

CANAL SOCIETY OF NEW YORK STATE  
Board of Directors  
February 4, 2023  
In Person Meeting at Samuel Center for Canal History, Port Byron NY;  
Meeting also Conducted Remotely via Zoom

*Committee Reports submitted via Dropbox for the February 4, 2023 Board of Directors meeting are part of the record for this meeting, although they are not attached. The reports remain accessible online, and were reviewed as part of the deliberations of this Board meeting.*

**MINUTES**

Those attending were: Board Members Paul Bartczak, Anita Cottrell, John DiMura, Lisa Dingley, Janice Fontanella, Ronald Grube, David Kinyon, Sharon Leighton, Bill Miles, Ruth Rosenberg Naparsteck, Bill Schollenberger, Bruce Schwendy, Andrea Seamans, Will Van Dorp, Dan Ward, Dan Wiles, and Craig Williams. Invited guests were Hannah Lewis and Amie Flanigan.

Mr. Williams called the meeting to order at 10:05 am, acknowledging the recent passing of Henry Baxter, an original member of the Society's Board of Directors. He also asked Board members to keep in mind the health of long-time Board member David Kipp.

The **Minutes** from the December 3, 2022 Board meeting were approved on a motion by Mr. Ward seconded by Ms. Rosenberg Naparsteck.

Ms. Cottrell reviewed the **Financial Statements**, noting the receipt of the Thruway Authority reimbursement of \$39,901.50 (thru end of October); an additional reimbursement request thru the December 31, 2022 is pending. Along with discussing the outstanding payable to Site Solutions Worldwide of \$8,000 for expenses in connection with the 2022 NYS Canal Conference, there was general discussion about the future of the Canal Conference. Mr. Williams commented on his 2022 Year End Financial Summary, which forecasts a \$21,388.60 surplus that is largely attributable to the \$20,803.16 received from the federal credit for Employee Retention. Mr. Ward questioned the \$9,672.14 insurance premium, which is heavily impacted by requirements due to the Society's contractual obligations with the Thruway Authority. Mr. Schwendy urged that the Society offset the high cost of event management fees for the Canal Conference by performing more of the tasks with volunteers. Additional financial items discussed were internet and security monitoring expenses at Port Byron. Mr. Williams confirmed that the Thruway Authority has yet to submit the new contract for the operation of the Port Byron Erie Canal Heritage Park Visitor Center. On a motion by Ms. Fontanella, seconded by Mr. Grube the Financial Report was accepted.

Mr. Williams noted that the program at the upcoming Winter Symposium will have a session dealing with the topic of **Diversity**. Ms. Leighton urged that the Society examine the make-up of its own Board of Directors relative to Diversity.

Regarding the Society's **Strategic Plan**, Mr. Wiles urged that the Plan include language formalizing the Society's educational programming. Mr. Williams urged that the Society make better use of the Neon data base management system relative to membership data.

Mr. Kinyon reported that State legislation has been introduced to lengthen the **Canal Navigation Season**, and that the Canal Corporation and the State Department of Environmental Conservation recently announced that it will continue the practice of 'double locking' at Locks C1 and C2 on the Champlain Canal in an effort to manage the encroachment of the round goby. Mr. Wiles reiterated his displeasure that he shared at that week's meeting of the Canal Recreationway Commission relative to the Canal Corporation plans for celebrating the **200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary** of the completion of the original Erie Canal.

Ballots for the election of **candidates to serve on the Society's Board of Directors** will be sent electronically to those members providing email addresses. Those without email addresses will have their ballots sent by post mail.

