

Minutes of the Stamford Library Association Meeting, Monday, January 27, 2025

Present at Stamford Library: Trustees Barbara Balliet, Katy Graves, Susan Harwood, Pat Heath, Stephanie Rubin-Ruquet (via Zoom), Linda Stratigos, Mike Teitelbaum, Ellen Thorn, Janet Wenner; Director Erika Eklund; guest Chris Hauser; absent: Trustees Millie Faulkner, John Hubbard

Call to order: Barbara called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Election of officers: An election was held in October 2024 for SLA members to vote for library trustees; each nominee — Barbara, John, and Stephanie — was running for reelection and was reelected to serve until the beginning of the January 2028 board meeting. At this first meeting of 2025, the board voted to reelect the officers from among the trustees. (The board voted in October 2024, and again at this meeting — motion by Stephanie; second by Ellen — to suspend the requirement of limiting the president to three consecutive one-year terms during the construction project to build a new library facility.)

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

Presentation to board by Chris Hauser

Barbara had invited Christine Hauser of the Stamford Library Writers Circle to address the board regarding an offer to have the library be involved in selling the forthcoming anthology by local writers who attend meetings held at the library. Library trustees concluded that at this time we have so much demanding our attention that we do not want to take on additional services, even if we were to earn donations from the project. We're happy to provide space to display copies of the new book, but we don't want any bookkeeping or tracking involvement.

Hauser invited the library trustees to attend the book release event on May 4, 2025, at 2 p.m. at Liberty Rock Books in Hobart.

Minutes: The December 16, 2024, Regular board meeting minutes were approved by trustees attending that meeting (motion by Mike; second by Janet).

Financial reports

Financial reports were distributed in advance by Erika and by Millie.

P&L statements through December 2024 show total income as \$178,689.51, against an annual budget of \$165,918.00. Total expense year-to-date is shown as \$186,423.39, against an annual budget of \$185,929.30. New library income year-to-date is shown as \$681,348.00, against an annual budget of \$4,500,407.00. New library expense year-to-date is shown as \$16,962.52, against an annual budget of \$4,348,383.61.

Wayne Bank Checking account statement on December 31, 2024, had a balance of \$6,332.18. **Wayne Bank Investor** account statement on December 31, 2024, had a balance of \$65,345.81, which includes interest for 2024 year-to-date of \$151.12. **Wayne Bank Business checking (construction)** account statement on December 31, 2024, had a balance of \$2,931.76.

Millie reviewed the check sequence, deposits, bank statements, and investment income amounts through the end of 2024. Through December, income includes \$2,557.29 from Homestead; \$43,433.40 from Tompkins (both of which were moved to NBT); \$151.12 from MM; \$12,489.65 from NBT Wealth Management; and \$7,071.26 CD maturity interest, for a total for the year of \$65,702.72. NBT fees, which began in August, show a year-to-date total as \$7,798.17.

At the end of 2024, the NBT Wealth Management account was summarized as having a market value of \$2,976,894.02, with the portfolio having 50.24% in stocks/Real assets; 47.70% in fixed income; and 2.06% in cash equivalents.

The **Balance Sheet** as of December 31, 2024, lists total assets at \$3,946,900.53. Millie confirmed that the assets and balance sheet match.

Millie prepared and distributed a clear summary of the library's 2024 Certificates of Deposit. The "Juried CD" was rolled into another CD at Wayne Bank upon its August 2024 maturity, with income deposited into the Construction Account at Wayne Bank. Maturity date for the new CD is May 23, 2025. The "Robinson Broadhurst CD" (from funds from Robinson Broadhurst, a Dalpe Estate donation, and partial funds from Homestead) was invested into a CD at NBT Bank. At maturity in December 2024, the principal and some interest were rolled into another CD at NBT, with a maturity date of April 28, 2025. A "DLD Grant CD" was also deposited into NBT, maturing on April 17, 2025.

The report was approved (motion by Janet; second by Katy).

Library director's report

Erika distributed a report electronically in advance of the meeting. In addition to the standard ongoing tasks related to payroll, invoices, spreadsheet recordkeeping, filing, weeding, maintaining an up-to-date website, and 4CLS involvement, the following items were reported.

Operations

Erika reported on the new 4CLS email list for trustees, to share news, training opportunities, and advocacy alerts. Erika will send trustee contact information to 4CLS unless a trustee opts out.

The Annual Appeal in 2024 raised \$6,620 through 84 individual donations, up from \$5,761 through 83 donations in 2023. Additional donations of \$560 have come in since the close of 2024.

Staff raises approved by the trustees were put in place by the start of the year.

The DLD Construction Aid application needed to be updated, mostly due to turnover in the State Education Department. Before resubmission, Linda, Erika, Paul Mays, and 4CLS all got involved and reviewed the application.

