

**PAWLING FREE LIBRARY**  
**Board of Trustees**  
**Minutes of Meeting**  
**October 14, 2021**

**Attendees:** Amy Emke, Stephanie McLaughlin, Nick Robertshaw, Susan Stone, Karen Franco, Heather Fidler, Megan Burlington, Virginia West, Wanda Rusiecki, David Potter, and Brian Avery (Director)

**Absent:**

**Call to order:** Meeting was called to order at 6:47 via zoom.

**Minutes of Previous Meeting:** Motion to approve by Amy & 2<sup>nd</sup> by Virginia. All in favor.

**Director's Report:** A copy of the report was provided to all trustees. Items discussed were:

- Motion to approve the proposed 2022 Closings Calendar, by Amy, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Karen. All in favor.
- Motion to approve the minor revision to the wording of the Sexual Harassment Policy text, by Amy, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Stephanie. All in favor.
- Deadline for all trustees to complete the required annual Sexual Harassment Prevention training is October 31.
- The Annual Appeal letter will be sent out in mid-December.
- The position of Young Adult Program Coordinator is still open.

Move to approve the director's report by Amy, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Wanda. All in favor.

**Treasurer's Report:** A copy of the report was available to all trustees. Move to file.

- The audit has been completed.
- Next month's meeting will concern the 2022 budget.

**New Business:**

a. Centennial Committee Update.

- Susan reported that 72 donors have contributed so far; and we have 25 sponsors. Between donors and sponsors, the total contributions to date are \$96,524.
- Verna Carey and Deb Muroski are chairing the Centennial gala. Additional volunteers are needed for the gala. Tickets will be \$150 each; 200 tickets will be available.

b. Buildings & Grounds Committee Update.

- Comcast has been contacted repeatedly about removing the telephone pole located on Library property.
- The Town had offered to fill the pot hole in the Library parking lot, but this has still not happened.

- Bids are due on October 29 for construction of the ADA-compliant restrooms as well as for the oil tank removal.
- c. Board Business.
- Wanda and Nick have proposed Patricia Rusch Bellucci, a Pawling attorney and CPA, as a well-qualified candidate for a position on the Board as treasurer. Amy will send Ms. Bellucci a trustee application form.
  - Congressman Antonio Delgado has nominated the Pawling Library for the National Medal for Museum and Library Service. To pursue our candidacy, we will need to submit a five-page write-up explaining what we have been doing that is noteworthy, as well as three letters of support from members of the community.
- d. Finance Committee.
- The last 414 vote was held in 2019. Motion to not go for a 414 in 2022, by Amy, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Stephanie. All in favor.

Motion to adjourn by Amy, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Karen. Meeting adjourned at 7:58.

Respectfully submitted by: Karen Franco, Secretary

**Next Meeting November 11, 2021 @ 6:45 p.m.**

## **Director's Report**

Ed Hauser has created the bid documents for the bathroom project, which Dutchess County has posted in the required places and which can be downloaded from our website at <https://www.pawlingfreelibrary.org/bid/>. At this point, it seems like we are in position to move step by step through the entire process of getting the bathrooms built. If any of you know of a contractor who would be interested in bidding, please encourage them to come to the walkthrough Ed scheduled for Columbus Day and to submit their sealed bids by October 29<sup>th</sup>.

There are two pieces of good news pertaining to the state construction grant. First, we received formal approval of our 2020 application for improvements to the annex, which means shortly we will begin shortly the process of filing to get reimbursed \$2,775. Secondly, the Mid-Hudson Library System recommended to the state that we receive \$7,559 to go towards the bathroom project. Historically the state has tended to follow Mid-Hudson's recommendations.

The policy committee is recommending the rewording of one sentence in section B:6 of our sexual harassment. The revised wording is intended to make clearer that while employees have options over the method of reporting harassment, they do not have the option of failing to report sexual harassment.

On a related note, all employees and trustees must complete their annual sexual harassment prevention training by the end of October. The links to the training and response form can be found at <https://www.pawlingfreelibrary.org/sexual-harassment-prevention/>

I have put together a proposed days closed calendar for 2022. At the board meeting we can discuss whether we want to make any changes, and then vote on a calendar for 2022.

We need to vote each year on whether to go out for a "414" proposal to increase our tax appropriation from Pawling residents. I haven't heard any trustees suggesting that we ought to do so next year, but we can formally make a decision at the board meeting.

