

Town of Esopus Library
February Board of Trustees Meeting
Monday, February 27, 2023

Agenda

Call to order	Don Carragher
Approval of January Board Meeting Minutes and February Emergency Board Meeting Minutes	
President's Word	Don Carragher
Public Comment	Public
Treasurer's Report/Finance Committee	Reggie Heffernan
Director's Report	Shannon Powell
Friends	Susan Leiching
Committees	
1. Buildings and Grounds – Larry Decker	
2. Governance and Personnel / Trustee Training – Nancy Beranek	
3. Sustainability, Research and Development – Don Carragher	

Adjournment

Resolutions:
2023-11 – Payment of January Claims

**TOWN OF ESOPUS LIBRARY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES
January 24, 2023**

Board Members Present: Reggie Heffernan, Nancy Beranek, Susan Barbarisi, Susan Leiching, Don Carragher, Larry Decker, Elaine Rylance and Laura Lauria

Board Members Excused:

Board Members Absent:

Staff Present: Brooke Dittmar, Mary Garraty

I. CALL TO ORDER –

The meeting of the Town of Esopus Library Board of Trustees was called to order by President Don Carragher at 6:03 p.m. Don introduced Elaine Jaffe as someone who is interested in becoming a Trustee. She spoke for a few minutes about herself and her background.

Don spoke to the public in attendance and reviewed how the meeting would go.

II. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Written minutes for the December monthly Board meeting held on December 27, 2022 and the Emergency Board Meeting held on January 11, 2023 were submitted and open for review.

A motion to accept the updated minutes of the December monthly Board meeting held on December 27, 2022 was made by Susan Barbarisi and seconded by Reggie Heffernan.

AYE: 8; NO: 0; ABSTAIN: 0

Board Members Excused: 0

Board Members Absent: 0

A motion to accept the minutes of the Emergency Board Meeting held on January 11, 2023 was made by Elaine Rylance and seconded by Susan Leiching.

AYE: 8; NO: 0; ABSTAIN: 0

Board Members Excused: 0

Board Members Absent: 0

III. Presidents Word – Don Carragher

Don mentioned that it would be good to review the MHLS bulletin. It contained a wealth of information. He saw an article about something that occurred at the Scarsdale Library. MHLS suggested making sure you have all your policies are updated. He also said that it would be wise to have clear descriptions of what each staff members' job entails. There was a new policy statewide for Trustees that requires 2 hours of new training each year. There is an update of the training policy that the Governance and Personnel Committee are discussing right now.

IV. Public Comment

Tim Bruck spoke that he has 9 letters from former employees discussing the abuse that Brooke Dittmar has given and they hope that this situation will come to an end now.

V. TREASURER'S REPORT/FINANCE – Reggie Heffernan

Written report was submitted. The Finance Committee reviewed the claims for the past month which totaled \$47,088.08. The committee presented the following resolutions for approval:

- **Resolution #02 of 2023 (Payment of December Claims):** The Board of Trustees of the Town of Esopus Library accepts and approves the payment of claims from December 1, 2022 to December 31, 2022 for items in the amount of \$47,088.08. A motion to accept the resolution was made by Nancy Beranek and seconded by Larry Decker.
AYES: 8; NAYS: 0; ABSTENTIONS: 0
Board Members Excused: 0
Board Members Absent: 0
- **Resolution #03 of 2023 (Lukatis Donation):** The Board of Trustees of the Town of Esopus Library accepts the quarterly share of income in the amount of \$1193.95 from the Lukatis Trust into the operating funds for the library. A motion to accept the resolution was made by Susan Leiching and seconded by Elaine Rylance.
AYES: 8; NAYS: 0; ABSTENTIONS: 0
Board Members Excused: 0
Board Members Absent: 0
- **Resolution #04 of 2023 (Acceptance of Foundation Donation):** The Board of Trustees of the Town of Esopus Library accepts the annual monetary donation from the Foundation in the amount of \$53,196.00 and approves the addition to the General Fund of the 2023 Operating Budget. A motion to accept the resolution was made by Larry Decker and seconded by Nancy Beranek.
AYES: 8; NAYS: 0; ABSTENTIONS: 0
Board Members Excused: 0
Board Members Absent: 0
- **Resolution #05 of 2023 (Acceptance of PILOT Payment):** The Board of Trustees of the Town of Esopus Library accepts funds of \$4527.00 from the Town of Esopus and will deposit the monies into the Town of Esopus Library's 2023 Operating Fund. A motion to accept the resolution was made by Susan Barbarisi and seconded by Susan Leiching.
AYES: 8; NAYS: 0; ABSTENTIONS: 0
Board Members Excused: 0
Board Members Absent: 0

VI. DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Brooke Dittmar, Director

Written report submitted. The electrical work for the outside lights will be completed in a few weeks. The entire staff took an Opioid Overdose Training provided by the Office of Addiction Services and Support. We also joined a new service called the NYS Talking Book and Braille Library. Overdue, the Library's house band held its first concert in quite a while. We are starting to compile the information for the Annual Report to the State.

