

TOMPKINS COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
TUESDAY, JANUARY 23, 2024  
**4:00 – 6:00**

CALL TO ORDER

**4:00 PM**

A. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

DOC 24-01

B. PUBLIC COMMENTS

ACTION ITEMS

**4:10 PM**

1. Draft Minutes of December 12, 2023
2. Audit of Bills  
Operating Budget in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_
3. Board Committee Opportunities
4. Bylaw Discussion

DOC 24-02

C. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

**4:30 PM**

D. LIAISON REPORTS

**4:40 PM**

- County – Amanda Champion
- Foundation – Kerry Barnes
- Friends – Nina Scholtz

E. WRITTEN REPORTS

**4:50 PM**

1. February Staff Report
2. Finance & Personnel Committee
  - a. Minutes of January 16, 2024
3. Library Service & Policy Committee
  - a. Next meeting on February 9<sup>th</sup>
4. Community Relations and Outreach Committee
  - a. Next meeting on February 14<sup>th</sup>

DOC 24-03

DOC 24-04

NOTE: In order to expedite the routine business of the board, please call Director Leslie Tabor ([ltabor@tcpl.org](mailto:ltabor@tcpl.org)) with any questions that you may have about the information items prior to the board meeting.

**REMINDER:**

**DATE OF NEXT BOARD MEETING**  
**FEBRUARY 27, 2024**

TOMPKINS COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY  
DRAFT MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
DECEMBER 12, 2023

TCPL Board Members Present: Martha Hardesty, President; Blixey Taetzsch, Don Trotter, Jason Moore, Liam Murphy, Lis Chabot, Melisa Sidle, Shelley Wong, Nina Scholtz

Board Members excused: Jamila Walida Simon, Marli Stahler,

Also Present: Kat Savage, Youth Services Department Manager; Mary McKeon, Administrative Manager; Michelle Benjamin, Business Manager; Kerry Barnes; TCPL Foundation Director, Amanda Champion; Tompkins County Legislator

With a quorum, meeting convened at 4:01 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER

APPROVAL OF AGENDA DOC 23-79

A **MOTION** was made by J. Moore and seconded by D. Trotter to approve the agenda. Approved unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Jay Leeming is grateful for the library but concerned about the withdrawal of materials. Leeming feels the screens in the children's area are distracting children who are reading. Leeming said he is being harassed for speaking up.

Caroline Cox is also grateful for the library, she is concerned about the withdrawal of materials. Cox said Leslie's response was professional but didn't resonate. She urges the board to communicate what the goals are.

Margaret Soulstein is grateful for the library too. Soulstein was impressed during covid and the library's quick action to getting books into patron hands. She fundraises by participating in the Readathon. She is floored by the 23% of books that have been eliminated. TCPL was a place of community, the tone of the library is different now. Soulstein would like to see the screen in a different location. Communication is inconsistent.

Richard Enlich a long-time resident, served on the South Central Region Library Council board and TCPL is not in compliance with the open meeting laws and there is no transparency. There was no information about RFID. Had there been weeding policies in advance the widespread mistrust could have been avoided.

Melisa Crumrine is on the Foundation Board of Directors/a donor/an employee. Crumrine said there is misinformation on the weeding process, no connection between weeding and RFID. We haven't weeded in twenty years, weeding of this magnitude will never happen again. Public libraries are not just about books.

Woody Chichester announced that staff are tired of the discourse, misinformation about weeding and the switch. We are not an archive.

Ken Garson, an IT professional and one year resident doesn't want to fight about the screen time but find another space for the screen the switch. RFID library systems are a significant expense.

Adrianna Histler loves the library too, and the friends Booksale is amazing! She would appreciate more transparency and listen to public feedback.

Bob Proehl feels discourse is hurtful to staff, change is hard. A public library is not an archive. It's a community site that maintains a circulating collection. The library is a community center, its public internet access, it's a warm place to spend the day in the winter.