The Mid-Hudson Library System has a new slate of trustee education programs on its calendar. In addition, it is trying out a new state-wide Trustee Handbook Book Club where groups of trustees discuss in depth the ideas of the trustee handbook which Rebekkah Smith-Aldrich co-authored. To see the list of upcoming sessions and/or to register visit <https://mid-hudson.evanced.info/signup/calendar>

I will be in France October 15-25. I may check my work email once or twice while I am away, but otherwise expect to actually be on vacation.

The MHLS annual meeting will be held virtually on Friday October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 10 am – 12 pm. I will not be available to attend, but you are encouraged to register at <https://mid-hudson.evanced.info/signup/calendar>

## **Programming**

### **Donald Partelow, Adult Program Coordinator**

On March 9, 2020, the film A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood which starred Tom Hanks as the beloved Fred Rogers was shown at the Pawling Library's afternoon Monday Matinee. This

would be the last movie presentation due to the spread of Covid-19. Our Monday Matinee and all other in-person programming were cancelled. The library then began to restructure its recurring programs and special events to an online format, but there wasn't a way to continue its newly released DVD film screenings.

A year and a half later, through a partnership with Pawling Recreation, our Monday Matinee was restored. On September 27 the film *12 Mighty Orphans* was scheduled to be seen at Pawling Recreation. Our library and Pawling Recreation reached out to those who had participated in the program over the years. "I didn't realize how much I missed the movies until it was gone," said one person. "I'm so glad you're bringing this back for us." The weekly movies had provided for many not simply a source of entertainment, but a place where long lasting friendships were formed.

Nearly 30 delighted people attended the first Monday Matinee at Pawling Recreation seated within a spacious room with comfortable seating. The audience clapped their hands and cheered the movie's return. It was quite a heartfelt moment. Most who attend this program are seniors, people we very much care about and were happy to see enjoy themselves.

We had a chance to speak to one senior following the program. "We all appreciate it. I absolutely love what you've done for us. I was thrilled with the response. I think it's great when two organizations can work together." Our library feels the same way.

We thank so very much Jessica Dickinson, Director of Pawling Recreation, and her outstanding staff for making this possible. And we thank all the people in and outside Pawling for attending our programs and special events. There is something for everyone at Pawling Recreation and the Pawling Library; two vital resources in our community.

In addition to our Monday Matinee, the Pawling Library is partnering with Pawling Recreation for an adult coloring group that meets every Wednesday from 1-2 pm.



### **Young Adult Program Coordinator**

Shannon DiValentino has agreed to become our new Young Adult Program Coordinator. She will come in on Columbus Day to sign her paperwork and get started on finding a presenter for the bicultural programming grant which Phil was able to secure. However, she will not begin full-time work at the library until November.

## **Neena McBaer, Children's Program Coordinator**

Programming breakdown by type: There was 1 week of programs in September, which kicked off our Fall session.

- All: 1 kit programs (8 attendees) ; 1 live programs (24 attendees) and 3 in person (22 attendees)
- Parent/Caregiver Early Literacy: 0 kits, 0 live, and 2 in person (16 attendees)
- Early Literacy: 0 kit (0 attendees), 0 live (24 attendees), and 0 in person (6 attendees)
- School Age Programming: 1 kit (8 attendees), 0 live (0 attendees), and 0 in person (0 attendees)

Fall Festival: On September 25th, I participated in Pawling Rotary's Fall Festival, running crafts for kids. Over 400 children attended the event, and around 65 children participated at my table, where they made pumpkin glasses and used Quiver, a virtual reality coloring app that brings images to life with technology.

Programming Notes: The fact that Carla was able to continue as Children's Program Specialist for the fall has been a lifesaver. Due to Phil's departure from the library, I would not be able to provide as comprehensive a schedule as I am this Fall without Carla. Carla's willingness to jump in and work during her weekends and evenings is an incredible asset to our library and I am grateful for her assistance.

This month, Carla and I created our Felt Pumpkin Faces kit for 20 local children under 5 years old. The kits include felt pumpkins and a variety of different shaped facial features that the kids can use for an ongoing learning experience at home. This has been one of our most successful Early Learning Kits thus far, as they continue to be a popular way for us to provide learning opportunities for children under five during the pandemic.



## **Tom Clemmons, Circulation Manager / Homebound Delivery Services Coordinator**

There are currently 8 active Homebound Services patrons. In September, I selected materials (books or audio books) according to reading preferences and made 7 Homebound Service delivery/pickups – 2 trips to Deerfield Ponds, 1 trip to The Hamlet, 2 trips to the King's Apartments, and two trips to The Grand including a donation from the PFL book sorters of six bags of large-print books for The Grand's Book Cart.

