

CANAL SOCIETY OF NEW YORK STATE  
Board of Directors  
March 23, 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 March 23, 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: Anita Cottrell, Janice Fontanella, Ronald Grube, John Hatch, David Kinyon, Bill Miles, Tammee Poinan-Grimes, Darrin Rooker, Ruth Rosenberg Naparsteck, Andrea Seamans, Will Van Dorp, Dan Ward, Dan Wiles, and Craig Williams; also present were incoming Board member Steve Boerner and Derrick Pratt, representing the Erie Canal Museum.

Mr. Williams called the meeting to order at 10:02 AM, and introduced newly elected Board member Steve Boerner and welcomed Derrick Pratt, Museum Educator at the Erie Canal Museum.

Mr. Kinyon presented the **Minutes** from the January 20, 2024 Board of Directors meeting, which were approved on a motion by Ms. Cottrell, seconded by Ms. Rosenberg-Naparsteck. On a motion by Mr. Kinyon, seconded by Ms. Seamans, the Board voted to extend its appreciation to outgoing Board members John DiMura, Lisa O'Hara and Ron Grube.

Mr. Williams then called to order the **Annual Organizational Meeting** of the Society and invited nominations for the positions of President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. On a motion by Ms. Seamans seconded by Ms. Fontanella, the following slate of Offices was elected:

President	Craig Williams
Vice President	Dan Ward
Treasurer	Anita Cottrell
Secretary	David Kinyon

On a motion by Mr. Kinyon, seconded by Mr. Williams, Mr. Rooker was elected to the newly created position of Deputy Treasurer; Mr. Rooker abstained from voting on the measure.

In presenting the **Treasurer's Report**, Ms. Cottrell noted that the Society is in a good cash position, and that the Winter Symposium had netted the Society \$1,950.23. Recent receipts had included \$30,000 from the NYS Council on the Arts, which has been deposited in the Samuel Center account. Mr. Rooker noted that the Finance Committee will meet soon with Michael Reich from Merrill Lynch regarding the Society's investments, which amounted to \$102,146.58 as of March 20, 2024. The Canal Society is still awaiting approximately \$45,000 in reimbursements from the Thruway Authority. On a motion by Ms. Poinan-Grimes seconded by Ms. Rosenberg-Naparsteck, the Treasurer's Report was approved.

Mr. Kinyon presented the name of **Andrea Rebeck** as a candidate to fill the vacant seat on the Board of Directors caused by the withdrawal of Lisa O'Hara from the recently approved ballot of

Directors for a three year term on the Board. This was approved on a motion by Ms. Cottrell seconded by Ms. Rosenberg-Naparsteck

Ms. Fontanella presented the Canal Society of NYS **Personnel Handbook** on behalf of the Human Relations Committee. The Personnel Handbook had been developed over the previous three months, and the committee had incorporated feedback provided by Park Manager Dan Wiles. On a motion by Mr. Ward seconded by Mr. Rooker, the Personnel Handbook was adopted by the Board. Mr. Kinyon urged the Board to consider the creation of an Administrative Assistant position to help with grant writing and administration as well as social media marketing.

In addition to his written **Collections Report**, Mr. Williams announced that professional movers had moved 561 boxes of the Canal Society's collection from the Erie Canal Museum to the Samuel Center; the cost of the movers had been covered by a donation from Dave and Liz Beebe. He pointed to the need for a security system at the Samuel Center because of the value of the collection.

Ms. Poinan-Grimes offered to handle Canal Society postings on **Facebook**. Mr. Williams thanked all those who contributed to the publication of the Winter/Spring issue of ***Bottoming Out***, which featured the transfer of ownership of the *Lois McClure* from the Lake Champlain Maritime Center to the Canal Society.

Mr. Kinyon provided an overview of the itinerary planned for the Society's **Spring Study Tour** May 3-5 to Lockport and Niagara Falls. The early bird offering to view the *Seneca Chief* and the Sunday trip to Medina were also discussed. Plans are being made for the October 18-20 **Fall Study Tour** to Boonville and the Black River Canal. The Board also discussed the future format and programming for a New York State Canal Conference.

