



Library Board of Trustees Meeting – APPROVED 3/19/2024  
*February 27, 2024, via videoconference and in person*

**ATTENDEES:**

*Presiding Officers:*

- Mari Harris, President
- Charlie Pensabene, Vice-President
- Camie Engel, Secretary
- Katie Sheehan, Treasurer
- Nichole Krisanda, Trustee
- Amanda Miller, Trustee
- Michael Poost, Trustee

*Library staff, Community Partners & Members of the Public:*

- Jill Dugas Hughes, Library Director
- Jenna Schmonsky, Administrative Assistant
- Jim McHugh, Town of East Greenbush
- Liz Reyner, Friends of the East Greenbush Community Library
- Robert Gramuglia, Auditor (exited at 7:24 p.m.)
- Nicholas Gramuglia, Auditor (exited at 7:24 p.m.)

A Library Board of Trustees meeting of the East Greenbush Community Library was held on February 27, 2024, at the East Greenbush Community Library and was livestreamed. It began at 7:01 p.m. and was presided over by Mari Harris, President, with Camie Engel as Secretary. The meeting was recorded.

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Ms. Harris called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

**REVIEW OF AGENDA:**

There will be an additional new business item and an unfinished business item.

**2023 AUDIT PRESENTATION:**

Messrs. Robert and Nicholas Gramuglia (Bryans & Gramuglia CPAs, LLC) presented their audit of the financial statements of the East Greenbush Community Library for fiscal year 2023. They highlighted the Library’s use of the modified cash basis of accounting method. Their audit included reviews of internal controls and significant risk areas, along with transaction testing. The audit noted no significant deficiencies and determined that the financial statements

maintained and presented by the Library are representative of the financial assets, liabilities, and net assets in accordance with the modified cash basis of accounting.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

None

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Ms. Harris thanked Ms. Miller for doing the Minutes for January.

**MOTION #2024-02-08:** Mr. Poost made the motion to approve the minutes from the January 22, 2024 Library Board meeting, as presented. Seconded by Mr. Pensabene. The motion was carried with 7 in favor, none opposed.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:**

Ms. Sheehan presented the financials for the period January 11, 2024 – February 20, 2024. Overall, the Library is in good standing. Noteworthy expenses included payment for the 2023 financial statement audit and the NYLA membership which is due March 1. Notable expenses in the Off-Warrant included one desktop computer, three laptops, furniture and supplies, and the annual Employee Assistant Program fee.

The Budget Committee meetings will be held on May 2, May 9, and May 30 starting at 3:00 p.m. Ms. Harris announced that the Budget Committee will be established at the March Board meeting.

**MOTION #2024-02-09:** Ms. Miller made a motion to accept the Off-Warrant in the amount of **\$186,852.03** for the period January 11, 2024 through February 20, 2024 as presented. Seconded by Mr. Pensabene. The motion was carried with 7 in favor, none opposed.

**MOTION #2024-02-10:** Ms. Engel made a motion to authorize the President to sign the Warrant dated February 20, 2024 through February 20, 2024 in the amount of **\$34,156.54** as presented. Seconded by Ms. Sheehan. The motion was carried with 7 in favor, none opposed.

**MOTION #2024-02-11:** Ms. Sheehan made a motion to approve the February 20, 2024 Financials with 14% of the year completed as presented. Seconded by Ms. Miller. The motion was carried with 7 in favor, none opposed.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS:

### **Administrative:** (Ms. Sheehan) – February 5, 2024

Ms. Miller questioned if the fine free report was available. Ms. Sheehan verified that the fine free report was provided by Ms. Dugas Hughes and reviewed at the Administrative Committee meeting. A summary of the fine free report is included in the Administrative Committee minutes. After going fine free, the Library saw an increase in membership and circulation, improved access for community members, positive impact on customer relations, and minimal impact on materials return rates. While the financial impact is about \$11,000.00, going fine free has allowed staff to reallocate their time and productivity to other areas. The committee recommended that the Board remove the \$1.00 charge for faxing, given the favorable result of going fine free and that fax income is nominal.