### **Personnel**

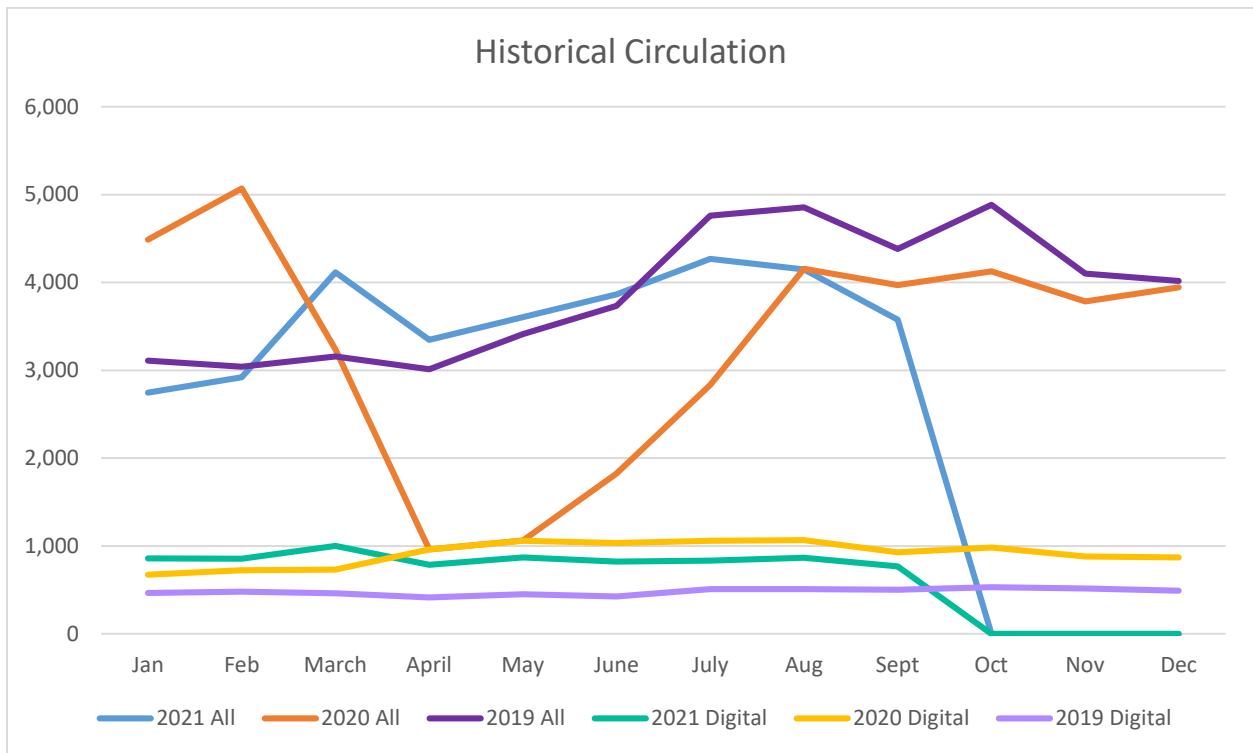
We had sixteen applicants for the Young Adult Program Coordinator position.

