

CANAL SOCIETY OF NEW YORK STATE
Board of Directors
August 24, 2024
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 August 24, 2024 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: Tom Beardsley, Steve Boerner, Anita Cottrell, Janice Fontanella, John Hatch, David Kinyon, Bill Miles, Tammee Poinan Grimes, Andrea Rebeck, Chris Romanchock, Darrin Rooker, Ruth Rosenberg Naparsteck, Bruce Schwendy, Andrea Seamans, Will Van Dorp, Dan Ward, Dan Wiles, and Craig Williams; also present was Derrick Pratt, representing the Erie Canal Museum.

Mr. Williams called the meeting to order at 10 AM.

On a motion by Ms. Cottrell, seconded by Ms. Seamans, the Minutes from the meeting of June 1, 2024 were approved.

Mr. Williams provided an update regarding the *Lois McClure*. He cited the \$50,000 donation from the late Barbara Barkley and announced that the target date for lifting the *Lois* out of the water is October 10, with the assistance of Joseph Verdi. Detailed plans are being developed by C&S Engineers, and JPW Crane is to provide an estimate for lifting the vessel. The possibility of storing the boat outside at the Verdi site is under consideration. From its current site at Beacon Bay, it is expected that the *Lois McClure* may be towed over roads to the Thruway, exiting from the Thruway to the ramps leading into the Port Byron Erie Canal Heritage Park, with the boat being pulled through the lock chamber and placed on a cradle in the canal prism. Mr. Wiles stated that test borings taken at both the Sugar Beet dock and at Port Byron were satisfactory. Mr. Williams explained that efforts continue to obtain a permit from the Corps of Engineers. Mr. Schwendy inquired about the suitability of the bottom of the canal prism as a foundation. In response to a question from Mr. Boerner, Mr. Williams stated that the wetlands designation does not mean that water is present in the canal prism. Mr. Beardsley stated that he hopes to have boats needed to tow the *Lois McClure* to the Sugar Beet dock. Ms. Poinan-Grimes cautioned that there may be insurance liability issues if volunteer boaters are used. Mr. Schwendy inquired about the elevation of the deck of the boat relative to the level of the abutting land; Mr. Williams explained that there would be an on-boarding ramp and boardwalk to access the *Lois McClure*.

Ms. Cottrell presented the Treasurer's Report, which was approved on a motion by Mr. Schwendy, seconded by Ms. Rosenberg-Naparsteck. Mr. Williams noted the addition of the Maritime Account to the report. The Society is still awaiting the \$25,000 contract from State Parks in connection with the Seneca Lake canal boat project. Approximately \$80,000 is owed from the Thruway Authority, Mr. Rooker pointed out.

Mr. Williams explained that the Income & Expense Analysis reflects 2024 expenses through June 30. Ms. Seamans inquired about insurance expenses related to the *Lois McClure*; Mr. Williams noted that once the vessel is on land, the boat will be treated by the insurance carrier like a building, with no additional cost to the Society's premium. Mr. Williams also cited the financial support by the Friends of the Park, and Ms. Seamans detailed the fund raising efforts of the Friends group, which had made possible the recent purchase of the ice wagon, which has been added as a feature to the Park. There was limited discussion about the possibility of making the October 10 lifting of the *Lois McClure* a public event, which could generate additional income for the Society.

Ms. Fontanella reported that the Human Relations Committee has invited Ms. Seamans and Mr. Williams to join in the September 4 performance evaluation of Mr. Wiles.

Mr. Kinyon reported that six current Board members will have their terms expire as of March 31, 2025. Mr. Williams stressed the need to identify new talent to lead the Society in the future due to the impact of term limits.

In addition to his written report, Mr. Williams pointed to the recent addition of the ice wagon to the Society's collection; Mr. Rooker noted that the ice wagon is already becoming a photo subject at the Port Byron Heritage Park. The Matton Shipyard collection includes a sign board. Mr. Romanchock reiterated his offer to provide shelving for storage of the collection in the basement of the Samuel Center. Mr. Wiles noted the assistance of volunteers for scanning acquisitions of the collection.