VII. FRIENDS --Susan Leiching

Friends did not meet in January. Friends will be starting the membership drive. In February they will have a box for donations of items that the teachers from Robert Graves Elementary school need. These are items that teachers tend to purchase out of their pocket for the children. There will be a list of suggested items.

VIII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

- **Buildings and Grounds** – Don Carragher
Written report was submitted. Don has compiled a list of items that have not been completed. These will be worked on throughout the year.
- **Governance and Personnel** – Nancy Beranek
Written report submitted. Nancy reviewed the meeting minutes. The committee is also looking at the holiday policy.
- **Sustainability, Research and Development** - Don Carragher
The committee did not meet. There was an Emergency Board Meeting instead on that date.

Don made a motion to go into executive session at 6:33 pm and Susan Barbarisi seconded. The executive session ended at 7:30 pm. Reggie Heffernan made a motion to close executive session and Nancy Beranek seconded.

Two documents were discussed along with 5 resolutions. Don read the titles of the resolutions. Number 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10.

The last two resolutions were pulled so that they are not voted on this evening. Don asked if anyone wanted him to read the body of the resolutions.

A Proposed Settlement and letter was given to Brooke Dittmar. Brooke was asked to consider thoughtfully, this settlement. She has 21 days maximum to respond. February 14th is the last day to decide. The Board has put Brooke on a 21 day administrative leave of absence. They asked her to collect her personal items and turn over her keys and any other library items. The letter and settlement will be emailed and mailed to her as well.

IX. Trustee Training – Don Carragher and Nancy Beranek

There was no trustee training this evening. See Presidents word above regarding MHLS Trustee Training.

- **Resolution #06 of 2023 (Acceptance of Proposed Severance Agreement and General Release and Waiver):** The Board of Trustees of the Town of Esopus Library agree that the proposed Severance Agreement and General Release and Waiver as well as a letter to the Director, Brooke Dittmar, regarding Proposed Settlement Agreement will be presented to the Director, Brooke Dittmar, at the January 24, 2023 Board of Trustee of the Town of Esopus Library Board Meeting. A motion to accept the resolution was made by Larry Decker and seconded by Nancy Beranek.

AYES: 8; NAYS: 0; ABSTENTIONS: 0

Board Members Excused: 0

Board Members Absent: 0

- **Resolution #07 of 2023 (Administrative Leave of Director):** The Board of Trustees of the Town of Esopus Library has determined that the Director, Brooke Dittmar, will be placed on administrative leave with pay for three weeks / twenty-one days until February 14, 2023. A motion to accept the resolution was made by Elaine Rylance and seconded by Susan Leiching.

AYES: 8; NAYS: 0; ABSTENTIONS: 0

Board Members Excused: 0

Board Members Absent: 0

- **Resolution #08 of 2023 (Authorizing the Appointment of Ben Gocker to the Position of Provisional Director):** The Board of Trustees of the Town of Esopus Library agree to appoint Ben Gocker as the Provisional Director of the Town of Esopus Library. A motion to accept the resolution was made by Susan Barbarisi and seconded by Elaine Rylance.

AYES: 8; NAYS: 0; ABSTENTIONS: 0

Board Members Excused: 0

Board Members Absent: 0

X. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business or discussion, Reggie Heffernan made a motion to adjourn and it was seconded by Nancy Beranek. The meeting was adjourned at 7:41 p.m.

AYES: 8; NAYS: 0; ABSTENTIONS: 0

Board Members Excused: 0

Board Members Absent: 0

Prepared by Mary Garraty, Secretary to the Town of Esopus Library Board of Trustees

**TOWN OF ESOPUS LIBRARY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES EMERGENCY MEETING MINUTES
February 13, 2023**

Board Members Present: Reggie Heffernan, Nancy Beranek, Susan Barbarisi, Susan Leiching, Don Carragher, Larry Decker and Elaine Rylance

Board Members Excused:

Board Members Absent: Laura Lauria

Staff Present: Mary Garraty, Shannon Powell

I. CALL TO ORDER –

The Board meeting of the Town of Esopus Library Board of Trustees was called to order by President Don Carragher at 5:01 pm.

