

Director's Report: Submitted by Patrick Pittman

July 2025

Director's Focus:

Pending Grants; Summer Reading; 2026 Budget

Personnel: See Personnel Committee report.

Finance: See Finance Committee report.

Facilities: See Facilities report.

Policy: See Policies Committee report.

Library Function: The library had slightly more than modest expectations for participation in the Summer Reading Program (SRP) in 2025. As the third round of summer reading with the same core staff, it has surpassed expectations in many ways. The best measure of a good Summer Reading Program comes from the consistency of attendance and reading participation. In that regard, this summer surpassed previous SRPs by a significant margin. Accounting for vacations, weather, and other unforeseen variables, the number of familiar faces coming to programs and volunteering their time has remained remarkably similar week after week. While not a sole indicator of the library's overall health and perception within the community, it does provide an additional dataset. The Summer Reading Program will end on Thursday, August 14th, and final numbers will go into next month's report. Please see the librarian reports for more granular information.

The building usage dipped from 2024. It caused some confusion at first, however, contractors began working on converting the family bathroom to the changing/nursing room around this time last year. The door counter serves its purpose to predict traffic flows for staffing purposes in normal circumstances. The door counter cannot distinguish between a patron and a contractor moving materials, so it alters the numbers to some degree. In the end, use is use. July 2024 saw a building use door count of 8,185. July 2025 had a count of 7,194. The difference between real numbers and percentage would normally cause some consternation, but the big picture shows something different.

Comparing YTD numbers between July 31, 2024, and July 31, 2025, tells another story. By the end of July in 2024, the library had 42,898 total visits. In 2025, it had 45,234. Divided by total hours, with 1,573 in 2024 and 1,568 in 2025, the library increased its patrons per hour (pph). 2024 served 27.27 pph, while 2025 served 28.84 pph. It may seem small, but a 5% increase falls in line with the target for this year. The additional ~1.5 pph does change how the library staffs the reference desk and the circulation desk. This also indicates the library has no slowdown in the imminent future. These statistics also act as an indicator of library health and perception within the community.

The decrease in circulation county-wide continued into July. Seymour has circulated 5,006 more items than in 2024, but the decrease in circulation still presents a pressure point. Interestingly, while the number of borrowed physical items has dropped, the number of electronic materials borrowed has gone significantly up. Patrons and borrowers have started leaning heavily into electronic lending. This trend flattened from 2022-2024, but the change in patterns will require a change in how Seymour procures materials. The librarians will continue to purchase physical materials for the library but grants and fund balance donations will go heavily toward building a more robust electronic collection for patrons to utilize. The year-end numbers will demonstrate if putting this into practice makes any meaningful changes for the library's circulation.

The variety of summer programs in July brought families to the library multiple times a week. The most popular surveyed programs included the 42-foot inflatable whale, African drumming story time, the perennially popular Mad Scientists programs, as well as a sustained Dungeons and Dragon campaign. This created a cross-section of interests appealing to many members of the community. The duplication of programs by Adult Services also allowed more individuals to participate in high interest programs, a request made by the Friends of the Seymour Library as a contingency in their contribution to fund the SRP. Please see additional reports for more details.

Relating to other activities by and through the library in July, the Seymour Library Foundation's Garden Tour took place on July 19th. All reports from the Garden Tour Committee indicated it went well, with changes implemented this year that may benefit the Foundation in the longer term. The library also received a gift of two picnic tables and planter boxes on July 26th from Eagle Scout Audrey Kalish. Audrey lives in the community and spent her youth at the library, so she wanted to give back to Seymour. The library happily accepted the gift and worked to encourage and advise Audrey during the year-long process. The library wishes to thank Audrey for her hard work and dedication, as well as express gratitude to the Friends of the Seymour Library and Seymour Library Foundation for funding part of the project.

Looking Ahead: As the Summer Reading Program draws to a close, staff vacations will begin. The SRP puts some pressure on the entirety of the library and, while incredibly worthwhile, everyone on staff needs to decompress after completion. Administratively, the work does not end with the program. The board will need to tentatively approve the proposed budget for 2026 and present it to the municipal funders on Tuesday, August 26th at 7:00 pm. This will work in conjunction with the development of the Long-Range Plan. The board will then have until the October board meeting to finalize and adopt both items.

Seymour's busiest season ends after Labor Day, but SUNY Brockport work-study students will begin making their way back to work for the library as classes begin. The temporary Sweden Story Walk still has a greenlight from the town, and the work-study students make it possible. SUNY students received \$13,922 from federal funds to work at Seymour through May 2025. This labor pool allows librarians to pursue external projects, much like the Story Walk, to take the library's mission of literacy and lifelong learning outside the walls of the library. These types

of connections underpin the true capabilities of both the library and the librarians. The SUNY campus should get a Circle K service organization established soon, which will add to the pool of SUNY students working with the library.

Lastly, the Foundation has set its annual After Hours fundraiser for Saturday, October 4th. The library will run a program simultaneously, in cooperation with the Monroe County Library System and Rochester Museum and Science Center. The program, called “Star Party” for now, will bring telescopes, binoculars, star charts, and scientific expertise to the Seymour lawn for stargazing. Those attending After Hours will have an opportunity to see the library in action. Observing how the library carries out its mission increases visibility and support and will hopefully encourage participation from those attending After Hours. The Star Party will open to all ages, while After Hours will restrict ticket holders over the age of 21.

In Closing: The library has started closing in on finishing the Summer Reading Program for 2025. It has shaped up as one of the most successful years since 2020. The key indicators for 2025 demonstrate a healthy, well-used library that has positive connections to its community. These trends will likely continue throughout the year, with the anticipated ebbs and flows coming with some predictability. Several critical events will approach relatively quickly with the close of summer reading, beginning with the municipal meeting in August, and finishing with After Hours, the Star Party, and the Friends of the Seymour Library’s book sale in October.

Within the mix of planned important events, the library received full funding to pursue the Outdoor Education Pavilion. While the concept has solidified, the timing has much more fluidity. The board should find out more in about a month as things start to come together. The library has also purchased a new server with funds from Steve Hawley’s office, as well as external grant donations. Installation of the new server will create more stability and reliability in Seymour’s IT infrastructure, as well as continuing the modernization of technology within the library. The installation will likely not occur until after Labor Day, primarily due to the SRP, budget presentation, and pending vacations. The progress made in library improvements in all areas continues to ramp as the library maintains and improves on fulfilling its mission.