Mary Stalker will support the Society's membership recruitment and retention program, announced Mr. Williams. Mr. Boerner hopes to have an issue of *Bottoming Out* ready for distribution by November. Mr. Wiles has created recent Facebook postings. Mr. Van Dorp will begin *Dispatches from Samuel Center*, a series of blogs, which are designed to appeal to a younger demographic audience; Mr. Van Dorp invited Board members to submit content. Mr. Williams suggested that the Society consider publishing the *Canal Courier* again; the publication had been introduced during the canal's 150th anniversary. Mr. Williams also noted that the Society's website is in need of updating.

Registration information will be sent soon for the October 18-20 Fall Study Tour to Boonville. Mr. Schwendy has assisted Mr. Williams in developing this program. Mr. Williams suggested that the Spring Study Tour focus on the Central Mohawk Valley (April 2025). He again raised the possibility of a 2026 NYS Canal Conference.

Mr. Schwendy stated that eight speakers have been invited to present at the March 1 Winter Symposium. Ms. Poinan-Grimes offered to assist with arranging online registration using FareHarbor. Mr. Romanchock suggested that the Society again offer free/discounted admission to local educators.

Following submission of grant applications, Mr. Williams stated that he is awaiting a decision from the NYS Canal Corporation regarding the Consolidated Funding Application and from the NYS Council on the Arts about the Society's operating funding application. In response to a

question from Mr. Beardsley, Mr. Williams stated the Society is still awaiting a contract from State Parks for the Maritime Grant. Mr. Beardsley reported that Art Cohen is preparing educational posters about findings from the Seneca Lake underwater exploration of canal vessel shipwrecks and that he hopes to create a website about the many boat remains that have been photographed. In an unrelated matter, the gunboat *Spitfire* may be raised from Lake Champlain.

In addition to his written report, Mr. Wiles noted that attendance at the Erie Canal Heritage Park continues to lag behind 2023 levels, although sales at the Visitor Center have not decreased dramatically. Ms. Rebeck noted that the reference in Mr. Wiles' report to the Thruway Rest Stop's location should be changed to 2 miles to the west of the Park. Mr. Williams expressed hope that having the *Lois McClure* on site will increase attendance for 2025. Ms. Seamans displayed vegetables raised in the heritage garden at the Park and stated that local schools have been great partners with the Society at the Park. A Port Byron Canal Activity Book is still in process. Mr. Wiles also reported that repairs to the HVAC system at the Erie House are in process. Mr. Williams stated that the reconstruction of the Samuel Center restrooms has begun; donations and the Canalway grant will cover most of the cost. Mr. Wiles noted the many users of the parking lot at the Samuel Center, and that he has requested local law enforcement agencies to assist with security.

Mr. Kinyon stated that three regional forums had been held regarding Canals2050, the new master plan being developed by the Canal Recreationway Commission. Ms. Poinan-Grimes commented about her participation in a 'vertical meeting' of stakeholders regarding the master plan.

Mr. Miles, a member of the Program Committee for the 2025 World Canals Conference, announced that there will be a call for programs in the near future. The three on-site tours will all be offered on Tuesday, September 23; sites hosting the mobile tours are Lockport/ Medina, Fairport and St. Catharines. Sharon Leighton, who has been elected President of the sponsor of the Conference, Inland Waterways Association, and the Erie Canalway's Patrick Stenshorn, are co-chairs of the conference. The September 24 launch of the cross-state tour of the Canal Boat *Seneca Chief* will be a major focal point of the conference.

Due to recent publicity about navigational problems of the *Colonial Belle*, Ms. Poinan-Grimes detailed the difficulties encountered earlier in the week and how staff had successfully managed the situation without any harm to passengers.

Mr. Pratt reminded Board members about the September 12 Central New York Bicentennial Event Planning meeting.

On a motion by Mr. Van Dorp, seconded by Mr. Miles the meeting was adjourned 12:07 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
David R. Kinyon
Secretary