

MEETING MINUTES
Olean Public Library Board of Trustees
April 15, 2026
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 L. Waterman, R. McElfresh, P. Shumway, M. Morgan, L. Whitford, G. Copella, and J. Mahar. From the Library: Treasurer Steffen, Business Office Manager Angell, Assistant Director Mahar, and Director La Voie.

Waive the reading of the minutes of the previous meetings and approve as mailed.

1. Voice of the Public/Correspondence: None
2. Approval of Warrant Sheets for March 18 - April 15:
 #976 Operating Fund: \$108,143.26
 #347 Capital Fund: \$25,790.25

Discussion:

Election inspectors are not paid in advance. Checks are printed in advance to allow for warrant approval ahead of distributing the checks on election day.

Payment of \$50 is made each month for four parking spots to Olean 2020. Consideration should be given to increasing the parking out front during the project to eliminate the need to pay for parking spaces.

The purchase of cotton t-shirts is made through the Outreach budget for staff.

The quarterly HVAC preventative maintenance plan is paid out of general rather than capital as it's a general operating expense that is budgeted as such.

3. Review of Financial Statements

Discussion:

Capital balance sheet

Capital appropriations

It is noted that donations have shown a steady incline, mostly related to the capital project.

General balance sheet

The balance in the tax account is higher than this time last year. This is due to less funds being invested in CD's to keep cash on hand available for large capital project expenditures. These expenditures include construction management & architect fees.

General appropriations

Appropriation notes are not provided for all budget lines. Notes are included for lines that need additional explanation or where it is predicted a question would be asked.

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

4. **Director's Report**

2026 Trustee Election/2027 Budget Vote

As a reminder, the 2026 Trustee Election and 2027 budget vote is scheduled for Tuesday, May 5th, at the Library. Polls open at 9 am and close at 8 pm. Trustees Jen Mahar and Reed McElfresh are seeking reelection to 5-year terms. No one else picked up a nominating petition, so they are running unopposed. There is a spot for write-in candidates on the voting ballots, but there are generally very few of these.

As in past years, we will host a variety of popular programs that day to hopefully bring in lots of Library supporters. Programs and offerings will include a children’s “planting party,” where families can decorate flower pots and plant flowers. There will be balloons, snacks and other activities to enjoy. There will be a video game tournament for teens, and information will be available to parents about upcoming programs and the future teen room. There will be “Spring and Book Bingo” for adults, where winners get spring items and books as prizes. There will also be a pop-in “succulent magnet” craft offered throughout the day at the Info Desk. Sheryl has scheduled outreach tables throughout the Library and a pop-up “library support/positive affirmation” button-making table.

There will be a public hearing in the Library on Tuesday, April 21st at 6 pm, for constituents to ask questions about the proposed 2027 budget. While the Director runs the hearing, it is recommended that Trustees and the business office manager also attend to help answer questions and show support for the proposed budget. It is not unusual for a reporter from the local paper to show up and ask questions.

Frances Bean O’Connell Endowment

Earlier this month, we received the annual Frances Bean O’Connell Endowment grant in the amount of \$13,885.11! Kevin O’Connell, who moved an additional \$150,000 into the fund in 2024 (bringing it to a total of \$300,000), said he wanted to make sure the Library receives at least \$10,000 annually. We are so grateful for this gift which allows us to offer amazing arts and crafts programs to patrons of all ages.

March Gifts/Grants/Donations [Action Item]

MOTION (G. Copella, L. Whitford): To accept, with gratitude, the following gifts, grants, and donations received in February 2026. The motion passed unanimously, with:

- \$25,000 Burt Memorial Fund/First Presbyterian Church – Capital Project
 - \$100 Mary Alfieri – Capital Project
 - \$914.52 Marjory Burdus Endowment – Quarterly Distribution
 - \$200 Cindy Kifer to support children’s programming
 - \$29 memorial for Michael & Irene Dieteman
 - \$25 memorial for JoAnn A Samuelson
 - \$13.60 in anonymous donations
- Gifts, grants and donations totaled \$26,082.12 in March!

Personnel [Action Items]

Part-time library page Kait Field has accepted a full-time job at Friedsam Memorial Library at SBU. She will cut her hours significantly at OPL, but is not leaving. Due to the loss of a substantial number of her hours, as well as another part-time page leaving last month, 4 part-time pages have been hired to cover those hours. The following part-time page hires require Board approval: Sophia Hawkes (Apr. 6), Catherine Farrell (Apr. 7), Johanna Florez (Apr. 8), Sylvan Beneng (Apr. 9).

MOTION (J. Mahar, R. McElfresh) To hire Sophia Hawkes, Catherine Farrell, Johanna Florez, & Sylvan Beneng as part-time library assistants. The motion passed unanimously.

