

**Broome Country Public Library**  
**Board of Trustees**  
Regular Session Meeting Minutes – 09.14.23

**Members Present:** Jeffri Boisvert, Katie Bowers, Al Buyck, Vikki Collazo, Peter DeWind, Jennifer Embree, Charmian Foster, Sara Glose, JoAnne Hanrahan, Jill Kissick-Castro, Kate Miller-Corcoran

**Also Present:** Josias Bartram, Imara deMontfort, Laura Haynes, Judd Karlman, Sherry Kowalski, Rebecca Stone

**Call to Order:** J. Hanrahan called the meeting to order at 5:30pm on Thursday, September 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

**Amendments to the Agenda:** None

**Public Comments:** None

**Minutes of Last Board Meeting:** Motion to approve the minutes from the previous meeting was made by A. Buyck, seconded by C. Foster, after a correction of the board members present. Passed unanimously.

**New Appointments/Resignations:** Tyler Hurlburt has been terminated from the position of custodial worker. Motion to accept this termination was made by K. Miller-Corcoran, seconded by A. Buyck. Passed unanimously.

Chris Burke has been hired to the position of custodial worker. Motion to accept this appointment was made by J. Kissick-Castro, seconded by K. Miller-Corcoran. Passed unanimously.

**New Business**

*Hoyt Foundation Grant:* J. Bartram mentioned the opportunity to proceed with a grant to fund the proposed updates for the library reading garden, such as educational gardening, art, gazebo renovations, and signage. The garden itself will be redesigned for easier maintenance, since the bulk of such has been generously handled by the Friends. J. Hanrahan mentioned that it needs professional attention to address some of the larger issues. The grant will be handled through the Friends. Motion to proceed with the grant application was made by V. Collazo, seconded by K. Bowers.

*Board Training:* There was discussion of Board training, both submission of necessary documentation for continuing education attendance and of a training session through the BCPL itself. J. Kissick-Castro has been speaker with an outside consultant to schedule a session for the Board. A motion to accept the proposal of the Board training session was made by A. Buyck, seconded by K. Miller-Corcoran. Passed unanimously.

*CSEA Contract:* The union approved the contract changes with increases of both a flat increase and a percentage for the next two years. Motion to accept these updates was made by C. Foster, seconded by J. Kissick-Castro.

*Literacy Volunteers:* J. Bartram and J. Hanrahan had a positive meeting with the head of the Literacy Volunteers, a group that rents space on the second floor of the library. The Board discussed an adjustment of both the rent and the size of the leasing space. The lease agreement will be part of the next Board meeting.

Budget: The library has updated our budget to reflect the requested budget cuts. Motion to approve the budget changes was made by S. Glose, seconded by K. Miller-Corcoran. Jason Garner's budget address went well and the library was specifically recognized for the work that has been done to support the community. J. Hanrahan was pleased.

Narcan Distribution: I. deMontfort mentioned that Bob Benki would prefer anything of this manner to be managed in-house due to liability concerns. J. Bartram would like to work directly with the county health department which is working through various local organizations. J. Hanrahan mentions that it dovetails well with the Peer Support initiative.

### **Old Business**

*Annual Report:* The printed annual report for 2022 is finished and J. Bartram is distributing to appropriate parties. The Board is very pleased with the finished product.

### **Reports**

J. Bartram mentioned the current and ongoing workload and mental health impacts for staff. There have been conversations about relocating the Reference staff as they are disconnected from the other departments and staff given their location in the building. Staff are being harassed by banned patrons. There was an altercation in the Peer Support room and security got involved. These incidents are mentally and emotionally taxing for the staff. Some attendees made suggestions and voiced ideas for staff support. Lack of staff is still a pressing issue. J. Karlman mentioned that Peer Support has been a huge help to minimize and prevent some of these events.

Motion to adjourn made by K. Miller Corcoran and seconded by A. Buyck. Passed unanimously.

