



Schenectady County Public Library Board of Trustees Meeting
January 22, 2026 - 6:00 pm
Swanker Room – Hon. Karen B. Johnson Library

1. Call to Order, Roll Call
2. Public Comment
3. Consent Agenda
 - a. Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes for November 20, 2025
 - b. 2026 Board Meeting Dates
4. Election of Officers
5. Strategic Planning Update – Library Strategies
6. President's Report
7. Director's Report
8. Friends of the Library Report
9. Committee Reports
 - a) Finance Committee
 - b) Planning Committee
 - c) Policy Committee
10. New Business
11. Adjournment

The next regular Schenectady County Public Library Board of Trustees meeting is scheduled to be held on February 26, 2026 at 6:00 pm in the Swanker Room at the Hon. Karen B. Johnson Library.

The regular monthly meeting of the Schenectady County Public Library Board of Trustees was held on Thursday, November 20, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. in the Swanker Boardroom at the Karen B. Johnson Central Library.

PRESENT: Madelyn Thorne, President; Brenda Schworm, Vice-President; Steve McCutcheon, Treasurer; Tina Chericoni Versaci, Secretary; Timothy Burke; Justin Chaires; David Fronk; Julie McDonnell; Carmel Patrick

ABSENT AND EXCUSED: Jude McQueen; Bernice Rivera

STAFF: Charity Thorne, Executive Director; Beth DeMidio, Director of Operations; Devon Hedges, Assistant Director; Janice Martin, Board Clerk

GUESTS: Jessica McDonald, Vice President, Friends of the Library; Catiy Alloway, Library Strategies (via zoom)

Madelyn Thorne called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

No one spoke during privilege of the floor.

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion to approve by Justin Chaires, seconded by Tim Burke. One abstention from Julie McDonnell. Motion passed.

FAMILY PLACE LIBRARY

Librarian Kaela Wallman gave a detailed presentation on Family Place Library. The Karen B. Johnson Library was officially named a Family Place Library on October 20, 2025.

PROPOSED 2026 MEETING DATES

The 2026 trustee meeting dates were included in the board packet.

APPOINTMENT OF NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The committee will consist of Tim Burke, Steve McCutcheon and Justin Chaires.

STRATEGIC PLANNING UPDATE

Cathi Alloway from Library Strategies gave an update on the strategic plan, highlighting the recent community survey.

MOHAWK VALLEY LIBRARY SYSTEM OVERDRIVE

There was a lengthy discussion on whether SCPL will opt in on MVLS Overdrive for 2026. No decision was made by the board this evening and President Thorne will follow up with Executive Director Thorne to reply to MVLS. A decision needs to be made by the end of the year.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The trustees received a donation from the Putnam Family Foundation. Tina Chericoni Versaci moved to accept the donation, seconded by Justin Chaires. Motion passed.

Carmel Patrick will not be seeking another term after eleven years on the board, in which she served four as President. The board thanked Carmel for all her hard work and dedication over the years.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Trustees reviewed the written report by Executive Director Charity Thorne. She included that as part of our strategic planning process, our website will soon be showing statistical information about Schenectady County. In October, the story map was reviewed and finalized and will be live on the website soon.

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY

The author event, An Evening with Elizabeth Strout, at Proctor's GE Theatre was well received.

New memberships are on the rise, and the membership committee continues to send out renewals letters to current members.

Volunteers are needed for Family Literacy Night, which will be held on Tuesday, December 9, 2025.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

No report.

PLANNING COMMITTEE

No report.

POLICY COMMITTEE

No report.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:33 p.m. on a motion by Tina Cherinon Versaci, seconded by Justin Chaires.

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, January 22, 2026 at 6:00 pm in the Swanker Boardroom at the Karen B. Johnson Library.

LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES
PROPOSED MEETING DATES FOR 2026

Thursday, January 22, 2026

Thursday, February 26, 2026

Thursday, March 26, 2026

Thursday, April 23, 2026

Thursday, May 28, 2026

Thursday, June 25, 2026

No meeting in July

Thursday, August 27, 2026

Thursday, September 24, 2026

Thursday, October 22, 2026

Thursday, November 19, 2026 (3rd Thursday instead of 4th due to Thanksgiving)

No meeting in December

Executive Director Report to the Board

January 22, 2026

SCPL's strategic planning project continued to be the focus during the months of November and December. With the community survey being live through mid-December, staff at all levels of the organization continued to promote the survey to widely to patrons, community partners and through outreach. According to Library Strategies, SCPL's community survey received a record number of responses among clients they've worked with; survey responses exceeded 3,000 submissions. I am thankful to our team for working so hard to get the word out and encourage participation. We also launched our staff strategic planning survey during this time and received 79 responses, which is an excellent response rate from 81 total part-time, full-time and substitute employees. Other activities during this time included:

- A review of schedules library-wide to continue our progress towards the goal of adequate and sustainable staffing through at least three people scheduled for every open hour to the greatest extent possible with our current staffing complement. I have been working with Director of Operations Beth DeMidio for a couple months to consider each location's staffing and schedules and determine how we might close existing schedule gaps where only two people were previously scheduled at a time, primarily through slight adjustments to schedule rotations to more evenly spread staff across operating hours and maximizing the weekly hours worked by part-time staff within Civil Service limits. We've come a long way from the two-person staffing model that was in use at branches just a few years ago. The addition of embedded adult and youth services librarians to each branch team helps with that, along with making sure the branches benefit from the regular presence of someone to provide reference, readers' advisory, collection maintenance and programming.
- Attending the Capital Region Chamber of Commerce Non-Profit Executive Dialogue meetings. This is my third year and it has been so valuable to hear from other Executive Directors working in the area (many in Schenectady specifically) and share resources and strategies that benefit others. This year the two different sessions of this group have held a couple joint sessions already so we are all getting to benefit from broader perspectives than our usual small groups.
- Thanks to participation in the Non-Profit Executive Dialogue group, we've recently formed a partnership with some other community organizations including New Choices and Mohawk Opportunities, to offer winter warm-ups where we provided refreshments including warm beverages and all have representatives available to share information

about the services we provide. The first session of this series exceeded attendance expectations with 26 attendees.

- Training to use Volody, the County's new paperless contract management system. We are looking forward to this more efficient process for departments to route contracts to the appropriate parties for review and approval.

November 2025

Public Services

Hon. Karen B. Johnson Main Library

Youth Services

Early Literacy programming often takes the programming prize for sessions and attendance with happy families reliably coming to weekly programs with their favorite SCPL staff. Three steady offerings (Toddler Time, Family Story Time, and Baby Lap Time) account for nearly half of all program attendance and a third of program offerings in November at the Main Library. Among other library tour and outreach events, a group of over 60 first graders from Pleasant Valley Elementary came to explore the new picture book section. Top programs among Teens & Tweens included the Teen Writing Club and crafts at Teens Unplugged.



Pleasant Valley 1st Graders tour the Main Library Children's Area

Adult Services

Popular programming offered for adults in November included presentations from the Mohawk-Hudson Land Conservancy, a film on classic children's author Beatrix Potter, and a landscape collage workshop. Additional speakers included Philip Morris, CEO of Proctors, the Director of the Giammatti Library at the Baseball Hall of Fame, and Glenville Author David Dietrusza. 73 adults came out to 17 programs at the Main Library in November in total.

Circulation

With the arrival of colder weather in November, the Circulation Department saw an increased need for essential services among our patrons. Working in close collaboration with Adult Services, Circulation staff leveraged our connection to the Schenectady County HUB to ensure vulnerable individuals were effectively guided toward the housing, shelter, and social services they required. This proactive cooperation ensured that patrons seeking warmth and refuge were met with compassion and immediate resource accessibility.

November provided a valuable opportunity for professional development and strategic networking within our Interlibrary Loan (ILL) operations. Lynn visited the Buffalo Public Library's Interlibrary Loan and Outreach Department to tour their facility and observe their workflows. As the current number two provider of ILLs in New York State—with a strategic goal of becoming number one—Buffalo offers a high standard of operational efficiency. This visit allowed for a productive exchange of logistics, "tips and tricks," and best practices. The deepening partnership with Buffalo's ILL team continues to be fruitful, offering insights that will help refine our own processes.

Circulation staff have also launched a new collaborative initiative crossing circulation and information services teams to utilize HQ Collections for maintenance and improvement. Under the guidance of the librarians, staff focused on the High-Circulation Condition Review (internally referred to as the "grubby list"), targeting items that have circulated over 50 times. Staff pulled these popular titles to assess their physical condition, performing repairs or re-ordering replacements where necessary to ensure our collection remains attractive and durable. Through this focused effort, the staff successfully completed the review and maintenance of the entire Non-Fiction and Biography collections by month's end.