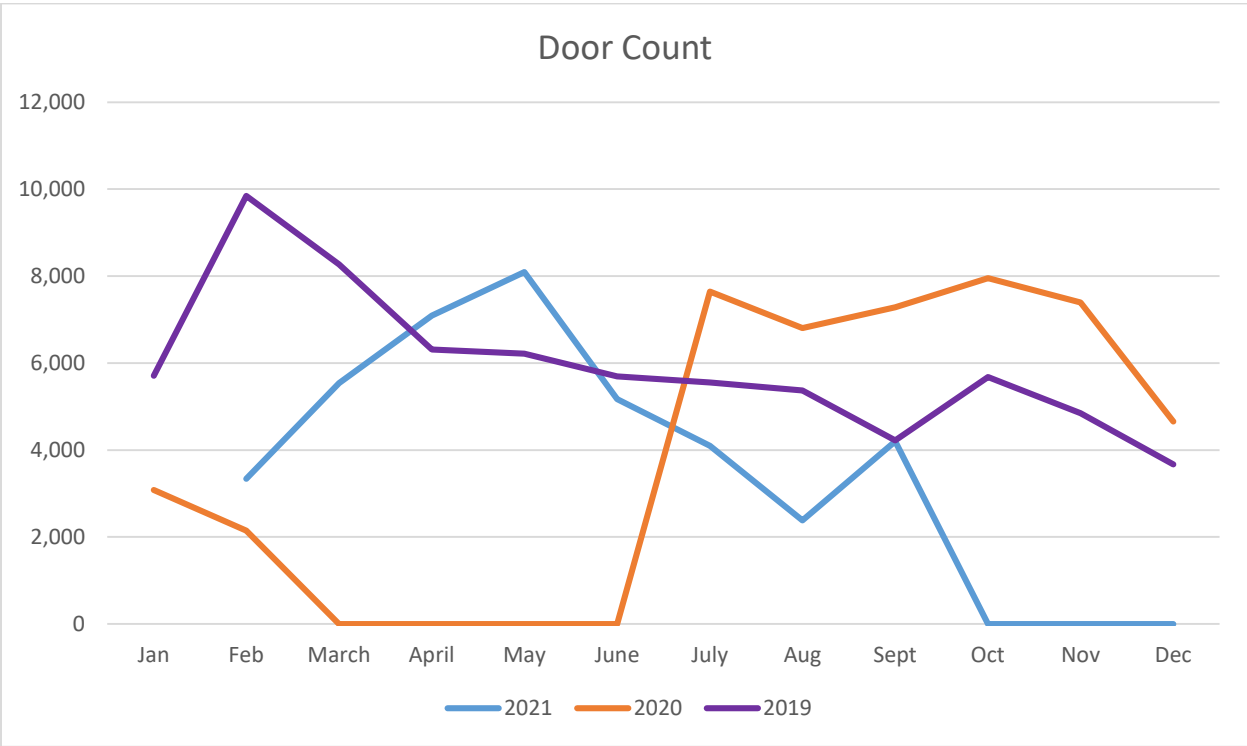
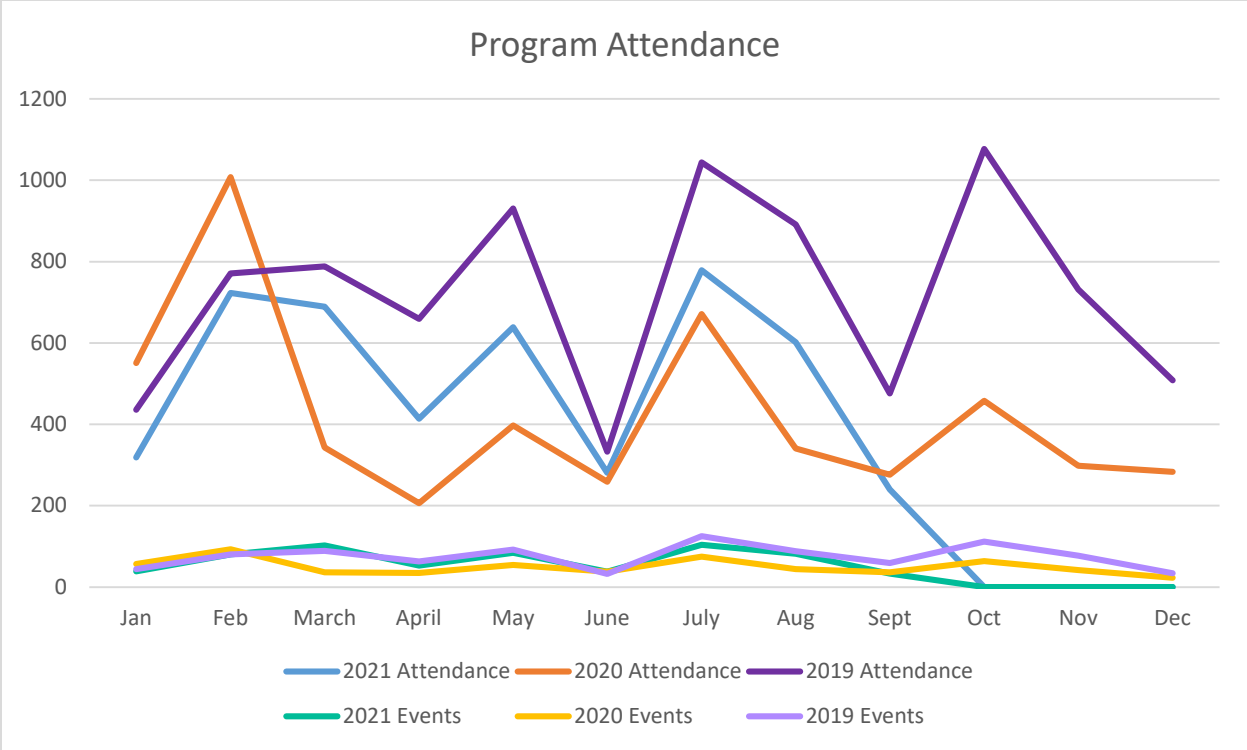
## Buildings and Grounds

