

Director's Report: Submitted by Patrick Pittman

June 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 Summer Reading Program began on June 26th this year. While the kickoff program maintained a similar number of attendees to previous years, the number of participants increased significantly. The library certainly welcomes attendees who want to eat LuGia's ice cream and see the library, and the kickoff program had between 700 and 800 in total. However, participants go a step further and engage with the library by signing up for the summer reading program. Last year's participation satisfied the requirements of using such a significant sum funded by the Friends of the Seymour Library. In 2025, sign ups for the program roughly doubled across all categories, exceeding expectations.

The success in gathering participants for summer reading came from good, comprehensive program planning by the librarians. Additionally, the simplification of the Children's summer reading game made tracking minutes for parents less tedious. Lastly, the outreach done this year reached the students in the AVID program at the Brockport High School and nearly 350 students at the Oliver Middle School. Solid Children's participation stems from appealing to parents but acquiring teen volunteers and readers requires addressing the kids directly. While this oversimplifies the work that went into community development in 2025, it highlights the some of the best approaches to creating interest in summer reading within the Brockport, Sweden, and Clarkson communities.

The next analysis of the Summer Reading Program will consist of evaluating continued and sustained participation. The board should expect to see good feedback, as surveys have gone out with major programs. 2025 will likely show an exponential increase, as follows from the building usage numbers. This year, the library had 6,371 patrons visiting the library in June with 222 service hours. This translates to roughly 29 patrons per hour. In June 2024, the library had 5,372 patron visits at 215 service hours (25 pph). The staff had some growing pains with the sheer number of people but have started acclimating. An additional staff member may need to cover a few hours during the busiest program times over the summer to continue with the relatively stringent guidelines set for patron service.

The trends still do not match in total circulation. Seymour fell in circulation from 2024. May 2025 saw a 1% decrease in circulation from the previous year, while June saw a 4% drop. This trend has reached about two-thirds of libraries across Monroe County. Two months of consecutive decreases have caught the attention of most Library Directors, with an item added to the agenda for Directors' Council to seek reasons for the decline. While no easy answer will likely emerge, different solutions and alternatives will hopefully bring circulation back up to expected levels.

In addition to the start of summer reading, various programs have appealed to many audiences. From STEM and experiments, to animals, to upcoming speakers, the librarians have sought ways to gather the community to learn about the world and encourage further reading. Programs in and of themselves have value, but engaging with participants to encourage critical thinking leads to more reading and enhanced education outside the library. A good program will foster a sense of curiosity, and fill a need in the community, particularly over the summer. The reports by the librarians illustrate how the community has responded to the programs offered.

Looking Ahead: Summer Reading will consume most staff time over the next month and a half and, given the numbers provided in the core metrics for June, Seymour will experiment with the best practices for meeting patron needs. This will go together with continuing its mission of literacy and lifelong learning. That said, the needs and requirements of the library do not stop because of the season. Tri-Delta has started quoting for the Seymour's server. Depending on policies at the federal level, it could create a pain point once they deliver a 30-day quote. The process and installation will need to happen by October and the end of service for Windows 10. It has gone out of the hands of the library and board until the quote comes in, so everyone can hope for the best.

The funding round has closed for the construction of a pavilion on the grounds of the library. The Seymour Library Foundation provided \$10,000, the Sweden Community Foundation provided \$5,000, BISCO has provided \$5,000, and Canandaigua National Bank has provided \$1,000 and a \$5,000 pledge. The total comes to \$26,000, with a grant outstanding for \$3,000 through the Suzanne Lee Trust to cover any shortfall. Since the fundraising and concept have ended, the mechanics of working with the municipalities goes to the board. Everything to date looks promising, and more updates likely will come in the next several weeks.

A preliminary budget for 2026 went to the Finance Committee in June. The budgets for Seymour build on different areas of revenue each year. The process began with the conversion of standing reserves into investments, which allowed the library some room to breathe. This budget should align with 2025 at breakeven, though, the Finance Committee and board will have some points of discussion. The library's operations and budget appear to have clicked together. The support of the municipalities as funders and in-kind stakeholders cannot be understated. Each step forward feels like monumental progress in the development of an institution in which the community can take pride.

In Closing: Another change in the staffing model at the Bookkeeper position has kept things moving as the second half of the year begins, starting with the Summer Reading Program. The transition took place at an opportune time and allows for streamlining services in continued library operations. Consolidating roles leads to more stable staffing, which allows everyone to focus on the most important aspects of the library. The increases in building usage and program participation highlight the importance of putting effort into successful, patron-focused operations. It has paid dividends for the library and the community.

Seymour has several upcoming projects and deadlines. Tri-Delta will continue working toward a replacement server. The Finance Committee will review the budget and present it to the board and municipalities. The Long-Range Plan will get renewed for 2026-2028, with an evaluation of 2023-2025. The new round of DASNY funding will close on August 15th, and the Facilities Committee has started diligently working to get the information needed for construction grants. The board and library have seemingly clicked together just as well as the library operations side, which offers an optimistic outlook for what will come next at the Seymour Library.