Phyllis Bornt Branch Library and Literacy Center

Thank you to library assistant Christy Guldenzopf, who presented two programs at the branch this month to help continue the crafting programs for the adults in the community while Adult Services Librarian Ali is out on leave.

Mont Pleasant Branch Library

Thank you to library clerk Kayley Ringrose, who has been covering programs for our adult services librarian to continue the momentum that has been built. Kayley presented two popular crafting programs.

Rotterdam Branch Library

Librarian Marietta Carr from the Schenectady County Historical Society came to the Rotterdam branch to present on how to properly care for important documents and photographs to

preserve memories, stories, and information that would be lost forever if damaged or thrown away.

For the monthly CrAFTERwork class at Rotterdam, patrons made paper-plate woven bowls, which are small decorative bowls that are made by cutting a paper plate into tabs and weaving yarn around it. This project was a fun way to learn the basics of circular weaving.

During a Book-a-Librarian session this month, Library Assistant Jody Monroe introduced a patron to templates on Microsoft Word that she could access to create, save, and then update her resume as needed in the future.

Youth Services librarian Stephanie Olson conducted many outreach visits this month, including a visit to Jefferson Elementary's Literacy Night to spread awareness about the SCPL community survey. She also welcomed Schalmont Middle School's 6th Grade class to the Rotterdam branch library to receive library cards, check out our selection of books and materials, and learn about our databases as well as how to access Hoopla and Libby. Stephanie ran a 30-minute presentation on our digital resources, with the students being able to follow along with the Chromebooks they have from school. It was a great experience; there were 164 students who came over 3 separate visits! Our circulation team at Rotterdam also did a fabulous job creating cards in advance of the visits and helping the students check out their materials efficiently.

Capitalizing on the buzz in the air over the final season of the streaming series *Stranger Things*, Stephanie set up a Stranger Things Mystery Room for young patrons to participate in on the Saturday after Thanksgiving. This was Stephanie's fourth time running the themed mystery room, and the patrons who came absolutely loved it!

Quaker Street Branch Library

In partnership with Beta Community Programs, based in Saratoga Springs, Youth Services librarian Stephanie Olson hosted *Snacks around the World*. Beta Community Programs offers engaging after-school programs that include STEAM (Science Technology, Engineering, Art, Mathematics) infused projects. In this program, budding chefs created scrumptious snacks (Lebanese Hummus and Apple Pie Spring Rolls) while picking up some nifty kitchen skills and learning about nutrition science.

Niskayuna Branch Library

The Niskayuna branch hosted a tea party for health and wellness. A chill chaser chai was created and refreshments were served. A power-point presentation explained the benefits of herbal

teas. Quaker Street clerk Michelle Yager led a crochet class in making useful scrubbies. The Everything Fiber Arts group met biweekly and continues to grow. Relax and Rejuvenate Yoga wrapped up a successful six-week series this month.

Preschoolers and their caregivers were able to gather together for a final DINOvember program. Creating playdoh fossils with dinosaur bones, dinosaur sticker scenes, and building dinosaur dens kept our kids busy. The big draw for the littles definitely came from their chance to feed Bob-the hungry T-Rex dinosaur toy with a variety of traditional and unusual Thanksgiving dishes.

The Children's section at the NIS branch is also in the process of a major overhaul making for a more cohesive flow of children's books and audio-visual items.

Woodlawn Branch Library

The Crafting Nest at the Woodlawn branch met several times in November. The Woodlawn Book Club read and discussed *Twenty- One Days* by Anne Perry. A Bingo event was enjoyed and several winners received cookies and crackers.