The Teenspace door came off track and needs repair. JPL Glass came to look at it, but did not have the necessary parts to make immediate repairs.

The Town did not wind up fixing our pothole at the same time as the paving of the new Lakeside Park entrance or the pickleball courts. James Schmitt has indicated that the pavers will still drop by the library one morning for the repair, but he couldn't say when that would be.

## Programming and Circ Stats





Days Closed 2022

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1	Saturday, January 1, 2022	<b>New Year's Day</b>
2	Monday, January 17, 2022	<b>Martin Luther King Jr Day</b>
3	Sunday, April 17, 2022	Easter
4	Sunday, May 29, 2022	Sunday before Memorial Day
5	Monday, May 30, 2022	<b>Memorial Day</b>
6	Monday, July 4, 2022	<b>Independence Day</b>
7	Sunday, September 4, 2022	Sunday before Labor Day
8	Monday, September 5, 2022	<b>Labor Day</b>
9	<i>Wednesday, November 23, 2022</i>	<i>Close early: 3 PM</i>
10	Thursday, November 24, 2022	<b>Thanksgiving</b>
11	Saturday, December 24, 2022	Christmas Eve
12	Sunday, December 25, 2022	<b>Christmas Day</b>
13	Monday, December 26, 2022	Boxing Day

Federal Holidays Open

- Monday, February 21, 2022 **Presidents Day**
- Monday, June 20, 2022 **Juneteenth Observed**
- Monday, October 10, 2022 **Columbus Day**
- Friday, November 11, 2022 **Veterans Day**

**Federal Holidays are listed in bold**

*Days the library closes early are listed in italics*



Days Closed 2021

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1	Friday, January 1, 2021	<b>New Year's Day</b>
2	Monday, January 18, 2021	<b>Martin Luther King Jr Day</b>
3	Sunday, April 4, 2021	Easter
4	Sunday, May 30, 2021	Sunday before Memorial Day
5	Monday, May 31, 2021	<b>Memorial Day</b>
6	Sunday, July 4, 2021	<b>Independence Day</b>
7	Sunday, September 5, 2021	Sunday before Labor Day
8	Monday, September 6, 2021	<b>Labor Day</b>
9	<i>Wednesday, November 24, 2021</i>	<i>Close early: 3 PM</i>
10	Thursday, November 25, 2021	<b>Thanksgiving</b>
11	Friday, December 24, 2021	Christmas Eve
12	Saturday, December 25, 2021	<b>Christmas Day</b>
13	Sunday, December 26, 2021	Boxing Day
14	<i>Friday, December 31, 2021</i>	<i>Close early: 3 PM</i>

Federal Holidays Open

Monday, February 15, 2021	<b>Presidents Day</b>
Monday, July 5, 2021	<b>Independence Day Observed</b>
Monday, October 11, 2021	<b>Columbus Day</b>
Thursday, November 11, 2021	<b>Veterans Day</b>

**Federal Holidays are listed in bold**

*Days the library closes early are listed in italics*

## **A. Introduction**

The Pawling Library is committed to maintaining a workplace free from sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is a form of workplace discrimination. All employees are required to work in a manner that prevents sexual harassment in the workplace. This Policy is one component of the Pawling Library's commitment to a discrimination-free work environment. Sexual harassment is against the law and all employees have a legal right to a workplace free from sexual harassment and employees are urged to report sexual harassment by filing a complaint internally with the Pawling Library. Employees can also file a complaint with a government agency or in court under federal, state or local antidiscrimination laws.

