



2024

SEYMOUR LIBRARY YEAR-END REPORT

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INTRODUCTION

The Seymour Library spent the majority of 2024 honing and refining the organizational structure implemented in early 2023. Institutions will, by nature, stagnate unless leadership and stakeholders maintain an eye on progress. People have a general tendency to avoid change without a driving factor. The issues present at Seymour came to a head in 2022, and the library leadership could no longer avoid making some complex decisions. The items of most need received attention in 2023. The combined reporting in 2023 and 2024 serves as an evaluation, based on evidence, regarding the success of the changes deemed necessary by leadership. For 2024, the action items found within this report include:

1. Reorganization to encourage library usage through professional staff retention as measured by programming and program attendance.
2. Collection development and demand for books as measured by circulation statistics.
3. Community, patron, and stakeholder rediscovery of the library as a tool to engage with literacy and lifelong learning, evidenced by building usage and door count.
4. Fiscal responsibility and responsible operational spending as evidenced by the 2024 Year-End Financial Statement.
5. Infrastructure needs assessment and accountability by the library and its municipal funders through capital improvement project planning and spending.
6. Future library developments and operational needs within a 2–5-year window.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Seymour Library's 2024 annual report underscores notable progress in programming, facility utilization, fiscal management, infrastructure enhancements, and strategic planning. The library continues to evolve, reinforcing its role as a vital hub for literacy and lifelong learning within the community.

Programming Achievements: Seymour Library significantly expanded its programming, increasing from 339 sessions in 2023 to 439 in 2024, resulting in higher engagement, with attendance rising from 7,337 to 8,809 participants. Children's services remained a focal point, particularly for ages 6-11, incorporating STEAM initiatives, literacy workshops, and problem-solving activities. Outreach partnerships with local homeschool networks and early learning centers strengthened educational support, while adult literacy and ESOL programs provided essential resources for diverse community members.

Building Utilization and Circulation: Visitor traffic rose by 9% to 72,546 in 2024, reflecting a growing reliance on library services. Circulation figures returned to pre-pandemic levels, with 147,131 items borrowed. The library's role as a public gathering space expanded, accommodating community meetings, study sessions, and informal social interactions. The Brockport Warming Center's use further highlighted the library's role in serving vulnerable populations.

Financial Overview: Seymour Library closed 2024 with a fiscal deficit of \$272,529.15, primarily due to major capital improvements, such as restroom renovations and landscaping upgrades. Operational expenses remained within budget, with strategic financial planning ensuring stability. The adoption of a structured funding model and increased municipal support are expected to enhance fiscal resilience. Revenue streams, including grants and investment income, continue to offset costs and sustain essential services.

Infrastructure Enhancements: Key facility upgrades included repaving the parking lot, modernizing restrooms, and overhauling plumbing systems, with municipal collaboration ensuring smooth project execution. Technological advancements, such as the introduction of a 3D printer and expanded digital literacy programs, provided new learning opportunities for patrons of all ages.

Future Considerations: To maintain momentum, the library will prioritize staff retention, collection development, community engagement, fiscal accountability, and long-term infrastructure planning. Addressing evolving community needs through proactive service enhancements will be crucial in sustaining growth and relevance.

Seymour Library remains committed to fostering an inclusive and dynamic environment that supports literacy, education, and community interaction. Ongoing strategic initiatives and municipal collaboration will be instrumental in ensuring the library's continued success and sustainability.

2. PROGRAMMING

Enhancing programming, particularly in Children's Services, has strengthened community connections by offering library-led activities that appeal to a broad demographic. Retaining a dedicated Children's Librarian for two years has fostered familiarity and trust among families, creating a sense of continuity. A well-established librarian with a reputation for quality programming often ensures consistent attendance, regardless of the specific program.