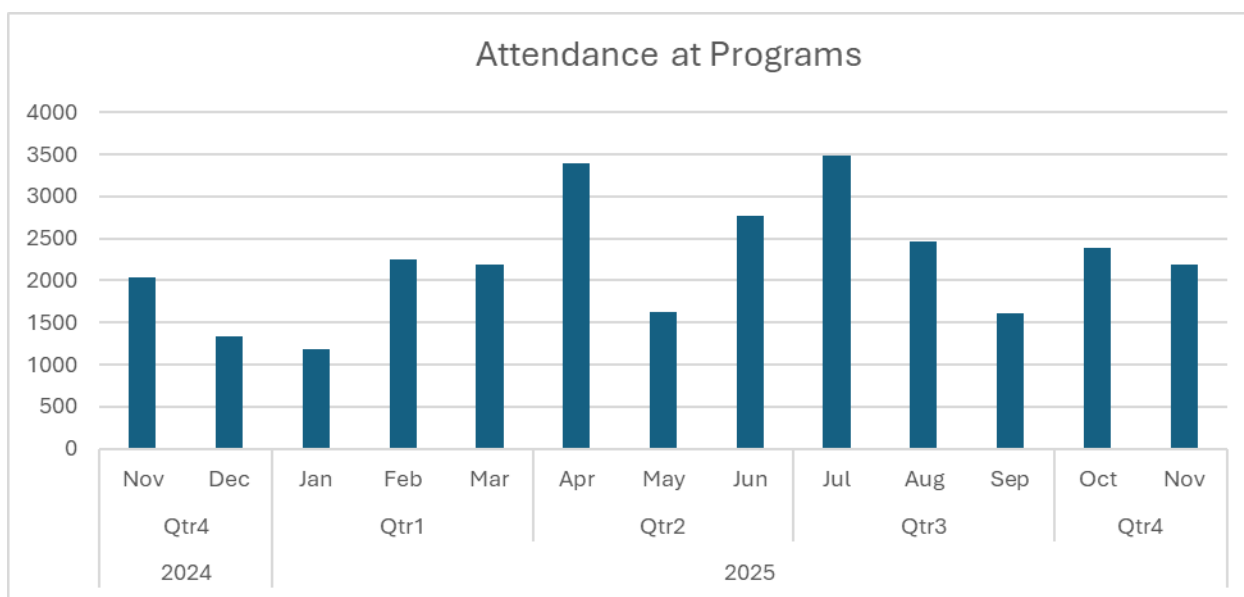
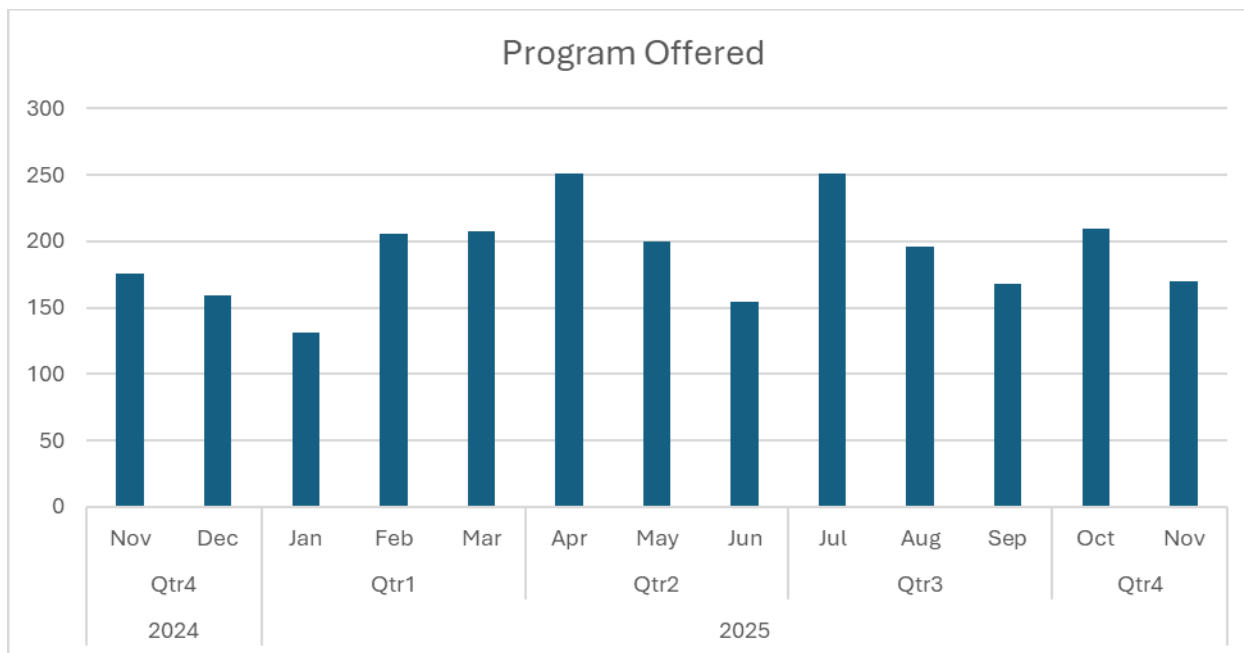
November at Woodlawn was all about the kids! With continued bi-weekly programs for our babies, toddlers, and pre-schoolers through the ever-entertaining Miss Lisa, children worked on regulating their feelings, as well as sharing of the musical instruments and scarves. Fifteen children were able to bring home a fun Thanksgiving and Dinosaur themed packet that included puzzles, coloring sheets, mad-libs & jokes, as well as a Thanksgiving Day Parade Bingo game for the whole family!