## **B. Policy**

1. The Pawling Library's policy applies to all employees, applicants for employment, interns, whether paid or unpaid, volunteers, contractors and persons conducting business, regardless of immigration status, with the Pawling Library. In the remainder of this document, the term "employees" refers to this collective group.
2. Sexual harassment will not be tolerated. Any employee or individual covered by this policy who engages in sexual harassment or retaliation will be subject to remedial and/or disciplinary action (e.g., counseling, suspension, termination).
3. Retaliation Prohibition: No person covered by this policy shall be subject to adverse action because the employee reports an incident of sexual harassment, provides information, or otherwise assists in any investigation of a sexual harassment complaint. The Pawling Library will not tolerate such retaliation against anyone who, in good faith, reports or provides information about suspected sexual harassment. Any employee of The Pawling Library who retaliates against anyone involved in a sexual harassment investigation will be subjected to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. All employees who believe they have been subject to such retaliation should inform the Library Director or the President of the Board of Trustees. All employees who believe they have been a target of such retaliation may also seek relief in other available forums, as explained below in the section on Legal Protections.
4. Sexual harassment is offensive, is a violation of our policies, is unlawful, and may subject the Pawling Library to liability for harm to targets of sexual harassment. Harassers may also be individually subject to liability. Employees of every level who engage in sexual harassment, including managers and supervisors who engage in sexual harassment or who allow such behavior to continue, will be penalized for such misconduct.
5. The Pawling Library will conduct a prompt and thorough investigation that ensures due process for all parties, whenever management receives a complaint about sexual harassment, or otherwise knows of possible sexual harassment occurring. The Pawling Library will keep the investigation confidential to the extent possible. Effective corrective action will be taken whenever sexual harassment is found to have occurred. All employees, including managers and supervisors, are required to cooperate with any internal investigation of sexual harassment.
6. When reporting any harassment or behaviors that violate this policy, all employees are encouraged to use the library's incident report form. The employee handbook specifies the protocol for employees to report harassment and file complaints.
7. Managers and supervisors are required to report any complaint that they receive, or any harassment that they observe or become aware of, to the Library Director or Board President.

8. This policy applies to all employees and all must follow and uphold this policy. This policy must be provided to all employees and should be posted prominently in all work locations to the extent practicable (for example, in a main office, not an offsite work location) and be provided to employees upon hiring.

### **C. What Is “Sexual Harassment”?**

Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination and is unlawful under federal, state, and (where applicable) local law. Sexual harassment includes harassment on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, self-identified or perceived sex, gender expression, gender identity and the status of being transgender.

Sexual harassment includes unwelcome conduct which is either of a sexual nature, or which is directed at an individual because of that individual’s sex when:

- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual’s work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment, even if the reporting individual is not the intended target of the sexual harassment;
- Such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment; or
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting an individual’s employment.

A sexually harassing hostile work environment includes, but is not limited to, words, signs, jokes, pranks, intimidation or physical violence which are of a sexual nature, or which are directed at an individual because of that individual’s sex. Sexual harassment also consists of any unwanted verbal or physical advances, sexually explicit derogatory statements or sexually discriminatory remarks made by someone which are offensive or objectionable to the recipient, which cause the recipient discomfort or humiliation, which interfere with the recipient’s job performance.

Sexual harassment also occurs when a person in authority tries to trade job benefits for sexual favors. This can include hiring, promotion, continued employment or any other terms, conditions or privileges of employment. This is also called “quid pro quo” harassment.

Any employee who feels harassed should report so that any violation of this policy can be corrected promptly. Any harassing conduct, even a single incident, can be addressed under this policy.

### **D. Examples of sexual harassment**

The following describes some of the types of acts that may be unlawful sexual harassment and that are strictly prohibited:

- Physical acts of a sexual nature, such as:
  - Touching, pinching, patting, kissing, hugging, grabbing, brushing against or poking another employee’s body;
  - Rape, sexual battery, molestation or attempts to commit these assaults.
- Unwanted sexual advances or propositions, such as:
  - Requests for sexual favors accompanied by implied or overt threats concerning the target’s job performance evaluation, a promotion or other job benefits or detriments;
  - Subtle or obvious pressure for unwelcome sexual activities.
- Sexually oriented gestures, noises, remarks or jokes, or comments about a person’s sexuality or sexual experience, which create a hostile work environment.

- Sex stereotyping occurs when conduct or personality traits are considered inappropriate simply because they may not conform to other people's ideas or perceptions about how individuals of a particular sex should act or look.
- Sexual or discriminatory displays or publications anywhere in the workplace, such as:
  - Displaying pictures, posters, calendars, graffiti, objects, promotional material, reading materials or other materials that are sexually demeaning or pornographic. This includes such sexual displays on workplace computers or cell phones and sharing such displays while in the workplace.
- Hostile actions taken against an individual because of that individual's sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and the status of being transgender, such as:
  - Interfering with, destroying or damaging a person's workstation, tools or equipment, or otherwise interfering with the individual's ability to perform the job;
  - Sabotaging an individual's work;
  - Bullying, yelling, name-calling.

