

Vernon Public Library Board Meeting

Monday September 30th, 2024

Attendees/Absentees

Kaylee Sierson, *President - present*
Rich Lagoy, *Vice President present*
Erin Russell, *Secretary -present*
Kathleen Fabrizi, *Treasurer - present*
Patricia Plank, *Trustee -present*
Amanda Moyer, *Director -present*

PUBLIC

The following members of the public community were present:

Keith Schibel
Paulette Schiebel
Zoey Morrissey
Connie Levgold
Kristina Boylan
Bernie Synakowski
Daniel Sierson
Renee Vanderwall

Call to Order

The Meeting was called to order by Kaylee Sierson at 6:00 p.m.

- Motion to accept the agenda 1st by Rich Lagoy 2nd by Kathleen Fabrizi

Reports

Director's

- new shelves were purchased for the books.
- Supplies cost was \$30 for printer

- 8 More books were purchased off of the books sponsor sheet for a total of 32 new books
- Attendance was up for this month
- Several donations of books/dvd's

Treasurer's Report

- as of August 31, 2024 \$35,893.83
- As of September 30, 2024 \$34,489.41 spending was kept low

Library Report

- New shelves
- Tutoring room
- Kids reading program positive feedback
- Books club
- volunteers/ kids giving community service
- Changed the social media and marketing has helped with attendance
- Flower beds and exterior were donated by community members amongst was Dan Decker of Dan's Lawn Care.
- Motion to accept the reports 1st Kathleen Fabrizi 2nd Richard Lagoy

New Business

1. Motion to approve August minutes with the alteration of two additional public community members added to the minutes. 1st Kathleen Fabrizi 2nd Erin Russell Motion to approve revised bylaws was tabled. 1st Erin Russell 2nd Rich Lagoy.
2. Motion to send out the formal donation letter to be sent out the last week of October 1st Patricia Planck 2nd Kathleen Fabrizi
3. A discussion was had about sending a librarian for notary training. Motion to table notary training for a head librarian not to exceed \$100.00 1st Kathleen Fabrizi 2nd Rich Lagoy
4. Update/Discussion on the parking area being opened up and more accessible for the public.
5. Discussion about email for the lawyer in regards to the flier. Still waiting on estimated tax numbers from the town.
6. Motion to mail the flier for the 414 vote. 1st Rich Lagoy and 2nd by Kathleen Fabrizi

Public Comment

1. Paulette Schiebel commented in regards to #3 In addition to the cost of taking the notary class there is a licensing fee of \$120 every 4 years.
2. Robin Vanderwall commented that the Kirkland Town Library has a notary.

3. Robin Vanderwall commented that she had read that the tax would go up by 16%. She looked at her own tax bill from Sherrill for Town of Vernon January 2024 and made an estimated assessment on her own bill which she was estimating to be about \$24 a year. Rich Lagoy commented that the taxes are not going up 17% they assessed tax would be going up 17%. Originally a Town official stated that it would be a 20% tax increase. Myron Thurston later adjusted 20-25% to 16% in the following board meeting. Rich Lagoy noted that taxes going up 17% was false information. Robin advised that the public pulls their tax bill out and note that we are talking pennies. Robin wanted the public to know that all VVS taxpayers are paying for the Sherrill library that is \$186,000 a year. Many people do not know that Town of Verona pays \$67,000, Town of Vernon pays \$66,000, and City Sherrill pays \$53,000. Currently Vernon taxpayers not even including the City of Sherrill are paying \$66,000 towards the Sherrill Library. Robin encourages all taxpayers regardless of how the Nov. 5th vote goes to attend the Sherrill Library meetings. They meet 10 times a year. Meeting Resources on their website will give all of the information that you get from a whole board packet, the budget, etc. Robin is virtually the only person that shows up. She says the Sherrill Library board needs to remember that people in Vienna and all of the school district pay for their library.
4. Keith Schiebel thanked the board for inviting him to the meeting. He was concerned with how it's promoted. He was on the website trying to find the meeting notice, etc. and saw that October information had not been posted yet. I don't know what the deal is on that. I was also concerned that during the public session maybe there were restrictions that are apparently not accurate after your presentation that it's more of a dialogue. As you throw terms out and use them from a tax standpoint. Mr Lagoy used the term budget. Budgeting and taxes are very different because the town has additional sources of income other than property tax. They get sales tax from the county . They get heavy funding from Vernon Downs that comes in their budget, and they get money from the Oneida Indian Nation in agreement with the County. There are other sources that come in. Unfortunately those sources are fixed. They can't ask for more sales tax or OIN gets negotiated, is a five year contract, and so those are really limited in what they can do to generate funds. The proposed \$60,000 has to come out of the property tax somewhere and if you're not spending it here then what are you spending it on whether you're raising taxes, withholding taxes, and cutting a different budget. When you look at it and say consult town officials the town is different from your school tax. School taxes generally are going up 2% a year. And right now the state caps towns or municipalities at 2% if it goes over the 2% there is a tax ride on it. Our neighboring town, the Town of Verona just put out a press release to increase and ask for voter approval, to go over their tax the 2% cap. Library is asking this community to fund \$60,000; obviously you have people in here tonight in support of that which is part of it trying to get out and sell that to the taxpayers. I would say what does the school do when they are asking to fund just a 2% increase for a \$40 million dollar budget. They get out and go to each community and have town halls, and have superintendents coffee with the