Friends of the Library

At this month’s meeting, I requested the annual program gift in the amount of \$4,000, which was approved. This helps pay for program supplies and presenters throughout the year (this is separate from the Summer Reading Program gift they also provide annually). I also requested up to \$200 for Lanna to purchase soil and flowers for 6 outdoor planters, which they have done for the past several years. This was also approved.

They are also considering moving up the September wine tasting fundraiser to August, considering the capital project likely won’t break ground until September. I will check with construction management to make sure preliminary work won’t have begun by August (i.e. things being relocated throughout the Library or put into storage at that point), just to be sure this is a viable option for the Friends. Once the project has started, the Friends will be looking into alternate locations for their in-person fundraisers. They want to continue with their major fundraisers so as to be able to continue supporting the Library throughout the year.

They also discussed their building fund and using a portion of it to assist with the capital project. They may pay to outfit their own space as well as assist with other areas of need.

News from the Library

This year's Easter magic show with the Jeffers, held on March 28th, attracted over 400 people (approx. 250 children and 150 adults), while the Baby Farm Animal Petting Zoo held on Apr. 11th brought in at least 390 people! We are definitely looking forward to the large meeting room space so everyone can view and safely enjoy these wonderful family programs.

On March 20th, Larry, Lanna, Chad and I visited the Dream It/Do It lab (makerspace) located in the Chamber building. We spoke with director Evelyn Sabina about the goals of the lab, how it operates, funding sources, and other questions. It was interesting to learn more about what is currently being offered in the community and how the Library can extend these offerings, as well as offer unique opportunities not provided elsewhere.

National Library Week takes place April 19-25. This year's theme is "Find Your Joy," which encourages people of all backgrounds to discover what makes the Library meaningful to them. Throughout the week, the Library will host a variety of fun and engaging activities for all ages. A basket raffle will run Mon., 4/20, through Sat., 4/25. An article will be placed in the OTH on Saturday, 4/18, providing details on all the activities taking place that week.

5. **Committee Reports**

None

6. **Old Business**

Capital Project Updates

- Architect & Construction Management Updates
 - Design Development Cost Estimates – Collier's, LeChase
 - Architect questioned why construction management has an estimate of only \$100,000 for the basement; why not then keep it in the project? He has requested and is still awaiting the breakdown of the costs from LeChase for the new design to confirm whether he agrees with the potential savings.
 - Major cost differences between Collier's schematic design and LeChase design development estimates include HVAC & square footage work scope.
 - The design has been changed rather significantly to reduce the budgetary gap.
 - Contract – Collier's
 - The construction and bidding documents contract with Collier's was reviewed by legal. There were concerns that the proposed contract provided little protection for the Library. This resulted in some delays as Collier's pulled some of the architect's team off the project until the contract could be finalized. The contract has now been approved and work is proceeding.
 - As is standard practice, aspects of the project will be bid as alternates in case of unexpected cost increases, i.e. inflationary. Ideas for alternates include:
 - Fitting out makerspace
 - Outside canopy
 - Meeting room partition – there is a less expensive temporary solution
 - Exterior site workAlternates can be accomplished later through NYS Construction Aid, other grants, and/or donations
 - DASNY Bond – comparison of terms
 - Munistat provided a comparison of 25- and 30-year terms for DASNY financing based on current market conditions.
 - There is a difference between bond financed amount and construction proceeds. Generating premiums, simply put, is the opposite of buying points for a mortgage. Investors pay more for the bonds and the library receives a higher interest rate.
 - The bond funds will be invested and gain interest until needed for construction expenses.
 - It is critical that all bids are received before bonding. If the bids come in much higher than expected and other funding sources are not secured, the project does not move forward and bonding does not happen.
 - Interest rates need to remain stable and comparable to current to ensure the library is able to receive the \$7.9 million bond. If interest rates spike, the project could be in

jeopardy. Munistat has stated that close to closing a known future spike to interest rates could allow for an early close to protect the financing. Interest rates will be locked in with an option to refinance after 8 years. Refinancing or pre-payment prior to the 8 years would initiate a penalty. The timeline for closing on the bonds is still set for an early August close.

- Construction Management
 - Contract
 - The contract with LeChase to provide construction management services has been approved by both parties' legal.
 - Builder's Risk Insurance Application
 - A cost estimate for builder's risk insurance from Scott Brook is on hold until the final project design is decided, at that information is necessary for completing the application.
 - Temporary location for storage, office spaces, materials
 - The Presbyterian church has some storage, programming, and work spaces available that it will allow the Library to use during construction.
 - Mike Morgan has offered space that could potentially be used for offices during construction on the fourth floor of the Community Bank building.
 - Gretchen will check with Intandem about potential storage space, and Community Bank third floor for office space.
 - The Stroehmann factory is another possible option for storage and/or offices if anyone can find contact information.
 - Jan from CCLS could provide thoughts/expertise on moving books. CCLS potentially has storage space that could hold circulating materials.
 - During Construction:
 - Wall off (not tape) dangerous areas to ensure safety for patrons and staff
 - As collections are moved to storage, an increase in borrowing materials from system libraries is likely
 - Offer more curbside services
 - Virtual programming & work from home for staff as needed and practical
 - Use of community spaces for programming
 - Staff will be able to pack and move books
 - Handicapped & 15 minute on-street parking spots on Laurens where main entrance will be temporarily relocated
 - A discussion with Common Council is needed.

