

CANAL SOCIETY OF NEW YORK STATE  
Board of Directors  
September 9, 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 September 9, 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 Anita Cottrell, Lisa Dingley, Ronald Grube, David Kinyon, Chris Romanchock, Darrin Rooker, Ruth Rosenberg Naparsteck, Bill Schollenberger, Bruce Schwendy, Andrea Seamans, Dan Ward, Dan Wiles, and Craig Williams. Hannah Lewis from the Erie Canal Museum attended as an invited guest.

Mr. Williams called the meeting to order at 10 am. The **Minutes** from the meeting of June 17, 2023 were approved on a motion by Ms. Cottrell seconded by Mr. Ward.

Mr. Rooker reported that the **Finance Committee** had met that week, having discussed the role of the Finance Committee and the need to establish some policies and procedures. He noted that the Society's finances have become more complex over the last few years due to the increase in the number of grants. The committee also discussed the need for an Annual Financial Review and the possibility of appointing a Deputy Treasurer to assist in the management of the Society's finances.

Ms. Cottrell presented the **Treasurer's Report**, noting that the Canal Conference account has been closed out, and that the lack of timely reimbursement from the Thruway Authority is eating into the Society's cash reserves. She pointed to the August 31, 2023 Cash Summary prepared by Mr. Williams, noting that Payroll has been under the amount budgeted and that the cost of Utilities and other operating costs at Port Byron are at acceptable levels. Ms. Dingley inquired about the frequency of membership dues billings, and suggested that a strategy be developed for increasing new memberships. On a motion by Mr. Ward, seconded by Ms. Seamans the Treasurer's Report was accepted.

Mr. Kinyon announced that the terms of the following Board members will expire as of March 31, 2024: Anita Cottrell, John DiMura, Elizabeth Dingley, Janice Fontanella, David Kinyon, and Bill Miles. He will contact each of the current members about their interest in continuing to serve on the **Board of Directors**.

Mr. Kinyon reported on behalf of Janice Fontanella regarding the August 15 meeting of the **Human Relations Committee**. Ms. Fontanella had shared the results of her prior meeting with Park Manager Dan Wiles, and the committee discussed possible updates to the Park Manager Job Description. The committee also discussed the need for a Personnel Manual and position descriptions for volunteers at the Port Byron Erie Canal Heritage Park. Mr. Kinyon invited comments from Board members regarding other duties for the committee.

In addition to his written report, Mr. Williams stated that volunteers are cataloging the contents of the Weseloh **Collection**. He also noted continuing work by Amie Flanagan at the Erie Canal Museum in connection with work being conducted in connection with the ‘Save America’s Treasures’ grant and the possible extension of employment of Ms. Flanagan. Mr. Williams continues to work on the acquisition of additional shelving for the Samuel Center from the September 11 Memorial and Museum. He also suggested that the basement of the Samuel Center may be suitable for storage.

Ms. Dingley will promote the Fall Study Tour via **social media**, and will target local historical societies as a potential market. Ms. Dingley suggested that a table top display be created for use at canal-related events, such as the Tugboat Round-Up to encourage membership in the Canal Society. Mr. Williams has provided ***Bottoming Out*** editor Paul Bartczak with material for the next issue, and he will enlist others to assist in this publication.

Mr. Williams reported that a 38-passenger bus has been scheduled for the October 6-8 **Fall Study Tour** in the Albany/Champlain Canal region. A Friday evening presentation will take place at Peebles Island Visitor Center following a tour of the Scarano Boat Yard and walking tour of Waterford. The Saturday bus tour of the Champlain Canal will feature stops at Lock 2 in Mechanicville, the Five Combined Locks of the Glen Falls Feeder Canal, the Rogers Island Visitor Center at Ft. Edward, and the Hudson Crossing Visitor Center, followed by a boat ride with Dutch Apple Boat Cruise. The Sunday programming will conclude with a performance of the “The Grand Canal March” by Albany Symphony’s Brass Quintet in celebration of the Bicentennial of the Champlain Canal, with a number of on-your-own sites to visit afterward.