#### **E. Who can be a target of sexual harassment?**

Sexual harassment can occur between any individuals, regardless of their sex or gender. Harassers can be a superior, a subordinate, a coworker or anyone in the workplace including an independent contractor, contract worker, vendor, client, customer or visitor.

#### **F. Where can sexual harassment occur?**

Unlawful sexual harassment is not limited to the physical workplace itself. It can occur while employees are traveling for business or at employer sponsored events or parties. Calls, texts, emails, and social media usage by employees can constitute unlawful workplace harassment, even if they occur away from the workplace premises, on personal devices or during non-work hours.

#### **G. Retaliation**

Unlawful retaliation can be any action that could discourage a worker from coming forward to make or support a sexual harassment claim. Adverse action need not be job-related or occur in the workplace to constitute unlawful retaliation (e.g., threats of physical violence outside of work hours).

Such retaliation is unlawful under federal, state, and (where applicable) local law. The New York State Human Rights Law protects any individual who has engaged in "protected activity." Protected activity occurs when a person has:

- made a complaint of sexual harassment, either internally or with any anti-discrimination agency;
- testified or assisted in a proceeding involving sexual harassment under the Human Rights Law or other anti-discrimination law;
- opposed sexual harassment by making a verbal or informal complaint to management, or by simply informing a supervisor or manager of harassment;
- reported that another employee has been sexually harassed; or
- encouraged a fellow employee to report harassment.

Even if the alleged harassment does not turn out to rise to the level of a violation of law, the individual is protected from retaliation if the person had a good faith belief that the practices were unlawful. However, the retaliation provision is not intended to protect persons making intentionally false charges of harassment.

## **H. Reporting Sexual Harassment**

Preventing sexual harassment is everyone's responsibility. The Pawling Library cannot prevent or remedy sexual harassment unless it knows about it. Any employee who has been subjected to behavior that may constitute sexual harassment is encouraged to report such behavior to a supervisor, manager or the President of the Library's Board of Trustees. Anyone who witnesses or becomes aware of potential instances of sexual harassment should report such behavior to a supervisor, manager or the President of the Library's Board of Trustees.

Reports of sexual harassment may be made verbally or in writing. Employees who are reporting sexual harassment on behalf of other employees should note that it is on another employee's behalf. Employees are encouraged but not required to use the library's incident report form.

Employees who believe they have been a target of sexual harassment may also seek assistance in other available forums, as explained below in the section on Legal Protections.

## **I. Supervisory Responsibilities**

All supervisors and managers who receive a complaint or information about suspected sexual harassment, observe what may be sexually harassing behavior or for any reason suspect that sexual harassment is occurring, are required to report such suspected sexual harassment to the President of the Library's Board of Trustees.

In addition to being subject to discipline if they engaged in sexually harassing conduct themselves, supervisors and managers will be subject to discipline for failing to report suspected sexual harassment or otherwise knowingly allowing sexual harassment to continue.

Supervisors and managers will also be subject to discipline for engaging in any retaliation.

## **J. Complaint and Investigation of Sexual Harassment**

All complaints or information about sexual harassment will be investigated, whether that information was reported in verbal or written form. Investigations will be conducted in a timely manner, and will be confidential to the extent possible.

An investigation of any complaint, information or knowledge of suspected sexual harassment will be prompt and thorough, commenced immediately and completed as soon as possible. All persons involved, including complainants, witnesses and alleged harassers will be accorded due process, as outlined below, to protect their rights to a fair and impartial investigation.

Any employee may be required to cooperate as needed in an investigation of suspected sexual harassment. The Pawling Library will not tolerate retaliation against employees who file complaints, support another's complaint, or participate in an investigation regarding a violation of this policy.

While the process may vary from case to case, investigations will be done in accordance with the following general protocol:

- Upon receipt of complaint, the Director or Board President will conduct an immediate review of the allegations, and take any interim actions (e.g., instructing the respondent to refrain from communications with the complainant), as appropriate. If complaint is verbal, encourage the individual to document his/her complaint in writing. If he or she refuses, prepare a complaint form based on the verbal reporting.