- **General Programs and Program Attendance:** The aggregate number of programs rose to 439 programs in 2024 from 339 programs in 2023. A more indicative measure of success comes from attendance numbers at these programs. 8,809 patrons attended programs offered in 2024 as opposed to 7,337 in 2023 (items 3.28 & 3.29). The per capita by program sank by about one person per program, but overall attendance remained consistent to the offerings. In short, librarians expanded program offerings of known interest to the public. The public, in turn, received those programs well and attended more of what the library offered.
- **Children's Programming:** The core of a library's program attendance comes from children aged birth to 17. This also extends to mixed groups of families. The general focus for Children's within the library in 2024 went towards the ages 6-11 (grades 1-5). Children within these formative years develop a love of literacy and learning. The librarians accomplished this through a combination of STEAM, reading and writing workshops, and programs related to creative problem solving. Total Children's program attendance increased from 5,679 in 2023 to 6,295 in 2024 (sum items 3.17b, 3.18b, 3.19b). Departmentally, this demographic represents Seymour's largest audience.
- **Children's Outreach and Early Literacy:** The library maintained partnerships with the Brockport Child Development Center and Inspire! Learning and Daycare, hosting 31 story times for 678 children—slightly fewer than in 2023 (items 3.25a & 3.25b). Since outreach program attendance depends on external enrollment, these fluctuations are beyond the library's control. Meanwhile, homeschool partnerships in Brockport, Sweden, and Clarkson reached capacity, necessitating an additional homeschool session in 2025. Hands-on learning programs, supported by the Seneca Park Zoo, Genesee Country Village and Museum, and Rochester Museum and Science Center, further enriched outreach efforts.
- **BOCES, ESOL, and Adult Literacy:** Seymour serves a diverse community with many non-English speakers. While the library does not host its own ESOL programs, BOCES provided 66 group sessions, drawing 462 attendees (items 3.70a & 3.70b) and meeting federal funding requirements for its program. Adult outreach efforts extended to Evergreen Place and Royal Gardens, offering monthly engagement opportunities for seniors with mobility challenges. Additionally, 51 digital literacy sessions were conducted to help adults navigate smart devices and computers (items 3.77a & 3.77b).

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- **Summer Reading:** A well performing Children's Services department will create continuity as kids age up into the next brackets. It will encourage reading with younger groups and move up with older children as new literacy and program interests arise. Seymour saw this reflected in the summer reading numbers in 2024. Seymour had 447 registered children in 2024, as opposed to 614 in 2023 (item 3.37). However, the number of young adults registered reached 466 in 2024, as opposed to 198 in 2023 (item 3.38). The drop in one category and uptick in another indicates growth and mission fulfillment. Adult registrants saw an increase to 169 in 2024 (item 3.39).
- **Summer Reading Programs:** Program attendance did not align precisely with registrations, a common trend in transition years. Children's Services hosted 45 programs with 1,776 attendees, Young Adult held 22 programs for 179 attendees, and Adult programs featured 17 events with 534 attendees (items 3.37-3.41b). A post-summer reading survey revealed declining interest in some historically popular programs and a growing demand for reading-based challenges. Future planning will prioritize program alignment with participant interests to maintain attendance consistency year-round.

3. BUILDING USAGE & CIRCULATION

Library visits increased from 65,813 in 2023 to 72,546 in 2024 (item 3.1), with total open hours rising slightly to 2,675. Patron foot traffic grew by 9%, continuing an upward trend. Notably, patrons per hour (pph) rose from 24.70 in 2023 to 27.12 in 2024, potentially necessitating service model adjustments to accommodate increased demand.