**Meeting ended at 7:12pm.**

*Respectfully submitted,  
Jeffri Boisvert*

BROOME COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY  <b>POLICY &amp; PROCEDURE</b>  <b>MANUAL</b>	SECTION	Trustees/County/City	POLICY # <b>0028-0</b>
	EFFECTIVE	April 27, 2023	PAGE 1 OF 1
	SOURCE	Board of Trustees/Administration	
	SUPERCEDES	2021 Committee Assignments	

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS 2023

Committees will meet as needed throughout the year. Each committee should have at least three members of the Board. A Board member can serve on more than one committee.

Chairs of each committee are responsible for coordinating committee meetings and ensuring that the committee fulfills its responsibilities. Chairs should be prepared to give an update at each board meeting.

The Board President is a voting member of all committees.

### **Executive Committee**

Comprised of the four leadership roles (President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary), this committee is empowered to conduct business on behalf of the Board on matters that require attention between regularly scheduled Board meetings.

Chair: JoAnne Hanrahan (President)

Members: P. DeWind (Vice President), K. Miller-Corcoran (Treasurer), J. Boisvert (Secretary)

### **Strategic Planning**

Responsible For: Developing, implementing, monitoring, evaluating, and revising the strategic plan.

Chair: K. Miller- Corcoran

Members: C. Foster, J. Kissick-Castro, S. Glose

### **Finance**

Responsible For: Monitoring, evaluating and recommending situation-specific and organization budgets, assessing internal controls, reviewing financial statements and meeting with County and City officials as needed.

Chair: K. Miller-Corcoran

Members: A. Buyck, P. DeWind

### **Nominating/ By-Laws Committee**

Responsible For: Identifying the talent, expertise and skills needed on the board. Recruiting new board members. Presenting the slate of executive officers and new trustees to the board for approval, annually or as needed. Review library by-laws to ensure compliance.

Chair: C. Foster

Members: J. Boisvert, K. Bowers, K. Miller-Corcoran, S. Glose

### **Personnel**

Responsible For: Consulting and making recommendations on personnel issues and completing the Executive Director's annual performance review.

Chair: J. Boisvert

Members: A. Buyck, V. Collazo

**Marketing**

Responsible For: Translating the library's vision, mission, values and policies into cohesive, clear messages to target audiences. Following the framework listed in the strategic plan, this committee will develop and implement a communication plan, determine what messages need to be communicated to target audiences, promote media relations and internal/ external communications.

Chair: J. Embree

Members: J. Boisvert, V. Collazo, S. Glose

**Ad-Hoc Committees:**

**Diversity, Equity and Inclusion**

Responsible For: Developing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating the diversity, equity and inclusion plan.

Chair: J. Kissick-Castro

Members: J. Boisvert, K. Bowers, J. Embree

**Policy Review**

Responsible For: Working with the Library Director to determine the best use of library space, including recommending policies for meeting rooms. Also provide recommendations on upgrades to facility.

Chair:

Members: J. Boisvert, J. Kissick-Castro, K. Bowers, K. Miller-Corcoran

**Other Roles**

**Four County Library System/ BCPL Liaison:** P. DeWind

**Friends of The Library Liaison:** J. Hanrahan



October 2, 2023

To All Member Library Directors,

During the Director's Call on September 7, we had a healthy discussion about the near future of fees for the Overdrive digital service (AKA Libby). After fine-tuning the plan, we move to the next step- a membership vote on a three-year funding proposal to raise the investment in digital content to provide better service to our patrons.

### **The Proposal**

We propose to overhaul the Overdrive pricing model and replace it with one based on member library budgets. If approved, the plan will phase in the increase over time to reduce the budgetary impact while increasing the content available to patrons.

See the attached chart for a library by library breakdown of the increases. The budget figures were pulled from 2022 NYS Annual Reports.

### **The Vote**

Each member library will have an opportunity to vote on the plan. Use the attached ballot to register your library's preference. The outcome will be determined by the majority of votes received by November 17, 2023.

If approved, the new fee structure will be put into place for 2024 and will run through 2026.

If not approved, the old fee structure will continue for 2024.

### **After 2026**

This plan is an effort to correct long term underfunding of the Overdrive program and provide better service to patrons who enjoy digital content. If approved, the effectiveness of the plan and its implementation will be evaluated. We will decide together (again) how to proceed beyond 2026.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely,

Steven J Bachman

Executive Director

## 4CLS Digital Content Plan Ballot

Library: \_\_\_\_\_

Shall the Digital Content Plan and pricing structure be approved?

