

Director's Report: Submitted by Patrick Pittman

January 2025

Director's Focus:

Pending Grants; 2025 Planning and Implementation

Personnel: See Personnel Committee report.

Finance: See Finance Committee report.

Facilities: See Facilities report.

Policy: See Policies Committee report.

Library Function: The library started the year strong in January regarding building usage and foot traffic. 5,906 patrons visited the library in January 2025. The library had 5,468 patrons using the building in January 2024. The 8% increase aligns with the library's general trajectory over the last three years. For reference, the library had 5,232 patrons in 2023. January usually serves as a slower month in library traffic, but it also provides some guidance for expectations in the coming year. Assuming the library function stays relatively stable, Seymour has a good projected outlook.

The library also saw an increase in circulation of 12% in January 2025. The library had 12,406 items circulate in 2025 as opposed to 11,070 in 2024. The continuing jumps in circulation demonstrate a need in the community for library materials, the primary purpose for the library's service in the community. However, without diminishing these gains, a reimagining of the collection management of the library has gotten underway. The way in which books and materials get into the hands of patrons, as well as patrons finding the best items for their needs, should help steadily increase this metric in 2025.

Library programs in January consisted of relatively standard literacy and STEAM based programs that appeal to different demographics within the service population. This has found footing with the local homeschool groups, who attend programs geared specifically to their interests in large numbers. While nothing stood out particularly, the library still saw a high level of engagement. Several programs in development will create more opportunities for public interaction as the library pivots with the demands of its stakeholders. When these plans come to fruition, Seymour should have an exciting year.

As notably, the library as a meeting place has come back into public consciousness. This began in 2024 but has continued growing into 2025. The library as a third space has opened some doors for new relationships and deepening bonds with our patron base and population. The

library had 41 meeting room requests in January. The number of study-room uses has also increased, with 63 uses in January. The evolution of library services focuses on trends, and the library as a third space certainly provides room to capitalize on public interactions.

An overall calm and productive start to the year has helped create tangible benchmarks for 2025. A firm shift in the library's financial model should inspire confidence from our municipal funders and the public. The library used its operating funds in productive and meaningful ways, with a combination of fiscal responsibility and generating new revenue streams. The library has pivoted to meet the needs of its stakeholders on multiple fronts. The Annual Report to the NYS Library reflects this data and has gone to the state for review. Seymour will continue to respond to the needs of the community and provide services to those seeking what the library has to offer.

Looking Ahead: A distinct departure of reliability and predictability has recently taken shape. The direction it takes could work out very well for many, but undergoing such a seismic transition may cause pressure points in the interim. The Seymour Library has not seen or felt most of these changes, but little exists in the way of guidance forward. The library will continue day by day or week by week as larger patterns unfold. As of now, some grant funding has paused. Those grants should continue to come through, as they received an earmark. Time will tell as the library navigates external funding sources, including the investment of reserves and operating funds not in use.

Regarding 2025, the library has a workable budget and consistent staffing. The library's plan of service has not altered from NYSED or NYS Library guidelines. The 2023-2025 Strategic Plan remains in place, with most benchmarks met. The library acts as a mirror of the best parts within its community. To that end, the Seymour Library has strength in the resurgence of support from community members, local/county/state elected officials, and the dedication of its staff, board, Friends, and Foundation. The work done by the Policies Committee from 2021-2024 has provided a firm foundation from which the library can serve its community as a public good.

At times, the library may need to lean into that support. The librarians have programs planned through April, along with summer reading just around the corner. The staff has received the directive regarding "business as usual" very well thus far. They will continue implementing what the library does well while reviewing where it can improve. The library has the necessary internal and local tools to continue its growth.

Launching into 2025, the library has started discussions with the Sweden Clarkson Community Center to ensure the success of both institutions. Continued partnerships with outside organizations like BOCES and the Brockport Central School District help enhance shared values. Seymour has also worked to make itself more visible to the community through several marketing campaigns and outreach events. The library will shape and reshape to meet community needs and demands without abandoning its mission: literacy and lifelong learning for all.

In Closing: The library saw early successes at the very beginning of 2025. These small wins set the tone for the rest of the year, which looks to continue building on what Seymour has accomplished in the last several years. The library can anticipate another year of a functional budget with minimal staff turnover. The goodwill from the library's stakeholders remains steadfast, and projects planned for 2025 seek to enhance the library in many ways. However, externalities from uncertainty cloud the anticipated future of library function and growth. To that end, the library has sound support from its stakeholders, excellent policies to utilize, and a clear mission on which to act. We will take it as it comes.