

MEETING MINUTES
Olean Public Library Board of Trustees
October 15, 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, K. Mahar, and Director LaVoie.

1. Waive the reading of the minutes of the previous meetings and approve as mailed.
2. Voice of the Public/Correspondence: None
 - Letter received from the First Presbyterian Church thanking the Olean Public Library for the chairs donated from the conference room.
 - Letter received from Interfaith Caregivers/the Olean Blind Association thanking the Olean Public Library for the tour given by outreach librarian Sheryl Soborowski. They noted that they look forward to utilizing our resources.
3. Approval of Warrant Sheets for September 17-October 15:
 - #969 Operating Fund: \$105,578.28
 - #341 Capital Fund: \$19,678.52

Discussion:

- Some larger payments on this warrant included:
 - The annual payment to WT Cox for \$8,324.59. This is for the majority of the periodicals that the library subscribes to.
 - The 4th quarter preventative maintenance payment to Mazza for \$3,960.
 - Annual Cassie & SPOT agreement paid to Librarica for \$912.76.
- The Baker & Taylor invoice is significantly lower. Baker & Taylor is planning to shut down all operations by early 2026. We will be purchasing our books through Brodart until a final vendor decision is made.
- The Capital warrant is higher than normal due to the capital project survey, laser scanning, estimating, and legal services for March & April of 2025.

4. Review of Financial Statements

Discussion:

- Budget line adjustments for both 2025 and 2026 will be presented at the November board meeting.
- Trustee R. McElfresh asked if a transfer into the Capital bank account would be needed given the warrant total and balance according to the balance sheet. The business office manager makes bank transfers following the board meeting after warrant approval unless one is needed sooner.
- Trustee R. McElfresh asked if a budget adjustment will be needed for professional staff, appropriation line 100. There are three payrolls of expense in September due to the 10/3/2025 payroll being deducted from the bank account on 9/30/2025. There are 26 payrolls budgeted for 2025. The Professional staff line, is projected to come in under budget by \$741 due to the treasurer's actual hours coming in less than budgeted. No budget adjustments are anticipated for the professional staff line.

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

5. Director's Report

NYS Construction Aid Projects - Updates

The HVAC replacements were completed on October 1st as planned. Since the installations, there have been quite a few problems with building temperatures, mainly with the units not running, or blowing cold air. On Oct. 13th, Mazza determined that a setting was incorrect and the units had been mistakenly set to run AC. There is also a problem with one of the boilers that is currently being addressed. As of Oct.14th, the HVAC units seem to be working well, and the building temperature is comfortable.

Once the work is complete, and invoice for the second half of the project total will be received and paid. As a reminder, the library was awarded \$253,469 in NYS Construction Aid (75 percent) for this project, based on a quote in the amount of \$337,959 provided in 2021. \$228,122 (90 percent of the award) has already been received. The final 10 percent (\$23,347) will be received once the project is closed out. The actual cost of the project is \$375,830 making the library match more than 25%.

The amendment to the security camera and lighting grant (2022) was accepted by the Division of Library Development. LaVoie can now close out that grant, at which point the library will receive the final 10 percent of the award--\$3,649. Post pictures are no longer needed for the construction aid grants.

Paige Drake Memorial Donation

The Library received a substantial number of donations in memory of Paige Drake, a popular retired first grade teacher in the Olean City School District who recently passed away. One of the donations received was a group donation of \$750 given by her "St. Nick's Drive neighbors" in Allegany, asking that OPL recognize her long career in elementary education. LaVoie had a discussion with Jane Gram, who coordinated the donation with the Library, and it was decided that the money would go towards a bench that will be placed in the new outdoor children's programming space, a planned part of the upcoming capital project. The funds have been placed in a restricted account and contact with the donors will be made once the space is finished to plan the bench and the wording for the plaque. The donors may want to hold a small unveiling ceremony at the time of installation for the family and friends of Mrs. Drake.

Personnel Update [Action Item]

MOTION (J. Mahar, L. Whitford): To approve hiring Michele Pfeffer as a part-time library assistant. The motion passed unanimously.

As reported at last month's meeting, Mahar and LaVoie interviewed several applicants for the vacant part-time library assistant position and decided to offer it to Michele Pfeffer, a retired social worker. She accepted the position, and her first day was October 6, 2025.

CCLS Annual Meeting

The CCLS Annual Meeting was held on October 8th at Holiday Valley. The first part of the meeting, 3-5 PM, included workshops for staff and trustees. Ask-the-Lawyer attorney Stephanie "Cole" Adams presented a workshop entitled Budget as Governance. Workshops intended more for library staff included Effective Community Reports conducted by a representative from the North Country Library System, and a panel discussion entitled Library Project Celebration, which was presented by library directors Lynn Grundstrom (Fluvanna) and Tyler Annis (Silver Creek), and our own Teen and Adult Programming Librarian, Cherish Inman, who presented on her popular teen program "The Amazing Race" (her PowerPoint was uploaded to the Box in case trustees are interested in taking a look at it).

Some of the interesting takeaways from Cole's session included:

- It was confirmed that public libraries may expend public funds on fundraising including capital campaigns.
- The library should budget annually for fundraising as needed (produce an annual capital budget if for capital fundraising?).
- If a public library chooses to hire a fundraising consultant who either coaches staff and trustees on fundraising and/or directly engages in fundraising for the library, that consultant must be registered as a professional fundraiser with NYS.