Fundraising Consultant Report (Sorokes)

- Capital Campaign; donor outreach
- Grant Opportunities (Ralph Wilson/Rural Libraries; STW/Appalachian Regional Commission; Gladys Brooks)
 - An application has been submitted for the WNY Rural Libraries grant for \$150,000 over two years. Whether the library is awarded this grant or not, it may open the door for future Wilson funding opportunities.
 - The STW Appalachian application is underway. The deadline for the LOI is 5/1/2026. The application will be geared towards Meeting Room & Maker Space technology needs. The cap is \$150,000. This is not a quick turnaround grant as it is known that applicants from previous year are still working through paperwork.
 - Gladys Brooks Foundation – This application is due in early June. The foundation has a national focus and has a funding category specifically for libraries.
 - WNY Forward just announced a grant for general community support. The cap is \$50,000 and requires demonstration of how approved funding would address a community need.
 - Plans for a capital campaign are under way. Voters approved the \$7.9M bond that will fund the bricks and mortar. The capital campaign will focus on ways to outfit the library with

- furniture, fixtures, and future programming.
- Phase 1 – Quickly get out general information postcards (non-personalized direct mail). They will contain a scannable QR code to website and information about the library and its role as a community treasure. This could prove successful as people are receiving less mail nowadays and paying attention to those pieces received.
- Phase 2 – Targeted mailing based on education level, financial means/wealth, and those that are prone to giving. This mailing would go to approximately 2,000 people.
- Phase 3- This phase would be the most personalized and completed in-house. This will be handled via a combination of letters, phone calls, inner-circle events, and meetings. This should include former employees and board members, and those who have given to the Library in the past. This phase would be deployed to approximately 100-200 people.
- Looking to fund capital needs before suggesting gifts for programming/endowments or ongoing operational needs.
- Website will play an important role in the campaign. There might be a need to hire an outside party to complete the website. The website should provide specific areas of the project that might be interesting for donors to contribute to. It is urgent to get the website completed within the next couple months.

Friends of the Library discussion

- The Friends may have funds to contribute to the capital project.
- They have expressed a commitment to continue to support annual library operations.
- They do not wish to become involved in the capital campaign at this time, as they are stretched thin in terms of volunteers and availability.
- At the end of the campaign, the Library’s list of donors could be shared with the Friends for future fundraising efforts.
- The Friends have contributed a significant amount of money to the library over time. The Library should consider dedicating or naming a piece of the project as a way of recognizing their contributions to the Library’s success.

House Donation Updates (Morgan; La Voie)

- SHPO Update
SHPO has determined they have no interest in the property for historical preservation purposes.

House donation updates

MOTION (R. McElfresh, P. Shumway): To enter executive session at 7:05pm The motion passed unanimously.

No actions taken during executive session.

MOTION (G. Copella, M. Morgan): To leave executive session at 7:20pm. The motion passed unanimously.
No actions taken.

MOTION (R. McElfresh, G. Copella) To cancel real estate contract with seller, Giunta Corporation, listed on the contract. This motion passed with one abstention: M. Morgan.

Trustee Training

Both library directors that are undergoing large capital projects with DASNY financing will provide the 2026 required trustee training. Both have valuable project knowledge and ideas for daily operations during construction, as well as fundraising and other information the board should find useful as we move forward with our project.

The training will be held in May. Library staff and trustees may send questions for the directors ahead of time. An honorarium of \$200 will be offered to each director. Should they decline, a donation in the same amount could be made to their library.

CRCF Cutco Foundation

The Fund advisor form has been received and needs signatures from La Voie, Shumway and Steffen. Once all signatures are completed, the form will be submitted to CRCF. The library is still awaiting instructions or guidelines for the fund. If nothing is received, questions surrounding withdrawals and processes will be addressed to CRCF. The fund is non-endowed donor

designated.

New Business

2025 Annual Report to the Community [Action Item]

The 2025 Annual Report to the Community was distributed to trustees prior to the meeting. Any suggestions or corrections have been addressed.

MOTION (L. Whitford, P. Shumway) To approve the 2025 Annual Report to the Community. The motion passed unanimously.

Schedule special Board meeting to certify trustee election & budget vote results

The special Board meeting has been scheduled for Wednesday May 6th at noon.

MOTION TO ADJOURN (R. McElfresh, G. Copella): Meeting adjourned at 7:24P.M. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Whitford, Secretary