Yes

No

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return to Steve Bachman by delivery or e-mail ([sbachman@4cls.org](mailto:sbachman@4cls.org)) by November 17, 2023.

Digital Content Plan Phase In 2024-2026

	Current	2024	2025	2026
Afton Free Library	145.00	\$ 455.76	\$ 531.72	\$ 607.68
Andes Public Library	50.00	\$ 295.38	\$ 350.00	\$ 500.00
Bainbridge Free Library	50.00	\$ 368.28	\$ 429.66	\$ 500.00
Bovina Public Library	50.00	\$ 250.00	\$ 350.00	\$ 500.00
Broome County Public Library		\$ 8,360.10	\$ 9,753.45	\$ 11,146.80
Cannon Free Library	162.00	\$ 353.88	\$ 412.86	\$ 500.00
Cherry Valley Memorial Library	151.00	\$ 355.08	\$ 414.26	\$ 500.00
Deposit Free Library	161.00	\$ 314.82	\$ 367.29	\$ 500.00
Edmeston Free Library	50.00	\$ 267.78	\$ 350.00	\$ 500.00
Fairview Public Library	50.00	\$ 386.22	\$ 450.59	\$ 514.96
Fenton Free Library	50.00	\$ 546.18	\$ 637.21	\$ 728.24
Franklin Free Library	79.00	\$ 250.00	\$ 350.00	\$ 500.00
George F. Johnson Memorial Library	2,675.00	\$ 5,071.98	\$ 5,917.31	\$ 6,762.64
Gilbertsville Free Library	50.00	\$ 250.00	\$ 350.00	\$ 500.00
Guernsey Memorial Library of Norwich	1,890.00	\$ 5,207.28	\$ 6,075.16	\$ 6,943.04
Harris Memorial Library	50.00	\$ 250.00	\$ 350.00	\$ 500.00
Huntington Memorial Library	1,645.00	\$ 3,779.34	\$ 4,409.23	\$ 5,039.12
Kinney Memorial Library	242.00	\$ 438.96	\$ 512.12	\$ 585.28
Lisle Free Library	50.00	\$ 651.42	\$ 759.99	\$ 868.56
Louise Adelia Read Memorial Library	386.00	\$ 393.60	\$ 459.20	\$ 524.80
Mary Wilcox Memorial Library	275.00	\$ 562.56	\$ 656.32	\$ 750.08
Milford Free Library	50.00	\$ 269.94	\$ 350.00	\$ 500.00
Moore Memorial Library	581.00	\$ 743.10	\$ 866.95	\$ 990.80
Morris Library	50.00	\$ 419.94	\$ 489.93	\$ 559.92
New Berlin Library	211.00	\$ 538.56	\$ 628.32	\$ 718.08
Nineveh Pub Lib Of Colesville Township	50.00	\$ 250.00	\$ 350.00	\$ 500.00
Oxford Memorial Library	359.00	\$ 771.30	\$ 899.85	\$ 1,028.40
Richfield Springs Public Library	184.00	\$ 554.16	\$ 646.52	\$ 738.88
Roxbury Library Association	50.00	\$ 250.00	\$ 350.00	\$ 500.00
Sherburne Public Library	569.00	\$ 1,708.56	\$ 1,993.32	\$ 2,278.08
Sidney Memorial Public Library	1,015.00	\$ 2,755.98	\$ 3,215.31	\$ 3,674.64
Skene Memorial Library	50.00	\$ 250.00	\$ 350.00	\$ 500.00
Smyrna Public Library	50.00	\$ 250.00	\$ 350.00	\$ 500.00
South New Berlin Free Library	93.00	\$ 250.00	\$ 350.00	\$ 500.00
Springfield Library	50.00	\$ 250.00	\$ 350.00	\$ 500.00
Stamford Library	293.00	\$ 654.30	\$ 763.35	\$ 872.40
Unadilla Public Library	50.00	\$ 250.00	\$ 350.00	\$ 500.00
Vestal Public Library	1,914.00	\$ 2,938.68	\$ 3,428.46	\$ 3,918.24
Village Library Of Cooperstown	397.00	\$ 1,675.38	\$ 1,954.61	\$ 2,233.84
William B. Ogden Free Library	261.00	\$ 558.54	\$ 651.63	\$ 744.72
Worcester Free Library	50.00	\$ 385.50	\$ 449.75	\$ 514.00
Your Home Public Library	1,540.00	\$ 2,501.10	\$ 2,917.95	\$ 3,334.80
<b>SubTotal</b>	\$ 16,128.00	\$ 47,033.66	\$ 55,592.32	\$ 65,078.00
Four County Library System	\$ 17,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 22,000	\$ 25,000
<b>Grand Total</b>	33,128.00	67,033.66	77,592.32	90,078.00