superintendent, they try to get out there and hammer and sell that to people. At \$60,000 I would agree that it's very difficult to understand the tax increase but 17% of the current or last year you can debate which year you want to be in the property tax. You maybe can squeeze it down less but where are you going to get that \$60,000 from? But here's a comment to you on that. I'm sure that the board here has determined what you do with \$60,000. I've heard do you need \$60,000? Do you maybe need \$40,000? What's operational? What do you do with the extra money? Do you have a capital investment accounts? But here is a little over 5 weeks or so from a vote, and I didn't see on the website here is what we are asking them to approve. I didn't see the language. What's going to be on the ballot. That you are asking voters to approve. Those are things that I would put out there. And the other thing is when you start looking at the library. I agree the Sherrill library is a fantastic resource. Look at what the Town of Verona had tried to do with Verona school you look at this facility as a library and technology you got a tremendous resource sitting in the village that probably after hours and in the summer, and why not talk to the school and say is there a room we move library access into a school? Town of Verona had that model for a while. I don't know what the existence is. And certainly programming with Sherrill would be a significant opportunity. Last thing is. \$60,000 is a few pennies, a few dollars, a few whatever. But in this community you have four volunteer fire departments. One city, town, in essence Vernon Center, and also Oneida Castle. What would \$60,000 do in their caulkers? Split four ways it's \$15,000 a year. And all those fire departments have been into the village and into the town asking for additional funds. I know a couple of years ago during COVID they were all in dire straits because of funding that had gotten cut back especially from the county. I know I lived through that piece. In the end that money did get restored post COVID but for a while when the fire department here in the village is approaching the village board and basically begging for the \$25,000 that the village had allotted to them so that they can pay the payment on a fire truck that's some pretty serious stuff. So I know when you look at the town and the different municipal layers of governments and you say your town's main priority is probably public safety that can be seen with the roads you drive. Make sure they are plowed, maintained and the roads are taken care of beyond that funding things like our fire department is huge. What if the town said \$60,000 on rotation every four years for the Fire Dept. you got a brand new truck coming in. Here's your \$60,000 truck for calls, etc. We all have limited resources. Unfortunately we know the school one is not going to get challenged, and here's that 2% you're paying \$3,500 on taxes you see that little oh it's only 2% of an assessment its a pretty good chunk. Last thing to reiterate is what the Town of Verona is going through. Town of Verona issues are one big entity that's not too far from here. There tax issues trump more than 25% of the property in the Town of Verona is owned by a tax exempt organization. That organization is creeping closer and closer in our back yard. If the tax on this goes through; it's \$60,000 this year but it's inperpetual that what does that happen not if our taxes go up but what if your property base shrinks. Then that continues to go

up. I will give you a big one. What if the one right outside here in the back door how long before that entity fails? and the money that comes to the town, the tax revenue and the loss revenue on property taxes then this community is in dire straits. This motion going forwards you can't say later on ah well maybe we don't need \$60,000 for the library maybe we need \$30,000 for the Fire Dept to keep that open otherwise maybe that collapses for people that live in the trailer park in vernon center would they rather have to drive to Sherrill to get a book or have Vernon respond to the fire in their backyard instead of Vernon Center. These are all things that we wrestle with in all of the municipalities. Thanks to the board.

Kaylee Sierson asked May I please ask what business in the back yard you are referring to? Keith replied Vernon Downs. You brought up good points. A lot of this can be seen in the town board meeting and their finances. And it's broken down for the fire departments and the tax gambling breakdown.

5. Pauletet Schiebel commented that she is the Chair head of the Republican Party Committee in Vernon and we are hosting a Town Hall and we are looking at the issues within the Town. Really, Really would love it if you guys come in. As Keith said, having that platform to defend your stance. You know what \$60,000 for? Why \$60,000 why we need this and able able to defend what you're trying to do here would be great. Rich Lagoy noted that that information has been given to the town. No one has seen these papers but on Town council person. So now we are giving papers to every person on the town board not just the library person because they weren't distributing it. Just like they said they didn't know how many people were coming into the library. We gave them all of that. But they are not distributing it. The town's not talking they had what the \$60,000 was. They are worried if the roof goes. If we got a grant for \$20,000 we can give back \$20,000 from the town from the budget. They can put this \$20,000 towards the \$60,000 in their fund for next year.

