

SCHENECTADY COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

The regular monthly meeting of the Schenectady County Public Library Trustees was held on Thursday, September 19, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. in the Swanker Boardroom at the Karen B. Johnson Central Library.

PRESENT: Madelyn Thorne, President; Brenda Schworm, Vice President; Angela Tatem, Secretary; Steve McCutcheon; Julie McDonnell; Jude McQueen; Bernice Rivera; Tina Chericoni Versaci

ABSENT AND EXCUSED: Justin Chaires David Fronk; Sharon Jordan; Carmel Patrick

STAFF: Charity Thorne, Executive Director; Beth DeMidio, Director of Operations; Devon Hedges, Assistant Library Director; Michelle Dannenhoffer-Cau, Public Services Manager; Doug Bixler, Support Services Manager; Jan Martin, Board Clerk

GUESTS: Rory Fluman, Schenectady County Manger; Haileab Samuel, Schenectady County Legislature-Chair, Education & Libraries; Michelle Ostrellich, Schenectady County Legislature-Vice Chair, Education & Libraries; Shirley DeBono, Vice President Friends of the Library

President Madelyn Thorne called the meeting to order at 6:00p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mark Olson-Asked what the justification was for withdrawing from JA. Is concerned about Interlibrary loan process.

S. A. Comenzo – Asked about the role of the Central Library.

Connie Nadas – Asked if books can still be taken out at Chestertown Library and returned to SCPL.

Patricia Gosda – Asked specifically about Interlibrary loan post August 31, 2024. She asked the library trustees to halt their withdrawal from JA.

David Gosda – Asked trustees to reverse their decision to withdraw from JA. Reported that the withdrawal was not included in the library's 2024 Long-Range Plan.

Stephanie Andersen – Homeschool mother. Reported that there is a big community of homeschoolers in the area that rely heavily on books from SCPL. She is concerned about the request process of getting books from other libraries. She noted that the previously held *Homeschool Hour* at the library is not currently being offered.

Maryanne Malecki – Asked whose idea it was and what prompted the change to withdraw from JA. There should have been a 6-month review process.

Diane Goldsmith – Interested in patron access and specifically the ILL process.

Sally Knutson – Reported that it is difficult to reserve new books. Wanted to know the benefit of withdrawing from JA.

Donna Goyette – Raised her children and her grandchildren with the help of Schenectady County Public Library. She spoke on behalf of her daughter, Michaela Williams who could not attend the meeting this evening. She wanted to recognize and thank Kaela Wallman, aka Miss Kaela for all that she has done as Youth Services Coordinator and specifically her evening story hour program at KBJ on Wednesday nights.

John Marshall – Wants clarification on whether SCPL will remain a member of MVLS.

Jerry Jasinski – Asked if withdrawing from JA will save the library money. Reported that he is unable to reserve books and have them sent to his local library.

Ralf Lenigk – Niskayuna patron. He heard a few weeks ago about the decision to withdraw from JA and was dismayed. Hoping for a chance to reverse the decision.

Elizabeth Walsh – Thanked the SCPL Trustees. She praised the Schenectady County Public Library and their nine branches. She has noticed staff and trustee changes and she handed out a written 2-page overview to the trustees that she prepared for tonight’s meeting. She asked trustees to consider an advisory group before moving forward with the migration of the new Polaris system.

Anne Skrebutenas – Former SCPL employee. Concerned about SCPL not being the Central Library of the Mohawk Valley Library System and the withdrawal of a substantial number of materials that were removed from the shelves as a result. Asking trustees to take a step back and listen to the public.

Christina Lubik – Homeschool mom with five children in different grades. Uses SCPL libraries and requests books frequently as it is such a benefit to herself and other homeschool parents. She would still like to be able to order books and have them picked up at her local library.

Chelsea Leader – Reported that after several attempts to request a specific book, she called SCPL and the item she wanted was sent to the Glenville Branch Library; she confirmed that books can still be sent to your local library. Disagrees with fine-free system.

Nancy Gifford – The public and staff were not consulted about the withdrawal from JA.

Margaret Littman – Longtime patron of SCPL. Is concerned about requesting books from other libraries without going through the interlibrary loan system. Asked if this was a cost-saving measure for County taxpayers.

Carol Collura – Asked how Schenectady County IT will adhere to the privacy policy regarding library users’ confidential records.

Daniel Siler – Worked in management at Chapel Hill Library in North Carolina. He has reviewed all of the material regarding the withdrawal from JA and fully supports the board in their decision.

Doug Bixler – Staff member but is speaking as a patron of SCPL. He supports the withdrawal of JA and feels the public has a lot of misinformation over the past several months.

CONSENT AGENDA

Moved by Tina Chericoni Versaci, seconded by Julie McDonnell. Motion passed.

PRESIDENT’S REPORT

Madelyn Thorne gave a shout out to Kaela Wallman and the United Way for bringing Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library to the Karen B. Johnson Library on Monday, September 16, 2024.

Joint Automation was given the 6-month notification that Schenectady County Public Library was going to withdraw from the system by the end of the year.

Charity Thorne, Madelyn Thorne and Eric Trahan, in a meeting facilitated by Haileab Samuel, met to discuss continued membership in the MVLS. An Ad Hoc Committee will be working actively to improve services.

DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Trustees reviewed the written report by Executive Director Charity Thorne.

Beth DeMidio reviewed and showed photos of current projects.

- Quaker Street – Replacement of siding; parking lot pavement
- KBJ – Renovation of breakroom and restrooms on the 2nd floor-tentative start date is September 30

Charity Thorne thanked Kaela Wallman for facilitating with the United Way to bring in Dolly Parton's Imagination Library. Huge benefit for early literacy.

Current and upcoming improvements:

- Key fobs for all locations to increase security measures
- SCAN EASY for all locations – FOL-sponsored – New scan/fax/print/copy option-more intuitive than what we offer now
- New website – launch date is in 6-8 weeks
- Library Calendar – up and running -online room booking for patrons
- Digital & IT Improvements

Charity Thorne addressed Public Comments.

- The feature for reciprocal holds were disabled by JA four months early
- SCPL will have a new catalog – WorldCat – which will allow patrons to request items from other libraries
- 3 types of ILL – Reciprocal Hold through MVLS; LINX Catalog through CDLC; OCLC-Requests come by mail
- 2024-Trustees decide to make changes: Bring in own IT; Improve services by having our own catalog
- Fees to JA-\$137,000; New Catalog/License for Polaris: \$50,000
- No cost to use Schenectady County IT Department
- New catalog – scheduled to be live in December 2024
- Updates on JA withdrawal – Posted on Website/Always tried to relay current information

Gabriel Benitz, Chief Information Officer of Schenectady County IT Department reported that the IT Department's main goal is to provide 24/7 Cyber-Security Protection.

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY

The fall book sale will be held on Saturday, October 5 from 10-4 and Sunday, October 6 from 12-3. Still looking for volunteers.

No report from Building, Finance, Planning or Policy Committees.

NEW BUSINESS – None.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, November 14, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. in the Swanker Boardroom at the Karen B. Johnson Library.