Ms. Rosenberg-Naparsteck concurred with Mr. Williams in praising the work done by Bruce Schwendy in organizing the **Winter Symposium**. Mr. Williams also noted the quality of the performance of 'Grand Canal March' by the Roberts Wesleyan University Brass Quintet.

Considerable discussion followed regarding the future of the *Lois McClure*. Mr. Williams reported that the cost for marine insurance should the vessel be transported by water would be between \$5,000 and \$10,000. Communication continues between the Society and the McClure family. Mr. Wiles noted that the *McClure* presents "... many questions but also many opportunities ...". The services of Cayuga Wooden Boats, located at Beacon Bay, could be utilized for some of the repairs needed on the boat. Mr. Rooker stated that the boat is secure at Beacon Bay. Mr. Van Dorp supported the removal of the vessel from the water. Ms. Poinan-Grimes urged that the boat be kept on the shore at Beacon Bay. Mr. Hatch and Ms. Rosenberg-Naparsteck concurred that the boat be moved onshore as soon as possible. Ms. Fontanella expressed concern regarding the Society's potential financial liability from the boat. Mr. Kinyon said that the Society must focus on the objective of moving the *Lois McClure* to Port Byron. Mr. Wiles noted that much work needs to be done in order to make the vessel an attraction, and he expressed concern that the *Lois McClure* will take energy and resources away from other Canal Society priorities. Barbara McClure Benedict, President of the McClure Foundation, has

expressed the hope that the Foundation will be able to financially support the vessel for future years. Mr. Williams stated that he does not want to sacrifice future programming opportunities. Mr. Rooker concurred on the need to focus on the presentation of the *Lois McClure* at the Port Byron Erie Canal Heritage Park.

Mr. Williams directed the attention of the Board to the **State Grant Review Report** that he had prepared. Mr. Kinyon praised Mr. Williams for having secured grants from Save America's Treasures, the Emerson Foundation, Preservation League of NYS, and NYS Council on the Arts, with other grant applications still pending.

Mr. Wiles reported on activities at the **Port Byron Erie Canal Park** in preparation for the May 1 season opening, including the April Canal Clean Sweep event and collaboration with seniors at Port Byron High School. An upcoming visit to the Park by Thruway Authority representatives is planned in the near future. The Park is partnering with other area heritage sites in planning events to celebrate the Erie Canal Bicentennial. Other activities include volunteer training to improve visitor skills, Port Byron students working on a mechanical lock and a billboard, and production of a new audio tour. Ms. Seamans noted that the local high school senior class will cultivate a garden featuring 19<sup>th</sup> century-period produce. Efforts are also being made to promote the Park to area churches and theater groups, working with the Thruway Authority to add the wording 'Buses Welcome' to existing signs on the interstate and purchasing of a new heat pump for the Erie House. Ms. Seamans stated that the '**Friends Group**' raises significant funds to support the Park.

Mr. Wiles also reported that Canal Society member Jim Lawson has offered funds to assist with reinforcing the Port Byron Aqueduct arch in the **Samuel Center** parking lot as a result of the presentation at the Winter Symposium on this matter. In addition to the new shelving that has been installed at the Center for Canal History, the Rooker family has donated cushions for the pew seating at the Samuel Center. Upcoming programs at the 34 Rochester Street facility include an April 28 program by the Canal Corporation and a May 11 cultural resources survey presentation on the Richmond Aqueduct. Mr. Rooker suggested that the Center could serve as a location for future programming for area high school and college students.

Mr. Kinyon reported that 'The Agency' has been retained by the NY Power Authority to assist in the development of *Canals 2050*, in collaboration with the Canal Recreationway Commission.

Mr. Wiles stated that Central NY canal communities are sharing information and ideas for the Erie Canal Bicentennial on Facebook at '**ErieCanal2025**'. Ms. Poinan Grimes announced that Canal NY will collaborate with the Canal Society to offer a presentation by John Kucko on June 21 about how to create **canal-related itineraries**.

On a motion by Ms. Rosenberg-Naparsteck, seconded by Mr. Rooker, the Board voted to adjourn at 12:02 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
David R. Kinyon, Secretary