- **Circulation:** Where library programs bring patrons in to participate, books bring patrons in to engage. This may bury the lede, but item circulation has achieved similar numbers to pre-Covid. At 147,131 print, physical, and electronic items (sum items 4.11,4.17,5.19,5.21,5.22), the library has achieved regularity in its lending. Of course, every stakeholder would prefer its community to read as much as possible. To that end, the library does not differ in perspective. The library will seek to curate a collection more associated with popular, significant, and useful titles in all areas. These titles should represent a cross-section of all people of all beliefs living in the area. As the adage goes, “a book for every reader and a reader for every book.” This undertaking will take one to two years to complete but will result in a more robust collection, thereby leading to regular increases in circulation.
- **Outside Organizations and Study Rooms:** A key component of library building usage came from other organizations seeking a place to meet. Support groups, Girl Scout Troops, religious study groups, among others, all utilized the library’s meeting rooms in 2024. The library had 464 meeting room requests and 772 study room requests. The significance of using the library as a quiet study space or an area to hold meetings indicates the public recognizes the flexibility and purpose of the library. The library serves multiple functions and, while it partially depends on how the library markets itself, it also pertains to how each individual/group views the library. These numbers demonstrate the community coming to the library as a choice rather than having the visit imposed on them.
- **The Library as a Public Space:** Shifts in community demographics have led to increased use of the library as a “third space”—a welcoming environment for reading, socializing, and leisure. The Brockport Warming Center attracted patrons seeking shelter, while families utilized areas like the puppet theatre for shared reading experiences. Public computer usage continues to grow, particularly in light of regional broadband limitations, underscoring the library’s essential role in digital access.

The sum of the parts brings the usefulness Seymour’s building, facilities, and services together. Each type of use has its own value, but it becomes clearer how much each of these components feeds into one another. As the needs of the community change, the library will adapt its resources and services to meet its stakeholders. The upward trend of building usage and circulation support how the library fulfills the mission of literacy and lifelong learning to the individual and to the group.

4. FINANCIALS

The Seymour Library's CPA can provide a far better, and much more detailed, explanation of the results of FY 2024 than anyone in-house. This report will address the key points of the financial results. Please see the attached appendix of the year-end statements for final numbers. Any municipal member can request contact information for the CPA at any time.

- **Total Deficit:** Beginning with the overall picture, Seymour had a total deficit for FY 2024. Seymour ended the fiscal year over-budget by \$272,529.15. However, \$234,733.81 went to pay for the total renovations of the public and staff restrooms to Whitney East Inc., and LaBella Associates for architecture and engineering services. This also included reflooring the vestibule and foyer outside the restrooms through GP Flooring. Seymour also changed its preferred landscape company mid-year, which cost the library an additional \$11,000 in deferred maintenance.
- **Balance Sheet Spending; Income Amortization:** Some items, such as Bullet Aid for technology upgrades and donation purchases, came from the balance sheet holdings instead of income. This totaled \$14,944.94 in expenses. Lastly, the Seymour Finance Committee chose to realize income over a 12-month amortization instead of lumped as received. By truing up funds over a total year, the income side came in lower than most years. Brockport's mid-year funding now spreads throughout the total year instead of each fiscal year. This one-year loss will streamline Seymour's funding model in future years to make reporting more comprehensive and consistent. See page 2 of the attached 2024 Final Accruals for the Profit & Loss Statement.
- **Operations Breakeven:** While Seymour paid for the annual deficit through reserve funds, as expected for capital improvements, the operations budget ran close to anticipated. The tightest component of Seymour's budget comes in Payroll Expenses. Maintaining these budget items, consisting of two-thirds of the total annual expenses, keeps Seymour on track. In 2024, Seymour came in slightly under budget on payroll. By excluding expense items with no income offset (reserves/donations), Seymour came in slightly under its total annual budget for expenses. Due to the change in the method of accounting for municipal funding, the income side came in under budget. This led to a total loss of \$22,850.40. A \$28,207 surplus from FY 2023 covered this loss, bringing the operations budget to breakeven. Please see page 3 of the attached 2024 Final Accruals for the Profit & Loss Statement.
- **External Revenue, Expanded Growth:** According to the final reporting at the February board meeting, the library's CPA, Lisa Marou, indicated spending to income looks to align with another breakeven year in FY 2025. Certainly, the board and library leadership will need to maintain a close eye on the budget. Following the patterns of the last two years will help function as a guide through the foreseen and unforeseen. Of more concern, replenishing the library's reserves will take the spotlight in 2025 and beyond. The municipal support in the library's restroom renovation,

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both monetary and in-kind, did wonders to assist with the project. Grant funding from MCLS and the Dormitory Authority of the State of New York will help, as will a distribution from the Shaffer Trust (held by the Village of Brockport). These funds will not serve as a 1:1 replacement of reserves spending in FY 2024, but it will start to rebuild the reserves. The library will need to continue to phase in deferred maintenance projects, landscaping, and upgrades throughout the library. A sizable portion of time will require the Director and the Board of Trustees to identify and write grants to offset these costs while improving the library environment.

