

## Resolution Concerning Wells College Archives

Introduced: Trustee Balloni

Seconded: Trustee Bianconi

Date: September 18, 2024

Whereas, the histories of the Village of Aurora (“Village”) and Wells College (“Wells”) are intimately connected by the shared histories of the peoples, times, and locations that shaped them; and

Whereas, up to 62% of the Archives of Wells as listed on the New York State Library site, according to the Village Historian (Letter to Wells College June 26, 2024, attached), deal with the Village, either exclusively or through the people, families, and historic homes and other buildings of Aurora; and

Whereas, many important documents pertaining to the Village, such as maps from 1794 and 1795 and records from early settlers were given to Wells while Professor Temple Rice Hollcroft served as both the Village Historian and the College Historian; and

Whereas, the donors believed depositing them with Wells was a safe and permanent way to keep their records in Aurora; and

Whereas, the Village has received communications from various descendants of the donors to the Wells Archives, from the Chief Curator of History at the New York State Museum, as well as from residents of the Village and many alumnae of Wells, stating their preferences that the Wells Archives “stay local”; and

Whereas, municipal governments in New York State are charged with encouraging the coordinated collection and preservation of nongovernmental historical records of the histories of their communities, for which it is appropriate to preserve collections of private letters, papers, books, maps, pictures, photographs and other media and make them available to the public; and

Whereas, the Village has long been the owner of certain Village Archives and historic collections that are under responsibility of the Village Historian and the Village Clerk (the Village’s Records Officers), in conjunction with the Village of Aurora Historical Society (AHS), with which AHS the Village has an existing agreement for the stewardship by AHS of all Village historical resources, including the Village-owned historic 1793 Patrick Tavern building; and

Whereas, the Village finds that it is in the interest of the public health, safety, and welfare and serves an urgent and vital Village purpose to request Wells to transfer to the Village the historical archives consisting of books, records, photographs and other media in the Wells College Library Archives whether they strictly relate to the history of one party or to the other (the “Wells Archives”), thereafter to be preserved and identified as the “Wells Collection,” made available to the public in an appropriate manner, and ultimately digitized to promote public access and searchability while protecting the originals; and

Whereas, AHS is a non-profit, tax-exempt education corporation authorized by the New York State Board of Regents that has a track record for its stewardship of Village historic resources and fundraising for the preservation of such resources in order to make them available to the public in an appropriate manner; and

Whereas, AHS has offered to assist the Village by (a) providing existing restricted monies for the proposed Village request of Wells to acquire and preserve the Wells Archives, (b) offering to take a lead role in communications with Wells for exploring the potential terms and conditions under which the Village’s request to Wells might be accepted by Wells; (c) offering to assist the Village by locating suitable interim storage space for the Wells Archives and raising funds toward the purpose; (d) offering to assist the Village in siting, designing, obtaining grants for, and constructing a suitable permanent Village archival facility that is of sufficient size to house the existing Village Archives and the potential addition of the Wells Collection.

NOW THEREFORE, Be It Resolved:

1. To authorize and direct the Mayor to make a formal request of Wells for the transfer to the Village of Aurora by gift or otherwise of historical archives consisting of books, records, photographs and other media in the Wells College Library Archives whether they strictly relate to the history of Wells or to the Village (the “Wells Archives”), thereafter to be preserved and identified in the Village Archives as the “Wells Collection.”
2. To request the AHS to take a lead role, in consultation with 2-3 Village officials to be selected by the Mayor, in confidentially approaching and communicating with Wells to explore the potential terms and conditions under which the Village’s request for the transfer of the Wells Archives might be acceptable to Wells.
3. To appoint a Village Archives Study Committee to work with the AHS to (a) locate suitable interim storage space that could accommodate the Wells Archives should they be transferred to the Village and raising funds toward the purpose; and (b) work on a plan for siting, designing, obtaining grants for, and constructing a suitable permanent Village archival facility that is of sufficient size to house the existing Village Archives and the potential addition of the Wells Collection.

Trustee James Balloni: AYE  
Trustee Matt Bianconi: AYE  
Trustee L. John Miller: AYE  
Trustee Janet Murphy: AYE  
Mayor James Orman: ABSENT

At least 3 of the above-mentioned Trustees voted in favor and the resolution is duly adopted.

**STATE OF NEW YORK)**  
**COUNTY OF CAYUGA) SS:**  
**VILLAGE OF AURORA**

I, Ann Balloni, Village Clerk of the Village of Aurora, New York, do hereby certify that the above resolution is an exact copy of the same adopted by the Village Board of Trustees of the Village of Aurora at a regular meeting on the 18<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2024.

Ann Balloni, Village Clerk