

MEETING MINUTES
Olean Public Library Board of Trustees
September 17, 2025
5:30 P.M. – Conference Room

The mission of the Olean Public Library is to assist all people with their educational, informational and recreational needs.

Call to Order at 5:30 P.M. by Board President Lanna Waterman. In attendance were trustees J. Mahar, R. McElfresh, P. Shumway, L. Waterman, L. Whitford, M. Morgan and G. Copella. From the Library: F. Steffen, H. Angell, and Director La Voie.

1. Waive the reading of the minutes of the previous meetings and approve as mailed.
2. Voice of the Public/Correspondence: None
3. Approval of Warrant Sheets for August 21-September 17:
#968 Operating Fund: \$101,765.99

Discussion:

- Higher than normal spending in the library supply category due to summer reading programs and prizes.
- Ubeo Business invoice higher during 3rd quarter than prior year by approximately \$400 due to high sign ups in summer reading programs.
- Utica insurance policies up 10% for property and 14% for liability over prior year.
- ACH payment made on Bank of America while waiting for the check to be received and applied to open up available credit for purchases.
- ACH payment made on Worker's Compensation & Disability through NYSIF. August invoice was never received. This ensured that the payment would be received before any policies were canceled.
- Trustees raised the question of why regularly scheduled bills are not paid by ACH. Doing this going forward will save on postage, envelopes, and checks while also ensuring payments are received and applied by the vendors timely.

4. Review of Financial Statements

Discussion:

- Electric is trending 40.55% higher than last year with gas about 4.24% higher than last year.
- Budget adjustments will be needed for appropriation lines 402 (insurance) & 505 (publicity & printing)
- Book spend including invoices received in September for August orders is \$42,577.08, this is \$6,700 underspent when using monthly average spend of the total annual budget.

MOTION (R. McElfresh, P. Shumway): To approve agenda items 1, 3, and 4. The motion passed unanimously.

5. Director's Report

Construction Aid

The Construction Aid application for the Children's Department expansion and light-use elevator lift has been submitted to CCLS. We had been tentatively approved for a 76.16 percent match of \$509,651 towards the total project cost of \$669,145. Since the submission, CCLS informed us that additional aid will be available due to another member

library's project coming in lower than expected, meaning we will receive \$558,996 instead (83.54 percent)! We were also notified that the 2024 Construction Aid Teen Room project will be funded at 90 percent of the total (\$290,972).

Because both of these projects are components of the bonded capital project, we will deduct these awards from the total approved by the public unless we become aware of cost increases or additional needed project elements prior to officially borrowing. DASNY oversees both the bond and the Construction Aid projects, so they will want to see that the Construction Aid projects are clearly separated from the bonded project. Scott Bova said that he might want to get the Construction Aid projects completed prior to starting the rest of the work to eliminate billing complications.

As a reminder, the HVAC unit replacement project is scheduled to occur on October 1st, possibly continuing into the following day. As a crane will be lifting the old units off the building and putting the new units on, the building will be closed for safety reasons. Curt Wallace is clerking the project and noted that the weather could potentially postpone the work (i.e. high winds or heavy rain). We'll monitor the weather closer to the dates to determine if work should proceed or if postponing it is advisable.

Personnel Update

Kim and I interviewed several applicants for the vacant part-time library assistant position. We offered it to a highly qualified candidate, Michele Pfeffer, who will start in late September or early October. She is a retired social worker with many years of experience working at the DSS in Erie County. Once she provides an official starting date, I'll ask the Board to officially approve her appointment.

Annual NYS Property Tax Cap Filing

On September 15th, I filed our annual tax cap form with the NYS Comptroller's Office. With PILOTs and a levy growth factor of 1.02, our total allowable tax levy limit for 2026 was \$1,155,719 (up from \$1,124,663 in 2025). However, because the Board voted to override the tax cap and ask for a larger increase, we exceeded the allowable levy by \$294,327.

Staff Development Day

Library staff wish to extend their sincere appreciation to the Board for providing such a nice lunch at our annual staff development day. And thank you also to those of you who were able to join us for lunch. It's a nice show of support to the staff.

It was a great day all the way around. We held our monthly staff meeting. The trainer from EAP who covered the mandatory NYS sexual harassment prevention training and the Narcan training drove in from Utica to do it in person. Kim did her annual emergency preparedness and fire drill training which helps staff remember what to do in any kind of emergency (medical, fire, active shooter, etc.). This year we had a new training at the request of service desk staff – how to deal with conflict and difficult patrons at the public desks. Kim and Sheryl conducted the training and staff were extremely engaged and asked a lot of questions. It was very helpful and the staff appreciate knowing their concerns are addressed by management. Chad ran a fun team-building exercise, letting staff play with some of the STEAM technologies used in our afterschool programs, and giving staff materials to make a fall-themed craft. Staff oftentimes wish to participate in our crafting programs, but due to attendance limits, cannot take advantage of them (we always make sure to prioritize patron attendance over staff participation), so this was a nice opportunity for staff to do a craft and enjoy some down time together. The day ended with department meetings. I think everyone felt it was a very informative day and are glad we have the opportunity to do this annually.

