

Director's Report: Submitted by Patrick Pittman

March 2025

Director's Focus:

Pending Grants; Begin 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 anticipated spring spike in building usage started in March. The library had more open hours in 2025 due to the shift in the date for staff development. Seymour had 6,468 patrons in March 2025 with 227 open hours. In March 2024, the library welcomed 5,672 patrons over 215 open hours. The increase of 12% translates to about an additional 2 patrons per hour (pph) served by the library in some manner. The increase to 28.5 pph from 26.3 pph represents a significant jump. March through early May will likely grow these trends until about the week before Memorial Day. The library should slow from Memorial Day until the start of Summer Reading.

The library also saw an increase in circulation of 15% in March 2025. The library had 12,829 items circulate in 2025 as opposed to 11,145 in 2024. Circulations have started moving in a positive direction. While flat increases help indicate the demand for books from patrons, this increase aligns with the collection goals of 2025. The library will put more books of more interest and demand into the hands of its patrons. The total circulation should then correlate with responsible and meaningful spending of municipal dollars within the collection.

Two significant programs of note in March took place at the beginning of the month and the end of the month. The *Little Women* tea party drew 27 people, primarily families, to discuss the books, characters, and plot. Patrons received the program well, and it served as a template for future programs around themed book discussions. The Braddock Bay Raptor Research program brought live birds on site to educate patrons about native birds living in the area. The program saw over 170 participants, and drew attention to zoology, environmental impact, and developing interest through demonstrations. Notably, a homeschool family from Webster made the return trip to Seymour the week after the program to borrow books about the birds showcased during this program. The program highlighted the correlation between programming interests aligning with literacy interests for target audiences.

Awareness in the community has spread regarding the volunteer holding digital literacy workshops on Mondays at the library. This service helps diminish the digital divide within the community and builds technology literacy through its function. Seymour has continued its work with County Legislator Jackie Smith to get MiFi units in the hands of patrons more directly. The multifaceted nature of library services has drawn interest from community members and increases the overall usage of the library. The next step in cultivating this increase will consist of a branding initiative to develop an image people can associate with the library. This will begin with “Seymour (the dragon) Approved” programs in the May flyer.

Looking Ahead: The Seymour Library looks poised to make a pivot in “rightsizing” its staff as retirements begin, starting in June. An internal staff member has started training in the bookkeeper position, which will likely consolidate roles. Within the larger picture, these consolidations will create savings in the personnel budgets. This area specifically will need some tweaking as uncertainty exists in developing a comprehensive budget for 2026. Whether or not the large-scale disruptions to the supply chain have longevity or not, Seymour will likely need to price them into the overall budget. The budget process for 2026 will likely take more time and effort than in years past. It will also, in all probability, change even after the initial presentation. The fluidity and flexibility will serve library and stakeholder interests until the economy reaches normalization.

Otherwise, the library holds a relatively strong position to continue its initiatives in moving forward. The mission of literacy and lifelong learning for all provides good forward guidance as the library continues to adapt in ever-changing circumstances. In the meantime, the library has continued its partnerships with BOCES, SUNY Brockport, and looks to partner with the SCCC for story times during their preschool summer camps. Seymour represents a community organization fulfilling its mission across the area and will continue demonstrating the library’s value.

In Closing: Core metrics show increasing utilization of the Seymour Library. At this juncture, the spring spike in public participation of programming, borrowing, and general library use, looks to continue uninterrupted. The librarians have gotten close to the end of planning for Summer Reading with high expectations. The development of 2025 has unfolded as expected within the parameters set in 2024. However, some hanging questions regarding the future of library services will only be resolved as time goes on.

To date, the library has numerous pending grants to state institutions and private foundations. Networking grants build an additional pipeline with interest earned from municipal investment vehicles. Coupled with institutional revenue streams, the library has continued to grow its resources to grow the enterprise. This logic only accounts for relatively predictable inflation rates. The challenges facing development of the 2026 budget and beyond fall on making assumptions. At this moment in time, the library has no clear guidance for pricing in contractual expenses, primarily utilities, MCLS cost shares, and continued supplementation of telecom services from New York State. The Finance Committee and Board of Trustees will have some

work to do to make the best choices possible before August. Seymour has continually shown resilience in facing challenges, and the outcome faced now should not end any differently.