Scotia Branch Library

Patrons at Scotia really come out for Family Storytime program sessions, with an average attendance of 34 people over the four sessions offered in November. MiSci programs featuring STEAM learning activities were also popular; 11 people came out to learn with "Rosie Revere, Engineer". Adult programming highlights included a holiday garland craft and the Spotlight Cinema Series. 16 program sessions were offered at Scotia over November with almost 156 people attending.

Glenville Branch Library

Family Storytime and Vinyasa Yoga were among the popular programs at Glenville in November. Also of note, 14 patrons came to enjoy the "Glass Gardens" arts program featured a local artist teaching about using polished glass and ceramics to embellish garden plantings. Nearly 100 people came out to enjoy over a dozen programs offered. The collections have also been updated to feature popular videos separated by format and on-going collection management projects have helped accommodate lots of brand-new titles coming in the new year.



11/2025 CIRCULATION	CURRENT	LAST YEAR	CHANGE	FYTD	LAST FYTD	CHANGE2
Bornt	933	543	72%	12,397	8,157	52%
Main Library	15,814	11,556	37%	220,620	175,342	26%
E-Resource	14,304	16,123	-11%	176,115	179,207	-2%
Glenville	3,912	2,844	38%	51,251	51,266	0%
Mont Pleasant	1,029	1,040	-1%	14,163	14,063	1%
Niskayuna	8,923	5,462	63%	112,104	103,345	8%
Quaker Street	1,631	917	78%	18,878	16,991	11%
Rotterdam	6,091	3,813	60%	71,424	65,082	10%
Scotia	2,920	1,707	71%	36,418	32,109	13%
Woodlawn	1,099	960	14%	16,045	12,434	29%

Support Services

A little more than a dozen RFID pads were purchased and will be installed in January when they arrive. These pads have updated technology that helps eliminate faulty or unintentional scans.

A fleet of iPads have been set up and released for Children’s programming classes.

Two new library team members were onboarded, clerk Marissa Thorburn and library assistant Snow Smith.

Credit card sales through self-checks were down slightly from November 2024 compared to November 2025. A dip in sales at the new public printing, coping and faxing kiosks occurred during the month of November, likely due to the number of holidays.

Month	Total Sales
January	\$2,140.00
February	\$2,715.00
March	\$3,854.30
April	\$4,168.75
May	\$3,503.90
June	\$3,526.50
July	\$4,195.65
August	\$4,915.40
September	\$4,559.95
October	\$4,834.00
November	\$3,501.10

December 2025

Public Services

Hon. Karen B. Johnson Main Library

Youth Services

Weekly early literacy programming continued to be a hit in December, with regular attendees enjoying offerings from our Youth Services team. Top programs among Teens & Tweens included the Teen Writing Club, Electric Reads, and 43 kids of all ages enjoyed making their own Labubu Paper Dolls!

Adult Services

Programming offered for adults in December included a holiday ribbon wreath craft project and classic films starring Judy Garland and Bing Crosby. 53 adults came out to 19 programs at the Main Library in December.

Circulation

In December, the Circulation Department proactively addressed the needs of our community during the coldest months by hosting the inaugural "Winter Warm-Up" program in the McChesney Room. This initiative transformed the space into a safe haven, offering warm refreshments and a comfortable environment for vulnerable patrons. We were joined by four community organizations that set up on-site to provide immediate connections to housing assistance, food support, and shelter options. The event was highly successful, with over 20 patrons utilizing the space not only to get warm but to directly access services aimed at improving their living situations.