- Consider including a section in the annual audited financial statements that addresses how the annual budget ties in with the library’s long-range plan; were there any financial limitations to achieving goals? If so, what needs to be done to correct this shortfall?
- Have a budget policy that demonstrates how the annual budget achieves the goals of the library’s long-range plan.
- Have a policy on issuing and accepting ACH payments. Consider using “Positive Pay” to protect these payments.
- End-of-year surplus can be moved into a library endowment.

The evening keynote address was given by NYS Librarian Lauren Moore. She discussed the challenges of navigating federal funding cuts, the legal challenges of getting them restored, the optimism of State Library staff in these trying times, important services provided by the NYS Library, collections held at the State Library, and a number of other issues.

Overall, CCLS held a high-quality meeting, with useful workshops, opportunities to socialize with colleagues, and a chance to hear what’s happening at the state level.

Friends of the Library

At the Friends October board meeting, they approved up to \$175 for Kathy O’Malley to purchase donut holes and cider for the annual Children’s Halloween Trick-or-Treating parades that will happen throughout the Library in late October.

The focus for this year’s Giving Tuesday, which takes place on December 2nd, will be the Local History section. They want to raise money to cover the rest of the new microfilm reader/scanner/printer recently purchased using the 2025 Manley grant award, which covered half of the cost. LaVoie will notify the Board about the “power hour” and more details about the best times to donate.

September 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:

- \$12,000 Friends of the Library annual book endowment
- \$1,503.69 from the Marjory Burdus endowment
- \$990.25 memorials for Paige Drake
- \$20 memorial for Barbara DeStevens
- \$20 memorial for Peter Frank Smith Sr.
- \$25.65 in anonymous donations

MOTION (R. McElfresh, P. Shumway) To board designate the total of Paige Drake memorials, beyond the \$750 donor restricted, to be used towards a bench placed in the outdoor children’s area as part of the capital project. The motion passed unanimously.

6. Committee Reports

CCLS Board meeting (McElfresh)

Reed was re-elected as President of the CCLS Board. The CCLS board is currently looking for an interested party to occupy a vacant trustee position.

The CCLS board officially approved the allocation of the additional 2025 Construction Aid to Olean, bringing the percentage for the 2025 application to 84.6. If any other library systems do not use their full aid allocations, we could see more funding for the project.

CCLS is operating at a deficit and there is potential for system libraries to contribute to help lower the deficit in the future.

E-books are a very popular format and CCLS thanks the system libraries for purchasing these items as a shared resource that all system library members can borrow.

7. Old Business

Capital project – updates

- Consultant L. Sorokes updates
 - Property transfer update – no updates on the property transfer
 - Possibility of allowing local fire departments the opportunity to use for training prior to demolishing. Their insurance would cover liability. They would be unable to train with actual fire but could cut holes and practice rescue operations. Look into once the house transfer is complete.
 - Fundraising planning – meeting tomorrow (10/16/2025) L. Waterman, Michelle LaVoie, and Larry Sorokes. Updates to be given at the next board meeting.
 - Policy on acceptance of donations of stock – The library should adopt one in case this comes up as part of the capital project while speaking with donors. Patty Shumway mentioned a broker account will be needed. The library would want to sell stock as soon as it is valued, unless a restriction prevents sale. Stock donations are not required to be an endowment fund and could go through the Community Foundation.

Public libraries and fundraising – legalities

We can expend public funds for fundraising especially related to capital projects. If a consultant is hired they are required to be licensed as a professional fundraiser in the state of NY.

Construction Management RFP

The RFP ad went into the Buffalo and Rochester papers as planned. M. LaVoie was contacted by a WNY website that puts ads like these out to contractors at no charge. One interested project management firm has asked questions on the RFP and requested a visit. The attorney was impressed by the questions submitted, total of 15, to be answered by next week. The answers will be posted to the library webpage as an amendment to the original RFP.

Environmental study proposals [Action Item]

Two environmental study proposals were received, LaBella and Encorus. The LaBella proposal was more robust. The Encorus original proposal did not include PCBs which required a revised proposal. LaBella would be available in one week to start if approved and Encorus needs one to two weeks.

Asbestos is expected in the canopy and if that is true an abatement design would be developed at an additional cost.

\$10,000 Encorus & \$5,800 LaBella

MOTION (L. Whitford, P. Shumway) To approve the proposal for environmental study as presented by LaBella.

Letter to OCSD & City of Olean

A letter to include project details and SEQR resolution, type II should be sent to OCSD and the City of Olean. Scott Bova, architect, will provide us with site plan and survey once available. Those documents, once received, will be included with the letter. The Mayor may share with other municipal agencies as they see fit.

Meeting with Code Enforcement

Once the site plan is received, a meeting should be held with Code Enforcement. Code Enforcement will want to confirm the exterior fits with the residential neighborhood and parking issues are addressed.

8. New Business

(none)

Other Discussion

Current building boilers are to be moved into the basement as part of the construction project. The cost of replacement was not included in the project but given the age and endless issues, 13-14 years old, the library should look into the potential cost to replace and life expectancy.

State Aid IMLS cuts could potentially impact Construction Aid in way of delays. No understanding yet of impact on the availability of Construction Aid given the current political climate and government shut down.

A library advocacy meeting is being held on 10/23 at 10am at the Ellicottville Memorial Library for anyone wishing to attend.

The library needs to approach the City and/or the neighboring lot owner about adding handicap-van accessible parking spots when the current library parking is removed during the capital project.

MOTION TO ADJOURN (R. McElfresh, J. Mahar): Meeting adjourned at 6:33P.M. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Whitford, Secretary