

Director's Report: Submitted by Patrick Pittman

July 2026

Director's Focus:

Pending Grants; 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: Participation in the 2026 Summer Reading Program exceeded the library's expectations. In July 2026, the building welcomed 7,349 patrons over 230 service hours. By comparison, July 2025 brought 7,194 visitors over 234 service hours. These figures reflect a modest net increase in building use and point to a broader rise in demand for library services across multiple areas. As noted in previous reports, the Summer Reading Program would play a significant role in shaping this year's core metrics. The current evidence suggests that 2026 is positioned to end on another strong note.

The Summer Reading Program drew strong community participation. By the end of July, overall registration was comparable to 2025. One notable trend is the movement of participants from Children's programming into the Teen and Tween Summer Reading Program. As of July, Young Adult registrations totaled 121, up from 95 last year, while Children's registrations totaled 346, down from 414 last year. Although the overall difference is relatively small, the shift is meaningful. It reflects the progress the library has pursued over the past three years in strengthening teen participation and supports the library's mission of reaching all demographics within the service population. Library staff will need to continue sustaining this engagement, but the results are encouraging.

Program participation and attendance also contributed to these strong metrics. The number of programs designed specifically for teens and tweens increased from last year, generating a strong community response. Technology programs, role-playing programs such as Dungeons and Dragons, and STEAM activities drew the highest interest among tweens and teens. Traditional offerings, including Garden Club, Mad Scientists, and animal programs, continued to attract children. Adult education programs connected to America 250 also brought in a significant number of adults to learn from MCC professors. Overall, July was a well-rounded month for programs aligned with community interests.

The third core metric, circulation, increased by an additional 7% in July. Patrons borrowed more than 1,000 additional items in July 2026 than in July 2025. A large June 30th purchase of e-

materials for Libby contributed to this increase, as those circulations were recorded in July. At this point, the data suggests a clear relationship between circulation growth and investment in e-materials. The library will need to identify sustainable ways to continue purchasing through OverDrive to meet demand. Testing different purchasing approaches, including slower e-book and audiobook purchasing in some months followed by larger purchases in others, has produced useful results. Current and pending grants will help offset some costs associated with a more balanced purchasing model.

The Summer Reading Program represents the library's highest period of annual utilization. The outreach and community connections developed this year, along with those established in previous years, have strengthened the program as an important literacy and education initiative in the area. However, a small number of resident concerns have begun to emerge in different areas. These concerns do not currently show a clear pattern or consistent theme, but several have required escalation to management. Most have been resolved, though some remain unresolved. This shift may have multiple causes, and until more information becomes available, the library will continue to monitor and track these concerns.

Looking Ahead: Upcoming community festivals will expand the library's presence beyond the building. The Brockport Arts Festival and Clarkson Good Neighbor Day should provide positive exposure across the service population. Giving residents opportunities to meet library staff helps create a warm, welcoming environment and strengthens community relationships. Although these events require additional staff time, they offer a significant overall benefit.

The library plans to release the community survey on August 20th and keep it open for several weeks. The survey is intended to gather practical, actionable feedback from residents while the library finalizes the 2025 financial audit. Together, the survey results and audit findings should give the board and library leadership the information needed to make broad year-end decisions. Even with that information available, a cautious approach to capital spending and major changes may be the wisest course. Future system updates could be costly, and the library can only make decisions based on the information currently available.

In Closing: July demonstrated the continued strength of the library's role in the community. Summer Reading participation, building use, program attendance, and circulation all point to sustained demand for library services across age groups. Growth in teen engagement and e-material circulation is especially encouraging and reflects the impact of intentional programming and collection investment. As the library moves through the remainder of the year, staff will continue building on this momentum while monitoring resident concerns, gathering community feedback, and working with the board to develop strategic plans for service and infrastructure improvements.