has not returned the keys it has for the library.

Barcode scanner: Instead of purchasing a replacement through 4CLS for \$100, the \$27 wireless one from Amazon is working well.

Automation: Internet and connection issues have been problematic on our circulation computers; 4CLS finally agreed to install new equipment and wiring.

Annual report: The portal has opened, so 4CLS data must be reviewed for completion of the 2022 report. 4CLS will provide work sessions to review any state changes from last year.

Programs and Outreach

Ancestry: Since Ancestry recently stopped offering remote access to their Ancestry Library edition, Erika worked with 4CLS to add a quick link tab to our desktop computers and trained the staff to help patrons connect to the application.

Book donations: Erika has been sorting and selecting books for an upcoming book sale and for books to be featured in our very popular "Blind Date with a Book" program. Drawing for prizes will be held on Saturday, February 25, along with a book and bake sale.

Financial information series: Eileen at Western Catskills is offering a monthly series at the library. January's "Preparing for a Disaster" had no attendees on a very cold and snowy morning. Upcoming topics include: avoiding scams (February); first-time home buying (March); and managing inflation (April).

Quilt blocks: Megan will hold a quilt block class on February 11; several people have already signed up for it.

Game Night: We are bringing back the popular Game Night, initially scheduled on the first Tuesday of the month from 6 to 8 p.m. Our high school volunteer has verified that no game pieces are missing and has suggested additional games to add to our collection.

Little One's Story Time: Lindsay's new program has been a great success and is gaining good feedback in person and on social media. She has a lineup of

themes and is working with Youth Services and 4CLS resources to bring in puppets, felt board pieces, and more to make the program immersive and fun.

Utica Zoo Zoomobile: A presentation called “Hop, Waddle, Slither, Swoop,” including at least four animals, is scheduled for August 15 as part of our Summer Reading Program activities.

Computer classes and tutoring: Currently being explored is a plan for Beth Mowry of Jefferson to provide appropriate computer training. Structure and payment are being discussed.

Committees

Advocacy (community public relations): Millie (chair), Barbara, Stephanie, Janet

Is this committee work essentially subsumed under anticipated Building committee plans? (Do some of our committees need redefining?)

Building (planning, plant, resources): Linda (chair), Barbara, John, Mike

Churchill lease: The committee has asked Ellen Bach, Esq., to review a lease provided by the mayor (along with comments from library trustees and director), and to draft a lease we’d consider signing. The board voted (motion by Millie; second by Mike) to put \$800 a month into an escrow account toward rent.

Archeological research on new property: The board voted (motion by Barbara; second by Mike) to have Barbara sign the September 9, 2022, proposal from Hartgen Archeological Associates of Rensselaer — with the elimination of the statement that the project has USDA funding and is subject to National Historic Preservation Act compliance — to do phase I of the investigation of the 1.56 acre property on which we plan to construct a new library, parking, and areas of potential future expansion.

Construction plans workshop: The committee held a three-hour workshop on January 28 for the board to update the timeline and discuss moving forward to introduce the public to the building project.

The committee will arrange two community meetings at the Village Hall in March — one on a Saturday at 11 a.m. and one on a Thursday at 6:30 p.m.— to introduce our general plans and explain why we need a new library. Instead of FDA (Finance Development Agency) providing this initial introduction and fundraising session — we didn’t sign on fast enough — Paul Mays will talk for about 20 minutes and then allow public comments.

Finance (fiscal oversight): Millie, John, Linda, Ellen

Agent visits: The board would like board visits from both the Tompkins and the Homestead agents around May or June. Millie will extend invitations, after which we may alter our Investment policy to allow investments that may increase library income.

Budget: The committee will meet to review the 2023 draft budget and make recommendations to the board.

Fundraising: Mike (chair), Millie, Stephanie, Janet

This committee will continue to be responsible for our usual community outreach and annual mailings. Will it also be responsible for the bulk of fundraising for the new construction?

Personnel (contracts, job descriptions, performance reviews): Barbara (chair), Linda

Staff job descriptions: The board expects to review job descriptions once staff performance reviews are complete and job descriptions are revised.

The library director position requires a contract. The Personnel committee will set up a performance review and make a contract recommendation to the board.

Signed policies: Some library policies (e.g., anti-sexual harassment; whistle-blowing) require staff to sign them annually before they are filed within individual personnel files. Certain training sessions are also required to be attended annually.

Policy (bylaws, policies, rules): Ellen (chair), Millie, Stephanie, Janet

The committee will continue to write, review and revise policies required by the State Library and to recommend changes to those policies that the committee believes need clarification. The committee will recommend obtaining legal review when deemed necessary.

Old business

Plaque in memory of Lyle Chastaine: Board members agreed to donate personal funds toward a plaque for the library in honor of Lyle, who died on December 26, 2022. Trustees have reviewed and made wording and layout changes to the samples Millie obtained. Please get your donation to Millie.

New trustees: We'd like to increase the board size. A number of recommendations have been made. Especially helpful will be a needs list of specific skills from potential trustees.

Identifying specific assets: If we plan to ask a benefactor for major funding, we should consider a budget line item earmarking such funding. Line item income from sale of historical collection items — into general operations or set aside for funding our historical collection needs to be determined.

Funding sources: Linda is preparing a list of potential funding sources, including sources provided by 4CLS.

New business

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 6:58 p.m. (motion by Linda; second by Mike)

Upcoming meetings and events of interest

Tuesday, February 28, at 5:30 p.m.: Regular board meeting, including anti-sexual harassment training (N.B.: date change)

Monday, March 27, at 5:30 p.m.: Regular board meeting

Monday, April 24, at 5:30 p.m.: Regular board meeting

Respectfully submitted,

Ellen Thorn, Secretary