

THE NEW CANAAN LIBRARY, INC
MINUTES OF ANNUAL MEETING OF MEMBERS

SEPTEMBER 28, 2022
Held via zoom webinar format

The Annual Meeting of The New Canaan Library, Inc was called to order at 6:00pm on September 28, 2022, by Robert Butman, President. The meeting was held via zoom video.

Present: Rachel D. Baker, Robert E. Butman, Sarah O'Herron Casey, Maya Frey, William J. Fox, Deborah S. Gordon, Crawford Hamilton, Ian Hobbs, Robert F. Lowe, Thomas Joyce, Victoria Merwin, Fatou Niang, David Rucci, Christine Seaver, Thomas D. Teles, Eileen S. Thomas, Anne W. Tseng, Alicia Wyckoff, Peter Ziesing

Absent: Jonathan Barry, Gary D. Engle, Christopher O'Connor

Staff: Lisa Oldham, Ellen Crovatto, Stacey Smith

Member Action Summary

The following items of business were unanimously approved by the Members:

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Members held on September 14, 2021 as presented

Election of Trustees

Ratification of the Amended and Restated Bylaws

Welcome and Call to Order

Robert E. Butman, President of the Board of Trustees, welcomed those present to the Library's 144th Annual Meeting of Members, calling the meeting to order at approximately 6:05 pm.

Minutes of the 2021 Annual Meeting

As the first order of Business, Mr. Butman requested the Secretary, Deborah Gordon, to address the approval of the minutes of the 2021 Annual Meeting of Members. Deborah Gordon presented the minutes of the September 14, 2021 Annual Meeting of Members, noting that they had been posted to the Library's website and made available to attendees for review. In the interest of time, Ms. Gordon made an initial motion to waive the reading of the minutes. The motion was seconded, and following a vote, the motion was declared unanimously passed. Ms. Gordon followed with a motion for the approval of the minutes of the Annual Meeting of Members held on September 14, 2021 in the form presented. The motion was seconded and unanimously carried.

Treasurer's Report

Mr. Butman then stated that the Annual Meeting gives the Library's Board and staff the opportunity to update members on the state of the Library and called on the Treasurer, Thomas D. Teles, to provide the Financial Report for fiscal year ending June 30, 2022. Mr. Teles reported that the library is doing well and is in excellent financial standing. He then proceeded to summarize the Library's preliminary unaudited financial results for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2022, highlighting the following:

- Based on preliminary unaudited financials for fiscal year 2022, total support and income is \$3.35 million. This is roughly a 6.3% increase over fiscal year 2021. Collectively, the Annual Appeal, fundraising events and designated giving generated \$880,000, which exceeded our budgeted goals by 20%. These results were above expectations and once again we can thank the generosity of our donors. Generating these results are harder and harder to duplicate year after year and it is only due to our dedicated staff, trustees and volunteers that we are able to do so. We look to continue this momentum into Fiscal year 2023.
- Total expenses amounted to \$3.3 million, which was greater than last year by 8.8%. This increase was largely a result of compensation expenses and unbudgeted administrative expenses.
- For Fiscal 2022, anticipate a surplus of approximately \$11,000.
- Pleased to report that the Capital and Endowment Fund balances are both healthy. The capital fund balance is \$745,824 and our Endowment Fund has a balance of \$1.54 million which is down \$200K due to market fluctuations. Combined, these funds are critical to the future of our Library.

Thomas Teles wrapped up his statement by thanking our contract accountant, Caroline Giannitti and the library's financial and administration manager, Reed Collyer, for their invaluable support and hard work over the past year. Caroline's accounting expertise, timely preparation of monthly financials and oversight of the annual audit process, has facilitated the carrying out of the responsibilities of Treasurer and I am grateful for her assistance.

President's Remarks

Robert Butman noted that the Fiscal 2022 was a notable year marked by two major developments. First, the library resumed normal operating conditions after a prolonged pandemic in 2021 which restricted access to our building and limited our ability to provide programming and services onsite. Secondly, we began construction on a new, state of the art building that will be our home for the next 50 years and beyond. It represented a milestone for our institution after 15 years of planning and provided a new sense of optimism and excitement for library patrons and the future of lifelong learning in our community. Furthermore, he was pleased to report that under less than ideal circumstances, the Library continued to perform extremely well based on a number of metrics that we follow closely.

Despite the obstacles of limited access and ongoing construction, the Library had the following highlights last year:

- More than 23,000 adults, teens and children attended in-person and virtually, over 870 programs including author talks, lectures, storytimes, writing and art workshops, STEM learning and more.

- 2022 saw total Circulation increase by 7.5% while circulation of print only materials increased 14% and circulation to teens increased by 9% from the previous year.

- In addition, the Summer Reading 2022 Program had 1048 children & teens participate, which surpassed the 2019 pre-pandemic number of 893.

