

## **Director's Report: Submitted by Patrick Pittman**

**May 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:** Building usage trends have fallen in line with expectations based on the last several years of data. The number of people overall represents the only major difference year-over-year. The library can expect a slow start in the beginning of the year, a busy spring, and a downturn around Memorial Day. This continues until the beginning of the Summer Reading Program in late-June. May 2025 aligned with previous years, in that building usage fell from April numbers. However, with 6,047 library visits, the library had more traffic than the 5,649 in May 2024. At 225 service hours, the library served 27 patrons per hour open. As noted, the trends remain the same. The numbers demonstrate a continual and consistent increase in foot traffic.

The trends do not match in total circulation. Seymour fell in circulation from the previous year. The drop in circulation reached almost all libraries in the county, with some exceptions. Based on the significant jumps in circulation over the entirety of 2024, and the beginning of 2025, it seems libraries had to correct at some point. The summer numbers will illustrate whether the decreased circulation reflects a wider trend or if May 2025 represents an anomaly.

The library had several programs tailored to specific audiences in May. Of note, the library's Homeschool Hour consistently hosts more than 30 participants. This month, the students played 18<sup>th</sup> century games and learned about early American entertainment. The library also hosted a CPR course, AARP Safe Driver Course, and held new hours for adult digital literacy. Seymour's programs continue to match its mission, to which the community responds by attending. As with each year, participation in the Summer Reading Program will drive the narrative for the remainder of the year.

The library secured grant funding through the Joseph Rippey Trust for \$5,000 to improve technology infrastructure. Lauren wrote a grant to the Harold Hacker Fund for \$1,300 to reinvest to the Homeschool Backpack Collection. Total grants in 2025 form a net total of \$31,531. If the Dillon Foundation granted \$7,000 to purchase materials factors in 2025, so the library has brought in a gross total of \$38,531. More grants sit in the pipeline awaiting a

decision. These funds will all go toward the benefit of additional library services, as requested by the public.

Community sentiment regarding the library illustrates a benchmark missing from the overall health evaluation of the library. The library has an excellent relationship with its municipalities, performers, partners, and collaborators. While surveys from story times show parents engaging positively with the library, it represents a fraction of the 20,000-service population. Some polarity will exist, with those who love the library and those who think of the library as an informational redundancy. The proportion of those polarized responses matters, but those who see services missing from the library, a need for adjusting hours, or overall accessibility could provide feedback to further develop Seymour's growth. The board may want to consider carefully crafting a more comprehensive survey for the future.

**Looking Ahead:** The computer upgrades did not turn out bad, all things considered. The library had a handful of machines that could upgrade to Windows 11 ahead of the October deadline to transition from Windows 10. Tri-Delta Services will complete the remainder of the work in the coming weeks. The main concern over the server appears well founded. The server requires replacement, though, the library has grant funding to cover the costs. The problem, as stated by the Tri-Delta sales rep, concerns price fluctuation. The rep cannot accurately quote the cost for server replacement due to the ongoing confusion regarding imports. The project will finish by the end of the year, but the price will remain unknown until the market reaches stability.

The continued grant application process will focus on a few institutional upgrades, with a focus on Children's services. Some of the infrastructure funds raised will go toward constructing a pavilion soon, although the timing of the project has yet to solidify. The DANSY grant has gone to New York State for review, and a decision should arrive with the funds in the next few months. The annual budget appears roughly on track, and the 2026 budget should balance with no issues. The concept of a three-legged stool will come up repeatedly. The municipal funds represent the seat, with fines/fees, grants/donations, and investment interest as the legs. The library requires all three (four) to adequately function.

**In Closing:** The Seymour Library has run as expected for the first half of 2025. Despite some minor fluctuations in operations performance and financials, 2025 has shown growth in all areas. These developments will come to a head in June, when the Summer Reading Program (SRP) begins. The operations for the year really do swing on the performance of the SRP, and the librarians have set the library up for success.

Otherwise, the library has some work to do in finalizing the budget for the August tri-municipal meeting, finishing the minimum technology updates to the library, and pressing ahead with additional revenue sources. Staffing changes in June will create some new day-to-day patterns, but no major issues should arise from the adjustments on the horizon. Seymour has all the pieces in place for another very successful year; it just requires good execution for a positive community response.