Mr. Schwendy reported that registrations have begun to be received for the **March 4 Winter Symposium**; a turn-out of 100 attendees is needed for the event to break even. Ms. Rosenberg Naparsteck noted that outreach to Rochester area school teachers has been a new initiative in order to attract a more diverse group of attendees. Ms. Seamans announced that Doug's to Go will enable the Society to sponsor a fish fry fund raiser on March 17. Due to the cost and lack of availability of bus rentals, the dates for the **Spring Study Trip** have been changed to April 23-24 in Auburn/Port Byron. Dedication of the Tom Grasso Memorial Stone and Port Byron wayfinding signage are planned. Mr. Williams pointed to the **May 13 Local Historians Meeting** at the Samuel Center as another effort to broaden the Society's collaboration with other non-profit organizations. Mr. Williams shared tentative program ideas for the **Fall Study Tour**, scheduled for October 6-8 in Albany.

Mr. Wiles informed the Board that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has requested the Society to explain its plans for how the identified wetlands on the Port Byron site will be impacted by the placement of the *Lois McClure* on the site. Mr. Wiles has arranged for Tartaglia Railroad Services to provide a proposal to the Society for the placement of a section of railroad siding within the canal prism as the base for the *Lois McClure*. No commitment has been by the Society relative to acquiring, moving or housing the *Lois McClure* at the Erie Canal Heritage Park.

Mr. Williams highlighted some of the activity contained in his written **Collections Report**. He characterized the Weseloh Collection as 'almost as large' as the iconic Madden Collection. Mr. Grube remarked about the Weseloh materials containing letters from canal travelers. Mike Riley joined the meeting briefly, with Mr. Williams thanking him in person for managing the movement and placement of the Grasso stone at the Park.

Mr. Williams displayed a draft cover of the upcoming issue of **Bottoming Out**. Mr. Bartczak provided an overview regarding the editorial content of the issue. Mr. Williams thanked Ms. Dingley for her continued social media posts about Canal Society events.

Ms. Cottrell noted that only 11 Board members had contributed to the **Annual Appeal**, and requested that all members participate; proceeds are not dedicated to a particular program or project this year. A grant application for \$50,000 for restroom improvements and a security system at the Samuel Center was submitted to the NYS Council on the Arts (NYSCA); grant awards are to be announced in April. Grant applications to the Emerson Foundation and the Allyn Foundation are pending. The Society has signed the contractual agreement for the \$25,000 **operating assistance grant from NYSCA**. The Society has also applied for a \$3,500 Technical Assistance Grant from the Preservation League of NYS for preservation of the aqueduct arch next to the Samuel Center. A grant request will also be submitted for Samuel Center restrooms and a performance by the Albany Symphony at the Fall Study Tour as part of the **Erie Canalway Tourism Event & Infrastructure grant program**.

A quit claim deed will be issued for the purchase of the **Brantis property** adjacent to the Port Byron Erie Canal Heritage Park. Mr. Wiles stated that Woodford Bros. Construction is reinforcing the base of the **Lock Shanty** on site at the Park. Modular is working on repairs to boiler #2 at the Erie House; Pascoe will be brought in to regulate the boiler. Expressing his frustration with the HVAC systems at both the Erie House and at the Visitor Center, Mr. Williams stated that both systems may need to be replaced in the near future. Plans are being made for the Park to welcome cyclists July 12 participating in **Cycling the Erie**. Mr. Wiles reported that the Samuel Center was open and participated in the Village of Port Byron Christmas celebration. Mr. Schwendy recently drove the widow of Tom Grasso, Carola Grasso, to the Samuel Center. Estimates for the installation of **fire and security systems** for the Samuel Center are being obtained at this time, according to Mr. Wiles.

The donated **model of a packet boat** is being painted by Society member/volunteer Jean Hamel. The display case being made by Hadley Exhibits to house the **Lock Model** will arrive by the end of February. Ms. Seamans announced that Thursday receptions for volunteer docents at the Park will begin soon.

Mr. Williams reported that the **South Central Regional Library Council** has accepted the Canal Society as a member; membership in the Library Council will entitle the Society to free consulting services and access to traveling exhibits.

With the approval of the Board, the following **upcoming Board meeting dates** were announced:

- April 8
- June 17
- September 9
- November 11

Respectfully submitted,  
David R. Kinyon, Secretary