

STARR LIBRARY  
68 WEST MARKET STREET  
RHINEBECK, NY 12572

NOTICE OF MEETING Monday, May 24, 2021, 5:30 PM

[Starr Library Mission Statement](#)

[“Starr Library provides access to the highest quality library services and programming, enriching our lives and building community.”](#)

**Trustees Present:** David Lavallee, Kat Melo, Shea Dean, Al Ragucci, Donna Warner, Martha Gershun, Karen Unger, Craig Oleszewski and Director Stephen Cook

**Friends Representative:** Stephen Frost

I. Call to Order, Additions to Agenda, Al Ragucci, President

a. Meeting was called to order by President Al Ragucci at 5:30pm *This meeting was held via Zoom due to the coronavirus pandemic.*

II. Secretary’s Report-Minutes from April meeting

a. *Motion to approve minutes passed unanimously.*

III. Nominating Committee Report- New Trustees

a. The board met the two new trustees, Laura Selicaro and Madhu Tadikonda, over zoom.

David suggested filling the additional opening with the promising candidates who were not chosen in the last round of interviewing. Donna suggested that we assess our needs as a board before choosing a new trustee. Motion to accept Madhu and Laura as new trustees starting in June: David. Second: Karen. Approved unanimously.

IV. Treasurer’s Report

a. *David reported that our endowment is doing very well because the market is good. On the expense side, he said, the only larger than normal expense was moving the sign out front for \$1300. On the income side, he reported that we got another piece of a large bequest -- \$50K of donations that are not part of the annual drive that has been deposited in the M&T account to pay for major expenses like AC and carpeting, architect’s fees, etc. There is over \$80K in that account. David reported that we are following national guidelines by only taking 4 percent of the endowment each year. Al suggested that the governance committee review the bylaws overseeing our use of the endowment. He said they are written generally but that they contradict some elements of the trustee handbook. Motion to accept: Karen. Second, Donna.*

V. Director’s Report

a. *Stephen Cook reported that Tara Foley, the new children’s programmer, would start on May 25.*

b. *He reported that the parking lot painting is complete.*

c. *He reported that Dave’s Tree Service was expected to do tree work on Thursday, May 27.*

d. Stephen said that per the governor's order you can't require masks, but that the library has a "masks requested" sign on the door and staff is wearing masks.

e. He also said that we're on track to have the new website go live by the end of June. Donna asked if we could see a beta version of the website.

f. He said he'd give us a timeline this week for the 414 vote so that we're on target to get our signatures and do what we need to do to get this passed. Shea asked how much money we are asking for in the 414 vote. David explained that we'd ask for \$50K this year and \$50K two years from now.

g. Stephen proposed giving trustees tours of the library.

VI. Friends Report –

a. Stephen Frost said that they made \$3750 from a two-day book sale that was not advertised to dealers. He said that the next book sale would be in July. He also said that the Friends of Starr have an art show of photographic prints by Lily Farell in the library

VII. Claims and Warrants-Motion to approve payments of claims and warrants.

a. Motion to approve: Karen. Second, Martha. Passed unanimously.

VIII. Committee Reports

i. **LRP**: Donna reported that we have a long range planning document that has been expanded to 14 pages by including a section on the People We Serve and a section on technology and a section on Diversity Equity and Inclusion. She noted that quarterly bylaw and policy review was included as well. She noted that the Stephen and staff were working with Donna and the LRP group to finish the document. Donna also said that she had talked to Al about convening a special board meeting to define the broad directions of the library including thoughts about renovation / expansion. Donna reported that the LRP committee had a meeting with Paul Mays on May 21 where he showed some preliminary drawings to the group. He asked for feedback on those drawings and then he'd revise accordingly. Plan was to meet with Paul again in late June. Donna said that there'd be recommendations from the LRP about how we separate the LRP into separate subcommittees: the LRP document, the building design, community engagement, and fundraising (capital campaign).

ii. **Buildings and Grounds** – Craig, interim head of the buildings and grounds committee, reported that prices were requested on May 3 of Paul Mays' firms for the light poles. Stephen and Craig said they're still waiting for prices of the new lights / poles. Stephen said that he thought that we would need to apply for approval from the planning board. He said he would ask David Miller of the planning board if this was still the case; he said he'd been working on this lighting issue for a year and a half. Craig reported that Stephen got a quote of \$6500 to repair chimneys and sidewalk; Craig asked to get more quotes to compare and to check the worker's liability coverage. He also mentioned that his son, a boy scout, is working on a tree survey of the Starr grounds. Craig said that he can't recommend contractors he works with as part of the NPS. Shea said she would give some recommendations.

iii. **PR** – Shea said that the committee helped the staff create an annual report for the community. Stephen said that the report was being laid out for email, for

paper (to be picked up at the library) and to distribute around town. She said we need to come up with goals for the LRP

iv. **Fundraising** – Karen said they were thinking about reenergizing the planned giving society. She said that she would reach out to the committee after Bard’s commencement to do more. She said that Bard’s application to the NEA to sponsor a Big Read was chosen, with Starr as a site for activities. She said that the library would get \$5K or \$6K and that the library would be giving away books, bringing people to the library.

v. **Governance** – Al mentioned that the committee would meet relatively soon to do a bylaws / policy review to make them more consistent with the handbook. Donna suggested that the bylaws need more attention than just being made to be more consistent with the handbook but rather a more thorough review.

vi. **Personnel** – Al mentioned that the personnel committee would meet soon to take up the issues that were raised in the executive board meeting.

#### X New Business

A. Al asked Donna if she wanted to schedule another special board meeting to address the overall direction of the library. She said she would consult with Stephen about what dates might be good for this meeting.

B. Al reported that Stephen Frost of the Friends called him shortly before the meeting and asked him to resign as president. Al defended his record as board president. Al argued that the board had changed, with more members being “lone rangers” rather than “team players.” He said that the fact that two members had resigned from the board and three more had threatened to resign in recent months due to interpersonal problems suggested that the board was dysfunctional. Al made a motion to resign as board president and be replaced by Treasurer David Lavalee. The motion passed in a vote of 4 to 3. David suggested that we are all on the board because we love the library and want to make it better. Other board members concurred. He said he hoped that at the June meeting we can make the board more congenial and reduce the tension we have experienced. David thanked Al for all the work he put into the library board. He said he wanted to “move forward without moving backward.”

XII. Adjournment. Meeting ended at 7pm. Motion to Adjourn: David. Second, Al.

Next Meeting Monday, June 28, 2021 5:30 PM