- If documents, emails or phone records are relevant to the investigation, take steps to obtain and preserve them.
- Request and review all relevant documents, including all electronic communications.
- Interview all parties involved, including any relevant witnesses.
- Create a written documentation of the investigation (such as a letter, memo or email), which contains the following:
  - A list of all documents reviewed, along with a detailed summary of relevant documents;
  - A list of names of those interviewed, along with a detailed summary of their statements;
  - A timeline of events;
  - A summary of prior relevant incidents, reported or unreported; and
  - The basis for the decision and final resolution of the complaint, together with any corrective action(s).
- Keep the written documentation and associated documents in a secure and confidential location.
- Promptly notify the individual who reported and the individual(s) about whom the complaint was made of the final determination and implement any corrective actions identified in the written document.
- Inform the individual who reported of the right to file a complaint or charge externally as outlined in the next section.

## **K. Legal Protections and External Remedies**

Sexual harassment is not only prohibited by the Pawling Library but is also prohibited by law.

Aside from the internal process at the Pawling Library, employees may also choose to pursue legal remedies with the following governmental entities. While a private attorney is not required to file a complaint with a governmental agency, you may seek the legal advice of an attorney.

### **L. State Human Rights Law (HRL)**

The Human Rights Law (HRL), codified as N.Y. Executive Law, art. 15, § 290 et seq., applies to all employers in New York State with regard to sexual harassment, and protects employees regardless of immigration status. A complaint alleging violation of the Human Rights Law may be filed either with the Division of Human Rights (DHR) or in New York State Supreme Court.

Complaints with DHR may be filed any time within one year of the harassment. If an individual did not file at DHR, they can sue directly in state court under the HRL, within three years of the alleged sexual harassment. An individual may not file with DHR if they have already filed a HRL complaint in state court.

Complaining internally to the Pawling Library does not extend your time to file with DHR or in court. The one year or three years is counted from date of the most recent incident of harassment.

You do not need an attorney to file a complaint with DHR, and there is no cost to file with DHR.

DHR will investigate your complaint and determine whether there is probable cause to believe that sexual harassment has occurred. Probable cause cases are forwarded to a public hearing before an administrative law judge. If sexual harassment is found after a hearing, DHR has the power to award relief, which varies but may include requiring your employer to take action to stop the harassment, or redress the damage caused, including paying of monetary damages, attorney's fees and civil fines.

DHR's main office contact information is: NYS Division of Human Rights, One Fordham Plaza, Fourth Floor, Bronx, New York 10458. You may call (718) 741-8400 or visit: [www.dhr.ny.gov](http://www.dhr.ny.gov).

Contact DHR at (888) 392-3644 or visit [dhr.ny.gov/complaint](http://dhr.ny.gov/complaint) for more information about filing a complaint. The website has a complaint form that can be downloaded, filled out, notarized and mailed to DHR. The website also contains contact information for DHR's regional offices across New York State.

### **M. Civil Rights Act of 1964**

The United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) enforces federal anti-discrimination laws, including Title VII of the 1964 federal Civil Rights Act (codified as 42 U.S.C. § 2000e et seq.). An individual can file a complaint with the EEOC anytime within 300 days from the harassment. There is no cost to file a complaint with the EEOC. The EEOC will investigate the complaint, and determine whether there is reasonable cause to believe that discrimination has occurred, at which point the EEOC will issue a Right to Sue letter permitting the individual to file a complaint in federal court.

The EEOC does not hold hearings or award relief, but may take other action including pursuing cases in federal court on behalf of complaining parties. Federal courts may award remedies if discrimination is found to have occurred. In general, private employers must have at least 15 employees to come within the jurisdiction of the EEOC.

An employee alleging discrimination at work can file a "Charge of Discrimination." The EEOC has district, area, and field offices where complaints can be filed. Contact the EEOC by calling 1-800-669-4000 (TTY: 1-800-669-6820), visiting their website at [www.eeoc.gov](http://www.eeoc.gov) or via email at [info@eeoc.gov](mailto:info@eeoc.gov).

If an individual filed an administrative complaint with DHR, DHR will file the complaint with the EEOC to preserve the right to proceed in federal court.

### **N. Local Protections**

Many localities enforce laws protecting individuals from sexual harassment and discrimination. An individual should contact the county, city or town in which they live to find out if such a law exists.

### **O. Contact the Local Police Department**

If the harassment involves unwanted physical touching, coerced physical confinement or coerced sex acts, the conduct may constitute a crime. Employees who believe criminal behavior may have taken place should contact the local police department.