



# HUDSON LIBRARY & HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## Annual Meeting

February 21, 2021 at 2:00 pm

The 109<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Hudson Library and Historical Society was called to order at 2:00 pm on Sunday, February 21, 2021 via Zoom Video Conference and streamed on the Library's YouTube channel, by the President of the Board of Trustees, Mr. Basil Musnuff. Mr. Musnuff welcomed all and stated the Annual meeting was being held virtually for Board members and the membership due to the COVID 19 pandemic and pursuant to the Board resolution passed on December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2020. He stated that comments from the membership viewing the meeting can be made from the YouTube channel and those will be addressed throughout the meeting. Mr. Musnuff then introduced Marie Turkovich, Deputy Fiscal Officer, to read the 108<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting minutes.

### 1. President's Report

Mr. Musnuff stated that he is always happy to speak to the successes of the Library. Mr. Musnuff said that this past year has been dominated by the pandemic and there has not been an in-person meeting of the Board since the last Annual Meeting. The library doors closed due to the pandemic and prior hiring plans announced at the last Annual Meeting were put on hold. The challenges have become opportunities giving the library and staff a chance to adapt and rise above the difficulties, shining in many ways. Services were provided to the public without the doors even being open. Collaboration with other libraries were increased and the library converted traditional content to digital formats in many different forms. New services were developed such as Curbside to allow materials to be delivered safely.

The library was able to increase the number and caliber of guest speakers. Reopening efforts required changes to the library's physical plant such as modifications for air flow, installation of plexiglass barriers and rearrangement of furniture for safe workspaces for our staff and patrons, as well as the purchase of personal protective equipment (PPE) for staff.

Mr. Musnuff highlighted that the Library received a 5-star rating, the highest rating that can be achieved, from the American Library Journal for the 8<sup>th</sup> year in a row and fewer than 1% of libraries achieve this status. Mr. Musnuff thanked the patrons for their participation in the programs and the community for its engagement. Mr. Musnuff thanked the library administration for implementing safety procedures to keep staff healthy.

This past year the Finance Committee continued to oversee the fiscal health of the institution, including its normally scheduled audit. This audit was completed without any substantive issues identified. During the past year the Board was concerned with the effects of the pandemic and the slowdown of the economy on funding received from the PLF. Although the PLF revenue has remained steady, the Board will continue to monitor the situation. It was about one year ago

that Legacy Investment Advisors were hired who have assisted in the diversification of investments, to keep them secure.

The Philanthropy Committee has worked on creative ways to support the library and raise donations. A wine tasting event with Victoria James, author of *Wine Girl*, unfortunately had to be cancelled. We hope to have events again in the future.

Finally, the Library levy will lapse at the end of 2021 and therefore a renewal levy will be on the May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2021 ballot to keep Library funding intact. This accounts for 2/3 of our operating funding and although normally a modest increase would be requested to keep pace with inflation and technology, due to the pandemic the Board being sensitive to these concerns has decided to run only a renewal levy, without any increase in millage. The library revenue would remain unchanged. The levy is crucial to the library and we encourage all to vote on May 4<sup>th</sup>. Those who would like to help are encouraged to place a sign in their yard, volunteer time or donate to the effort at the levy website [www.stronghudsonlibrary.org](http://www.stronghudsonlibrary.org).

## **2. Fiscal Officer's Report.**

Ms. Pandelli gave a snapshot summary of the Library's 2020 finances. In the General Fund the state PLF brought in \$1.2M and made up over 31% of our operating revenue. Ms. Pandelli noted that the Library's largest source of income is a \$2.9 mil operating levy that brought in over \$2.6M and makes up 2/3 of operating revenue.

Ms. Pandelli stated that due to the pandemic the Library shifted spending and took a conservative approach knowing that state funding could be unpredictable. The library was able to provide resources and programming to customers and managed to roll over \$2M into the 2021 operating budget.

Ms. Pandelli stated that the library's Private Funds are comprised of gifts, endowments and grants along with the investment earnings on those funds. She noted that the Friends are a major donor to the library, providing additional resources for materials, programming, and support to the Brewster Café as well as giving to the Political Action Committee in support of the upcoming levy. In 2020, over \$280,000 was spent from this fund on programming and collections and at year end, this funds' portfolio was valued at over \$3 million.

The third fund, the Capital Improvement and Maintenance Fund is used for building improvements and capital replacements with \$90,000 deposited each year from the operating budget. In 2020 the library continued the LED lighting project but paused major projects at the beginning of the pandemic, with plans to restart in 2021. At year end the balance in this fund was over \$892,000.

