

MEETING MINUTES
Olean Public Library Board of Trustees
December 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 5:32 P.M. by Board President Lanna Waterman. In attendance were trustees G. Copella, J. Mahar, M. Morgan P. Shumway, L. Waterman and L. Whitford. From the Library: K. Mahar, F. Steffen and Director La Voie. Excused: trustee R. McElfresh.

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 November 19 – December 17, 2025:
 #971 Operating Fund: \$119,268.23
 #343 Capital Fund: \$450.00

Discussion:

- Question on Overdrive – any money that wasn't spent out of our central library book aid will go toward ebooks and e-audiobooks for next year.
4. Review of Financial Statements Discussion:
 - Business Office Manager has recalculated estimated appropriated fund balance usage of \$110,000. We had budgeted \$208,110. The estimated reduction in usage is due in part to the following items:
 - 10001 Earnings from investments actual was \$36,000 more than budgeted
 - 10004 Gifts, Grants, & Donations actual was \$12,500 more than budgeted
 - 102 Support Staff actual was \$25,000 less than budgeted
 - 103 Maintenance Staff actual was \$15,000 less than budgeted
 - 202 Employer Taxes actual was \$3,180 less than budgeted

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

5. Director's Report

HVAC Construction Aid Project - Update

The library received the final bill from Mazza on November 21 for the installation of the 2 new HVAC units. According to Mazza, they completed the work on November 8th (insulating the units). Because the job did not end up being clerked as planned, the library hired M/E Engineering out of Buffalo to commission the work, to ensure everything was satisfactorily completed before issuing the final payment, which is 50 percent of the project cost. M/E came to the Library on 12/10 and spent several hours looking over the different project components, including the remote controls. There will be a meeting on Friday, 12/19, between the M/E engineer, Mazza reps, and Director LaVoie, to discuss any findings from the initial inspection as well as next steps. M/E will coordinate a site visit with Mazza over the next few weeks to inspect the units while they are being started up and shut down.

November Gifts/Grants/Donations [Action Item]

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

- \$1,200 from Hamlin Bank

- \$200 from the Junior League Coasters for Children's programs and resources
- \$126 from the Bush Family Foundation memorial
- \$50 in memorial donations for Janice Snyder
- \$9.90 in anonymous donations

Additional Grant Updates

The library anticipates receiving a \$10,000 award from the Carnegie Corporation of New York in commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. The awards are going to every Carnegie library in the country. Even though OPL no longer inhabits the Carnegie building, because it has maintained a recognized connection to the building, it is eligible for the award. Necessary paperwork was submitted, and the library should receive the funds in January.

CCLS notified OPL that it was awarded an Outreach Mini-grant in the amount of \$714. The Library will collaborate with Love in Action (LIA) to create comfort kits to distribute to local food pantries and other agencies that work with the homeless and those living in poverty. The comfort kits will include materials providing information about services and resources available at the public library. Outreach Librarian Sheryl Soborowski wrote the grant for submission to CCLS after LIA contacted her about partnering on the initiative.

Thomas Barnes Bequest Correspondence

The law firm Brooks & Brooks in Little Valley sent correspondence that included the bequest being listed as far less than what appeared on earlier documents the library received and signed off on. Director LaVoie contacted CRCF Executive Director Kirk Windus who said it appeared to be an earlier version of the will that was erroneously shared with the above law firm. Kirk confirmed the higher amount with the attorney for Barnes' estate. An updated letter reflecting the higher amount is coming.

NYS Library Budget and Legislative Initiatives (2026/2027)

NYLA is currently advocating for the following budgetary increases for FY 2027/28:

- State Aid for Libraries: \$181.32 million (*received \$106M for FY 2026/27*)
- State Aid for Library Construction: \$175 million (*received \$44M for FY 2026/27*)
- Library Materials Aid for school libraries: \$11.33/pupil (*hasn't increased from \$6.27 since 2007*)
- NOVELny: \$3.1 million (*received \$3M in FY 2026/27*)
- Cultural Education Fee: \$15 Increase (to \$30/transaction). Helps to provide fiscal support to the NYS Library.

2026 Legislative Priorities include:

- Intellectual Freedom (Open Shelves Act)
- eBook Licensing Reform (key provisions include requiring publishers who license e-books to offer them to libraries on reasonable terms; prohibiting charging libraries more than what the public is charged for the same item; banning restrictions on the number of licenses a library can purchase or the number of times an e-book can circulate). Hochul previously vetoed this legislation.
- Civil Service Reform (allowing public libraries to hire professionals of their choosing rather than from a predetermined list provided by the local Civil Service office)
- Media Literacy requirements in school libraries

The Intellectual Freedom bill is the public library version of the Freedom to Read Act, which pertains to school libraries. The Freedom to Read Act was approved by the legislature earlier this year, but for unknown reasons, Kathy Hochul has not yet signed it. These bills aim to prohibit book banning based on partisan or doctrinal disapproval and protect library staff from employment discrimination for refusing to remove materials. Incidentally, Sen. George Borrello voted against the Intellectual Freedom Act.

