

**CLINTON-ESSEX-FRANKLIN LIBRARY SYSTEM**  
**Minutes for Board of Trustees Regular Meeting**  
**Held January 25, 2016**

**Call to Order**

The Board of Trustees meeting was called to order at 4:29 p.m. on Monday, January 25, 2016 at the Clinton-Essex-Franklin Library System, 33 Oak Street, Plattsburgh, New York, by Charles “Kip” Thompson, President.

**Oath of Office**

The Oath of Office was administered to Charles “Kip” Thompson as President by Mary “Elise” (Lisa) Minnich, Treasurer.

Kip then administered the Oath of Office to Lisa Minnich as Treasurer, Gary Alexander as Secretary and Emily Castine as Member-at-Large. He also administered the Oath of Office as trustee to James “Jim” Bennett and Phyllis Magnus as a new trustee representing Essex County.

**Roll Call**

Present: Gary Alexander, James “Jim” Bennett, Emily Castine, Wallace “Wally” Day, Dorothy Latta, Phyllis Magnus, Thomas “Tom” Mandeville, Scott McDonald, Mary “Lisa” Minnich and Charles “Kip” Thompson

Present at Schroon Lake Public Library: Fran Filshie

Excused Absences: Nicole “Nicky” Bryant and Rita Quinn

Staff Present: Ewa Jankowska, Executive Director; Dawn Recore, Administrative Assistant; and Michael Spofford, Finance Manager

Others Present: Anne de la Chappelle, Director, Plattsburgh Public Library

**Consent Agenda**

Lisa Minnich motioned approval of Consent Agenda, containing the following items, seconded by Wally Day.

- **Approval of Excused Absences**
- **Approval of Agenda**
- **Approval of Minutes of November 23, 2015 Meeting**
- **Committee Reports** – Advocacy, Development, Executive, Finance, Health Plan, Negotiating, Nominating, Personnel, Property and Strategic Planning Committees have no reports at this time.
- **CEFDA Report**

Motion carried unanimously.

## **Financial Reports**

Lisa Minnich motioned approval of the Financial Reports prepared by Michael Spofford as presented, seconded by Emily Castine.

The following Financial Reports were provided for review prior to this meeting:

- Over and Under Report for period ending November 2015
- Budget-to-Date as of November 30, 2015
- Balance Sheet as of November 30, 2015
- Revenues vs. Expenditures Comparison for November and Fiscal Year-to-Date
- Grants/Non-Current Aid Report as of November 30, 2015
- Preliminary Over and Under Report for period ending December 2015
- Preliminary Budget-to-Date as of December 31, 2015
- Preliminary Balance Sheet as of December 31, 2015
- Preliminary Revenue vs. Expenditures as of December 31, 2015
- Preliminary Grants/Non-Current Aids Status Report as of December 31, 2015

Michael Spofford stated that the packet includes the November reports as well as the preliminary December reports. He pointed out that the first item in the Preliminary Over and Under Report for period ending December 2015 is a Prepaid Expense that on the Balance Sheet is a little over \$200,000. Usually at the end of the year, Prepaid Expenses are down to about \$180,000. Michael will be doing a reconciliation that will decrease that account and basically increase expenditures accordingly, as they were included in the approved budget and the amended budget.

Michael reported that the remaining funding the State for 2015, about \$21,000, was received in January. That funding has been released to the member libraries.

Kip Thompson pointed out that many line items are under spent, which is a very nice way to begin a budget year. He commended the staff and announced that we are entering the year with a fair amount more cash than was had at this time last year. This helps to enable CEFLS to make it through August or September when State funding is actually received.

Michael stated that there is approximately \$50,000 in funded reserves that will be moved into the money market account. Having funded reserves means that when unexpected expenses occur, there will be cash in the bank. Ewa mentioned for the benefit of those who were not here years ago that for years CEFLS had to borrow money because although the fiscal year begins January 1, State funding oftentimes has been delayed until August or September. For years we have worked to fund a reserve so that borrowing and paying interest rates would not be necessary. CEFLS also has a line-of-credit at the bank in the event of the unexpected.

The motion to approve the Financial Reports as presented carried unanimously.

## **Public Comment Period**

Anne de la Chappelle apologized for having missed a couple of meetings.

## **Communications**

Dawn Recore read a thank you letter from Barbara Stowe for the gift card she received in November from the Board of Trustees and the plant she received in December when a member of her family passed away. Barbara stated that she enjoyed her years on the Board and working with the staff. She served as a trustee of the CEF Library System for more than 10 years.