Sharing the Secret Garden:  
the design, implementation and promotion of an educational green space in Binghamton's  
Stadium District

## ORGANIZATIONAL HISTORY

The Friends of the Broome County Public Library (The Friends) has provided the Library with significant financial and operational support for 48 years. An all-volunteer group, the Friends carries out a number of fund-raising programs, the proceeds of which are used to support Library programs and to acquire equipment and supplies beyond the scope of the Library's operating budget. The principal fund-raiser is the annual schedule of on-site book sales, which we are proud to see are enjoying real growth and consistently attracting new patrons. More recently—and in keeping with this mission—the Friends has assumed responsibility for managing grants on behalf of the Library, providing a means for piloting innovative programs and services in direct response to the needs of our community. Since its completion in 2008, the Friends have funded the ongoing maintenance of the Library's Bronksy Reading Garden, and Friends volunteers have contributed countless hours of labor each year.

The Broome County Public Library (BCPL/The Library) is observing its 120<sup>th</sup> year as the region's primary research library and its 61<sup>st</sup> year as the central library in the Four County Library System, serving 350,000 residents of Broome, Chenango, Delaware, and Otsego Counties. It has occupied the current site and facilities since 2000, serving as a community hub in downtown Binghamton, providing information services, community meeting space, and educational programming. In 2020 and again in 2023, we conducted community needs assessments to explore how we could build on this history of traditional library services, a process that clearly demonstrated the importance of the Library as a safe and welcoming space, open to all.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Library's Bronsky Reading Garden was completed in 2008 thanks to generous support from the local community, the Bronsky family, and Representative Donna Lupardo. As the only green space in the Stadium District of downtown Binghamton, the Reading Garden has an important role to play in revitalizing the neighborhood, contributing to a sense of place and boosting the quality of life for local residents by providing educational and recreational opportunities. This vision is clearly articulated by the City of Binghamton in their Stadium District Master Plan and has only gained currency during the Pandemic and Recovery era.



Upon commencing my role as BCPL's Director in September 2020, one of my first tasks was the creation of a new strategic plan grounded in a thorough assessment of community needs. With the support and approval of BCPL's innovation-oriented Board of Trustees, this plan articulates the importance of the Library as an open and accessible public space in which traditional library services are offered alongside a wide array of educational, public health, and recreational opportunities, realized through partnerships with community organizations. As we began to implement this vision, we turned to the Reading Garden as our safest space for the community to gather, particularly for programs serving children, families, and the elderly. This in turn highlighted the Garden's untapped potential as a key Library space. To use a literary metaphor, I was reminded of Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The Secret Garden* in both a positive sense (a magical oasis of art and nature sheltered from the surrounding world) and a negative one (because the garden is so sheltered, many of our regular patrons are unaware that it's there).