The Administrative Committee plans to discuss the construction project at their next meeting.

Ms. Sheehan amended the committee minutes and clarified that the March committee meeting will be extended to provide training to Trustees on financial terms and definitions. On March 4, the Services Committee will meet from 5:30-6:30 p.m., followed by the Trustee training from 6:30-7:00 p.m., followed by the Administrative Committee from 7:00-8:00 p.m.

**MOTION #2024-02-12:** The Administrative Committee made a motion to remove \$1 per page for faxes effective March 1, 2024. Seconded by Ms. Engel. The motion was carried with 7 in favor, none opposed.

### **Services:** (Ms. Miller) – February 12, 2024

#### **Little Free Libraries Update:**

- The library is transitioning ownership of the Little Free Libraries to another entity and will remove them from the library's insurance.
- The Kiwanis Club has expressed interest in taking over the Little Free Libraries and has insurance coverage.
- The library will assist in the transition process, and the new owners will decide the location of the libraries.
- The transfer process involves updating ownership details on the Little Free Library website.

#### **Staff Manual Project:**

- The committee is reviewing the contents of the staff manual, and discussions will commence in the next meeting.
- Developing the staff manual is a major priority for the library this year.

### Equity Challenge Grant:

- The library is considering participating in the Equity Challenge Grant offered by Upper Hudson.
- The grant aims to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion within the organization, aligning with its strategic goals.
- Tasks outlined in the grant include community engagement, recruitment of diverse candidates, and board learning modules.
- This would be an opportunity to receive funding for activities already planned and aligning with the library's strategic plan.
- The challenge starts April 2024 and runs through December 2026.

**MOTION #2024-02-13:** The Services Committee made a motion to de-accession the two Little Free Libraries. Seconded by Ms. Krisanda. The motion was carried with 7 in favor, none opposed.

**MOTION #2024-02-14:** The Services Committee made a motion to have the EG Library Board complete the Board Learning and Recruitment module from the UHLS Equity Challenge. Seconded by Mr. Pensabene. The motion was carried with 7 in favor, none opposed.

### DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Ms. Dugas Hughes presented the February Director's report and highlighted the following:

- The report reflected statistics comparing 2023 to pre-pandemic levels, noting that while physical circulation numbers for adult books had not fully returned to pre-pandemic levels, children's numbers had surpassed them.
- Significant increases were seen in digital resources, eBooks, audiobooks, and databases.
- The drive-through window visits have increased.

### Winter Reading Challenge:

- Participation was analyzed, with a focus on the theme of "Stay Cozy."
- The most complete activity was reading a book while enjoying a hot beverage, indicating that participants embraced the theme of enjoying themselves at home.
- The challenge was also used to highlight resources available from the library, such as Consumer Reports, Hoopla, and Libby.
- Adult Winter Reading registration numbers were reported, with 133 registrants in the previous year and 189 registrants in the current year, marking the highest participation ever for the winter reading challenge.

### **NYS Annual Reports:**

- There were some minor edits to the 2023 NYS Annual Report, including updating information about current trustees, provided by Ms. Dugas Hughes.
- Extension was granted for the NYS Comptroller's AUD Report: due 4/30/2024.

### **Library Closure and Communication:**

- Recently, there was an unplanned library closure due to a maintenance issue related to a sewage smell.
- There was a discussion about communication strategies during such incidents and the importance of having a designated spokesperson for the board to ensure consistent messaging.
- Patrons will be encouraged to sign up for the Library mailing list to receive an email and updates when an unforeseen event occurs at/for the Library.

### **Capital Projects and State Construction Grant:**

- A small committee which is comprised of: Ms. Dugas Hughes, Ms. Schmonsky, Ms. Geurds, Mr. Poost, Mr. Pensabene, and Architect, Mr. Stasack from Hyman Hayes Associates is working on the construction phase planning and hiring of a construction manager.
- Meetings are held weekly.
- An application was submitted to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). This is for buildings that are 50 years or older or that require work that is greater than 10 feet outside of the building's perimeter.
- There may be delays and challenges related to grant approval processes and fund distribution.
- Discussed request for additional construction funding from Assembly Member John McDonald and its restrictions as it relates to the capital project.