The library is hosting a community service worker for 24 hours of work throughout January and the beginning of February. She seems very nice and is already hard at work dusting, cleaning, and straightening shelves.

Erika submitted a grant to Stewart's Holiday match for \$1,700, slightly up from previous awards.

Erika completed the Mallinckrodt paperwork for a \$1,000 donation received at the end of 2024.

The 2024 Annual Report to New York State has several sections new to the library this year: construction funding; tax levy change), but progress is being made and 4CLS offers workshops and individual assistance.

The library continues to scale back magazine subscriptions. (Most of the magazine usage has switched over to Libby and there are just a handful that still circulate physical copies.) By shrinking the periodical area down and weeding audiobooks, we hope to clear an area for board games, which we hope to be able to let patrons check out.

A proposed 2025 budget was distributed for board review and discussion — and possible adoption at the February meeting.

Programs and Outreach

Erika coordinated with a representative from Delaware County to provide cancer services information at the library on February 24.

All donations Megan Avery raises through sponsorship of a roller-skating event in Florida in February will be donated to the library; details are posted on the library's Facebook page.

Erika worked with Megan Avery of Hipstitch Academy on an application to Roxbury Arts Group for a decentralized arts grant to support textile classes and teach about overconsumption at the library. c

We are applying for a 4CLS minigrant for Drew Azzinaro's Guitar in the Mountains series, which we hope to offer in the fall. Funding is available up to \$2,000. Azzinaro is putting together a proposal with possible lesson plans.

We held an amazing Lunar New Year-themed Kamishibai storytelling program with Janet.

The Blind Date with a Book program has four categories of books this year (adult, YA, juvenile chapter, and picture) available to be checked out based on a brief "dating profile" description, read, rated, and returned for a chance at one of four prize baskets (2 kids, and 2 YA/adults).

Winners of the Blind Date with a Book program will be chosen at our Annual Book and Bake Sale on Saturday, February 22 (please consider donating some baked items). This book “sale” will be all donation-based with no set prices on books. We need to make space for more donations and other storage.

Committees

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

Joe Dianich and Bill Boyle provided bids on site-clearing and geothermal work, which were sent to Paul Mays for review and analysis of issues covered and his recommendations to proceed.

We need to bring the architect to the Village’s Planning Board meeting when we talk about a geothermal component; curb cuts; drainage and hook-ups; etc. If trustees attend a February Village Board meeting, they can request that the Planning Board convene a meeting with us in March.

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

Pat will coordinate the effort. Mike will coordinate timing with Matt at FDA. Barbara and Mike will design a new flyer, which will dovetail with site work to be done most likely in May. Banners (not signs) for the property — “Future home of Stamford Library” — and a Donate button for the website will probably follow in the Fall.

New business

Rent increase at Churchill Building: The Village sent a notice of a rent increase, to be imposed retroactively. The board is willing to pay a 3% increase effective March 1, 2025, but will reword the renewal to eliminate the retroactive aspect, alter the amount of time allowed to vacate, and other emendations before signing a new lease. The math for the rent increase will also be corrected in a new signed lease.

Reorganization issues

The following topics were confirmed or updated 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 SLA board meets monthly, 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 as preferred.

- Regular meetings for 2025 are scheduled for: January 27; February 24; March 24; April 28; May 26 (*change?*); June 23; July 28; August 25; September 22; October 27; November 24; December 22.
- Annual meeting is scheduled for October 27, at 5:30 p.m., with the Regular meeting to follow.

Membership: Association and Lifetime membership lists are updated regularly and an up-to-date list is maintained by the Library Director. Although we encourage membership in the Stamford Library Association, 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, Linda, Janet
- **Building** (planning, plant, and resources): Linda (chair), Barbara, John, Mike
- **Finance** (fiscal oversight): Millie (chair), Katy, John, Ellen
- **Fundraising:** Mike (chair), Millie, Pat, 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 circulation desk.

Banks/financial services:

- **Legal name:** All our legal documents and financial services should be using the library's legal name — Stamford Library Association — on all paperwork, to match our amended charter.
- **Credit card:** In addition to the library's Amazon credit card, we still have an Elan credit card through Wayne Bank that is associated with Linda's personal identification and which the board voted in June 2024 to retire. We arranged for NBT Bank's Sean Land to provide the library with a "community" credit card that does not require an individual's personal

identification; Library Director Erika will be the sole authorized signer of this vehicle.