#### APPROVAL OF NOVEMBER 14, 2023, MINUTES DOC 23-80

A **MOTION** was made by M. Sidle and seconded by J. Moore to approve the minutes. Approved unanimously.

#### APPROVAL OF THE BILLS

I, Treasurer, Blixty Taetzsch, in keeping with New York State Education Law, certify that I have reviewed payroll #24 dated 11/30/23 and #25 dated 12/14/23 totaling \$119,041.76. I have reviewed all vouchers presented for payment, and that all disbursements are within the approved operating budget of the library, and therefore recommend that the Board of Trustees approve for payment December 2023 bills in the amount of \$468,719.87 as listed in Abstracts #35, #36 and #37.

#### APPROVAL OF THE PROPOSED 2024 BUDGET DOC 23-81

Approved unanimously.

#### NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

D. Trotter made a recommendation for nominees Kathy Weinberg and Darrell Long for trustees. Approved unanimously.

Trotter also recommended Melisa Sidle whose current term ends in December 2023, for another three year term, beginning January 2024. Approved unanimously.

#### DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Kat Savage, Youth Services Department Manager reported in director Tabor's absence. Savage gave an overview of the Youth Services department including crafternoon, winter reading passive program, and staff changes. Crafternoon drew 150 attendees and 8 activity/craft stations. The winter reading program started December 12. Kids and teens can pick up a free book in return for writing book reviews that will be posted in the Children's Room and the Teen Center. Staff changes include a permanent Library Assistant, Sash Raffloer, two new staff from Adult Services joined YS, Tom Fredette and Woody Chichester.

LIAISON REPORTS

**County** - The Legislature is working on a strategic plan gathering public input sessions, input from staff and they also met with senior leadership on the steering committee. Champion gave a brief overview of the bylaws changes and is asking to meet with the board to discuss the changes. Champion stated that TCPL Board of Trustees is not an advisory board.

**Foundation** – The Foundation is in the thick of processing and acknowledging year end gifts and fine-tuning our 2024 work plan. We’re excited to have finally gotten a lead on a prototype for a donation box that will accept cash as well as credit card gifts. The students in Antonio DiRenzo’s Proposal and Grant Writing course at Ithaca College did an incredible job presenting their findings and recommendations for rebranding and a social media plan and strategy for the Foundation. And we were honored to celebrate Julee Johnson at AFP Finger Lakes’ National Philanthropy Day luncheon where she received the Volunteer Fundraiser of the Year Award, nominated by the TCPL Foundation, Southern Tier AIDS Project, and Friends of TCPL.

**Friends** – D. Trotter announced the slate of officers for the Friends, they are:

- President – K.C. Ryan
- 1<sup>st</sup> VP Membership – Emily Koester
- 2<sup>nd</sup> VP Book Sale – Anne Neiryneck and Kathy Weinberg
- Secretary – Sue Durham
- Treasurer – Jay Janowsky

Nina Scholtz will be the Friends liaison as my term has ended.

K. Barnes thanked Martha Hardesty and Don Trotter for their two terms of service as trustee with books dedicated to each of them.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

A **MOTION** was made by J. Moore and seconded by D. Trotter to adjourn to Executive Session at 5:30 p.m. to discuss compensation of TCPL director. There being no further business, a **MOTION** was made by M. Sidle and seconded by S. Wong to end Executive Session at 5:48 p.m. Approved unanimously.

A **MOTION** was made by J. Moore and seconded by S. Wong for a raise of 2% for the director which is consistent with the department heads’ compensation. Approved unanimously.

A **MOTION** was made by S. Wong and seconded by M. Sidle to adjourn at 5:50 pm. Approved unanimously.

