



# Finger Lakes Library System

## TRUSTEE NEWSLETTER

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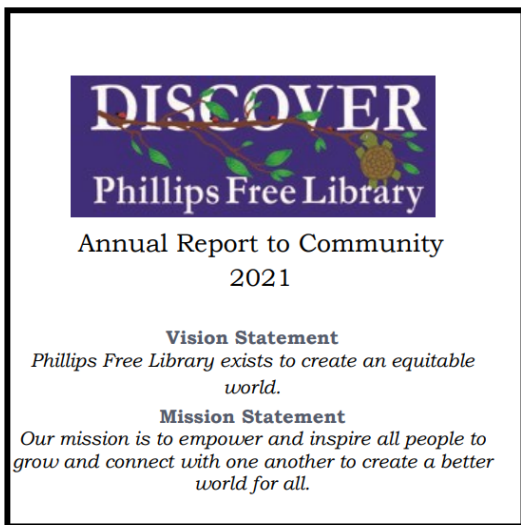
### Happy New Year!

This year, FLLS celebrates 65 years of service to our 33 member libraries and their Boards. Public Library Systems were established in Education Law in the late 1950s by the State Legislature and Governor for the purpose of helping local libraries better serve their communities through cooperation, sharing resources, and by offering cost-effective services. Trustees are encouraged to reach out to Sarah Glogowski or Heidi Eckerson with any questions or needs.



Meet your Trustee Education requirement by joining the [Trustee Handbook Book Club!](#)  
Resumes February 21, 2023

### Latest News



The title page from the [Phillips Free Library's report to the community](#).

*As of January 1, 2021, all public and association libraries must provide "a board-approved written annual report to the community on the library's progress in meeting its mission, goals and objectives, as outlined in the library's long-range plan of service." – NYS Minimum Standard #3*

## 2022 NYS Annual Report

A snapshot of your library's yearly activities

January and February are **Annual Report** season. Every chartered public library is required to file a NYS Annual Report of the library's activities and finances.

Library boards must approve the annual report before it is submitted to FLLS. Please plan to hold a special meeting if you don't normally meet in February. More information will be made available when it has been released by NYS. Jenny Shonk is the contact for your 2022 Annual Report questions. She will be reaching out in January with more information.

Every library should use their annual report statistics to their advantage, no matter how large or small you are! An annual report to the community allows you to promote and publicize the library's accomplishments and to furnish accountability to your funding base.

Here's an [example from the Seymour Library](#).

## Board Calendar

Library work has a cyclical nature-- January is Annual Reports, June, July, and August belong to Summer Reading and, well, it's always busy at the library!

Board work also follows a pattern. We suggest adopting a Board Calendar to map out your library's path in 2023. This yearly plan spells out items that need your Board's attention like budget work, policy updates and the like. Items on the calendar then become items on your monthly agenda.

This tool can take many forms from a print calendar to board portal software. You decide what works best for your organization.

In future newsletters, this column will highlight timely events and issues that are important for Boards to be familiar with.



**Library Advocacy Day**  
**February 28**

## Referendums

NYS allows libraries to request funds directly from school district taxpayers by asking them to vote on a resolution placed on the annual school district ballot. This is the definition of a "school ballot referendum"

Referendums are a form of sustainable funding for libraries because once your community votes "yes", your library receives those funds every year. Your library can decide to ask for more funding as needs develop.

While school budget votes happen in May, now is the time for your board to start planning if you wish to be on the ballot in May.

For more information, including a timeline, see the [North Country Library System's Referendum Toolkit](#).

Association libraries doing a 259 vote have to abide by the tax cap and file. For more information, visit the [Mid-Hudson Library System's Tax Cap FAQs](#)

Here are some [sample tax cap override resolutions](#) from [NYLA](#).

Reach out to Sarah or Heidi if you want to discuss your library's referendum.

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## Library Life

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### FLLS Fine Free in '23

Eliminating Fines is Mighty Fine

In 2019, the New York State Library Association adopted the [ALA Resolution on Monetary Library Fines as a Form of Social Inequity](#). To date, the majority of FLLS's 33 libraries are fine free. We're excited to have the Coburn Free Library in Owego and the Cady Library in Nichols join the fully fine free family! (Owego had eliminated fines on youth items and now is extending that to all patrons.)

To be clear, a fine and a fee are two different things. Patrons are still responsible for lost or damaged materials.

Check out the [ALA's Fine Free FAQ](#) for more info.

[Watch Dawn Wacek: A librarian's case against overdue book fines](#)

Dawn Wacek's TED talk



*Dawn Wacek*  
**A librarian's case against overdue book fines**

Posted Nov 2018

## Board Best Practices: Agendas

A-gen-da: *noun* a list of items to be discussed at a formal meeting.

Agendas make for productive (and efficient) meetings. More than just a list of everything you want to discuss, an agenda establishes the purpose and flow of your meeting.

### What's on an agenda?

Typical items include topics, action items, and other library business. For example, reports and votes. Some months may have shorter agendas than others.

### How to organize an agenda

The items on your agenda are listed in the order they are taken up. Agendas begin with a call to order and end with adjournment.

In between, you'll vote to accept the minutes from your last meeting and tend to the work of the Board for the month. A well-organized agenda also makes for easier minute-taking. More on that in our next issue.

Be sure to send your agenda out **before** the meeting. It's part of your Board Packet, and should be posted on your website.

What if you have to make last-minute changes to your agenda? Attorney Stephanie "Cole" Adams has some guidance:

<https://www.wnylrc.org/ask-the-lawyer/raqs/295>



## Soliciting Donations for Public Libraries

Attorney Stephanie "Cole" Adams answers questions specific to libraries.

"And we're also going to talk about "raffles", so hang in there, association libraries...this one's for you, too."

*Q: We are beginning our long-range planning process and are asking patrons to fill out a community survey to assess what the community wants to see in the library now and in the future. Thinking it was a good idea to raffle off gift cards to encourage participation, I gave my board trustees a letter requesting a donation of gift cards. Another director told me I'm not supposed to have the board ask for donations in any form. This is something our Friends group should do. Please advise. Thanks in advance!*

*A: Following our "do not reinvent the wheel" rule for "Ask the Lawyer," prior to diving into this, we checked the "Trustees Handbook" On page 57, it provides an excellent summation of the concern at play in the issue of trustees and fund-raising:*

"Public library boards generally take care to separate private fundraising efforts (**such as direct personal solicitations**, as opposed to seeking grants from foundations or government agencies) from normal library operations and board **activities since there are restrictions on the appropriate use of public funds.**" [emphasis added]

The Handbook then points out that this concern is why many public libraries use "Friends" to personally solicit and raise funds.... To this concern about limits on the use of public funds, I would add that when it comes to raising money, it is very easy for the solicitation to run afoul of charitable regulations, required accounting, and limits on allowed fund-raising activities (such as games of chance).

But does this caution merit a complete **bar** on such solicitations?

[Read Cole's full response here](#)