

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

**November 2025**

### **Director's Focus:**

Pending Grants; Future Construction; Staff Development

**Personnel:** See Personnel Committee report.

**Finance:** See Finance Committee report.

**Facilities:** See Facilities report.

**Policy:** See Policies Committee report.

**Library Function:** November 2025 saw the first dip in building usage year-over-year without an obvious explanation. Seymour saw something similar in July, but the bathroom construction made the reasoning plausible. 6,064 people came to the library in November with 203 total hours of service, which equates to roughly 29/30 patrons per hour (pph). November 2024 had 6,602 people in the building over 217 service hours, or a little more than 30 pph. The patrons per hour remained roughly equivalent, but the open hours differed distinctly from the prior year. This factor alone could explain the drop, but it does not appear to correlate with any pattern.

Notably, Seymour yearly building usage has surpassed the 2024 total of 72,545 at the writing of this report. The library remains on pace to build library usage by 5-7% annually. The library will have significant data to parse after the year ends. Feedback from the public, town and village governments, library staff, and the board seems to indicate the library likely turned the corner in 2024. This year marks the end of a Long-Range Plan which has largely met its objectives, broadly stabilizing the library. The start of a new Long-Range Plan in 2026 will map how the library will change and transform to continue meeting the needs of the public.

Increased utilization of grant funds to purchase electronic titles, as well as new and popular physical copies, flattened the decreases in 2025 circulation. The targeted use of grant funds to supplement the collection evened year-over-year circulations. The library staff remained cognizant of best use of funds when purchasing, as well as patron borrowing patterns, and adapted to the change. The end of the year should demonstrate an overall increase in total circulation, with electronic materials pulled out to examine the rate of use from 2022-2024 and 2025 alone. The spending in the next fiscal year may need adjustment, depending on the conclusions drawn from the data.

Tweens and teens took center stage for programming in November. The relaunch of a teen writing workshop drew 10 teens and tweens in to develop their creative writing skills. The age of this group skewed younger, toward middle school. However, older teens had their time to

shine during a volunteer service project. 9 teenagers made 100 hygiene kits for the Community Hygiene Bank in just over an hour. These teens likely needed service hours but enjoyed the work and engagement. The cultivation of library usage by teens, whether for programs, books, volunteering, or space, took a high priority as a directive to the librarians this year. The sense of accomplishment from Youth Services seeing it come to fruition creates significant fulfillment.

The financial health of the library stood on solid ground throughout the year. However, a bequest for a significant sum will increase the library's ability to begin looking at areas of critical improvement over the next several years. The board will have some calculation and decision making ahead to act in tandem with the new Long-Range Plan. However, the possibilities of what this board could accomplish have opened by a wide margin. The library has many options for internal improvements. The knowledge and experience of the board will help guide the use of funds in the most practical and beneficial ways.

In most other aspects, Seymour has started winding down its year. School breaks will bring people into the library, as individuals and families look to get out of the cold. Several upcoming events intersect interests from varying age groups. The events in the winter months generally attract a wide audience, as the sun sets early. The planning phases of 2026 have started, with a few new program offerings in development based on community feedback. All signs point to a strong start in the new year.

**Looking Ahead:** Some of the more notable events occurring in November and December consist of a writing group for children and teens. This program emphasizes literacy but also gears the library up for an author visit from Neal Shusterman. Shusterman wrote several bestselling books for children and young adults. Brockport Central School District has underwritten the honorarium for Shusterman but would like him to do an off-site community visit. The high school library chose Seymour for this site. Lift Bridge will come with Shusterman's books during a signing event.

The Monroe County Library System administration also assigned a Rochester Amerks player to come to the Seymour Library in December. The player will talk about their time on the ice, as well as read a story. Seymour has not had the opportunity to host an Amerks player in conjunction with the MCLS/Amerks program in 4 years. The social media post and e-mail blast received significant attention, and it will likely result in a large turnout. This, again, speaks to the reputation Seymour has built within MCLS over the last several years, something everyone from the staff to board should feel proud of in their respective contributions.

**In Closing:** November's data indicated an aggregate successful year by all metrics, even before December closes. While a down month for building usage, the total shows the library has a strong presence and fills many community needs across the board. The library's audience continues to expand and shift, while the librarians respond to feedback from the community. The library will need to evaluate the expiring Long-Range Plan but has achieved many of the key benchmarks. The new Long-Range Plan will set the tone for the coming year and shape the decision making for the next.