

CANAL SOCIETY OF NEW YORK STATE  
Board of Directors  
November 11, 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 John DiMura, Lisa Dingley, Janice Fontanella, Ronald Grube, John Hatch, David Kinyon, Bill Miles, Chris Romanchock, Darrin Rooker, Ruth Rosenberg Naparsteck, Bill Schollenberger, Bruce Schwendy, Andrea Seamans, Will Van Dorp, Dan Ward, Dan Wiles, and Craig Williams.

Mr. Williams called the meeting to order at 10 am. The **Minutes** from the meeting of September 9, 2023 were approved on a motion by Mr. Ward seconded by Ms. Fontanella.

In the absence of Anita Cottrell, Mr. Rooker presented the **Financial Report**. He noted that Ms. Cottrell had transferred funds from various accounts in order to maintain a cash flow in the Society's operating account due to the lack of timely payment by the Thruway Authority; these funds will be replenished upon payment by the Thruway Authority. At the November 2 Finance Committee meeting, it was reported that a new bank account to handle transactions for the Lois McClure had been established, and that the annual audit had been reviewed. Mr. Rooker invited comments regarding the filing of the Society's Form 990 for its non-profit annual tax return. It was noted that the Society's assets are nearing \$1 million, and that the proliferation of duties for the Treasurer require additional volunteer staff. Mr. Rooker presented a proposed amendment to the Society's Bylaws to create the position of **Deputy Treasurer**. Mr. Williams concurred that creation of the Deputy Treasurer position would also provide an additional person who has access to the Society's account passwords. The proposed amendment to the Bylaws was approved on a motion by Mr. Grube seconded by Mr. Ward.

Mr. Kinyon informed the Board that the following have agreed to serve an additional three-year terms each on the Board of Directors beginning April 1, 2024: Anita Cottrell, Lisa Dingley, Janice Fontanella, David Kinyon and Bill Miles. Due to John DiMura's decision not to seek another three-year term, the **Nominating Committee** will present the name of another candidate to fill this position.

The **Human Relations Committee** will meet November 15 to discuss the production of a Personnel Manual, Ms. Fontanella reported. Additional duties regarding the care and management of the *Lois McClure* are being added to the job description for the Park Manager, she stated. Mr. Wiles pointed out that there is a limit to his ability to do more as Park Manager than what he is currently doing.

Ms. Dingley shared a **Membership/Communications** report highlighted by reports on the Society's website/Facebook coverage afforded by the journey of the *Lois McClure* to Beacon Bay Marina in Clay, NY. Her report contained numerous analytics about website and Facebook visitation, as well as YouTube coverage of the Fall Field Trip and the production of related print collateral materials. An enhanced "Donate" button on the Society's website and the addition of a website page dedicated to the *Lois McClure* were also recent changes, as was the production of an updated print brochure about the Canal Society. Mr. Romanchock suggested that information and media coverage about the *Lois McClure* be organized into a single web page. In response to a proposal from Ms. Seamans about creating a log by those on the voyage of the *Lois McClure*, Ms. Dingley said that Tom Beardsley was already compiling such a record which may be included in an upcoming issue of *Bottoming Out*.

Mr. Williams cited the tour of the Battenkill Knitting Mills on Sunday, October 8 of the **Fall Study Tour** as the highlight of that conference. He pointed to the maps contributed to the Study Guide by Steve Talbot and the possible future accession by the State Museum of a barn door from a Champlain Canal-vintage barn in Ft. Edward as major contributions to the success of the tour. Mr. Kinyon presented a draft outline for the May 3-5 Spring Study Tour in Lockport. Mr. Williams suggested that a format similar to that of the Winter Symposium be used for the next Fall Study Tour and future New York State Canal Conferences. The Blackstone Canal was recommended as a destination for the 2024 Fall Study Tour.

