

Minutes of the SCHSFLA Board of Trustees Meeting on September 16, 2024

The meeting was held at the Hallstead Branch Library

Call to Order at 4:01 PM by President Steve Spero.

Board Members in attendance: Steve Spero, Rob Vermette, Cathy Harter, Joann Reimel, Jim O’Pecko, Kathy Matis, Craig Benson, Dawn Augenti, William Squier, Lorraine Chidester, Angela Zick, Vickie Calby, Fred Cicilioni

Staff Present: Kris Ely, Administrator/Librarian, Rita Cooley, Lauren Canfield, Hallstead Branch Librarian

Excused Absent: Eileen Baessler

Steve welcomed guests: 1 Guest- Doug Sivers

Approval of Minutes: All in Favor-All 1. Vickie Calby

Opposed- None 2. Kathy Matis

Approval of written reports: All in favor-All 1. Rob Vermette

Opposed- None 2. Jim O’Pecko

Lauren Canfield- HGB Branch manager:

Steve introduced Lauren as our newly transferred Branch Manager of the Hallstead Great Bend Library. Lauren, who formerly was the branch manager at the Forest City Library gave an intro of herself and explained that this is her “home” library as she grew up here and attended this library as a child. She spoke of things happening at the HGB Library

- Bonnie Yuscavage of the Historical Society will do a presentation of the history of Hallstead on 10.15.2024 at 11AM. All are invited to attend.
- Lauren thanked Val Burdick of the HGB branch for stepping in to work extra hours during the transition of changing managers at this branch.
- There will be a Halloween Story time and a fund raiser during which they will be giving Squish mallows away to the children.
- Lauren has also updated the books and materials listed as “in transit.” This had not been done for quite some time.
- Started a Treasure chest for the children that are patrons. As they bring in their report cards they will be rewarded for getting good grades.
- Relabeling some of the book shelves for ease in finding certain categories.
- Weeding is happening through-out the library.
- Faith Mt. Academy students will resume their visits later in the year.
- Issues: Would like new blinds for the windows
- Wants a small shelf to store the DVD’s
- Eventually would like to replace the current phones with cordless ones
- She also mentioned an issue with the Fax machine as it is ringing busy whenever they try to send a fax. This is happening with all area codes they are trying to reach.

- Lauren also asked Kris Ely if there is a plan for an Amnesty Week in September this year. Kris indicated that she does hope to advertise this as it helps not only to get the books back into circulation, but also brings the patrons back in again.
- Board member Cathy Harter had attended the Strategic Planning group meeting at this branch and asked if any decision had been made in response to a patron's question regarding safety of the HGB employee's main desk being in such close proximity to the main entrance. A discussion was held regarding the fact this is the situation in all of the branches as well as the main library and the Historical Society.

Discussion of Finances: Rob Vermette

See Attachment A

Note: We need to make sure we get the 945 filled out for the lottery as soon as possible

T&S tax will prepare that.

Steve asked for a motion for the Approval to transfer \$83,000.00 from the Blueberry fundraiser to the library operating account. All in Favor: Yes

1. Rob Vermette

All oppose: None

2. Craig Benson

Rob said the two additional Board members who will now be able to sign checks, Lorraine Chidester & Vickie Calby, are completing the paperwork required by the banks for this process.

He said that we have opened a checking account at Visions. All restricted money will be deposited here for the main library in Montrose and all branches i.e, Forest City, Hallstead, Susquehanna.

We will have a short fall of income for November/December. To cover this we will take funds from our two endowments (Lott & Post). Monies will not be taken from the McKeage account.

Rob & Kris are getting the updated budget together for the balance of the year.

We had unexpected expenses this year that were not figured into the budget:

- Past Lottery Taxes: Approx. \$ 15,000.00. (\$4000 to \$5,000 of this was penalties.) All of these monies have been paid. We now will wait to see if we can recover some of the monies paid out in penalties.
- Accumulation of Pratt Library taxes from many previous years: \$31,000.00 (Note: This amount would have almost covered 1 month payroll)

We will need to discuss raises versus bonuses for next year. Last year we had a 4% raise on average for the employees.