### **PERSONNEL MEMORANDUM:**

Staffing is almost at 100%.

Ms. Dugas Hughes presented a Personnel Memo. Under "Provisional Appointment", there is a date correction for Ms. Susan Fox. Ms. Fox will be starting on March 4, not April 4, 2024.

**MOTION #2024-02-15:** Mr. Poost made a motion to approve the Personnel Memorandum dated February 27, 2024, as amended. Seconded by Mr. Pensabene. The motion was carried with 7 in favor, none opposed.

### **LIAISON REPORTS:**

#### **Friends of East Greenbush Community Library:**

Ms. Reyner reported that the Friends met on February 20 to discuss the upcoming Spring Book Sale which will be held April 12-14. The Membership tiers have been changed and one of the benefits for a certain tier is to offer a Friends preview sale the night before the book sale starts. The Friends were pleased to satisfy four grants for the Library, totaling approximately \$14,000.00, for four different programming areas. The Friends are looking at different ways to raise funds. The raffle baskets continue to be popular along with the in-house book sales and seasonal sales. The Friends are partnering with Kiwanis and others to do an Easter Egg Hunt.

**Town of East Greenbush:**

The Board welcomed Mr. Jim McHugh!

Mr. McHugh started in January and informed the Board if they have any questions, concerns, or things to highlight to reach out to him.

**Rensselaer County:**

No report

**Upper Hudson Library System:**

No report

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**NYS Annual Report for 2023**

**MOTION #2024-02-16:** Mr. Poost made a motion to approve the NYS Annual Report for 2023 as corrected. Seconded by Ms. Miller. The motion was carried with 7 in favor, none opposed.

**Final Audit for 2023**

**MOTION #2024-02-17:** Ms. Engel made a motion to approve the final audit for year-end December 31, 2023, as edited. Seconded by Mr. Poost. The motion was carried with 7 in favor, none opposed.

**LEADERSHIP TRAINING**

Ms. Harris and Ms. Dugas Hughes attended a UHLS CORE Library Leadership Training that highlighted the following:

**Ground Rules for Meetings:**

It was suggested to establish ground rules for meetings to make them more effective in managing time and discussions.



The Services Committee will work on creating these ground rules and present them to the board for adoption.

**Time Frame for Agenda Items:**

Another suggestion was to allocate specific time frames for each agenda item to manage time effectively during meetings. This will provide clarity to both presenters and attendees about the duration of discussions.

Time frames will be added to the board agenda starting in March.

**Succession Planning**

There was a discussion about succession planning for the board and other affiliated groups like the Community Advisory Council. It was proposed to create a list similar to the one used during the Strategic Planning process to identify potential trustees or council members. Ms. Dugas Hughes will develop a template in TEAMS; trustees encouraged to contribute ideas and suggestions for potential candidates.

**Promotion for Library Voting**

The library has historically come in second place in the “Times Union Best of the Capital Region Vote”. It was suggested to increase promotion efforts, including using signage and email blasts, to encourage more votes and potentially secure the top spot.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

The library plans to include a blurb in the upcoming newsletter regarding trustee vacancies. There are two vacancies expected at the end of the year, possibly sooner. The purpose of the announcement is to attract potential candidates to fill the vacancies. Since there are only three newsletters per year, it's crucial to advertise in this newsletter; the following newsletter will be after the elections.

**ADJOURN:**

**MOTION #2024-02-18:** Motion to adjourn the February 27, 2024 Board meeting was made by Ms. Krisanda at 8:47 p.m. Seconded by Ms. Sheehan. The motion was carried with 7 in favor, none opposed.

Recorded by, Jenna Schmonsky, Administrative Assistant  
Respectfully submitted, Camie Engel, Secretary