6. Rich wanted to address Paulette and Keith because of a personal text that was sent. No one contacted the library board before the town hall forum date was set, etc. Keith said, you're not the only one on the board. We had Kaylee. There are six of you up there that could speak on behalf of the board. For the rest of the public this public form started. So as the county legislature I get to go to Oneida Castle, Town of Vernon City of Sherrill, Village of Vernon, and I'm actually a part of Verona. And when you look at all of the issues there's a lot of issues in all of this. The one you look at internet right now what's the hottest issue in Oneida Castle? Trees. A year ago what was the hottest issue? Sewers. You can't put sewer pipes in the ground with trees in the way. Residents don't understand. Everyone is up in arms. It looks like a hurricane hit it. It's tough. It's like five years working on it. How long is Vernon Center been working on water? Years. And that's what people are so hard to understand is the speed of government. It's disgusting. And the higher up you go, the worse it gets. When you're dealing with the federal, the states bad. County ok. Federal, forget it, and so its this town forum started with and then one that's hitting our board that I think is critical in this community are two proposed local laws by the county on illegal drugs sales cannabis sales illegal and illegal sale of paraphernalia for drug use. And there's two laws that we will address that Wednesday night and again we try and reach out inTo the

community and say 'Hey here's what's going on. As far as a date, Rich, to be honest with you, it works around my calendar. Saying hey heres a date that were going to put on. Rich said, that ain't even what I was going to ask you. One text that you sent me, and I know where you got this from because it was said right here in the library. You said you called Griffo's office and the only ones spreading the rumor about allocated funds was us. And that is not the case. I can show you a text from Griffo's office. I came to this board meeting and I said "When the budget passed there were grants you could apply for and they had people that allocated money for libraries. And literacy programs. Nothing to do with Griffo's Office besides the fact that he was giving me a list. Melanie come back the next month and said I called Griffo's office, you're lying there is no allocated money. Rich spoke to Griffo to confirm and Griffo stated that it sounds like you and I are on the same page. We are not lying. Paulette stated that no one said that Rich lied. Kaylee then asked to move forward with with any further public comment. Kaylee asked the Schiebels if they had received her formal letter. She stated that she had an extra copy for them before their town forum. It explains why she personally could not be present. Nothing against the their forum. She commended them for their efforts in the forum. Paulette responded that she thinks it would be beneficial if the library came and defended themself at the forum. Erin Russell stated, Why are you using the word to defend? What are we defending? Kaylee said there is nothing for us to defend. We are asking the people to use their free right to vote. Rich stated that the town board told us that we are supposed to be neutral. We are not for it; we are not against it. If it passes we will collect it; if it doesn't pass, we will not collect it. But now with everything that has been fed to the town board; now they are all against it. But that was never the case. Kaylee Sierson spoke about the gratefulness to Griffo's office for the grants that were given to Sherrill Library, Oneida Library, and another library Hamilton or Cazzanovia. She asked that Keith pass our gratitude along to Griffo.

7. Keith wanted to address the three in the school district Vernon, Verona, and Sherrill that fund the sherrill library with this going to a town tax we are also asking all of the residents in Oneida Castle to fund it and they are not in the VVS school district. Because the Sherrill vote was by the school district Oneida Castle is already paying a hefty sum for the library in the city of Oneida. So when you look at their tax bill which none of us get the oneida castle bill to add that tax on to their bill likely a resident thats living there is six blocks away down the street there the oneida library verses coming this way. Thank you.

Kaylee Sierson wanted to address Keith's comment on fire departments and fire safety. She noted that on social media we have a fire safety education that has had a great deal of interest. It is planned on a day off of school so that the local kids can come out to that. Also in NYS fire safety is one of the requirements for home education. So this is beneficial to the homeschool families in the area. We also offer a CPR class we are treating safety very highly too. She wants that to be out for the public.

Kristina Boylan wanted to speak as a community member that moved here in 2010 and the library was hurt shortly after. The importance of this building here in town within walking distance. I will be attending Wednesday and I will bring that up. It's sad that books and their libraries are so much more than books, are cast as a luxury when it's a necessity and

people need internet access to apply to jobs. This is one of the places that they may be able to walk to. It's not that way for everyone, but it is for some and it's important. She noted that she has volunteered in the past and she hopes to volunteer in the future in whatever way she can support the library. I would like to encourage others to do the same. Kaylee spoke about a concern from community members, "what are you doing with the money? Where is the million dollar library going? The rumor is still being spread that we are building a million dollar library. This is not true. Keith with what you said about not being open asd much, that is one of our main goals to try and be open more for the community. because we are not open as much as we want to be just because of a lack of funding.

- Motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:40pm 1st Rich Lagoy 2nd Kathleen Fabrizi.