Bob stated that we were able to accomplish these and many other routine tasks during this period of transition by having a remarkable library staff, who, despite the limits of our existing building, make all this activity happen every single day. They are dedicated professionals and we appreciate their hard work, innovation, intellect and good cheer.

Secondly, the Library has a tremendous group of board members and volunteers, who along with the generous donors from the community and the Town of New Canaan support the Library whole-heartedly.

Our Board of Trustees are truly a working board and they are extremely engaged. Last year we added 1 new member and expanded the size of the Board to 22 members. We also instituted

another matching grant program for the Annual Fund which raised more than \$100,000 in outside contributions during the last quarter of the FY21. This initiative was extremely successful and brought the total fundraising for the Annual Fund to over [\$500,000] for the complete fiscal year.

Of course, any discussion of the Library would be incomplete without addressing what is certainly the most significant and important accomplishment at the Library in generations – the beginning of construction of a new \$40 million building. This project is really the culmination of more than a decade of leadership, planning and hard work by the Library Board. It is a thoughtful, well-conceived design that integrates a beautiful, modern, energy efficient Library with an open green space. It is a library designed for the 21st century and beyond, not the past. It is a building designed to achieve the library's programmatic goals for the future. Most importantly, it is a building designed not only for the way we learn today but also one that is flexible and continues to meet New Canaan's needs for generations to come.

After seven months on the job, our construction manager (Turner Construction) has completed roughly 40% of the project and is on time to finish the building by early 2023. So far, all work is tracking on time and on budget with most of the building's infrastructure and site work now completed.

Bob highlighted the numerous milestones in this project that were achieved last year, and below are several of the most important:

- Under the guidance and leadership of Ellen Crovatto, Lisa Oldham and Alicia Wyckoff, the Capital Campaign raised another \$10 million in pledges during FY22 bringing the total fundraising to date to \$32 million, including the Town's grant of \$10 million.
- Dede and Jim Barnett gave a leadership gift of \$3 million to name the new 300 person auditorium.
- The library presented plans to P&Z to move a portion of the existing building built in 1913 (encompassing 60 x 25 feet) to the west side of the property. These plans were presented as an alternative to demolishing this part of the existing library and were approved by P&Z last December. Centerbrook Architects is now designing specific plans to accomplish the move and secure the foundation and structure of this building in its new location.
- The library negotiated with Town to receive a Construction Loan of up to \$7 million to

finish the project on a timely basis. This loan will be paid off as donations are received over the next 5 years.

Bob summarized that it was a herculean task last year to navigate the approval process and start construction of the *New New Canaan Library*. It not only required the laser focus of the library staff and board to make it happen, but the hard work of many donors and volunteers who were unrelenting in their support.

Executive Director's Remarks

After introducing herself and welcoming the attendees, Lisa Oldham stated the following:

Regarding Adult Services and Partnerships:

- Since we've now been a construction site for the past 10 months, with access to our building somewhat less than ideal, we have expanded our partnership with the Lapham Center providing Tech Help and technology instruction to seniors there on a regular basis. Hundreds of seniors have participated. We've also partnered through out the warmer months with the YMCA and the municipality to provide outdoor movement classes at local parks.
- As our Board president mentioned, in FY 22 we saw the circulation of all our print materials start to rebound from the Covid period. Importantly our turnover rates throughout the collection are also very impressive, with our children's collection turning over 4 times more than the Connecticut average. This is an important measure of the health and quality of the collections and is testament to the very careful management by our specialist librarians to ensure that our materials are well aligned with our community's interests. While we sadly saw our longest serving librarian retire as Manager of Collections at the end of the year, I'm very pleased to report that we've promoted a very capable librarian who has also been working with our collections for the past 20 years into this very important role.
- When we move into the New library, we will have Automated Materials Handling which uses Radio Frequency ID technology and a robotic sorting system which will allow our team to spend more time on the frontlines of customer service. To prepare for this change, our Collections team has led a massive project to add almost 150,000 RFID tags into the books, a logistically complicated and time-consuming project. Our circulation and children's teams have shouldered the majority of this very labor-intensive project.
- As we shifted out of the all virtual programming environment of Covid, we nevertheless saw that our community emerged at differing rates from the pandemic and that even among those who were ready to attend in person, there was no appetite to go back into the Lamb room with its poor ventilation system and lack of windows. Our wonderful team, often in partnership with other local non-profits such as the LandTrust , the Historical Society and the Glass House, presented learning experiences in new spaces, often outdoors. We also continued our on-line programming offerings as well. In all, 10,500 adults enjoyed our programs in person or online.