This month also marked the beginning of our partnership with the SJTA youth program. The department has welcomed three youth associates who are gaining valuable "first-time" job experience, each contributing 10 hours per week. These associates assist Circulation staff with various logistical projects, allowing them to build professional skills while providing essential support to the department.

Continuing the collaborative "Grubby Review" begun in November, staff—under the guidance of librarians—shifted focus this month to the Audiobook and Large Type collections. The addition of the SJTA youth workers proved particularly valuable in this effort; they were tasked with carefully inspecting audiobook discs and utilizing the disc polisher to restore older, "well-loved" items. This attention to detail ensures that these popular materials are in excellent working order for the next borrower. Items that could not be restored were pulled for replacement, maintaining the high quality of our audiovisual and accessible print collections.

Rotterdam Branch Library

In December, the Rotterdam branch offered a variety of festive programs designed to help the community prepare for and anticipate the holiday season.

Early in the month, Library Assistant Jody Monroe prepared 15 Holiday Gnome Grab-and-Go bags for our tweens and teens. All 15 went out the first day we offered them!

On Saturday, December 6, Jody held a Kids CrAFTERnoon program, where children made Christmas countdown paper chains as either snowmen or reindeer. The kids enjoyed it, and their parents seemed to like having these little holiday keepsakes.

On December 8, Jody held the first of a multi-session Granny Hexagon Cardigan program for a large group of adults, teens, and tweens.



On Saturday, December 13, Jody held the first meeting of the Hook and Zen Crochet Club. Their first project is a fully customizable top-down sweater that everyone was excited about. Patrons received 2 skeins of yarn to get them started. The club will continue to meet on the 2nd Saturday of every month, choosing new projects once current ones are completed.

Fiber Therapy is so popular with its “members” that it continues to bring in between 3 and 5 patrons EVERY Saturday, though it’s only scheduled on our calendar to meet every other Saturday!

Rotterdam’s December CrAFTERwork project was DIY Frosted Luminary Jars. Patrons coated mason jars in “snow” (Epsom salt) and decorated the tops with twine or ribbon, fir tree cuttings, and in some cases, a bit of glitter. The 12 participants each added their own brand of pizzazz to it.



Chloe Whittaker of Embroider with Chloe came back to the Rotterdam branch to lead a DIY Felt Ornament class, where participants learned how to decorate felt ornaments using basic embroidery techniques. Using pre-cut felt shapes of gingerbread men, trees and presents, patrons were able to embroider to add decorative details and patterns to the felt, creating special Christmas ornaments.

The Rotterdam Non-fiction Book Club read *Eager: The Surprising, Secret Life of Beavers and Why They Matter* by Ben Goldfarb, an engaging look at how beavers' engineering can help address modern environmental challenges like drought, floods, wildfire, and climate change. This book offers a wealth of information, though at times the level of detail can be more extensive than necessary, which may feel wordy for readers looking for a faster-moving narrative.

Youth Services librarian Stephanie ran a Baby Story Time and Playgroup for the first time at Rotterdam, after hearing from patrons and other branch staff that programs for babies were highly desired. She plans to offer the program one Friday a month at the branch going forward.

One library patron reported to our service desk staff how much she appreciated that the library has a play area and toys for the children, so they have a warm place to play in the winter months!

Quaker Street Branch Library

Quaker Street programs focused on creativity and seasonal traditions, including holiday crafts and gift-making workshops in the month of December.

CrAFTERwork at the Quaker Street branch saw patrons putting together Snowman Hot Cocoa Jars. A lovely holiday gift idea using three small jars, each containing the components needed to make a delicious hot chocolate - (cocoa mix, marshmallows, and peppermint candies) - participants decorated the jars to look like snowmen. Patrons loved this festive craft project, as it was simple to construct yet fun to make.



Youth Services librarian Stephanie Olson welcomed back Beta Community Programs this month, who taught kids how to make some easy holiday snacks. We had 13 participants, and all the families loved it!

Niskayuna Branch Library

The Niskayuna branch was decorated for the season and promoted its holiday collections. The Everything Fiber Arts group met to celebrate this festive time of year with refreshments for 17 people. The Adult collections look accessible and attractive as our Adult Services librarian Dori Trela did some collection maintenance in the Fiction and Video collections, making space for newer materials!

