



## THE SHERMAN LIBRARY

### **SHERMAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION FINE-TUNES NEW BYLAWS TO REFLECT STRONG COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR LIBRARY**

**SHERMAN, Conn. – (May 17, 2011)** The Board of Trustees of the Sherman Library Association met here tonight before a standing room only crowd of library members seeking to express their views on proposed changes to the library's 20-year-old by-laws.

The result was a revised draft of the by-laws which will be voted on by the membership at a meeting held at a date in the near future, allowing for ten days' notice of the membership.

Commenting on the community show of support for the library, Library Board President Sharon J. Danosky said:

"I know I speak for all the Board that it was great to see so many people who really had great ideas and thoughts on how we can become a better library. We were all very energized by the meeting. We hope people will continue to be involved. There is a lot of work to do and funds to be raised and we really need our membership. I think we recognized that the membership really hasn't been engaged for many years and we want to explore ways of better involving our

membership – not just in major decisions, but seeking their input as we build our new library and move into a new era.”

Ms. Danosky explained to the membership that changes to the by-laws were both necessary and required as the library prepares for a major expansion and renovation of its historic building in Sherman’s historic district. The current by-laws are vague and do not meet today’s standards of transparency and accountability that is expected of non-profit organizations.

“We asked our attorney – a specialist in Connecticut library governance – to review what other association libraries like ours were doing to provide the best practices and governance procedures and then rewrite our by-laws accordingly,” Ms. Danosky said. The Board had spent many hours reviewing the by-laws and then brought them to the membership for input, review and eventually for a vote.

The resulting by-law changes had elicited comments from some members, many of whom were happy with the bylaws the way they were in the past, or felt the new by-laws took away certain voting rights from the membership.

Addressing the members filling the meeting room, the library’s ten-person board led by Ms. Danosky went through every article in the new by-laws, discussed comments and agreed to adjust the language and tone to reflect the will of the members. In some cases that meant restoring language contained in the original 1990 by-laws.

Among the significant changes agreed to by the Board were:

- Eliminate a new provision which stated that members would have no voting rights on any matter whatsoever.
- Remove language in the bylaws that the Board of Trustees would be “self-perpetuating”.
- Remove a section that would have permitted reimbursement for trustees for “expenses and fees incurred” from doing library business.
- Adding a clause that any major encumbrance the library would be considering will be brought to the membership.

Other matters brought to the attention of the Board for consideration included the ability to solicit nominations from the membership to fill positions on the Board, and the Board expressed its desire to reach out to members to become more involved and consider serving on the Board when there is an opening.

As had been originally planned, essentially all of the membership’s comments and suggestions are being incorporated into a revised draft which will be submitted to the Library Association’s legal counsel for review and redrafting. Then the revised by-laws will be distributed to the membership and a membership meeting will be scheduled to again review the amended bylaws and approve if they meet the members’ concerns.

### **About the Sherman Library**

The Sherman Library is a free public library, open to all.. For over 100 years the library has been a place where intellectual curiosity can be satisfied in a friendly, comfortable environment. The library offers 26,000 books, audio books, films and other materials and hosts over 200 free programs, exhibits, story hours, book discussions, concerts, town collaborative and other events each year. The library also provides computers and wireless access to the Internet and through its website [www.shermanlibrary.org](http://www.shermanlibrary.org) provides access to the library catalog, research databases, ebooks, audio books, and a schedule of events. The library receives support for the operating budget from a town grant, membership contributions, gifts, grants and fund raising proceeds.