**Library Director’s Report**

**March 2025**

**Trustee Election and Budget Vote Calendar [Action Item – see attached]**

Having researched when we can legally hold our annual budget vote, and having looked into when other local votes are scheduled, Kim has put together a calendar with a potential voting date of Thursday, June 26th. The budget will be made available to the public in May, with a public hearing on Tuesday, June 10th at 6 pm.

Given that we are planning to hold the bond vote on the same date, we will have to hold separate hearings to present the project to the public and answer questions. The architect will be at these presentations, and Noah will assist with tax information for the public (he will not be able to attend however). While we don’t yet have final cost estimates or drawings from the architect, we should probably look at some tentative dates to hold the public presentations, so I can check with Scott Bova on his availability.

Bond Schoeneck King will be working with us on the referendum language, as well as ensuring all of our notices and ballots are legally compliant. I had a conference call with a couple of the attorneys we worked with before, as well as Noah, to discuss the question of bonding through the CRC. Matt Wells, one of the attorneys, was not comfortable with the fact that Harris Beach was basing their determination that we could bond through the CRC on our 501c3 designation. He recalled Jerry Nichols saying that those designations were issued to school district public libraries in NYS by the IRS in error in the 1970s, because the IRS didn’t understand the different charter types in NY. They will be meeting with the Harris Beach attorneys who work with the local CRC to see if they would be willing to issue tax exempt government bonds instead. Matt seemed to think they might not be as amenable to that option but will let us know after they talk.

Trustee Ann Tenglund’s term expires on June 30, 2025. She does not plan to run again. Mike Morgan indicated he would be very interested in running for the open seat. As long as the attached calendar is approved, nominating petitions will be available beginning April 28th.

**February Gifts/Grants/Donations [Action Item]**

Per our Policy on Acceptance of Gifts, Grants and Bequests to the Library, the Board must formally accept the following: in February, we received $14.00 in anonymous donations; a $100 memorial donation for Carole O’Malley; $180.00 in memorial donations for the parents of Kathy O’Malley.

**Friends of the Library**

The Friends’ annual beer tasting fundraiser, FeBREWary, was held on Friday, Feb. 28th. It was very successful, with around 120 people attending. That is the largest number for FeBREWary yet. The event grossed $4,264, between ticket sales, the basket raffle, and the 50/50 raffle! I have not seen the total with expenses taken out, but these events typically cost very little, as most of the food, beverages, and baskets are donated. All of the proceeds from this event will go to the library to help pay for presenters, programming supplies, circulating materials, furniture, technology, and many other needed items.

At their March board meeting, the Friends approved giving the library up to $6,000 to purchase the remaining 32 chairs that were not covered by our request to CCLS for legislative Bullet Aid (CCLS approved $3,163 for 10 chairs). The chairs being replaced by the Friends include 14 chairs for the conference room, 14 for the public computers, and 4 for the staff room. The existing chairs are all old and some are in disrepair. Kim made sure to research sturdy chairs for heavy use, so they should last for a long while. The Friends also approved up to $200 for flowers and soil for the outdoor planters, which Lanna has agreed to select and plant again this year. We are so grateful for the Friends’ generosity.

The date for the annual Peg Bothner Bookmark Awards Ceremonies will be Saturday, April 5th. One ceremony will be held at 11 am and one at 1 pm. The bookmarks will be on display in the Gallery throughout the month of April. This is a very popular annual event, with hundreds of local school children participating. The ceremonies usually pack the house, with approximately 125 people attending each one.

**News from the Library**

On February 20th, I attended the Cattaraugus County Nonprofit Hub’s meeting on federal and state grant opportunities, which was held at the Ischua Valley Country Club in Franklinville. The meeting covered federal and state grant opportunities available to nonprofits and where to find them; best practices for applying; a demonstration of federal and state resources available to nonprofits. Speakers included Annie Kurowski of McAllister Quinn, a renowned national grant writing and advocacy firm, and Noah Goodling of the WNY Nonprofit Support Group, an agency dedicated to growing the capacity of nonprofits in WNY. There was a lot of good discussion about eligibility for grants, not being afraid to apply for the big ones, and how to navigate the executive orders around language related to DEI.

On February 28th, Heather and I attended another Stephanie Cole Adams webinar, this one entitled Innovations in Employee Benefits. Much of what was covered were benefits the library already offers, including an EAP program, competitive compensation and COLAs, paid time off (this is offered to full time staff), and Paid Family Leave. Other suggestions were not necessarily feasible, such as onsite child care or elder care, and partnerships with local businesses to offer staff discounts. Some to consider would be bringing back our annual staff awards party, and to offer “structured fun” and/or “structured quiet” days; these would allow staff to work with their supervisor to get a day now and then to do only the work they enjoy most, or to have a day where all of their work is non-interactive. I don’t know if this would really be workable for the library, but sometimes it’s good to find new ways to boost morale that don’t cost anything.