Youth Services librarian Amy Relyea and branch manager Michelle Dannenhoffer-Cau worked on a plan to re-organize and shift the children's collections to allow for more shelving and display space for New & Popular items. This also allowed Picture Book City neighborhoods to spread out a bit with the extra free shelves. Librarian Relyea hopes to have the full shift completed sometime in January.

Woodlawn Branch Library

The Woodlawn branch was also decorated for the winter and displayed its seasonal collections. The Crafting Nest met several times in December, and progress was made on scarves and quilts. Bingo games brought several people to the branch. They enjoyed the games, fellowship, and refreshments. The Woodlawn Book Group read and discussed various books by Agatha Christie.

The month of December may be frantic for people trying to get all their shopping and events in, but at the library, it's a calming time.

Youth Services Librarian Amy Relyea used this slower time to wrap up the year's ordering, to plan for a Toddler Story Time program beginning in February, and to consider alternative programming options to bring local children into the library after school.

Scotia Branch Library

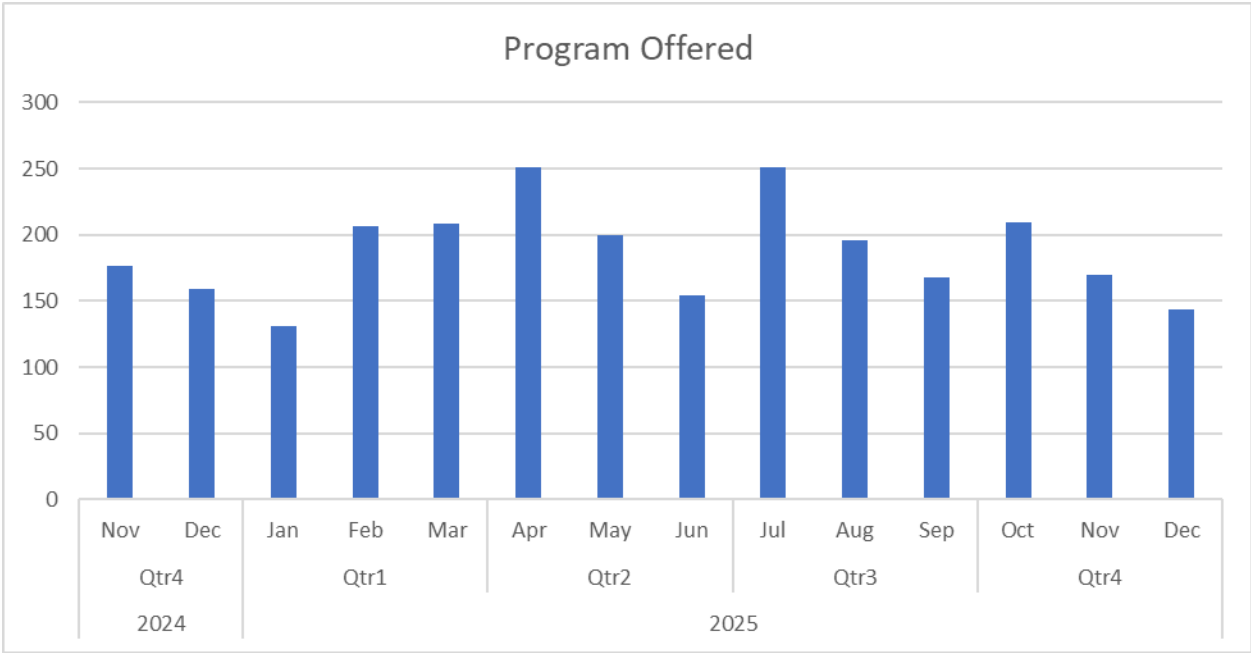
Patrons at Scotia really come out for Family Storytime program sessions, with an average attendance of 28 people at the three sessions in December. Crafts for kids including the Art of Ropemaking and a Teen Crochet Club attracted a few creative types. Movie programming and the annual Holiday on the Avenue festivities in Scotia also saw a lot of friendly faces connecting with adult programming. 12 program sessions were offered at Scotia in December with almost 218 people attending.

