

SUFFERN FREE LIBRARY  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
REGULAR MEETING  
April 22, 2025

**Regular Meeting Called to Order:**

President Craig H. Long called the Regular Meeting to order at 7:37 p.m. A quorum was present.

Trustees Present: Craig H. Long, Warren E. Berbit, Donalee Berard, Karen Bash-Romaner, Pamela Hess, Michael Minevich, Mark Murphy, Mario F. Pensa

Absent and Excused: Erb Cooper

Staff Present: Darlene Alessi, Director

Public Present: None.

**MINUTES**

*Review of the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of March 25, 2025*

**MOTION**

A motion was made by Donalee Berard, seconded by Karen Bash-Romaner to accept the *Minutes of the Regular Meeting of March 25, 2025*. Motion carried unanimously.

**Financial Report –Donalee Berard**

Treasurer Donalee Berard reported from the Treasurer's FY July 2024 through March 2025 Financial Statement. (Statement attached).

- Checking account reported at \$662,722.
- CD maturing dates are as follows:
  - ~\$1,412,942 –4/25/25
  - ~\$800,000 –6/17/25
  - ~\$600,000 –8/15/25
- Debt Service funds at \$387,428.
- Small funds at \$ 32,868.
- NFS account at \$2,890,401 down by \$34,000 from prior month.
- Income YTD is \$3,332,563.
- Expenses YTD 1,960,274.
- Interest Income YTD \$59,544, budgeted at \$30,000.
- Most line items are within the 75% mark at this time.

Trustee Michael Minevich commented on the conservative investment strategy, noting that it has proven effective in minimizing losses.

**MOTION**

A motion was made by Mark Murphy, seconded by Mario F. Pensa, and carried to accept the Treasurer's Financial Report as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

## **Director's Report – Darlene Alessi**

The Director referred to her written report. (Report attached).

In addition, Director Darlene Alessi reported on the following:

- The centennial celebration is scheduled for June 12-13, 2026, with Friday focused on speakers, local history room tours, and refreshments. Saturday featuring family activities, food trucks, bouncy houses, and story time in the gazebo.
- Updates on the new website design, due to go live by the end of May.
- The adult space renovations include new shelving for the local history room funded by the Masonic Guild, communal seating, enlarged teen space, a learning lab and enclosed individual study rooms.

The Director emphasized the importance of making the adult space functional and user-friendly for patrons.

The Director announced that at the November 2024 Board meeting, Trustee Michael Minevich asked for a follow-up regarding passport services at the Library. The response to the inquiry from *U.S. Department of State* was that we are not eligible.

Secretary Karen Bash-Romaner suggested for the centennial celebration, adding a Sunday event, which Darlene agreed to discuss with the Woman's Club and staff.

## **Committee Reports:**

### **~Building and Grounds –Mario F. Pensa**

- HVAC Project

Trustee Mario F. Pensa announced that *OLA Consulting Engineers* have not submitted updated mechanical and electrical drawings.

### **~Finance Committee –Warren E. Berbit, Mario F. Pensa, Donalee Berard**

Treasurer Donalee Berard reported on the Finance Committee's discussion, including the decision to whether or not withdraw the interest from the \$1.4 million CD coming due.

Secretary Karen Bash-Romaner raised concerns about TD Bank's involvement in money laundering, prompting a discussion about whether to switch banks.

Treasurer Donalee Berard explained the challenges of finding a new bank that would accept a 501(c)(3) Association Library that would provide government type accounts and the potential costs of switching banks.

A long discussion followed. The Board decided to have Madalen Klein make inquiries to other Board approved banks to explore options.

### **~Personnel Committee –Warren E. Berbit, Karen Bash-Romaner, Michael Minevich**

Nothing to report.

~**Policy Committee** –Erb Cooper, Karen Bash-Romaner

Nothing to report.

~**LRP Committee** -Michael Minevich, Mark Murphy

Trustee Michael Minevich reported that the LRP Committee recently met to review the Library's main goals and objectives to determine what has been accomplished and what to achieve and implement in the future.

Trustee Mark Murphy reported that the Committee talked about the importance of LRP transparency on certain projects that should be accessible to the public via the Library's website.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

~Board of Trustees Monthly Meeting Time Discussion

President Craig H. Long followed up on the proposed changes of the Regular meeting time from 7:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. conversed at the March Board Meeting.

The Board discussed and debated in-depth the merits of starting meetings earlier versus later, with some members preferring 6:30 p.m. and others advocating for 7:00 p.m. and with some members expressing willingness to revisit the issue in the future.

### **MOTION #1**

Trustee Mark Murphy moved, seconded by Secretary Karen Bash-Romaner to start the Regular Meetings of the Board of Trustees at 6:30 p.m. A brief discussion followed.

Vote: Roll Call Vote:

- 3 Ayes
- 3 Nays
- 1 Abstention
- President voted no

**Motion** defeated.

### **MOTION #2**

Vice President Warren E. Berbit moved, seconded by Trustee Michael Minevich to start the Regular Meetings of the Board of Trustees at 7:00 p.m. A brief discussion followed.

Vote: Roll Call Vote:

- 3 Ayes
- 3 Nays
- 1 Abstention
- President voted no

**Motion** defeated.

**MOTION #3**

Trustee Mario F. Pensa moved, seconded by Trustee Mark Murphy to start the Regular Meetings of the Board of Trustees at 6:30 p.m. A brief discussion followed.

Vote: Roll Call Vote:

- 3 Ayes
- 4 Nays
- 1 Abstention

**Motion** defeated.

**MOTION #4**

Trustee Michael Minevich moved, seconded by Vice President Warren E. Berbit to start the Regular meeting of the Board of Trustees at 7:00 p.m.

Vote: Roll Call Vote:

- 5 Ayes

**Outcome: Motion** passed.

President Craig H. Long announced that the May 27, 2025 meeting will start at 7:00 p.m. The Library's By-Laws will be updated to reflect the time change of the Regular Meetings.

**NEW BUSINESS**

None.

**MOTION**

A motion was made by Mark Murphy, seconded by Karen Bash-Romaner to adjourn the Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees at 8:34 p.m. Motion approved.

Respectfully Submitted,

Karen Bash-Romaner, Secretary