- **Bank safe-deposit box:** Barbara, Linda, Millie, Ellen, and Erika have access to the safe-deposit box #318 at Wayne Bank.
- **Bank accounts at Wayne Bank:** SLA maintains three bank accounts — Checking, Investor, and Building Construction — as well as the 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.
- **Bank accounts at NBT Bank:** SLA began an investment account and a Building fund account on June 25, 2024, at the NBT branch in Grand Gorge under Russell Antonacci, account manager at NBT Wealth Management, with a goal of moderate risk/return. Income is distributed automatically each quarter. Millie shares reports with trustees quarterly. The library also has a corporate credit card at NBT, with Library Director Erika as the sole authorized signer of this vehicle. [The Tompkins Trust account, Homestead account and Homestead Building Fund account were all closed on September 30, 2024, with funds moved to NBT.]s
- **Evening Star Bookkeeping,** in Schoharie, has provided payroll, accounting, and tax services for SLA since May 2022 and is authorized to have online access for inquiries and to make online transfers within the library's accounts at Wayne Bank. Evening Star Bookkeeping's certificate of liability is on file with Wayne Bank and NBT Insurance Agency, LLC (which was Karl W Reynard Inc. until July 2024).
- **Investment policy review:** The board regularly reviews and updates the library's investment policy. The board may review the policy again after recommendations from our agents at NBT Wealth Management. meetings with Tompkins and Homestead agents. Wayne Bank and NBT Wealth Management need to receive the revised policy whenever it is updated.
- **Tax levy:** The property owners in the Stamford School District voted in May 2024 to approve an annual tax levy of \$70,000 (up from \$45,000 in in 2016) to benefit the library. The school district is required to collect the levy for SLA.

Insurance:

- The library's Workers' Comp insurance was switched to Hartford from NYS Insurance Fund for 2024. An invoice for Hartford insurance was submitted at the beginning of 2025 in the amount of \$644 (\$167 for each quarter of 2025).
- NBT Insurance Agency (formerly Karl W Reynard Inc.) carries SLA's Directors and Officers Liability insurance policy through Mount Vernon Fire Insurance Company. An invoice for was submitted at the beginning of 2025 in the amount of \$878 for a policy from 3/15/2025 to 3/15/2026.

- NBT Insurance Agency (formerly Karl W Reynard Inc.) carries SLA's Commercial Package insurance, which includes liability insurance covering the new SLA property. It is provided through the insurance carrier Utica National Insurance Group and was added to our existing general liability commercial package. The current policy period runs from 9/1/2024 to 9/1/2025).
- A copy of the Evening Star certificate of liability comes from the head of Evening Star and is kept on file at the library with a copy provided to NBT Insurance Agency (formerly Karl W Reynard Inc.) for its records. A new certificate for 2025 is in process.

Contracts:

- **4CLS Services:** SLA signed a renewal of our services agreement with Four County Library Services for 2025 services. It includes: Automation at a cost of \$7,260, a decrease in the amount for the circuit program (they dropped the audiobook option) from \$900 to \$600; an increase in the cost of Libby (Overdrive) as part of the multiyear, stepped increase plan from \$654 to \$763; with all else remaining the same.
- **Lease:** The Churchill Building, where the library currently rents space, is owned by the Village of Stamford, which has been charging SLA rent of \$1,353 per month. Village mayor Robert Schneider sent a letter on January 9, 2025, stating the monthly rent starting on March 1, 2025, will increase by \$313.25, to \$1,556.25. SLA's legal counsel, Ellen Bach, is reviewing the details.
- **Webmaster:** A letter of agreement, signed for 2024, is still in effect for hosting, backups, security, maintenance, and updates with CMS Internet Solutions of Bovina and filed physically and electronically in the library. His rate will stay the same at \$600 for daily site backups and routine maintenance with an additional \$144 for the domain maintenance. The website is Stamfordlibraryny.org.
- **Donor Perfect:** SLA signed a contract for this application for tracking donor information, which costs \$1,228 annually. (Katy donated \$1,200 toward the first year's fee, 2024.) A contract later in 2025 has not come through yet.
- **Library Director:** Per the library's bylaws, the library director must sign a contract annually. Erika will provide this agreement to the SLA president, subject to a performance review and satisfaction by the board as a whole; and the library director being satisfied with working conditions. Review, and approvals are likely to be completed during the first quarter of 2025.

Personnel issues

- **Mileage reimbursement:** The 2025 mileage reimbursement for business travel is \$0.70 per mile (up from \$0.67 per mile for 2024). Invoices must be

submitted that include date, mileage distance and calculation, and business purpose.

- ***Personnel policy signatures:*** Certain policies require trustee and staff signatures annually to be listed, signed, and filed within individual personnel files maintained by the library (e.g., anti-sexual harassment; whistle-blowing).
- ***Building keys:*** Erika has an up-to-date list of key holders who have access to the Churchill Building from the library.
- ***Library memberships:*** In 2024, the trustees voted to discontinue its annual membership in LTA (Library Trustees Association), which became part of NYLA.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 6:50 p.m. (motion by Barbara; second by Ellen).

Upcoming meetings

- Monday, February 24, 2025, at 5:30: Regular board meeting (NBT's Russell Antonacci expected to attend)
- Monday, March 24, 2025, at 5:30: Regular board meeting

Respectfully submitted,

Ellen Thorn, Secretary