

Aurora Free Library  
Meeting Minutes  
November 16, 2023

Present: Susan Deacon, Susan Dean, David Eckhardt, Dennis Looney, Natalie Kimbrough, and Thea Miller

Zoom: Lars Peterson

Guests: Marie Dentes, Robin Driskel(Zoom), Lori Knopp

Staff: Sandy Groth

The meeting was conducted in-person and Zoom.

A. Susan called the meeting to order at 5:34 pm.

B. **Conflict of Interest/Consent Agenda** – No conflicts of interest were noted. Motion to accept the consent agenda.

Move by: Susan

Second: Thea

Action: Carried

C. **Book Lovers' Ball recap (Marie & Robin)**

- a. Final profit was \$26,000. Great success; a lot of new people attended this year.
- b. Thoughts for next year: The Inns of Aurora price will increase. This past year's increase was \$23.50/plate to \$60/plate. This is projected to increase again next year. We will need to plan for this in our 2024 budgeting.
- c. The silent auction continues to be a main source of profit revenue, with ticket prices mainly covering the food and band. The board has been asked to think of additional vendors/donors for next year.

D. **Director's Report (Sandy)**

- a. Shared the updated 2023 Trustee Handbook
- b. Recent events have been successful (Hocus Pocus event, steady donations to the Food Pantry donation box, and the Halloween Spooky Morgan Opera House).
- c. Christmas in Aurora will be held on Saturday, Dec. 2nd. Fundraising efforts at next year's Christmas in Aurora were discussed (125th ornaments, wreaths, or poinsettias).
- d. Will receive FLLS Collection Development Grant for just over \$2000
- e. Annalise and Sandy looking into Narcan training
- f. Jail Room - Mnetha Warren-MacCormick will paint the stairwell to basement and window trim in jail. She started this week.

E. **Morgan Opera House (Lars)**

- a. 11/18: CU Klezmer Ensemble
- b. 12/2: Bones East

- c. 12/16: Shepherds Play

**F. Preservation (Dave)**

- a. **NYS Aid for Library Construction Program – Roof Reconstruction Project:**  
The roof reconstruction project has essentially been completed. The total project cost submitted by Hale Roofing is \$80,444, which they invoiced and we paid. Steve Moolin has submitted and obtained approval for the required amendments to the original project description with the NY State Education Department (Project number 0386-22-9243). Closeout of the project has also been approved, and we are awaiting the 10% (\$3,361) of the State funding that was withheld pending successful completion.
  
- b. **Capital Fundraising:** A Capital Fundraising effort has been established to generate funds through the Aurora Free Library Building Preservation Campaign to help offset the costs of building projects. It is anticipated that the fundraising will progress for at least three years to address the roof and other Library projects, including window renovations, exterior facade surface repair and painting, and masonry repairs. To date, the following funding for the \$80,444 roof renovation cost has been recovered:
  - i. The NYSED grant of \$33,610 was received in January 2023. Thank you Steve Moolin!
  - ii. A check for \$10,000 dated October 31, 2023 was awarded to us by the Triad Foundation, which was contingent on our success in raising a comparable match in private donations. Thank you to Triad Executive Director Roy Park, Jr., and to John Dentes for his kind advice in securing this grant!
  - iii. The Triad match fundraising was accomplished through an appeal to specific local donors, by which we received \$6,150 in checks and online donations. An additional \$5,000 was allocated from private donations through the Silent Auction at the Book Lovers' Ball on October 6. Thank you Robin and Marie!
  - iv. A check for \$20,000 dated October 20, 2023 was awarded to us by The Stanley W. Metcalf Foundation. Thanks to Sue Dean and Dennis Looney who attended the grant seminar this past summer, where they made contact with the Foundation's Executive Director Steve Rich, who visited the Library with Dan Fessenden on August 11.
  
- c. **Morgan Opera House Air Conditioning:** Funding of \$59,200 has been requested through the 2024 New York State Aid for Library Construction Program. Steve Moolin kindly prepared and submitted the application to FLLS, which approved it in late September and forwarded it to NYSED. The Dentes family and Triad have generously donated a combined \$15,000 as matching funds for the project. At the May 19 meeting, Trustees approved a contract for \$29,200 to Taitem Engineering of Ithaca to assist the AFL in the design, specifications, and construction-period services for a suitable AC system for the MOH. We anticipate approval of our NYSED grant request sometime in mid to late 2024,

with the AC installation completed prior to Summer 2025.

- d. **Regional Economic Development Council Grant Application:** We have again partnered with the Village of Aurora to develop a new application for funding the AFL Windows Renovation Project through the New York Forward Program. The State program provides awards to small rural communities with grant funding of up to \$4.5 million. Our component of the Village application has been submitted to NYS with the help of Evan Tuthill, Cayuga County Department of Planning and Economic Development. Our updated proposal for renovations of the Library windows has requested a grant award of \$365,000. The award results will be announced by NYS in early January 2024. If awarded, AFL would need to provide at least a 25% match, for which we would apply for grant assistance from the Emerson Foundation.
  
- e. **2020 NYS Aid for Library Construction Grant Project 0386-20-2656 closeout:** Steve Moolin has diligently worked to finalize and close the 2020 NYSED grant. The completed components of this grant project include extensive renovations to the Old Jail with equipment and furnishing, the floor replacement and refinishing in the two main library rooms, the front door renovation, electrical outlet upgrades in the main reading room, a dehumidifier system, and subsurface waterproofing along the northwest foundation wall. The final forms have been signed by President Susan Deacon, and we should soon receive a check for \$5,400, which is the 10% of the funding that was withheld until completion of the project.

#### G. Nominating (Natalie)

- a. Two candidates are interested and will be sending resumes.
- b. Dave is willing to take on Presidency for one year, with Dennis stepping into the Vice President role. We will need to fill the Secretary role.

#### H. Treasurer's Report (Thea)

- a. Initial 2024 budget was reviewed and discussed.
- b. Increasing the tax levy by \$5,000 was discussed, but not voted on.

#### **Adjournment – Motion to adjourn the meeting.**

Moved by: Dave

Seconded: Dennis

Action: Carried

Meeting adjourned at 7:23 pm