Ideas to curb spending and save money:

Finance Committee spokesperson Dawn Augenti suggested that we need to start to reign in our expenses. Her suggestions include:

- No New Hires

- Cut down hours that the libraries are open

The Finance committee will meet and make suggestions to the personnel committee regarding these matters.

Lorraine Chidester stated that the new Data Base will cost \$8500, and we need to find these funds from somewhere.

Steve explained that last year we took a total of \$135,000 from the 3 endowments. This year to date we have taken \$59,000.

Kathy Matis suggested that instead of cutting hours when the libraries are open, could we use volunteers to help out.

- Look for volunteers to work behind the desk or somewhere else to help reduce hours of employees.
- Fred Cicilioni volunteered to assist at Forest City branch from 9-1 one day/month. If this test works out, it could alleviate the need to hire an additional person at the Forest City Branch. Fred would be the second person on duty at the branch during those hours. He will give a report.

Other ideas: Need to get the "Friends of the Library" restarted.

Each branch could have its own Friends group.

The Board Representative from each branch should help in getting this started. The representatives of the different branches are as follows: Forest City: Jim O'Pecko; Hallstead/Great Bend: Angie Zick; Susquehanna: Kathy Matis

Organize an Author Event: Lorraine will look into this.

Upcoming fundraisers: Fall Pottery Sale, Christmas in December, and possibly Bingo.

Next finance meeting will be October 17, 2024 at 4PM. All Board members are invited to attend. There will be an invited guest: Christine Marrazzo, a Financial Advisor from Janney Montgomery Scott LLC.

Strategic Planning: Rob Vermette

Rob explained that the community meetings at all branches have now been completed. The Montrose meeting had four library users in attendance. Now, this information will be compiled and put into a 5 year plan. Action plans will be made and the committee will present a five year forecast.

Blueberry Festival: Steve Spero

Rita Cooley spent considerable time synchronizing her Excel spreadsheet, which contains a lot of non-financial details with our QuickBooks file. Currently our net income shows as \$93,000. Steve Spero indicated there should be only minor changes by year end.

Property Notes: Steve Spero

August 16/17 our main library in Montrose was struck by lightning. This severely affected our HVAC system. Montrose has 3 a three phase line. The system sustained considerable damage to the one

phase. Penelec took a few days to repair, but the chiller wasn't working correctly. Petcovsky was also called in regarding repair. They said it was not their problem to repair. Once the invoice arrives for these repairs, we will need to turn this into the insurance. Board member Dawn Augenti recommended notifying the insurance agent, Chris Caterson, now about this upcoming claim.

Historical Society Bid on stairs: One bid has been received. A second bid is expected next week. It is hoped that this project can be completed prior to the start of winter. We may vote via email on accepting one of the bids so the process can be expedited.

Vinny Quattrocchi, a local retired contractor with many years of experience working with tile and construction, has agreed to help with our Building and Grounds Committee.

By Laws/ Policy: Jim O'Pecko

The committee has met and started determining what changes may need to be made to the Bylaws.

Article 1- Name (remains the same)

Article 2- Mission and Purpose (remains the same)

Article 3- Voting Membership – need to add the date for start and finish of the Annual Support Drive. Kris Ely indicated that the letters re the Support Drive are mailed out during the first week of October. The dates will be as follows:

Start date of Support Drive: Oct. 1 End Date: the following Sept. 30. The payment will cover the membership for the upcoming calendar year, January thru December.

Article 4- Trustees. Jim announced that this Bylaw will be reviewed at the next meeting of the Policy and Bylaws Committee. There is a new member on this committee, Chris Hall. Chris is a long-time employee of the library and Kris Ely has asked her to join the committee. The committee welcomed Chris Hall and feels that she will have insight into how changes in the bylaws and policies may affect the daily workings of the Association.

This committee meets on the first Thursday of each month at 8:30 am at the Montrose branch. The next meeting is on October 3rd, 2024.

