Look Back (2020-2022): The end of the year is always a good point for looking back and reviewing what has happened. I have been Board President since January 2020 and so want to take this opportunity to look back over three years.

In early 2020, I established three areas that I wanted to focus on: sustainability, visibility, and training. In January 2021, I added Board documentation and, at some point, also began thinking about areas in the Minimum Standards as set by the NY State Library which impact the Board.

- **Sustainability** – While I do not feel like I have impacted OCPL’s sustainability in the ways I likely envisioned in 2020, helping to revise the MOU with our member libraries (2021) connects with this and is something that had languished for quite a while. Part of sustainability is having a better understanding of how OCPL is funded and the MOU discussion, as well as extended explanations about the budget have helped with that. Is OCPL funded as well as we would like? No and that is something that requires continued advocacy.

- **Visibility** – I was concerned about OCPL’s lack of visibility and while I didn’t know how to change that, I knew a change was needed. Thanks to the hiring of a new Communications Director, OCPL’s visibility has improved dramatically. As a Board we can help with OCPL’s visibility by talking about OCPL with community members and County Legislators, and supporting OCPL’s marketing efforts. Being more visible is something we should continue to strive for.

- **Training** – The NY State Library has been pushing library trustees to receive two-hours of training each year on topics such as “financial oversight, accountability, fiduciary responsibilities and the general powers and duties of a library trustee.” (From NYSED website) That ‘push’ has become law (Education Law 260-d). This training can be done at any time through webinars, etc.

  This training (or lack thereof) is reported to the State Library on its annual report to them.

  *I struggle to get the Board interested in training. What do I need to do differently?*

- **Board Documentation** – The Board does not have ready access to its older minutes and other documents (e.g., reports submitted to the Board and policies). When I checked into solutions, I found them to be expensive. In addition, it would require the buy-in of both the Board and those who support the Board so that it is kept up to date. While I’ve dropped this for now, I still see a need for better access to our records so we are less dependent on keeping our own duplicate files and less dependent on OCPL staff for locating older documents. I will keep my eye open for possible solutions.
Minimum Standards – The NY State Library has minimum standards which all libraries must follow, https://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/compchart.htm. While we do not talk about them much, they are important to OCPL and to our members. My focus on our bylaws was driven both by a recognition that they need updating and by the minimum standards which require that bylaws “be reviewed and re-approved by the board of trustees at least once every five years or earlier if required by law.” Our bylaws have not been reviewed or updated since 2014. Hopefully, the Board will vote on an update at our December meeting and then continue to work on updating the bylaws in 2023.

There are other minimum standards which we, the Board, need to pay attention to and work with OCPL staff to assure adherence (e.g., strategic planning). I hope we can have a presentation and discussion on the minimum standards in early 2023, so we understood how we can help.

Looking Ahead: These are at the top of my mind:

- **Increase participation by Board members** – The OCPL Board is a working board, where work is accomplished through committees and individual efforts, as well as acting as liaisons to other groups. As the saying goes, many hands make light work, and that work occurs between meetings. *In 2023, every Board member will need to step up and help. Where does each Board member want to contribute to the work ahead?*

- **Grow the Board to its full complement of 11 members** – Having our full complement will help us as we divide the work that needs to be done as well as assure that we have quorum at our meetings. We need to actively work with the County Executive’s office on an ongoing basis, so that this Board always has 11 members. *A meeting with the CE’s office to bring forward three potential candidates is being scheduled.*

- **Increase collaboration between the Board and Executive Director** – As stated in many places and in different ways, a library benefits from its board, director, and friends group working together collaboratively. Working collaboratively with our Executive Director – and our Executive Director working collaboratively with the Board – is an area we need to improve upon. There is nothing magic that needs to happen, but for all of us to recognize the benefit of always working together.