Monroe Community College has been reserved and the College’s Geoscience Department has been requested to co-sponsor the Canal Society’s **2024 Winter Symposium** on Saturday, March 2 announced Mr. Schwendy. In addition to topics of historic interest, there is expected to be a presentation about preservation efforts on the Schoharie Aqueduct.

Mr. Wiles related his exchange with Canal Corporation Director of Canals Brian Stratton following the August 9 meeting of the Canal Recreationway Commission. Mr. Wiles had expressed his dissatisfaction with the lack of programming for the **2025 Erie Canal Bicentennial**. Mr. Williams also reported that the NYS Department of Education has begun the deaccessioning process for the *Day Peckinpaugh*, and that he fears that the vessel, which had undergone \$4 million of renovations after being saved from demolition previously, may be scrapped.

Considerable discussion took place regarding the possible acquisition of the ***Lois McClure*** by the Canal Society. Mr. Williams updated Board members regarding the most recent discussions with the Lake Champlain Maritime Center regarding a number of options to preserve and possibly relocate the vessel. Art Cohn has raised \$50,000 to support the possible relocation of the sailing vessel; he will also discuss possible future financial support by the McClure Family for the boat. Mr. Williams estimated that the total cost of relocating the boat to Port Byron could be approximately \$100,000. Recent discussions have been held with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers regarding placement of the boat in the former canal prism at the Port Byron Erie Canal

Heritage Park, although the wetlands issue remains an obstacle. Mr. Rooker pointed out that the display of a boat at Port Byron had been part of the original master plan for the Park; he suggested that the availability of the *Lois McClure* may be the best opportunity to achieve this. The placement of a boat on site at Port Byron would also enhance visitation to the Park, Mr. Rooker commented. Ms. Seamans agreed that Port Byron would be greatly enhanced by the presence of a boat on site. Mr. Wiles commented that the *Lois McClure* belongs on the water; although he agreed that the boat being incorporated into the interpretive displays at the Port Byron Erie Canal Heritage Park would enhance the Park, he expressed his concern regarding maintenance of the wooden boat at that location. Mr. Kinyon insisted that the Board be presented with a written proposal regarding the Society's acquisition and use of the *Lois McClure* at Port Byron; he also urged that the \$500,000 endowment, which is in the possession of the Lake Champlain Maritime Center, be transferred to the Canal Society. Mr. Rooker agreed that longer-term maintenance costs need to be considered by the Board, but he suggested that other grants may be available to assist with these costs. On a motion by Ms. Rosenberg-Naparsteck seconded by Ms. Seamans, the Board voted unanimously to authorize the Society's Executive Committee to determine what to do regarding the acquisition and eventual relocation of the *Lois McClure* to the Port Byron Erie Canal Heritage Park.

Mr. Williams provided the following updates regarding current Society-administered grants:  
Save America's Treasures – ends September 30, 2023.

Preservation League Technical Assistance (Owasco Aqueduct) – report has been completed.

NYSCA Operating Assistance – hope to receive \$49,000 (received \$25,000 for 2022-23).

Erie Canalway Events – grant will pay for 'Grand Canal March' October 8.

Erie Canalway Infrastructure – Crawford & Stearns proceeding with plans for Samuel Center; current project may be limited to only restrooms.

NYS Consolidated Funding Application – denied.

Emerson Foundation – seeking \$108,000 to continuing cataloging Society collection by Amy Flanagan and movement of collection to Samuel Center.

In addition to his written report, Mr. Wiles noted that attendance has increased significantly in 2023 at the **Port Byron Erie Canal Heritage Park**. Although income from sales is flat (2022 vs. 2023), cash sales are down and credit card purchases have increased. The number of repeat visitors appear to be on the increase as well. A 'reasonable' estimate has been received on repair of the Erie House HVAC system. The Park will join with other local Central New York canal-related organizations in planning for the Erie Canal Bicentennial. Ms. Seamans announced that the 'Friends of Port Byron' are considering additional fund-raising activities and publication of a new activity book.

There being no additional items to be discussed under either Old Business or New Business, on a motion by Mr. Grube seconded by Ms. Cottrell, the Board meeting was adjourned at 12:01 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
David R. Kinyon, Secretary