## **President's Remarks**

Kip Thompson stated that a year ago he had hoped that we could find a way to provide some money as a cushion for CEFLS for the inevitable periods when New York State has tough financial times because that is when they cut budgets. He wanted to have a properly invested fund. He has now pretty much given up on the investment idea but is thinking of a couple of new ones; first, a fund that at least initially would be just a cash fund, and second, development of a Friends of the Library group, similar to what Schroon Lake Public Library has. In years past, the CEFLS Board was fortunate to have had individuals who served for 10 or more years and were terrific advocates. They knew their county representatives and were comfortable speaking with them. He would like to ask Schroon Lake to help us to build up a CEFLS Friends group and have some fund raisers in anticipation of tough financial times ahead. The Friends could also do advocacy and assist when CEFLS has programs or attends community functions so that less staff time would be utilized. Kip is also interested in the possibility of having some sort of foundation that would sponsor library programs. He asked the Board to think about these ideas and be prepared to offer input at a future meeting, probably in April.

Kip is interested in implementing a board evaluation instrument so that at or close to year end, trustees could fill out a (multiple choice) questionnaire and they talk among themselves about how they think they are doing as a board. He has used such a tool with other boards and finds it very useful to determine if they are organized appropriately, focusing on the right priorities, and providing trustees with an opportunity to share ideas. Kip would like Ewa Jankowska to look around at other Systems for good evaluation instruments. If they are not using any, Kip will put one together with our Board, based knowledge from past experiences.

At some point, probably in May, Kip would like Jim Bennett to provide a little presentation on a new set of procedures, called Sturgis, which could potentially replace Robert's Rules of Order. Jim offered that Sturgis is used by many professional associations, including the American Library Association. He said that at one time ALA had 26 amendments to a resolution and had to dig themselves out one by one to get back to the main resolution. He feels that Sturgis is a friendlier approach, whereby you discuss things for a set amount of time, then formulate a resolution that has more consensus. Kip would like the Board to become educated on Sturgis and if it is liked, it can be voted in to replace Robert's Rules of Order.

Kip reminded trustees of the importance of responding when RSVPs are requested to determine a quorum for meetings. A quorum is required in order to conduct business and fulfill obligations put on us by the State Library through which State funding flows. Lisa Minnich added that we do not want trustees traveling to get here, sometimes in unpleasant weather, only to find out that there is no quorum.

## **Director's Report**

In addition to her written report, Ewa Jankowska reported on the following:

Anne de la Chappelle and Ewa have met with Jean Curry and John McCarthy, the planners of the LTA Institute that will be held for two days in Plattsburgh in early May. Ewa explained to them that it is challenging to get member library trustees to attend events even if they are free. Since LTA Institute has expenses, necessitating an associated fee, attendance could be a very challenging matter. Ewa expressed that she would like the fee to be less than \$100.

North Country and Southern Adirondack Library Systems will hopefully participate in LTA Institute in some way. We are working on some grants that we might be able to use to help make a nice display and we have been asked if we could prepare a basket for a lottery.

Terry Kirchner, Director of Westchester Library System, has been asked to provide a seminar at LTA. He and Ewa have decided that director's evaluation and board self-evaluation would be good topics. Terry has a PhD in Human Organization Systems and an MBA in Organizational Psychology so is very well qualified to do such a seminar.

Jean Curry and John McCarthy asked if CEFLS could make some award nominations. Every year LTA gives the Wilma Moore Award, which is a trustee of-the-year award, and a Friend-of-the-Library Award. Nomination forms are on the LTA website and the deadline is February 26.

Julie Wever and Ewa met with Kara Page, the fund raiser at The Wild Center. Kara was instrumental in providing the very popular free passes that CEFLS and member libraries received a few years ago. CEFLS has some money left over from a past grant when Kara provided a seminar on fund raising, so Ewa has asked Kara to help in a strategic planning exercise to begin soon to assist with preparation of a new five-year plan of service that will be due at the beginning of October. Ewa provided Kara with the Aspen Library Dialogue, a great resource of library trends from the Aspen Institute. Ewa envisions the exercise to involve looking at trends to see how they can be applied to member libraries, and then developing ways to help member libraries achieve goals related to the trends. Ewa welcomes and appreciates the participation of CEFLS trustees.

In order to prepare the CEFLS Annual Report, there is a member library survey that we distribute yearly. Survey responses provide many of the statistics needed to complete the annual report. So far, already 25 libraries have submitted their completed surveys.

Mooers Library has a great new Board and they are now looking for a new library director. Slowly they are getting their financial situation under control. Michael Spofford and Ewa have had many discussions with the new treasurer, Art Menard. What happened in Mooers brings to light that there could be other libraries who are handling their finances in a manner that is not appropriate. She stated that every year Michael reviews the annual reports of all the member libraries, but we are not able to go to each one to see how they do business, nor is it really expected of us because each one is autonomous. In the future, Michael and Ewa will be working on a seminar to better train member library directors and boards.