Six of the nine planned presentations for the March 2 **Winter Symposium** at Monroe Community College have been confirmed, announced Mr. Schwendy. Featured topics will address canals in relation to the lives of both Native Americans and African Americans. Taping of the sessions for future rebroadcast as well as offering the program to both online and in-person attendance is under consideration.

Mr. Williams labeled the transfer of the *Lois McClure* from Lake Champlain Maritime Center/Vergennes, Vt. to the Canal Society/Port Byron as "a monumental effort" which had taken a tremendous collaborative effort by many individuals and organizations. However, he singled out the contributions particularly of **Art Cohn** throughout the transfer of ownership/transport of the boat to Cayuga, NY. Mr. Cohn had been assisted by an outstanding crew as well on the boat's journey to New York State. As the result of a meeting on November 10 with C&S Engineering, C&S will develop a scope of services to oversee the work needed to move the *Lois McClure* from Clay to the Port Byron Erie Canal Heritage Park. Mr. Cohn has expressed hope that the McClure family will contribute additional funds in support of the placement of the boat at the Park. Mr. Wiles urged that the Canal Society 'seize the moment' relative to fund-raising for this purpose. Mr. Williams cautioned that there is also discussion about taking the boat on a waterway tour for the next two years before placing her out of water at Port Byron. Mr. Rooker noted that any improvements made to the *Lois McClure* to be navigable and tour would have value in terms of preservation ashore. Mr. Romanchock inquired about the extent of repairs that would be necessary for the boat to be either on display or on tour. Mr. Van Dorp cautioned that maintaining a wooden boat is challenging; he also suggested that an effort be undertaken to recruit students from area colleges to assist with preservation of the boat.

Mr. Williams reminded Board members of the upcoming **Annual Appeal**. He questioned Board members about the advisability of making this year's solicitation a general appeal or whether to target donations for such initiatives as the Grasso Library or the *Lois McClure*. Mr. Grube suggested designing the appeal in a manner that would provide members the option of making a general donation or a restricted contribution.

Mr. Williams provided the following updates regarding **grants** that the Society has received or is applying for:

- Save America's Treasures – due to a shortfall in the in-kind services that the Society was using as a match for this grant, a one-year extension has been granted
- NYSCA Support for Organizations – hoping for a \$50,000 grant
- Erie Canalway Events – used for Albany Symphony performance at Fall Study Tour
- Erie Canalway Infrastructure – resulted in restroom design; seeking accessibility comments
- Emerson Foundation – requested \$100,000
- NYSCA Capital Grants – could be source for funding *Lois McClure* improvements

Mr. Wiles will submit a year-end report regarding the **Port Byron Erie Canal Heritage Park**. Winterization measures are currently underway. Ms. Seamans reported that there will be a Doug's Dive fish fry served from the Samuel Center November 17 to benefit the Park, plus a possible Lenten dinner.

In addition to his written report, Mr. Williams stated that portions of the Canal Society's **collection** at the Erie Canal Museum continues to be relocated to the Samuel Center. He also updated Board members regarding the McCarthy Donation, Weseloh Collection, and various digital collections.

A representative from the Church of Latter Day Saints/Mormons asked Mr. Williams recently what New York State is doing to celebrate the **Erie Canal Bicentennial**. Mr. Wiles noted that a committee of Cayuga County historians are meeting next week to discuss possible local plans.

Mr. Williams stated that there is no change in the status of the *Day Peckinpaugh*.

Mr. Romanchock and Mr. Williams will work on a plan to replace clapboards on the **Lock Shanty** on the grounds of the Port Byron Erie Canal Heritage Park.

**Upcoming Board meeting dates** include the following: January 20, March 23 & May 25, 2024.

Ms. Fontanella moved and Mr. Miles seconded a motion to **adjourn** the Board meeting at 12:05 PM. An informal visit to Beacon Bay Marina in Clay, NY followed to inspect the *Lois McClure*.

Respectfully submitted,  
David R. Kinyon, Secretary