

Susquehanna County Historical Society & Free Library Association Board Meeting

The mission of the Susquehanna County Historical Society and Free Library Association is to support the appreciation and preservation of local history, and to nourish the joy of reading, the discovery of ideas, and the power of information.

April 28, 2025

Call to Order at 6:00 pm.

Will Squier, Board President

Roll Call

Do we have a quorum? There was a quorum with nine Board members present.

Aaron Bioyce was unable to attend.

Welcome

Will Squier, Board President

Public Comment

15 minutes maximum will be allowed for public comment.

The public comment will follow at the end of the minutes.

Approval of Minutes

Any discussions? No

Motion to accept the minutes of March 24, 2025, Board meeting.

Motion_ Lorraine Chidester Second Steve Hinds

Approve: yes: 9 no: 0 Abstain: _____ Table _____

Board Reports

Any discussions?

Motion to accept March, 2025 Board reports.

Motion Lorraine Chidester Second Eric Powers Approve: yes: 9 no:
0 Abstain: _____ Table: _____

Branch Report

Laura Nichols, Susquehanna Branch Librarian

Laura talked about her programs at the Susquehanna Branch Library. Her Spring Baby and Toddler Story Time Program has usually between 30-36 3-year-olds and under in attendance. She said that this is a great time for moms to meet and interact as well as a wonderful family time where many children stay and play afterward. She also has a sunshine program in which a smaller group of little ones and their parents go into the community and meet at the S&F community room with the senior residents and have story time, bubbles and other activities. This has proven to be a wonderful program for the community.

Laura further mentioned the donations that the library has received. There have been several large memorials with one being from the North Jackson Church community. They have been able to purchase new shelves for the library.

She discussed a plant sale fundraiser.

She has also received an anonymous generous donation that will be used to purchase elephant story books for trunk or treat giving.

Treasurer's Report

Review Treasurer's Report: Steve Hinds will discuss highlights of the meeting.

Steve Hinds reported that the income to the library has increased \$7,032.00. We have taken less from the endowments. Expenses are down \$47,000.00. He further discussed the endowments and the draw from the endowments exceeding the recommended draw of the financial advisors of 3% for 3 out of the last 4 years. In those three years the withdrawals were 3 times greater than the 3%. He further stated that we cannot continue to take exceedingly large draws from the endowments and ignore the underlying problem of expenses exceeding income. The 2025 expenses are down mainly to the employment reduction action taken by the Board in December of 2025. The volunteer action of Lorraine Chidester as chief executive officer overseeing the finances and timely filing of necessary reports and paperwork to alleviate unnecessary penalties and interest payments has contributed largely to a better financial outlook for the organization. This action is not fair to Lorraine as an unpaid volunteer. At this point fiscal responsibility is the primary goal of the Finance Committee and changes need to be made.

Any discussions?

Motion to accept the Treasurer's Report.

Motion Dawn Augenti Second Craig Benson

Approve: yes 9 no 0 Abstain _____ Table _____

Fundraising

We are registered to participate with NEPA Gives. The region's largest 24-hour giving event is happening on June 5-6. Last year local nonprofits received over \$60,000.00. There will be a social media blast for giving with competitions such as the furthest away contribution.

A grant from Visions Federal Credit Union will be received for summer reading in the amount of \$1,200.00 dollars.

After attending the workshop for the United Way funding, Lorraine has completed the paperwork to receive \$7,000.00.

She has also completed the paperwork for a Dollar General grant of \$3,000.00.

Will Squier talked about the cross-country race at the Blueberry Festival in which local schools can compete for cash prizes. The first prize being \$500.00

Score keepers will be needed to help with the race if anyone is interested, please contact Will.

Blueberry Festival: August 1st & 2nd, always looking for volunteers

Old Business

After accepting the bid for the front-stairs project at the last meeting the work is expected to start the last two weeks in May. Bonnie has been researching appropriate railings for the stairs, keeping with the period of the building. She has found several choices which are being discussed.