The Assistant Director, Ben Gocker, informed the Board that he was resigning from his position. The Governance and Personnel Committee offered up the resolutions listed below.

- **Resolution #09 of 2023 (Personnel Action – B. Gocker):** The Board of Trustees of the Town of Esopus Library agree to the personnel actions resolution. A motion to accept the resolution was made by Larry Decker and seconded by Reggie Heffernan.
AYES: 7; NAYS: 0; ABSTENTIONS: 0
Board Members Excused: 0
Board Members Absent: Laura Lauria
- **Resolution #10 of 2023 (Additional Duties for Shannon Powell):** The Board of Trustees of the Town of Esopus Library accepts and approves compensation awarded to Shannon Powell for the additional administrative duties of the Town of Esopus Library until which time as a new/additional staff is hired. A motion to accept the resolution was made by Reggie Heffernan and seconded by Elaine Rylance.
AYES: 7; NAYS: 0; ABSTENTIONS: 0
Board Members Excused: 0
Board Members Absent: Laura Lauria

The Board discussed the next steps immediately following the deadline date of February 14, 2023 of Brooke's decision regarding the severance offer provided to her on January 24, 2023. Resolution 11, listed below, was drafted and approved in preparation of the event that no

decision from the Director was received from the library's attorney's office by the end of business on February 14th, 2023.

- **Resolution #11 of 2023 (Administrative Leave of Director Extended without pay):**
The Board of Trustees of the Town of Esopus Library has determined that the Director, Brooke Ditmar, will have her administration leave extended until February 28, 2023 without pay and at which time all benefits will be terminated. A motion to accept the resolution was made by Susan Leiching and seconded by Nancy Beranek.
AYES: 7; NAYS: 0; ABSTENTIONS: 0
Board Members Excused: 0
Board Members Absent: Laura Lauria

In the event that an agreement was reached by the library's attorney's office by the end of the day on February 14th, the above listed resolution, Resolution 11, would be destroyed as it was no longer needed.

The Board agreed to the appointment of Elaine Jaffe as a new Trustee that will be filling in the remainder of an existing term.

There was a request to move the February Board of Trustee meeting from February 28th to February 27th. This request was approved.

X. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business or discussion, Susan Leiching made a motion to adjourn and it was seconded by Nancy Beranek. The meeting was adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

AYES: 7; NAYS: 0; ABSTENTIONS: 0

Board Members Excused: 0

Board Members Absent: Laura Lauria

Prepared by Mary Garraty, Secretary to the Town of Esopus Library Board of Trustees

Town of Esopus Library

Buildings and Grounds Committee

February 6, 2023

4pm

Attending: Larry Decker, Nancy Beranek, Don Carragher, Shannon Powell and Laura Lauria

No absentees

Nancy brought up that we need a clock replacement in the Community Room. Larry volunteered to purchase one.

Discussed some of the items on our "to do" list

- It was decided that we will leave the wooden library sign right where it is.
- Discussed Pond maintenance (algae mats & bacteria blocks in particular)
- Cleaning up tree line before June
- Server tile needs replacing in server room.
- Bulge in back wall needs to be fixed. Don will address it.
- New Deck furniture. Bench still needs sealing which Don will do in the Spring.

Fire Inspector report needs to be found and addressed

Survey maps need to be found. Shannon will look for them.

It was mentioned that we should create two lists...one for annual Summer Chores and one for Winter.

Toured back storage area and discussed future options. Plan to add tool shed to garden area to accommodate tools and hoses now stored here.

The next Building and Grounds meeting is scheduled for March 13, 2023 at 4:00 pm

Submitted, Larry Decker

**Town of Esopus Library
Finance Committee Minutes
February 9, 2023**

Attendance: Susan Leiching, Reggie Heffernan, Susan Barbarisi, Elaine Rylance, Don Carragher, Nancy Beranek, Ben Gocker

The payment of claims for \$15,692.70 was reviewed by the Finance committee and a resolution for approval by the Board of Trustees will be presented to the Board at the February meeting.

Ben discovered in the past week that our accounting firm, Christopher J O'Connor, CPA , closed its Kingston office without notice. However, the head accountant of the firm, Rose Woodworth, has opened a new firm, Woodworth and Zaronolnick Accountants Inc, and she does have access to all of our previous records. The committee agreed that at this time we need to ensure as much financial stability as possible. We agreed to sign an agreement with Woodworth and Zaronolnick Accountants Inc. to be our accounting firm for the next year at the rate of \$550/month.

