

Hudson Area Library Association

President's Report

The Year 2011

After more than a decade of the library's being on precarious financial footing, in 2010 the picture brightened considerably with the approval by Hudson residents of additional funding for library operations. That year saw the Board finally able to realign its focus from survival mode to services mode; it continued in that vein during 2011. Also, in 2011, the Board pursued its vision and stated objective to explore how, and where best, to provide those services. This yearlong effort culminated in the sale of 400 State Street and plans to relocate the library to a new site within the City of Hudson. During the year, special emphasis was placed on recruiting a new Library Director as well as new trustees to the Board whose combined efforts should ensure a smooth transition of the Hudson Area Library into a new home.

Some of the Year's Highlights

Building

Negotiated a take back of the library's \$300,000 mortgage with the Hudson Community Development and Planning Agency in exchange for that Agency's taking ownership of 400 State Street. Shed of this debt obligation, the library would be free to pursue alternative locations. (This agreement was subsequently superseded by the sale of the property to a third party and the repayment of the mortgage from the proceeds.)

Entered into discussions to lease a property at 217 Warren Street for the short to mid-term, made necessary by the absence of capital to purchase or construct an alternative facility as well as increased operating and deferred maintenance costs.

Received an expression of interest to purchase 400 State Street and, to test the market, listed the property for \$450,000.

With no serious interest and no other bids, sold the building to GalVan Partners Ltd. for \$476,500 and entered into a leaseback arrangement at a dollar a month until new facilities became available.

Received an offer from GalVan for a 30-year, dollar-a-month lease for space in the Armory on North Fifth Street which they had just purchased. Negotiated a Memorandum of Understanding and accepted GalVan's proposal, terminating lease discussions for 217 Warren.

Commissioned a building code review of the Armory and hired a Library Facilities Consultant to assist in planning for the future home of the library with an objective of being in a new location by yearend 2013.

People and Programs

While the major preoccupation for the Board this past year has undoubtedly been building related, no program or service has been neglected. This is due entirely to the dedication of the staff and volunteers who are the faces of the library and who make it work. At the end of 2011, we were proud to name a new Executive Library Director, Emily Chameides to replace Corey Fleming who resigned in August.. Emily was the unanimous choice of the Board over the many other applicants for the position.

In addition to contributing financially, all our trustees were incredibly generous of their time and talents during this unusually demanding year. I am particularly grateful for the guidance and counsel received from Ginger Benedict, Mark Orton, and Joseph Rapp in matters relating to the building.

I also want to make special mention of The Friends of the Library who in 2011 had a banner year. Under the leadership of Vicki Kosovac, the Friends experimented successfully with new and resourceful ways to raise funds and bring people into the library.

Finally, I want to fondly acknowledge two of our colleagues who died this past year: Kathleen Hintze, staff member with more than 20 years of service, and David Johnson, longtime volunteer and former trustee.

Looking Ahead

2012 brings new challenges, new opportunities and new leadership to the board.. It's an exciting time to be involved with the work of the library and I look forward to remaining a part of the team that will assist in shaping its future. The Galvan Initiatives Foundation is helping to make possible the library's fulfillment of its mission in a way and in a timeframe not even imagined this time last year. There'll be detours and deviations for sure, but ultimately Hudson and its surrounding communities will have a 21st century library that we can all be proud of.

Respectfully submitted,

Theresa T. Parsons
March 14, 2012