- **Fines, Fees, and the Future:** Despite a minor reporting discrepancy, fines remain an important revenue source. Printing and faxing services continue to generate increasing income. Questions still surround the receipt of gifts and injecting the Foundation in that process, but overall, these revenue streams look to continue steadily in FY 2025.

Most importantly, the municipal support and organization involved in the investment process of reserves has created a significant third stream of revenue. The laddering of reserves and operations funds not currently in-use through municipal investment vehicles allows the Seymour budget to thrive. While FY 2024 saw interest earnings of \$26,921.27, variation will exist year by year. Together, though, these income lines act as a support to the overall health and financial well-being of the library. While the library will have some work ahead to continue improvements for the community and its stakeholders, the operations budget looks quite healthy.

5. INFRASTRUCTURE

2024 saw significant and necessary investments in the infrastructure of the Seymour Library. Some projects proved critical to the function of the library, while others consisted of addressing deferred maintenance. Each of these projects highlighted the cooperative nature of the library and its three municipalities. Every party had a role in the financial and in-kind work performed at the library. The communication led to functionality, ending with a product everyone in the community could see and take pride.

- **Parking Lot Paving:** One of the deferred maintenance items came at the suggestion of the 2023 reporting year meeting. The Seymour parking lot needed holes and cracks filled, as well as leveling. The Town of Sweden took charge of the paving project with collaboration from multiple municipalities. Of the most interesting results of the project, reconfiguring parking for ease of access to the building generated significant compliments. Paving went quickly, with only minor disruptions to library service. The current lot has a smooth service and encourages the flow of traffic. The Joint Operating Agreement and Lease Agreement worked well, in that the municipalities provided aid and support to the library in ensuring continued access to the building.
- **Plumbing and Restrooms:** The Board of Trustees slated the restrooms at the Seymour Library for renovation in 2024. However, the aging plumbing system created wastewater backups in the library with relative regularity in 2023 and 2024. Our municipal funders ordered an architectural and engineering assessment. The architect found the current system could no longer support the volume at the library. The municipalities assisted with keeping the plumbing outflow moving during the investigation and bid process thanks to the Village of Brockport Department of Public Works. The Clarkson Highway Department installed the new exterior laterals to the sewer system. In addition, the municipalities fulfilled their obligation by committing funds to the underslab work. The library found funding and utilized reserves to complete the renovation. The challenging and arduous timing of renovating while keeping the library open to the public demonstrated the cohesive and cooperative nature of the municipalities and Seymour. The completion of the work beautifies the building and, more importantly, keeps the wastewater moving out of the building and into the sewers.
- **Technology:** The library used funds donated to the Foundation of the Seymour Library earmarked for technology to improve user experience and expand some offerings. The purchase of a 3D printer opened new doors to explore STEAM learning, particularly when coupled with Raspberry Pi hardware and CAD software. This opened pathways to learning for patrons looking to learn new skill sets. The programs had healthy attendance, and the printer usage required supplementation from BOCES. This added two additional printers to the Makerspace. Overall, this reached children,

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teens, tweens, and adults. A demand for digital literacy with few options in the area brought new faces into the library. Seymour can expand on this platform in the coming years.

6. KEY ITEMS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION

To sustain growth, Seymour must balance innovation with community-driven needs. Traditionally, libraries respond reactively to public demand; however, continued progress will require proactive planning and creative service expansion. Upcoming priorities include:

- Expanding outreach programs, particularly for early literacy and ESOL services to our current partners, as well as reaching to institutions like the Sweden Clarkson Community Center.
- Strengthening financial sustainability through grants and strategic investments.
- Enhancing technology offerings to support digital literacy and STEM education.
- Adapting service models to accommodate increased patron traffic and evolving community expectations.

By aligning its resources with emerging needs, Seymour will continue to foster literacy, learning, and engagement for all patrons.