Other Issues:

Lorraine Chidester of the Finance committee indicated that the County Auditors want to see more internal controls of the financial workings of the Association. This is in the event of employees being on vacation or out with illness, etc. We need to create a policy folder with written policies for such things as finance, Blueberry Festival, payroll, Lottery Tickets, and the annual Pottery Sale.

Lorraine has created a credit card policy. This and the subsequent policies will be finalized by the Finance committee and then written up by the Bylaws/Policy Committee. These changes will then be presented to the Board for a vote prior to their implementation.

William Squire has an issue with the fact that users of the library need to pay into the Support Drive in order to become a member of the Association and have the ability to vote at the Annual meeting in November of each year. Will feels that because residents of Susquehanna County are already paying taxes, a percentage of which goes to the Association, residents should automatically be able to vote at

the Annual Meeting. President Spero explained that any changes in this policy would require a change to be made to the Bylaws. It is not something that can be changed without a vote.

Discussion was held among the members regarding the need to pay an annual fee to vote at the Annual Meeting. Some pointed out that tax dollars cover the many uses of the library such as taking out books, books by mail, audio books, Story hour, use of the computers, internet, etc.

President Spero explained that we would need a motion for this matter to go to Bylaws and Policy Committee. Recommendations could then be brought to the full board for a vote. This will be discussed at the next Bylaws Committee Meeting.

Steve asked Dawn Augenti to send him a copy of the Enabling Law that was originally enacted by the County Commissioners that established the "Library" tax for Susquehanna County residents. Dawn will do this.

Steve also indicated that if Lorraine Chidester of the Finance Committee will send him a copy of the proposed new credit card policy he can review it and forward it to the Board.

Kathy Matis asked all available Board Members to attend the Annual Library Lottery which is Saturday September 21st from 12:00-4:00 PM at the Green Gables Pavilion in New Milford, PA.

This year's Lottery was advertised as Stacks of Cash in the hopes of generating more interest by emphasizing that it is to help raise funds for the library. The logo was presented in advertising as stacks of books.

Several Board Members indicated they would attend the lottery and can help.

Motion was made to end regular Board meeting and go into Executive session at 5:25 PM.

Motion to adjourn: Time 5:25.

Motion was made by Kathy Matis and seconded by Vickie Calby.

All in favor: Yes

Opposed: None

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joann Reimel". The signature is written in dark ink on a light background.

Joann Reimel, Recording Secretary

Attachment A

FINANCE COMMITTEE NOTES- SEPTEMBER 2024

The finance committee met on September 12. All members were in attendance plus Kris Ely and Steve Spero.

Highlights from August financial statements: total YTD income \$837,405; total YTD expenses \$789,751; net YTD income \$47,654; total assets as of 8/31/24 \$1,515,748; total endowments as of 8/31/24 \$1,197,896.

The finance committee reviewed the January-August YTD financial statements. There are a number of modifications needed to better organize the income and expense categories, including treatment of endowment income. We are partially done incorporating the annual budget into the financial statements for ongoing comparisons (thanks, Lorraine).

The county auditors are continuing to review our books per the Commissioners. We will continue to do monthly internal reviews as well. A question about credit card users has resurfaced, with a recent monthly Elan statement showing previous cardholders as "active". Letters have been sent to Elan to remove these old accounts from the system, thanks to Dawn.

Other items discussed:

- 1) The non-payment of lottery tax withholdings is an ongoing issue. We have submitted a request for abatement of penalties and interest for 2022 to the IRS. Once that has been handled and any relief from the IRS has been received, any remaining penalties/Interest that we have paid and not been reimbursed for will be handled between our lawyer and Peretore.
- 2) The Finance Committee approved a motion to move \$83,000 from the Blueberry Festival checking account into the Peoples operating account.
- 3) Additional check signers, Vicky Calby and Lorraine Chidester, have been approved and getting all of the bank approval cards is in progress.
- 4) A new checking account has been opened at Visions FCU to handle all of the branch restricted funds, except for the Historical Society, which already has its own account.

Looking at year-end finances, it appears that there will be a shortfall based on expected income/expenses for the last four months of the year. An updated forecast will be prepared by Kris. Rob Vermette, Treasurer