Recorded by Mary McKeon  
Administrative Manager

Endorsed by Liam Murphy  
Secretary

# JANUARY MONTHLY STAFF REPORT

## Director's Report

*Leslie Tabor*

- Wishing you a joyful 2024 from TCPL! Things are off to a wonderful start at the Library.
- Welcome new Trustees: Mimi Campbell, Darrell Long, Kathy Weinberg
- Welcome new Legislator Liaison: Rich John
- Thank you to our previous legislator liaison, Amanda Champion, for her six years of service supporting TCPL! We look forward to seeing you at Government Operations committee meetings and budget hearings.
- RFID progress continues:
  - We've tagged approximately 50 percent of the collection, including the youth services and young adult collections. We will move to the adult collection next.
  - The new gate will be installed this week because our old one broke and it has the mechanism that provides our door count statistics. We are staying flexible.
  - To capture door count, the gate pings to a self-check machine. So, we will also install a new self-check machine this week. Patrons will be able to use it by scanning barcodes, just like the existing ones. (The existing ones are also breaking rapidly – do you see a pattern here?!)
- I've had the pleasure of appointing two new permanent department heads for adult services and youth services. Jeremy Jordan and Kat Savage both joined TCPL in June of 2023 and possess strong management skills from library work around the country. Jeremy will oversee adult services and has experience in public and academic libraries. Kat joined us from Brooklyn Public Library and is already implementing fantastic ideas in youth services. TCPL is lucky to have them both and I am thrilled to have three permanent department heads with complementary skills and collaborative mindsets. We are going to have so much fun!
- February is Library Lovers' month, and we are ready. In February, TCPL will expand our offerings in Hoopla. We currently have Hoopla Instant, which provides five downloads per month for millions of books, audiobooks, graphic novels, music, and more. With Hoopla Instant, everything is available with no holds. In February, TCPL will introduce Hoopla Flex, which offers more current eBook and eAudiobook titles. Like physical materials borrowing and the Libby App, you may have to wait for holds, but you'll have more titles to choose from. Our statistics show us that more and more users are reading on their phones, iPads, and Kindles, so it's important that we keep up with digital demand. This is a trend that libraries are seeing all over the world and balancing print and digital is essential for public libraries. TCPL has voracious eAudiobook listeners and I love that we can offer a free alternative to paid apps like Audible. Spread the word!
- Lastly, did you know that TCPL has a monthly newsletter? It's a great way to check out our program highlights, hear from the Foundation, and find out about new books. It's free to sign up, so please help us spread the word and sign up if you haven't already. [Here is the direct link](#) and there's a Newsletter Signup link at tcpl.org under the Quick Links menu.
- Staffing Updates:
  - One part-time page will promote to full-time on January 29th.
  - Interviews for new library clerks in circulation are complete. One new full-time clerk will begin on January 23<sup>rd</sup> and we are checking references for a second clerk.

- Page open houses – the first of this type of recruiting event – were held on January 18<sup>th</sup> at 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. We have approximately one hundred interested applicants and are considering several part-time positions of ten hours each. We hope to attract a more diverse group of applicants, including BIPOC and high school students.
- A Librarian I civil service exam was ordered for the recruitment of two Librarian Is. These positions were vacated by the promotion of two staff to Librarian III in Adult and Youth services.
- The Board Treasurer is leading the search committee for the Library Business Manager position.
- Kathy Raine retired on January 18, and she will be missed!
- Kerry and I will visit Kendal on Friday the 26<sup>th</sup> at 4 p.m. Kendal residents are strong library supporters, and we had a great visit in 2023. Don't forget to share ideas for community partners that you're able to help us meet!

## Access Services

*Kate DeVoe*

### Staffing

- **Tom Fredette** (Librarian II) joined the Circulation Department this month! Tom has worked in Youth Services, Adult Services, and now, Circulation. Tom is passionate about digital literacy and makes regular visits to Lifelong and McGraw House. He will be our Page Coordinator. Tom gives a shoutout to longtime Page, **Michelle Saraceni**, for showing him the ropes!
- **Sam MacQueen** will be starting as a **Library Clerk** on January 24! The search committee had this to share about Sam: "he's very self-motivated; he owned his own moving business and helped people move across country! He has a lot of enthusiasm and a great customer service philosophy. Plus, he wore a leather jacket to his interview." Welcome, Sam!