Even though the Garden is nestled against the Library building on two sides, currently the only entrance is from our parking lot. This means that holding children's programs in the garden means directing families out of the front doors and across the parking lot, which is unsafe, inconvenient, and inaccessible. To address this issue, we've received funding from New York State to add a door from our Youth Services Department directly to the Garden. Because the building is below grade, we are also building a wheelchair accessible ramp on the interior of the building. The project will be completed in the spring of 2024 and will add to work that was completed in 2021 to make the Garden itself more accessible. Now that these improvements are under way, we have the opportunity to envision the Garden as an extension of the Library's interior space. This is a major focus of our 2024-2028 Strategic Plan, which we are currently in the process of writing having recently completed a community needs assessment. In keeping with the results of the needs assessment, we propose to focus on the following:

1. Placemaking - after 3 years of pandemic restrictions followed by gradual recovery, the community is hungry for the experience of gathering in public spaces that feel safe and offer a unique experience. Our data indicates that while our door count has recovered to pre-pandemic levels, the use of traditional library services has yet to reach those levels. The community is fully utilizing the Library, but their reasons for being here have changed. The Reading Garden offers an additional space that is perfect for this type of gathering.
2. Education - during the pandemic we began holding children's programs in the Reading Garden and the direct access from our Children's Room will enable us to explore this potential further. In particular, we have the opportunity to focus on environmental education and to tie this into our more traditional literacy programming. For example, we envision reading a Ukrainian folktale about a giant turnip, followed by the opportunity to plant, harvest, and taste turnips.
3. Recreation - as the only green space in the neighborhood, the revamped Reading Garden will be available as a recreational space for local residents. We envision providing a

variety of self-directed and more organized recreational opportunities ranging from lawn games to picnics to scavenger hunts.

4. Arts - the Reading Garden is already an excellent venue for visual and performing arts. Over the past couple of years, we have successfully hosted several concerts and a children's opera. Investing in the Garden will allow us to offer these types of programs on a regular basis.
5. Public Health - the Library has had a lot of success with public health programs such as COVID and Mpox vaccine clinics and wellness programs like our free weekly yoga classes. The Reading Garden will be a perfect space for expanding these programs, particularly in summer months when there is a lot of demand for our community rooms.

#### January 2024 - June 2024: Design Phase

Work with Whitham Design on a comprehensive redesign of the Reading Garden that enhances existing strengths by adding a focus on native plants, a sensory garden, accessibility, public arts, and ease of maintenance.

#### July 2024 - June 2025: Initial Implementation

Work with a professional landscaping firm to implement the garden design.

#### July 2025 - December 2025: Finish Implementation

Purchase and install improved signage, public art, and accessible furniture. Complete repairs and upgrades to gazebo/bandstand. The Hoyt Foundation's contribution will be recognized with the installation of a plaque renaming the gazebo in the Foundation's honor and commemorating the project.

#### Ongoing

Ongoing maintenance of the garden will continue to be funded by the Friends of the Library and performed by Friends volunteers, as it has since the initial design was implemented in 2008. Ease of maintenance by volunteers has been one of the primary issues with the current design. Addressing this by featuring naturalistic plantings of native plants will be a priority of the new design. Additionally, the Friends are prepared to fund ongoing seasonal maintenance by a professional landscaping firm.

## NEED FOR PROJECT

In the aftermath of the COVID pandemic, Libraries—along with the communities they serve—are undergoing a rapid transformation. The context for this proposal is an ongoing and comprehensive reassessment of both mission and purpose of the Broome County Public Library.

We recently completed a community-wide survey, seeking resident input that will help to clarify patron needs and interests. Along with a similar survey three years ago, this underscores the evidence that our patron demographics have changed dramatically over the past 20 years. We are seeing more people contending with issues of mental health, homelessness, addiction, and poverty. Many of our regular patrons use the Library primarily as a place to shelter from the weather, use the restrooms, and just spend some relaxed time without being hassled. Just as many, of course, continue to come in search of a book or a DVD. Within the past three years BCPL has sought area foundation support for special and focused initiatives that are establishing fresh resources, programs and services that are meeting these critical needs many of our patron's face.

Regardless of disparate needs, it seems that all patrons are in search of a quiet place, a haven, a calming environment. At this point we are keenly interested in the promise and the principles of placemaking as a response to this clear expression of need. Libraries have a traditional image of providing a quiet and reflective atmosphere, but there is a developing trend in making them active community hubs as well. Our proposal seeks to create a balanced environment by taking deliberate steps to reevaluate the outdoor garden area as an integral Library space. We plan to contract with local, skilled designers in order to achieve professional and effective results. Placemaking's chief value to a community is the process of engaging residents in thoughtful and coordinated upgrading of its environmental quality so that it resonates with those elements people long for and value the most. We are not aware of another library attempting similar goals and expect the outcome to generate significant interest among libraries in the northeast.