Ewa went on to say that Mooers had received several construction grants to build a new library for which they now have a shell of a building. If the Mooers Library closed, it is not known how the State would get back their money. Kip Thompson commented that there are two primary things on

which the State focuses; they do not want any conflicts of interest for directors and trustees, and they want to know that there is someone on the board that understands finances.

Flyers for the *Adopt an e-Book or e-Audiobook* fund raiser in conjunction with Adirondack Foundation have been distributed. Those who donate may adopt a title in honor or memory of a loved one. As of today, if \$25 more is donated, CEFLS will receive a check for \$250 over and above the total of the donations. Funds raised will be used to purchase fiction e-books for young adults.

Ewa requested help from the Property Committee and is hoping for additional trustees who have building and grounds experience to serve on the committee. She and Michael Spofford would like help prioritizing a list of projects because even after obtaining a construction grant, a 50 percent match by CEFLS would be required. The potential projects are many and among other things might include roof repair, filling in the tunnel between CEFLS and Plattsburgh Public Library, resurfacing the driveway and replacing carpeting. Anyone interested in serving on this committee should let Kip know after the meeting.

### **Plattsburgh Public Library (PPL) Report**

Anne de la Chappelle reported on the following topics:

The lighting at the front of PPL and along the stairway leading into the building was replaced by Murray Electric.

On February 1, work to replace the 45-year old elevator will begin and will take two to three months. It is a \$175,000 project, made possible by a 75-25 percent construction grant.

A new youth services librarian, Ben Carman, has been hired. He has taught high school English and most recently worked at Plattsburgh State.

There was an incident today with a homeless patron who was cutting up books. The police handled the situation very nicely and the patron was told to never come back.

The City budget was passed recently. They were really trying to stay within their tax cap yet they were way over budget. In working with them a few times, PPL gave up a few things but the City knows that the library has taken huge cuts over the last few years. Fortunately, Ben Carman was already on the books before the budget vote because all the other unfilled positions are going to be left unfilled. Also, overtime has been cut.

LTA representatives are providing more support for the LTA Institute in May than was originally thought, and with the other two Library Systems helping out, the Institute should be a great event.

This spring, PPL's Friends group is bringing in a speaker whose topic will be how to start a friends group and how to reinvigorate a group.

PPL has shifted a big part of their adult fiction budget to help purchase new fiction e-books.

CEFDA will be meeting on April 22 at PPL. Ewa Jankowska may be offering a workshop on makerspaces and there will be discussion regarding Kip Thompson's request in the fall for trustees of member libraries offering to dually serve on the CEFLS Board. Two of PPL's trustees are willing to

do so if there comes a need to fill a Clinton County seat. As far as filling the current Franklin County seat, Anne suggested that Pete Benson at Saranac Lake Free Library or someone at North Country Community College might be able to suggest someone.

### **Committee Reports**

There were no committee reports.

### **Old Business**

**Sunshine and Leadership Funds:** Emily Castine announced that the Sunshine Fund has been funded for 2016 by 100 percent of the members, with a current balance of more than \$300. The Leadership Fund is four trustees short of 100 percent participation. Emily stated that donations to Leadership can pay for the purchase of all types of books including e-books.

### **New Business**

Lisa Minnich motioned approval of Service Priorities 2016 as presented for review prior to this meeting, seconded by Gary Alexander. Motion carried unanimously.

Lisa Minnich motioned approval of Individuals and Institutions with Whom to Conduct Business in 2016 and Individuals to Conduct Business in 2016, seconded by Wally Day. Ewa Jankowska stated that approval of this document is done every year because trustees are required to sign a Conflict of Interest Statement. By reviewing the document, trustees can see where potential conflicts of interest might occur. Motion carried unanimously.

### **Executive Session**

Lisa Minnich motioned to enter into Executive Session at 5:27 p.m., seconded by Dorothy Latta, for the purpose of discussing the Director's Evaluation, salaries of Management Confidential Staff and upgrading of a staff position. Motion passed unanimously.

### **Return to Regular Session**

Emily Castine motioned to return to Regular Session at 6 p.m., seconded by Tom Mandeville.

Kip Thompson recapped Executive Session:

- Lisa Minnich motioned approval, seconded by Scott McDonald, to upgrade a staff position provisionally, with a raise as the staff member goes into the position. Motion carried unanimously.
- Dorothy Latta motioned approval, seconded by Phyllis Magnus, to provide Management Confidential Staff with a three percent raise with a one-time payment equivalent to what they received last year, retro to January 1<sup>st</sup>. Motion carried unanimously.
- Lisa Minnich will review with Ewa Jankowska the Board's thoughts with regard to her evaluation.

**Adjournment**

There being no further business to come before the Board, Kip Thompson adjourned the meeting at 6:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gary Alexander  
Secretary