### Programming & Outreach

- Circulation hosted the Library's first ever Page Open House sessions on January 18! **Melisa Crumrine** (Library Assistant), **Mitchell Hall** (Page) and **Alex Ehrhardt** (Page) planned and hosted two hour-long sessions for the community. The first session had over 50 people, and the second, over 30. We came away with a diverse pool of candidates who are very excited to be a part of the Library.



- **Tom Fredette** visited Lifelong this month to teach Cybersecurity Basics. “We have presented this workshop a few times and we always enjoy it because the patrons are engaged and ask questions throughout the workshop.” Tom has also been in contact with the program director at Love Living at Home about digital literacy instruction for their membership.
- Circulation staff are planning a movie series for Black History Month, spearheaded by **Mitchell Hall** and **Melisa Crumrine**! Aside from the Page Open House, this is the first time Circulation has taken ownership of a program series!
- **Olivia Haring** (Page) and **Melisa Crumrine** are headed to Cayuga Heights Elementary School on Friday, January 19 to celebrate Literacy Night! They will be helping Youth Services staff sign children up for Library cards.
- **Melisa Crumrine** is also headed to New Roots Charter School on Monday, January 22 to guest star at their College Writing and Literature Class alongside Youth Services. Busy month for Melisa!

### Patron Praise

- From one of our Library by Mail patrons: “What you all do for me is like medicine. You are like miracle doctors. I could not live without my books. My two passions are walking and reading, and I am eighty-six years old, and I cannot walk like I used to, so your books keep me going.”
- "This is a great library, we just moved here and I'm really into your ILL system -- this one came all the way from Washington state!"
- "The library of things is the best thing ever" from a patron checking out an umbrella in the pouring rain.



- "I've been feeling a little down, a little blue, but I always feel the love when I come here. It's a warm place."
- "We're going through all of your movies by letter! We're up to L. We watch all of the 4 and 5 star movies. It's fabulous."
- "It's so great to be able to come and get this DVD for free to show to my class. We've been studying this person, and now we get to watch this."
- "I knew this place was going to look cool, but I didn't know it was going to look \*this\* cool!" young patron upon entering the lobby. They liked the security gate but then they saw the RFID self-check: "WOW!"

## Youth Services

Kat Savage

### Youth Services Department Board Report January 2024

Highlighted Statistics	Dec 1-31	Nov 1-30
Programs Offered	29	38
Attendance	1,054	1,217
Circulation, Children's Materials	24,308	24,155
Circulation, Teen Materials	2,121	2,036



Whiteboard prompts encourage teens to get creative!

### General Overview

In February, we will honor and celebrate Lunar New Year, Library Lover's Month, and Black History Month:

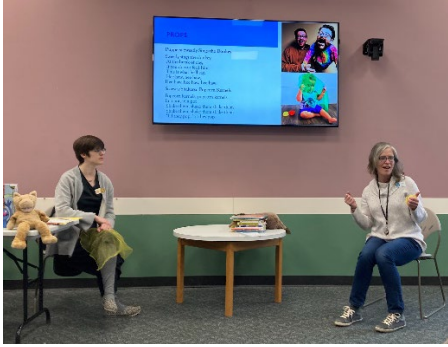
**Author Willie Mae Brown** will visit us on Wednesday, February 28, at 6pm. She will read from *My Selma*, her middle-grade memoir about growing up in Alabama during the Civil Rights movement, answer questions, and sign copies of her book. Leading up to her visit, the **Tween Book Club** will read and discuss *My Selma*.

**Lunar New Year** decoration making will be in the Youth Services department Saturday, Feb. 3 from 2-4pm. We will welcome the Year of the Dragon with a Lion Dance on Saturday, Feb 10 at 3pm.