Regional councils across the state, including WNYLRC, have been setting up advocacy meetings for library supporters to meet with their local legislators to argue for increased funding and support for these bills. WNYLRC also offered to provide advocacy training for school librarians in Cattaraugus and Allegany counties. Director LaVoie was invited to assist in this training, which took place on 12/09, due to her advocacy experience, as well as her previous career as a school librarian. Erie2 BOCES also took part in the training. The school

librarians in attendance expressed their appreciation for the training, as advocacy can be difficult for them to take part in (they cannot easily leave school to attend meetings). Advocacy for school librarians is more than meeting with politicians to argue for increased funding, though that is very important; it is also about advocating for professional librarians in every school library and for opportunities to collaborate with classroom and subject-level teachers to make library time more productive for students.

Personnel Update [Action Item]

MOTION (G. Copella, L. Whitford): To accept Building Attendant Trevor Carr's last day of employment at the Library, which was on December 12th. The motion passed unanimously.

Friends of the Library

Once again, the Friends participated in Giving Tuesday this year and had their best year yet! They won the Power Hour \$500 incentive from John J. Irving, CFP. They raised a grand total of \$5,380, which included a \$2,500 donation from Jim and Susanna Stitt! Thank you to everyone who donated, especially during the Power Hour. This year they featured the Library's Local History section. They raised funds specifically to cover the rest of the new microfilm reader/scanner/printer we purchased with this year's Manley grant, which covered half of the cost. The Manley grant was \$5,000; the workstation components total nearly \$10,000.

6. **Committee Reports:** None

7. **Old Business**

Capital project – updates

Collier's – meetings with key staff

Scott Bova has been meeting with various staff to discuss programming areas and needs and any recommended design changes to the capital project.

LaBella – updated hazmat survey

LaBella came back with new survey that stated the library does not have mercury in its lights because they are new, LED lights, and thus aren't a hazmat concern.

Consultant L. Sorokes updates

Larry hasn't received any announcements regarding Empire State grants and is hopeful that the library may still receive positive news. He's made contact with several potential fundraising and grant opportunities and will continue to strategize additional lead gifts in 2026.

2027 budget planning

LaVoie and Angell will meet and prepare a budget draft with the Finance Committee to present to trustees in early 2026 with a public vote in May.

Community Bank investments [Action Item]

CD 510000891 matures 12.17.2025 in the amount of \$400,000. The rate on this CD was 3.65%.

CD 510000891 was reinvested 12.17.2025 in the amount of \$400,000 for 6 months at a rate of 3.5%.

CD 510000728 matures 12.28.2025 in the amount of \$250,000. The rate on this CD was 3.65%.

Heather, Business Office Manager, recommends reinvesting the CD that matures on 12/28/2025 for another 6 months in the amount of \$250,000 at the rate(s) available on date of maturity.

Board agreed to go with Heather's recommendations and re-invest the maturing CD at 6 months.

MOTION (M. Morgan, P. Shumway): To approve the CD investments as presented by the Business Office Manager. The motion passed. One abstention: G. Copella.

“Positive Pay” program

Angell met with bank personnel and is waiting for documents to sign. The library is signing up for Positive Pay for both checks and ACH payments for operating and capital accounts.

8. New Business

2024 Construction Aid

NYS made a formal announcement that approximately \$290,000 will be received for the Teen Room.

2025 budget adjustments [Action Item]

Increase Disability & Paid Family Leave by \$750 (appropriations line 204)

25% of 2026 policy due by 12.26.2025 for \$1,018.73

Increase Electronic Resources by \$17,500 (appropriations line 307)

A mid-year notice from Baker & Taylor that they intend to close down operations resulted in the library cancelling book orders because it is unsure of what may or may not come in. Suggestion to re-allocate over to Overdrive and CCLS to purchase materials. Some physical book orders placed in December may ship/invoice before year-end. If those amounts exceed the available budget amount left under appropriation line 301 (Books) an additional adjustment could be needed at the January meeting where December financials are reviewed to move funds from another underspent line such as support staff or maintenance staff.

Reductions on the following lines could be made:

Health Insurance \$750 (appropriation line 205)

Books \$17,500 (appropriation line 301)

MOTION (P. Shumway, G. Copella): To approve the budget adjustments as recommended by staff. The motion passed unanimously.

Construction management updates

LaVoie, Scott Bova and a few trustees met with a potential construction manager for the upcoming project to discuss their services. The next meeting is Tuesday, January 13, 2026 at 10:30 a.m. to continue the discussion.

Board of Trustees – 2026 expiring terms

Two trustee terms will be expire in 2026: Reed McElfresh and Jen Mahar. They will need to re-run for election if they decide to continue on the board.

2025 annual audit

Ed Bysiek sent the engagement letter, and staff will proceed with the audit preparation.

Board/Director email correspondence considerations

Sometimes the “reply all” emails can be challenging for trustees to respond to when they receive a lot of emails. Would there be other resources that could eliminate some of the emails? It was decided that trustees who receive a lot of email should consider setting up a separate account just for Library business.

Special end-of-year board meeting to approve warrants

A special meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, December 30 at noon to review and approve payment of any end-of-year bills.

Other Discussion

None

MOTION TO ADJOURN (G. Copella, J. Mahar): Meeting adjourned at 6:42 P.M. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Laura Whitford, Secretary