While the Reading Garden is already a beautiful green space in the heart of the downtown Binghamton's Stadium District, it hasn't reached its full potential due to the following issues:

- Lack of awareness of the garden, even among regular library patrons, observed anecdotally and confirmed by community needs assessment
- Lack of accessible furniture
- Deteriorating condition of gazebo/bandstand
- Difficulty of garden maintenance by volunteers
- No direct access from building (have already received a NYS Library Construction grant to address this)
- Lack of signage

Addressing these issues will also allow us to pursue the following priorities:

- A renewed focus on sustainability, native plants, and the intersection of literacy and sustainability education
- The design and implementation of a sensory garden for patrons on the autism spectrum

- Tie the Reading Garden into library programs such as our Farm to Library program, Ukrainian Story Time, and our Seed Library
- Increase the quantity and visibility of meaningful public art, including both the installation of additional sculptural works and increasing our capacity to host performing arts.

## EVALUATION

Success of the project will be measured by increased use of the Reading Garden by the public and for innovative new Library programs. Evaluation of the outcome will include both hard data related to increased usage levels and anecdotal materials based on gathering patron opinions and input.

## ADMINISTRATIVE

Because the vast majority of the Library's funding is from Broome County, the City of Binghamton, and New York State, we are somewhat insulated from financial microtrends. After suffering significant budget cuts in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis, we have enjoyed stable and sustainable growth over the past decade, but still aren't funded or staffed at our pre-2008 levels. Despite this, we have been able to continue to serve our community with innovative programs and services due to the support of the Friends and their successful transition to managing foundation grants.

The Friends were unable to hold book sales (our primary source of operating revenue) during the COVID shutdown, but we had more than enough in our reserve fund to make it through, particularly since we have no payroll to worry about. We were also able to use this period as an opportunity to increase our grant writing activities. Since the shutdown ended, demand for our book sales and our inventory of donated books have both increased to unprecedented levels, allowing the Friends to continue to expand and support the Library in new and innovative ways.

## PROJECT BUDGET

- Landscape design - \$12,000

- Implementation (materials and labor) - \$10,000
- Accessible furniture - \$10,000
- Signage - \$5,000
- Repairs/improvements to gazebo/bandstand- \$5,500
- Additional public artwork - \$8,500
- Administrative costs - \$5,000
- Library staff time - \$5,000

**Total project cost - \$61,000**

### Funding

- Library/Broome County - in-kind contribution of staff hours - \$5,000
- Whitham Design - 50% of hours contributed as pro bono donation - \$6,000
- **Request from the Hoyt Foundation - \$50,000**

### BUDGET NARRATIVE

After consulting with local colleagues who have completed similar projects and with a member of the team that produced the original reading garden design, I have identified Whitham Design as my preferred design firm for this project. In addition to landscape design, Whitham does municipal design work and has completed several grant-funded projects for the City of Binghamton. This includes the designs for the Arts District and the Stadium District. Because the Library is in the Stadium District, we were included in this process, and I had the opportunity to form a relationship with Whitham. Based on initial conversations with their Principal, this project is estimated to be billable as \$12,000 under their usual rates, but they are offering to contribute 50% of these hours as a pro bono donation to the project.

The estimate for implementation is also based on initial conversations with Whitham Designs. This covers materials and labor for the Reading Garden itself, the initial phase of implementation.

The cost of accessible garden furniture is a rough estimate based on browsing available products.

The cost of signage is a rough estimate based on previous projects.

The cost of repairs and upgrades to the gazebo/bandstand is an estimate based on conversations with the Broome County Department of Public Works. Much of the labor can be completed by Broome County staff who are already on payroll. This labor, along with project management, is included as an in-kind contribution of staff hours.

The amount included for public art may be insufficient. If any other areas of the project are under budget, these funds can be redirected to supplement this amount. Otherwise, additional funding may be necessary at a later date in order to fully realize this vision.

## Friends of the Library 2023 Operating Budget

Broome County Public Library 2023 Operating Budget