**Library Lover's Crafternoon** will be Thursday, Feb. 8<sup>th</sup>, from 3:30-5:30 in the Youth Department. We'll have six craft-making stations where participants can create art and crafts that celebrate love for their library!

**Winter Reading** continues through March 15 – kids and teens can get a free book in return for writing a review. Each review gets the entrant a raffle ticket to win a prize!

**Robotics Club** will resume for an eight-week drop-in session on March 7. Kids and teens ages 8-19 will be challenged to program a wrestling robot to compete in an arena.



*Storytime 101 training for Staff*



*Come check out one of our new readalong picture books!*



*Staff training on the Children's Room Nintendo Switch*

**Your Moment of Joy**

*Young patron:* I love the snowman in the window!

*Staff:* Me too!

*Young patron:* Why doesn't he have a hat on? That's crazy!

*Staff:* Right?! But after he got painted in there, he was too big! We wouldn't want him to catch cold though, so maybe we should paint him a small hat!

*Young patron:* That's a good idea!!

As **Winter Reading** continues (Sasha said it has really *snowballed!*), we are also beginning to plan for **Summer Reading**. While it's hard to think about summer as snow falls, we are committed to make sure Summer Reading 2024 is a true adventure!

**Collections**

The RFID tagging and encoding is nearly complete in the Youth Services collections, with disc-based multimedia remaining to encode.

We have added a new pilot format to the children's collection: read-along books! These books, provided by **Playaway Wonderbooks**, have a built-in speaker that read books out loud.

**Staff Highlights**

**Kai** is preparing for Kids Discover the Trail – field trips will begin in March and continue through the end of the school year. We look forward to welcoming teachers in February to start off this cornerstone series!

**Tom** led one of our regular visits from GIAC, creating Fox in Socks puppets and doing a collaborative word search and crossword with kindergarten and first grade after-schoolers.

**Woody** is coordinating book giveaways for Winter Reading, and has helped to give away over 250 books of all ages. In addition, they are updating our digital signage and preparing to order a slew of non-fiction to start 2024 off right.

**Kelly** led our presentation of a Winter Special Storytime to over 40 participants, featuring stories, puppets, and songs and assisted by **Cassie** and **Kat**. Kelly says, "Seeing the joy and wonder on the participants's faces as they watched the puppets in the theater is the best," and Kat was stopped in the street weeks later by a grateful parent whose toddler had a blast! (We did too!)

**Sasha** and **Woody** have been sprucing up the Teen Center – creating interactive whiteboards, updating

displays, and adding more board games for in-house use. The former Teen Librarian office will be converted to a Teen Craft Room, an always-available public space that can also be used for small group programs.

**Kat, Kelly, Cassie, and Kai** led a Storytime 101 training for staff, to share the work we do for children 0-5 and their caregivers, to our colleagues. Special guest **Leslie** gave concluding thoughts, speaking about the importance of engaging with early literacy and libraries at this crucial age.

**Joah** submitted the Robotics Club curriculum to Autodesk/Instructables and won a \$250 runner-up cash prize in the worldwide competition. He also led a sample session of the Club at the Sciencenter in January.

**Kat** began her position as permanent Youth Services Department Head in January and is thrilled to continue doing great work with the department for children, teens, and families of Tompkins County!

## Volunteer Coordinator

*Elizabeth Buckley*

We are exploring what it might look like to have volunteer docents providing customer service to patrons. The aim is to have them welcome patrons as they enter, ask how we can help them today, and provide answers and assistance for frequently asked questions and needs. We are looking to have docents who are familiar with and able to share information with patrons about the following library features and important things to know:

- Library layout
- Library of things items
- Services we provide
- Collections we have available
- Meeting rooms
- Restrooms
- Which types of questions would be best directed to reference desk librarians
- How to use the new app and checkout machines (after they are instituted)

- Where to pick up holds
- The time or other information regarding an event taking place here (this information will be provided to volunteers)

The development of this role is in the planning stage at this time and we are very much looking forward to seeing it in action. We're also exploring who among our current volunteers would be interested in discussing this role with us and helping us roll it out. We are especially looking for volunteers who are highly knowledgeable (and would like to learn more) about library services, who also are friendly and comfortable introducing themselves to patrons and providing guidance. I'd be particularly happy to talk about possibilities with Board of Trustees members!