## **3. Baldwin-Babcock Report**

Ms. Polott, Executive Director, spoke next about Caroline Baldwin-Babcock, who helped found the Hudson Library and Historical Society in 1910. The Baldwin Babcock Lecture Series established through a provision in Mrs. Babcock's will stipulated a trust be set up for the library where interest income earned each year be spent on a series of culturally enriching programs in both the arts and humanities. In 2020 a variety of educationally stimulating events were presented thanks to the dollars generated by the Baldwin-Babcock Fund, including former Governor John Kasich, *National Public Radio* host Terry Gross, Astronaut Scott Kelly, cohost of the MSNBC show *Morning Joe*, Mika Brzezinski, and Historian John Meacham. The Library is grateful for our founder's vision which has enabled the library to bring such high caliber programs to our community.

#### **4. Report of the Friends of the Hudson Library**

Dr. Lynn Remly, President of the Friends of the Hudson Library, presented an update on 2020 activities. The COVID pandemic negatively impacted Friends activities and the store was forced to close in March. Prior to the closing, in January and February the bookstore brought in \$4,800. The saving grace for the Friends was the online sales on Amazon. In 2020 online sales enabled the Friends to make approximately \$10,000 which was donated to the Library. Monthly Board meetings were suspended, and business was conducted via email, but the annual meeting was held via Zoom on November 12<sup>th</sup>, 2020 where officers were elected.

Due to the pandemic there are now 48 members, but the group is confident that 2021 will improve and become less restrictive and volunteers will again join. The Friends will begin to use PayPal for membership payments, in addition to cash and checks, as a safe option. Dr. Remly noted that the group is grateful to loyal Board members and sorters who want to get back to the bookstore. The Friends first sale in a year will be March 6<sup>th</sup>, with monthly sales thereafter. She noted their gratitude to their clients who call inquiring when the Friends store will reopen.

#### **5. Executive Director's Report**

Leslie Polott stated that for over a century the Hudson Library & Historical Society has been the heart of our community providing essential services, resources and support in good times and bad. The library's journey began 110 years ago when Caroline Baldwin-Babcock and other likeminded citizens established the library to reinvigorate our communities' intellectual life. In the 1930's during the great depression the library was a beacon of hope and solace for the community providing people with much needed information to better their lives. In the 1940's during the Second World War, the library joined the war effort sending materials to troops overseas and retrofitted a woody station wagon with empty ammunition cases to carry library books as the first bookmobile in the area. During the 1950's through the 1980's, the library responded to the community's growth by expanding its facility and services, acquiring the John Brown collection, making the library a nationally renowned research center, and joining the CLEVNET automation network.

The 1990's were a time of rapid change and a bond issue was passed to build a new facility better equipped to meet Hudson's growing needs. During the first two decades of the 2000's, the library continued its quest to anticipate, meet and exceed the community's needs by expanding collections and offering innovative new services.

Nothing, however, could have prepared us for the events that occurred in 2020. It was a year of profound change and unimaginable challenges for the library and its community. As libraries across the nation were forced to shut down, the Hudson Library responded decisively moving from in person services to a virtual and then hybrid service model. At the same time, the pandemic provided us with remarkable opportunities to develop new innovations to better meet our community's needs.

The Hudson Library became two libraries: one of mortar and one of clicks, offering a wealth of physical and digital resources and services. The library staff worked hard to develop alternative ways to access physical materials & resources, using Curbside and Drive Up services, and implemented virtual tutoring in business, genealogy, and homework assistance. Customer engagement was enhanced through almost daily virtual lectures in science, technology, current affairs, and business as well as presentations by best-selling authors. The community response to these efforts was extremely positive with online streaming media usage skyrocketing and program attendance enormous. In 2020, despite the challenges of the pandemic the Hudson Library remained a constant; providing residents with much needed information, resources, and educational enrichment.

## **6. Closing Remarks**

Mr. Musnuff thanked Lynn Remly and the Friends for all they do, encouraging all to join this great organization. Mr. Musnuff noted that normally this meeting would move to the trustee election for the three open Board seats, but due to the library's governing documents, the Board is precluded from using any proxy voting or absentee ballots. Mr. Musnuff stated that pursuant to the resolution passed on December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2020, the Trustee elections have been postponed to later in the year when they can be safely conducted. Lastly, he reminded all to vote, and to visit the levy website at [www.stronghudsonlibrary.org](http://www.stronghudsonlibrary.org) for facts and information.

Adjournment of meeting at 2:47 pm. Board of Trustees Organization Meeting to follow.

Attendees of meeting via YouTube channel were Denise Gibson.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mr. Basil Musnuff, President  
Board of Trustees

Ms. Marie Turkovich, Board Secretary  
Board of Trustees