New Business

Fred Cicilioni Motioned to advertise for a head librarian position with the position being a 20 hour a week position until the end of 2025 with the option to renew.

First____Lorraine_____ Second ____Craig_____

Discussion: Eric Powers suggested the position be advertised on the library website and with the Scranton District.

The Mitchell Estate: Dawn Augenti who has been working with our Connecticut attorney and Marissa McAndrew, our local legal counsel, to finish the estate of David W, Mitchell explained the responsibility of the Board, who were court appointed as Administrator c.t.a. to finish the last remaining asset of the Mitchell Estate. Much of the estate had been previously administered, leaving a house in Connecticut which was under a landcontract in which Mr. Mitchell received some of the payments before he passed. The remaining payments were being administered by the Board. The Russos had made their last payment and were asking for their deed of completion. Dawn and Lorraine attended by zoom the meetings with the Connecticut attorney and the Surrogate Court Judge and have completed the necessary requested paperwork for the court approved transfer. At this time the Board is required to produce a Resolution appointing a Board representative to effectuate any necessary paperwork to complete the closing on the house.

Attached please find the completed Resolution appointing Will Squire as Board representative.

Eileen Bassler discussed the upcoming soup and bake sale that is held on election day in the library lobby. She asked for donations of soup and baked goods for the sale which is a nice fundraiser twice a year at the Library for the Bridgewater Township voters and anyone visiting. She further asked for support of your library by fundraising and what each person can do to help.

Lorraine also discussed an addition to the election day fundraiser. The Library will also have hot dogs available to purchase that day.

Eric Powers discussed raising funds by the book buy-back option in which some books can be sold online. He will be doing further research on this project.

Craig Benson discussed the grants that are being applied for at the museum and the work being done by the Historical Committee and Curator who have been actively seeking any available grant applications.

Next Meeting: May 19, 2025, 6:00pm, Hallstead- Great Bend Branch Library

Motion to Adjourn:

First : Angie Zick Second : Lorraine Chidester

Meeting Adjourned at 6:54 PM

SPEAKERS: 16 minutes 30 seconds

Kris Ely: Reprimanded the Board for their illegal patron policy and giving the staff a smoke screen piece of paper and no guidance on the administration of the policy. They were told to check Id. and cannot get any idea from the Id. She further discussed a 17 year old LGBTQ+ having no rights and that they need more voices on the Board. She demanded to know what happened to the Board committee's meeting and why the only fundraising is being left to Steve Spero.

Elain Jones: She stated she had people come in the library and tell her people are banning books and she is concerned that people think this.

Will stated we are not banning books. This has come from outside individuals. Many people in this community are underrepresented.

Dr. Ken Lattimore: Stated there may be a review of the acquisition of books.

Will made the statement we will get any book that anyone requests

Kris Ely: Stated that is what a librarian is for.

Carol Carpenter: Talked about the good things happening at her home library in Susquehanna. She described the story walk and the activities that are happening at the library.

Sharon Norville Asked about making changes to the by-laws and will the vote be brought to all members present? Will the Board advertise prior to the meeting?

Jennsy Castrogiovanni : Drove a long way and is concerned about the direction of the library. She further referenced banning books. She further suggested seeking counsel from the present librarians and listening to them.

Will agreed that there is a lot of good knowledge there.

Speaker did not identify themselves: The Board needs transparency and people will need to be able to ask questions for information to make decisions in voting.

Will said there will be a time to ask questions.

Speaker Horvath: Will there be another Board Member?

Will explained the change in Board member numbers when the Board lost numbers in the previous administration by attrition as well as a number of members resigning at the December Board meeting. The Board can have between 9 and 16 members. He hopes

people will be willing to submit applications in light of the audience behavior at recent Board meetings.

At the end of the meeting after the adjournment Gerald Ely strongly expressed his opinion about changing the board member number back to 16.