

CANAL SOCIETY OF NEW YORK STATE  
Board of Directors  
January 11, 2025  
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 January 11, 2025 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, David Kinyon, Bill Miles, Tammee Poinan-Grimes, Andrea Rebeck, Darrin Rooker, Ruth Rosenberg-Naparsteck, Bill Schollenberger, 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 and welcomed those in attendance.

On a motion by Ms. Cottrell, seconded by Mr. Miles the **Minutes** from the November 2, 2024 meeting were approved.

In addition to the written report provided by Ms. Cottrell, she noted that a number of payables remain outstanding. Although a reimbursement for expenses for the Port Byron Heritage Park has been received, the Society is still awaiting payment for fourth quarter expenses incurred for operating the park. Mr. Williams expressed his pleasure with the number of grants and donations the Society had received in 2024, resulting in the Society ending the year with a surplus. \$8,500 in donations for the Annual Appeal have been received to date, and Ms. Cottrell reminded Board members that it is important for there to be 100% participation by Board members; this is particularly important in applying for foundation grants. Ms. Cottrell and Mr. Rooker both commented on the online financial management training program they had recently participated in, and that financial reports prepared on an accrual basis are now being required by most funding entities. On a motion by Ms. Seamans, seconded by Mr. Beardsley, the **Financial Report** was approved.

Mr. Williams recounted the **grants** received and pending. Although the Society was approved for only a \$10,000 operating grant by the NYS Council on the Arts, compared with the \$30,000 received for 2024, he had obtained feedback from NYSCA staff about the most recent application. Whereas the Emerson Foundation had approved a \$50,000 grant for 2024, a 2025 grant request had been turned down. A \$24,000 Canalway Infrastructure Grant for the *Lois McClure* has not been received yet. A Canalway Infrastructure grant application for bike racks and picnic area at the Oswaco Creek Aqueduct and a Canalway Events grant application for an Albany Symphony performance are still pending. The CFA grant application to the NYS Canal Corporation was not approved for the *Lois McClure*. Mr. Williams will soon submit a grant application to NYSCA's Capital Grant program for a security system for the Samuel Center. The contract with State Parks to continue the exploration of Seneca Lake has been finalized.

In presenting a draft **2025 Budget**, Mr. Williams noted that 2024 expenditures had been \$311,905 due to payroll expenses having been less than the amount budgeted; as a result, a down payment had been sent to Hadley Exhibits for a display cabinet at the Port Byron Visitor Center and will be reimbursed as part of the Thruway Authority contract for 2024. Although Mr. Wiles will only be working 20 hours per week in the newly created position of Facilities Superintendent, there is only sufficient funding for a seasonal Park Manager position since the budget now provides funding for a part time position for Amie Flanagan, which will enable the Samuel Center to be open to the public two days per week. In addition to higher costs for insurance and other operating expenses, there are fewer sources of grant funding despite the increased contractual amount from the Thruway Authority. Although it is not a sustainable practice, Mr. Williams recommended that \$50,000 from the year-end surplus be used to cover 2025 operations. Mr. Rooker noted that the snowplowing budget for the Samuel Center needs to be increased. On a motion by Ms. Cottrell, seconded by Ms. Rosenberg-Naparsteck, the Board approved the 2025 Budget.

Mr. Kinyon was requested to submit a printed ballot to Mr. Schwendy for candidates to serve on the Society's **Board of Directors** as well as to provide this same information to Mary Stalker for an online ballot. Mr. Williams noted that new candidates will be needed for 2026 due to he and Ms. Cottrell reaching their term limits.

Mr. Williams had updated Janice Fontanella regarding **staffing** needs for the Society, noting that the search for a new Park Manager will take an extended amount of time to complete.

In addition to his written report, Mr. Williams stated that Bob Barth had donated materials for the Society's **collection** recently.

Mary Stalker continues to handle **membership** billings and processing new member applications using the Neon online system. Mr. Williams will also request Ms. Stalker to handle the Society's some of the **social media marketing**.

A copy of the upcoming issue of ***Bottoming Out*** was shared with Board members. Mr. Boerner thanked the contributors of articles and photos in the issue, noting that the goal is to produce two issues per year. Mr. Van Dorp noted the contributions of photos by Bill Hecht; he requested photos and editorial content from Board members for the blog postings on the ***Dispatches from the Samuel Center***.

The Castle near Little Falls has been secured as the headquarters for the April 4-6 **Spring Study Tour**, Mr. Williams announced.

Mr. Schwendy expressed his pleasure that there will again be a musical presentation as part of the March 1 **Winter Symposium** at Monroe Community College. In addition to his written report, he requested that Ms. Poinan-Grimes assist with online registration; Ms. Poinan-Grimes noted that she needs a 'cover' for the FareHarbor page for the Symposium online registration.

Although no grant was approved by the Emerson Foundation for the ***Lois McClure***, Art Cohn is requesting a donation from the McClure family. A permit from the Thruway Authority for

transport of the boat is awaiting the submission of plans and specifications from C&S Engineering. Mr. Williams stated that the goal is to have the boat arrive at Port Byron in May. Transport of the vessel and construction of a foundation at the Park for it may cost approximately \$180,000, Mr. Williams estimated. Mr. Beardsley suggested that businesses may be willing to donate materials needed for painting and display of the *Lois McClure*. Mr. Williams stated that although Mike Riley had been paid to regularly check on the condition of the boat while it was in Seneca Falls, those services are no longer required.

Hills Heating of Baldwinsville has completed repairs to the heating system at the **Erie House**, reported Mr. Williams. Port Byron High School students have utilized some manuscripts in the Society's collection to create educational podcasts.

With the completion of the new restrooms at the **Samuel Center**, shelving has been relocated to segregate the Society's collection from the public, explained Mr. Williams. A photo exhibit by Frank Forte on February 1 is the first of a series of events planned to celebrate the latest renovations to the Samuel Center. Herrtronic has provided cost estimates for the proposed security system at the site. The January 9 fund raiser by Doug's to Go was poorly attended due to weather conditions, Ms. Seamans informed the Board; she will consider other fund raising opportunities for the future.

A 'Call for Presentations' for the upcoming **World Canals Conference** had been issued in November, according to Mr. Miles. Early Bird registration for the conference has been extended until the end of January. Nonprofit organizations will be invited to staff exhibits at Buffalo's Canalside as part of the Sunday Community Day.

Mr. Miles is meeting with Ms. Rebeck and Kal Wysokowski soon to strategize for a possible **2027 New York State Canal Conference**. Mr. Williams noted how costly previous conferences have been for the Society to sponsor.

Mr. Williams reported that the *Day Peckinpaugh* has not been moved from the Waterford Flight, despite a bid to purchase the vessel having been accepted in the fall by the State Museum.

Mr. Williams has invited Onondaga Coach to offer an Erie Canal Bicentennial Tour to Port Byron during 2025. Ms. Poinan-Grimes reported that bookings are going extremely well for 2025 for the *Colonial Belle* due to interest in the **Erie Canal Bicentennial**.

Mr. Miles reported that a memorial to former Canal Society President **Thomas Grasso** will be placed in Fairport this spring on the Canalway Trail in Fairport.

On a motion by Mr. Miles seconded by Ms. Seamans, the Board voted to adjourn the meeting at 11:40 AM.

Respectfully submitted,  
David R. Kinyon, Secretary