**FINANCE & PERSONNEL COMMITTEE****AGENDA**

Tuesday, January 16<sup>th</sup> 4:00 pm

Meeting started at 4:05. Attending Michelle, Lis, Leslie, and Melisa

- Labor Management Update: Labor management meets prior to F&P; we scheduled meetings for the next six months; possible training.

Discussion about scheduling: Michelle thinks the two days off in a row clause in the contract might be a difficult issue to solve. Michelle and Leslie think there might need to be refinement in order for this to work. It seems like most folks are okay, with only a few finding the need for the two days in a row all the time. We look forward to hearing from staff how they would like to see some of these issues addressed. Schedules are set for a minimum of one month in advance, but are working toward working on quarterly schedules. Everyone is on a 4-week rotation for Saturdays, including department head and director.

Department heads are Kat, Jeremy, and Kate – they are all permanent.

- 2024 County Agreement: We just received the agreement today. Michelle is concerned because they added a line again that says allotted annual funds not spent will be returned to the County. The committee agreed that Leslie will schedule a meeting with Lisa, and in the meantime, Michelle will contact Jessie about whether the added language is a mistake. Committee also discussed that Rich John is our new liaison, and we will be reaching out to get to know him better.
- End of year planning – final statements, amendments, state reports: Michelle did not have much to add. Once all the final bills are paid, then Michelle will close out the year. Then there will be budget amendments, state reporting, etc. There is always a huge rush for year-end reporting. Auditors will come at the end of March. Michelle expects to have everything ready for them before she leaves. Connie is also a good resource (Michelle's last day is March 15<sup>th</sup>). Typically, the auditors are only on site for about 3 days.

New IT Contract: as an organization there have been several changes. This year Synergy recommended managed services contract. Not a person on site routinely – but only as needed. This would save us about \$40k per year. More support would be remote, and but there is also redundancy. We are in a six-week transition period since Leslie has signed the contract. At the end of the first contract, we will have more data due to a ticket system about what kinds of issues there are. We may need an assigned person on staff to deal with some of the things that Evan currently does. There are areas where professional development is needed to make sure staff has the necessary training in technology. We will need to evaluate whether this approach to support works for us. It's important to point out that this is not happening to save money, but rather a change in how Synergy is providing service.

- Business Manager succession planning: the committee has been established, which include Blixxy, Leslie, Kerry, Jeremy, Connie, Mary, and need to add an SSA staff. We will be meeting to get started ASAP.

- Staffing updates: Yes.
  - Background reference check phase for 2 circulation clerks – there was a list and folks were interviewed and hired from that pool (8 people interviewed, but no internal candidates).
  - 1 full time page promoting form part time. – posted internally for full time page
  - Two, page open houses at 3 and 6 for multiple 10-hour page positions. Staff will present information, there will be a rubric screening process. They will interact with a staff member one on one. So, this will be the initial screening process. This will then give us a group for interviews. How are we funding the 3 ten-hour page positions? Michelle and Leslie will review and follow up.
  - Jeremy and Kat being promoted has opened their previous positions – there are two Librarian 1 openings.
  - We do have one Librarian 2 position that may be open depending on the resolution of a personnel matter.
  - We will get an update on the personnel list at our next meeting.
- 5:20pm moved into executive session to discuss two terminations and an active grievance.
- 5:55pm out of executive session.
- Public meeting adjourned 5:55pm.