

Director's Report: Submitted by Patrick Pittman

May 2026

Director's Focus:

Pending Grants; Begin Summer Reading; 2027 Budget

Personnel: See Personnel Committee report.

Finance: See Finance Committee report.

Facilities: See Facilities report.

Policy: See Policies Committee report.

Library Function: Building usage moved closer to a four-year median in May 2026. The building saw 5,618 visitors in May 2026, as opposed to 6,047 in 2025. In May 2024, 5,649 patrons used the building. The board could view this as the plateau it anticipated coming sooner than expected. May typically represents one of the months with limited foot traffic. Year on year, the library has noted a decrease of about 1,000 individual library visits. This does represent a statistically significant drop. 31,670 in 2025 to 30,556 in 2026 shows about a 3.5% underutilization rate.

Keeping this in mind, the average library usage annually would fall in a range of 70,000 to 80,000 users. As noted in previous reports, the Summer Reading Program will dictate the overall yearly trajectory for the library's 2026 final numbers. Summer tends to follow the prior year's trends closer than in other months. Therefore, fewer summer reading participants would indicate a flattening trend. The library will continue monitoring this closely.

Total circulation has remained relatively flat, which offers some parallels with the door count. County-wide losses in circulation reached almost all libraries, with few exceptions. Seymour has weathered these variations reasonably, which the board can attribute to good collection curation, regular use of the library by high use borrowers, and pivoting to electronic materials. This strategy will continue until the numbers demonstrate it no longer has usefulness or viability, whether financial or by circulation.

A major point of emphasis for 2026, and directives to the librarians, included collaboration with outside organizations. The library has enough traction within the community's consciousness as a place to read, bring children, hold meetings, and study. Public perception matters a great deal. However, if the library can expand into previously untapped spaces, it widens the scope of patron contact. May's Homeschool Hour went to the Clarkson Historical Society to learn cursive, understand local history for America 250, and create an immersive experience. Many thanks to the Clarkson Historical Society for agreeing to the collaboration.

The library also offered programs about native birds and birding. A secondary objective this year includes taking a theme and running it throughout the year. The Flight Path Grant received in 2025 for the purposes of educating the public on local birds spurred enthusiasm from much of the staff. The grant allowed the creation of backpacks with bird identification and observation equipment for circulation, bird experts coming to do talks and demonstrations, as well as in-house bird programs. Each of these facets contributes to a larger goal of targeted literacy and lifelong learning for all. By these standards the programs had significant success.

Looking Ahead: Part of what will bump utilization numbers in the library includes school visits from Ginther Elementary in early June. Each visit will bring 32 school aged children and 6 teachers/assistants. Outreach to the Brockport Central School District has remained an integral part of generating enthusiasm for summer reading. This year represents the first in many that will bring district students to the library. This will increase participation, as well as strategic partnerships. Outreach at the upper grade levels will continue the same as years prior.

Grant funding cycles have started ending once again. Unfortunately, Seymour did not qualify for the large Community Project Funding during this cycle. On the other hand, a steady stream of recurring grants has come with some regularity. The expectation of returns on smaller grantors who have a working relationship with the library does not seem unwarranted at this point. All things considered, both large and small donations work to the betterment of the library. Funding announcements will take place between June and August.

In Closing: The broad library metrics have come closer to mirroring 2024, rather than 2025. On paper, this correction looks closer to how the library will set future guidance. However, with some changes to the Summer Reading Program this year, the library could see a jump in attendance numbers. Collaborative and cooperative relationships outside the library help draw more attention to library services. Developing minor shifts to the larger model will only help foster and refine library services.