Because Ben will be leaving his position of assistant director effective February 11, 2023, the committee agreed that our best option to keep the library open was to ask our current children's programmer Shannon Powell to take on additional responsibilities until such time as we hire a new library director. To compensate for her time the committee agreed to pay her a temporary salary of \$1200.00/month. (Reggie called her in the evening to provide the details to which she verbally agreed).

Our next order of business will be to develop our 2024 budget in order that the community will be able to vote on it in June. Ben reminded us that according to the sustainability matrix we use, we should be paying staff based on the current Ulster County living wage calculator. We made some rough estimates of what that would look like. Further the 2023 budget and actual numbers spent in 2022 were distributed for the committee to review. We will spend our next meeting developing the budget for approval next month.

Respectfully submitted,
Reggie Heffernan, Treasurer

**Next Meeting
Thursday, March 9th
4 pm**

Town of Esopus Library
Governance and Personnel Committee
February 7, 2023

Attendance: Nancy Beranek, Don Carragher, Susan Leiching, Reggie Heffernan, Laura Lauria, Shannon Powell, Ben Gocker, Mary Garraty

The committee has requested a resolution for Ben's resignation. He has submitted a resignation date of February 11, 2023.

The committee discussed the Library Manager position as well as Shannon's upcoming additional responsibilities. The Finance committee will discuss a wage increase for Shannon for performing the additional duties. The committee also discussed additional responsibilities for Barbara.

Brooke's attorney countered the offer that she received. The Trustees are not changing their original severance offer.

The committee will be reviewing the following policies next month:

1. Exhibits and Postings
2. Public Relations
3. Release of Public Statements by the Board

Trustee Training:

- There is a trustee training event on February 21, 2023 from 5:00 pm to 6:30pm. The title of the webinar is Open Meeting Law. Pizza is planned for this event.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Beranek

Town of Esopus Library
February 8, 2023

Sustainability, Research & Development
4:00 pm

The Sustainability, Research and Development Committee did not meet this month.

Submitted by Don Carragher

Next meeting is scheduled for March 8th at 4:00 pm

Town of Esopus Library – Directors Report February 27, 2023

It certainly has been a month of change, both inside and out of the library!

Ben and I were able to work on the NYS Annual Report collaboratively, and I submitted it to MHLS for review on 2/15. This report is done to analyze materials, usage and programming offered by our library. Of particular interest, in the 2022 year, children's book circulation increased by 20%! This is clear evidence that programs returning to in-person at the library has helped to increase general circulation and foot traffic.

The outside electrical lights and lamp heads have been replaced; our driveway is much brighter and more efficiently lit in the night hours. It does make a big difference when you are leaving or entering the building in the evening.

The library celebrated "take your child to the library day" with a folk music performance from local entertainer, Jason Vance. It was a great program that included the themes of ancestors and black history month; it was wonderful to see many children and families in the library. I would love to add him to our calendar as often as possible!

We have begun accepting applications for the Community Garden; we have one returning garden manager this year, as well as a new one who was recommended by a previous garden manager. We opened the application process earlier this year at the recommendation of our garden managers, as they said the gardeners have expressed getting in earlier to prepare their plot would be helpful (not to mention it feels like spring in February).

Chair Yoga returns to the library in March! This program is always well attended and inquired about whenever we have a break. Yoga Kathy is returning for her first in-person sessions since the onset of COVID-19, however we will continue to broadcast on Zoom for those who prefer to participate from their homes.

The reopening of the Duck Pond Gallery has been enjoyed by community members. We are currently in the midst of our second month-long gallery display, with the third beginning later this week. Stop by and check out some of the amazing art displayed in the community room.

We are continuing to work on our weeding project that Ben began; Laura is compiling the lists of material that have not been checked out in 7 years (or more) and circulation desk staff are working to pull those titles and make decisions on what should be maintained or taken out of circulation. I have signed up both Laura and Josie for a training March 9th about diversifying collections and best practices for weeding.

MHLS has begun using a service called Tixkeeper, which allows patrons to request tickets to museums that individual libraries possess. Some of these include Bethel Woods, the Aerodome, and the FDR museum. Currently, our library only has passes to Mohonk Preserve, however we

are researching renewing our passes to Guggenheim and Boscobel, as we previously had offered them and we have many patrons inquire about them.

Newspaper subscriptions have returned to the library! The library is currently receiving the NY Times, and our Wall Street Journal subscription is currently processing.

Respectfully submitted,

 2/21/23

Interim Library Manager