

General Membership Meeting

Meeting called to order by President Corey Swanson, 7:35 p.m. and welcomed members joining on Zoom.

Secretaries Report: Secretary Walt Pickut read the secretaries report of the previous general meeting. John Anderson corrected the tally of books in the library to reflect approximately 640 rather than the 300 reported. With the addition of that correction President Swanson called for a motion to accept the secretaries report as presented. So moved by Tom Traub, seconded by Phil Stafford, and unanimously approved without objection.

Treasurers Report: Treasurer John Anderson presented the balance sheet to date and profit and loss report, copies of which are available to members upon request. For the record, John noted a typo correction to date that should indicate January 20, 2024, instead of instead of December 19, 2023. John pointed out a current positive balance of \$2565.46 and member donations-in-kind total \$298 representing a tool chest donated by member Richard Carlson. In addition, the correct member donation is approximately \$2700. Restricted funds remain generally unchanged. Solar glasses donations are continuing to increase. The library telescope is ready for delivery and member Marcy Kupiec contribute funds to deliver a telescope to the Ashville New York Library. Additional CD investments are being considered pending consideration of future expenses. In the absence of additional additions or corrections, President Swanson requested a motion to accept the treasurers report as presented. Lawen Griffith moved that the treasurers report be accepted as read, seconded by Phil Stafford, and unanimously approved that objection.

Finance Committee Report:

1. Laurie Livingston reported that the committee endorsed purchase of 75 new chairs contingent on price estimates that Treasurer John Anderson will receive. The next meeting is slated for Monday, February 26. CD purchase was discussed but decision was made to postpone the investment until a later date.
2. Laurie reported on the status of current and future grant applications. Laurie requested prioritization of three potential project grant applications:
 - a. Chautauqua Region Community Foundation (CRCF) has two grant possibilities, a monthly general grant with a maximum of \$4000 available only twice per year. Last year the grant was approved for the library telescope project and 10,000 solar glasses.
 - b. Community Impact Grant, available at \$5000 and above, available on March 1 and August 1. Last year this grant funded the STEM space camp at just over \$5000. In 2020 were used that and other grants for the 24-inch telescope automation system. Overall funding for the project came from CRCF, Lena Foundation, and Hultquist Foundation, totaling approximately \$30,000. Deadlines for future applications are May 10, 2024 and September 20, 2024.

- c. The Lena Foundation has previously provided funding for automation, the well, and refurbishing the bathrooms. The deadline for future grants is April 15 and July 22.
 - d. As a result, we have an opportunity for four grants to fund the following:
 - i. Additional library telescopes
 - ii. Roof repairs
 - iii. A major security system upgrade
3. **Facilities Committee:** John Anderson reported that the committee is working on a number of projects:
- a. Finalizing work on the storage room.
 - b. A tool cabinet was donated by member Richard Carlson plus a large quantity of tools, including hand tools, a power saw, a welder, and metalworking tools, along with a wall cabinet and more promised in the near future
 - c. It is reported that there may be a slight oversupply of screwdrivers.
 - d. The library is still under renovation and reorganization, with more books slated to be received soon from Richard Carlson. Barcodes will facilitate borrowing books as a member benefit.
 - e. MKO historical archives are now in two file cabinets with new keys in the Observatory office.
 - f. Ethernet power strips will be moved from the dome into the control room.
4. **Program Committee:** Next month's special guest speaker will be Tom Traub, presenting a program on the April 8 total solar eclipse. The March speaker will be Doctor John Mathur, a Nobel Prize laureate in astrophysics will be speaking about some of the remarkable new infrared findings from the James Webb Space Telescope.
5. **Solar Eclipse Committee:** Tom Traub
- a. Andy Felong and Corey Swanson have donated books to be raffled off during Tom Traub's February presentation.
 - b. The program and public safety discussion is slated for the Frewsburg Town Hall on February 7
 - c. The committee decided to keep 500 eclipse glasses available for use on April 8, on-site.
 - d. For logistic and personnel reasons, we have opted out of a national observing program.
 - e. Local environmental reporters are still needed by NASA, state and national organizations involved in the eclipse observations., Compile this information and posted on the member section of our website.
 - f. Tom continues his schedule talks around the community about the eclipse
6. **Educational Outreach Committee:** Tom Traub
- a. Space Stem Camp is under consideration for 2024
 - b. another internship has been proposed, but is the 90-hour commitment currently is beyond our capacity.
 - c. Kyle reported that a recent observation by him and Tom confirmed by transit documentation the existence and ephemeris of a new exoplanet, TOI 5747b, 93.2

light years from Earth whose confirmation is now officially credited to Martz-Kohl Observatory. It is an Earth -sized or slightly larger planet, very close to its star. It is classified as a “hot super Earth” orbiting a red dwarf star at about 0.0 15 AU. The orbital period of this planet is over 22 hours. These findings will be published in the relevant scientific literature.

7. Technology Committee: Tom Traub

Planning to work with the Facilities Committee to modify the secondary mirror on a 24-inch telescope to facilitate use of the FLI focuser to enhance the telescope focusing capability.

8. Public and Media Relations Committee: Andy Felong

- a. Laurie Livingston will be sending out notifications to 203 people in our database to update recipients on Observatory events.
- b. The Jamestown and Dunkirk newspapers have carried our eclipse announcements.
- c. The Dunkirk paper did a very nice feature on Kate LaRou’s recent special guest speaker presentation
- d. Andy has changed the members-only password on our website. It is now MKO2024.

9. Unfinished Business:

President Swanson noted that we are in the process of developing an online store with MKO branded products for sale in collaboration with Falconer Printing.

10. New Business:

Tom Traub reminded members to note the beginning of October to look for Comet C2023 A3 (tsuchinchuan atlas) is on the inbound leg of its orbit expected to reach zero magnitude in the early morning skies in the beginning of October, 2024. This is a long-period comet. Comet 12P (Pons-Brooks) will also be visible though not as bright in April. We have been taking pictures of it and have seen regular outbursts from its surface increasing and decreasing by several magnitudes. Comet 29P (Schwachmann-Wachmann) a Mars-Jupiter orbital comet. is also currently very active and will be visible soon, too.

11. Correspondence: None to report.

12. For the Good of the Association:

President Swanson thanked Marcy Kupiec for her donation of a very attractive, framed wall hanging, a memorial patch commemorating American astronauts lost in the Apollo, Challenger, and Columbia disasters.

13. Upcoming Events:

- a. Open Doors Jamestown, Saturday, February 3. Volunteers are needed and will be served breakfast and lunch. Logistics and plans were discussed in detail.
- b. President Swanson noted some group visits slated for the near future in February.

In the absence of additional business President Swanson called for adjournment. So moved by Walt Pickut, seconded by Phil Stafford, and unanimously approved without objection.

Adjourned 8:52, p.m.

Next General meeting scheduled for Wednesday, February 28, 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Walter W Pickut

Secretary