Children's:

- In addition to all the adult learning, 15,000 New Canaan Children participated in learning programs this year! While there are so many things to share about our extraordinarily talented Families' team and the literacy and learning programs they delivered, it is the community partnerships that I'll focus on tonight. Our Families team is very attuned to our young members and their families who were experiencing 'Zoom fatigue' by the start of the year, but were not enthusiastic about congregating in the current library's poorly ventilated, always cold and often leaking Children's spaces. So for the 650 programs we presented this year, very many were innovative, collaborations at outdoor locations. Partners include: New Canaan Parks & Recreation, New Canaan Cares, the Land Trust, Farmers' Market, New Comer, New Canaan Garden Clubs and both the Norwalk and Stamford Symphony Orchestras. In all but the very coldest weeks of winter, we held story times outside on the Library front lawn and at other outdoor venues in town.

Fundraising:

- We significantly exceeded our fundraising targets of \$735,000 in FY 22. The annual Literary Lunch is the largest event in our annual fundraising calendar and last year, it netted \$231,000. These funds pay for the collections, programs, and services that our community expects. They also pay for the repairs and maintenance of our building- an increasingly costly exercise in this building, as well as funding the many other costs to deliver the level of service our community deserves.
- in addition to raising funds to pay for the ongoing services, we have also been in a Capital Campaign for the past several years. Under the leadership of Ellen Crovatto and with the support of our Campaign chairs and the rest of our trustees, we raised another \$10M in gifts and pledges. All of this has come from very generous families of this wonderful community! Additionally, the Town of New Canaan made a generous one-time grant investing in this important and exceptionally well used community asset. At the end of the year, Ellen and team ran an incredibly successful 'campaign within the campaign' that saw 300 people inscribe a chair in our new auditorium and raising over \$300,000.
- To complete the new Library project, we have an further \$5 Million to raise and we are very hopeful that the rest of the community will come forward in support, to get this wonderful new community space finished. I encourage you to go to newcanaanewlibrary.org to learn more and to contact my colleague Ellen Crovatto or myself.

New Library:

- The year ending June 22 was momentous for the Library. We started the year still enmeshed in a 6-month Planning and Zoning process that ultimately saw our project approved along with an exceptional and significant compromise on the part of the library to retain the roughly 1200 square foot original library building. There was a great deal of public discussion about this section of the building and the Library has embraced the changes to the plan that were directed by the P&Z, and will be moving this small original section onto new foundations on the site sometime next year.
- These changes will of course incur additional costs and we are hopeful that the honorable people who valiantly worked to ensure this compromise will now come forward to help fund its execution.
- Following on from the P&Z approvals, we awaited the building permits for several months and finally broke ground in November. Since then, it has been full steam ahead. If you are interested, you can watch a time-lapse of the project by going to our live

building cam link from the Library's website
<https://www.newcanaannewlibrary.org/project-webcam>

- With three months to go and an average of 80 workers on the site daily, the building is changing incredibly rapidly. Some interior spaces are sheet rocked and painted already. The beautiful stonework is well underway with master stonemasons carefully cutting and laying the Connecticut stone from early morning till late every day.
- We anticipate opening our doors to the new library early in February! Meanwhile there is a tremendous amount of work for our team and the Turner team to ensure that both the services and collections AND the new building are ready!

Election of Trustees

Robert Butman then indicated that the meeting would proceed to the business agenda and called upon Eileen Thomas, the Chair of the Governance Committee, to address the election of the Trustees.

Ms. Thomas stated that she had been asked to present this year's nominees for election to the Library's Board of Trustees, both those whose initial terms have expired (either this year or last) and who have been nominated for election to a second three year term, and those who had been recently elected to the Board to fill vacancies.

Board members who are renewing three-year term (2022/23 to 2025/6):

Rachel Baker
Sarah Casey
Deborah Gordon

Board members who are renewing for a one-year term extension (2022/23-2023/24):

Bob Butman
Christine Seaver
Maya Rao

Board members completing board terms:

Anda Hutchins (served from 2016 to 2022; this was her second 6 year term as Trustee)

Proposed Slate of Officers for FY 2022/23:

President: Bob Butman
Vice-President: Christine Seaver
Vice-President: Eileen Thomas
Treasurer: Tom Teles
Secretary: Deborah Gordon

Deborah Gordon made a motion that those named above whose terms have expired be elected to the Board of Trustees to serve for a second three-year term. The motion was duly seconded and unanimously approved.

Christine Seaver made a motion that the members present ratify the election of those recently elected to the Board to fill vacancies. The motion was duly seconded and unanimously approved.

Eileen Thomas declared the election of such Trustees duly ratified.

Ratification of Amendments and Restatement of the Library's Bylaws

Concluding the business portion of the meeting, Deborah Gordon called for a motion to ratify the amended and restated Bylaws. The motion was duly seconded and unanimously passed.

Adjournment

Robert Butman then moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion having been seconded and unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 6:48 pm.

Mr. Butman announced that the Question and Answer feature on the zoom webinar was activated for those who would like to ask submit questions.

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah Gordon
Secretary