Annual NYS Sexual Harassment Prevention Training

Every year NYS requires employers to offer mandatory sexual harassment prevention training to all employees, board members and volunteers. If any trustees are not receiving it as a part of their job, online options are available. When you have completed your annual training, no matter where you do it, please submit an attestation form with proof of training to me by October 15, 2025. If you need a form, Heather or I can provide one to you.

CCLS Annual Meeting

The CCLS Annual Meeting will take place on Wednesday, October 8th from 3PM-@ 8PM, at the Holiday Valley Lodge in Ellicottville. The first part of the meeting, 3-5 PM, will include workshops for staff and trustees. The evening portion of the meeting will run from 5:30-@ 8PM, consisting of a cash bar, the annual business meeting, dinner, and the keynote address, which will be given by New York's State Librarian Lauren Moore. Attorney Stephanie "Cole" Adams

will run an afternoon workshop entitled Budget as Governance, in which she will review 10 essential skills for public library boards. If any trustees wish to attend, please let me know as soon as possible. I must rsvp by September 26th.

Friends of the Library

Read Between the Wines was a huge success this year! Thank you to all of the trustees who attended – that leaves such a good impression with the Friends and the public. The event netted over \$5,000. It was the most well attended event yet, with 150 tickets sold. I received many positive comments from attendees throughout the evening, saying they just love coming to this event every year. The Friends do such a great job, featuring lots of local wines and plenty of great food. The live music adds a nice touch.

At their September board meeting, the Friends donated their annual Book Endowment check to the Library. While we budget \$7,000 for this annually, they have always given a larger amount. This year’s check is for \$12,000.

News from the Library

CCLS Assistant Director LJ Martin shared some quotes from the CCLS patron survey: “I love the OPL,” “OPL has been my information haven since I moved to Olean 50 years ago,” and “Olean library staff has created a welcoming and professional environment. Love that place!”

August Gifts/Grants/Donations [Action Item]

MOTION (G. Copella, L. Whitford): To accept, with gratitude, the following gifts, grants, and donations received in August 2025. The motion passed unanimously, with:

- \$5,000 from the F.T. & Anna C. Manley Memorial Fund for the purchase of a new microfilm reader/printer
- \$640 memorial for Paige Drake
- \$60 memorial for Irma Wheeler
- \$6.70 in anonymous donations

6. Committee Reports

CCLS Board meeting (McElfresh)

None

7. Old Business

Capital project – updates

- Consultant L. Sorokes updates
 - Property transfer update

MOTION (G. Copella, R. McElfresh): To enter executive session at 5:41 pm to discuss library space needs. The motion passed unanimously.

MOTION (L. Whitford, J. Mahar): To leave executive session at 6:09pm. The motion passed unanimously.

Public libraries and fundraising – legal questions

Needing to get further clarification on this matter. Prior legal and consultation have opposite opinions on this matter. Questionable in regards to using public funds to solicit for donations. Stephanie “Cole” Adams is expected to give advice on this topic at the CCLS meeting.

Construction Management RFP

The RFP from the attorney could go out at any time as a public notice. Packets put together by the library will be mailed to well-known and suggested project managers. The attorney suggested giving interested parties

three to four weeks to respond with a proposal. The library is not required to take lowest bid. The RFP ad should be placed in the Buffalo & Rochester paper for one day. If a public notice board or municipality site exists the RFP should also be posted there. Increased exposure will ensure the library can secure the best possible candidate(s).

Proposed Timeline for RFP bids/advertisement

9/29 Publication of notice

10/24 Site visit by and questions must be received by

11/03 Submission of proposals by 2:00pm

11/19 Selection date

Environmental study (building) – update

The Library Director is working to obtain a second quote.

Scott, architect, does have the completed survey and will review with the trustees once he returns from vacation. The SEQR resolution should be sent to the school district and City of Olean as an FYI.

Question to Ask the Lawyer (decision making authority of board committees)

Due to the Open Meetings Law, committee meetings should be publicly posted, should time allow. Establishment of a smaller committee is permissible to make emergency decisions in relation to the building project that are needed in between regular meetings but it is advised that a dollar threshold be set as a percentage of contingency budget. The threshold, committee, and resolution will be set at a later date.

8. New Business

(none)

Other Discussion

The “big beautiful bill” made changes to personal contributions made by individuals to charities that go into effect in 2026. Even if you don’t itemize, take the standard deduction, you can take advantage of this opportunity.

MOTION TO ADJOURN (L. Whitford, P. Shumway): Meeting adjourned at 7:19P.M. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Whitford, Secretary