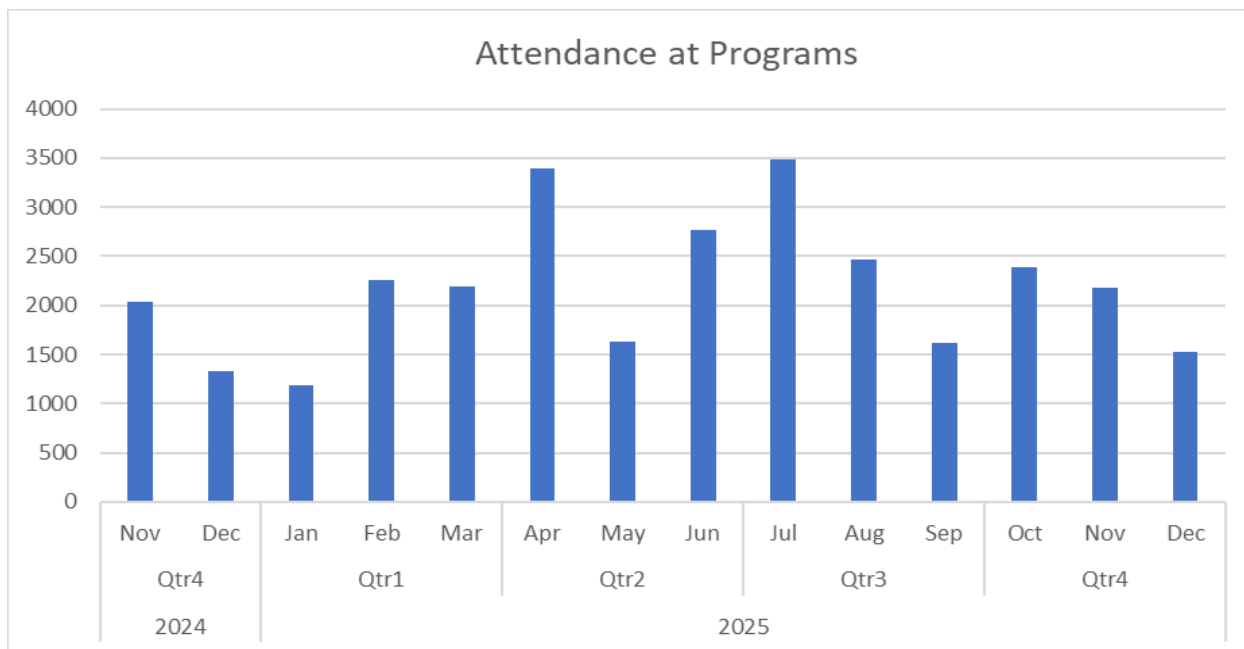
Glenville Branch Library

Slow Flow Yoga and Family Storytime were among the popular programs at Glenville in December. Forty people came out to enjoy eleven programs offered. The Glenville Branch also held a first event with Fresh Table Community Pantry where the public is welcomed in to stock up on groceries.



Volunteers set up the Fresh Table Pop-Up Community Pantry at Glenville Branch Library





12/2025 CIRCULATION	CURRENT	LAST YEAR	CHANGE	FYTD	LAST FYTD	CHANGE2
Bornt	806	790	2%	13,203	8,947	48%
Main Library	15,018	16,850	-11%	235,638	192,192	23%
E-Resource	14,303	16,230	-12%	190,418	195,437	-3%
Glenville	3,513	2,846	23%	54,764	54,112	1%
Mont Pleasant	1,098	1,234	-11%	15,261	15,297	0%
Niskayuna	9,064	7,753	17%	121,168	111,098	9%
Quaker Street	1,431	1,267	13%	20,309	18,258	11%
Rotterdam	5,830	4,533	29%	77,254	69,615	11%
Scotia	2,560	2,595	-1%	38,978	34,704	12%
Woodlawn	1,089	1,118	-3%	17,134	13,552	26%

Support Services

Added hardware equipment came in for us to be able to offer a second public printer at KBJ, in order to separate the print release station from the copy/scan/fax station, reducing bottlenecks as a high volume of patrons use these in demand services. We are hoping to have this addition in place by the end of January 2026.

Security Camera system company, Verkada, provided our IT and Leadership Teams with an online demo of their product and how it could be immensely valuable to our library systems for safety and security of our patrons and staff. Our new door count system equipment has been delivered and we are working with Facilities/IT to get power/network wiring in place so we can

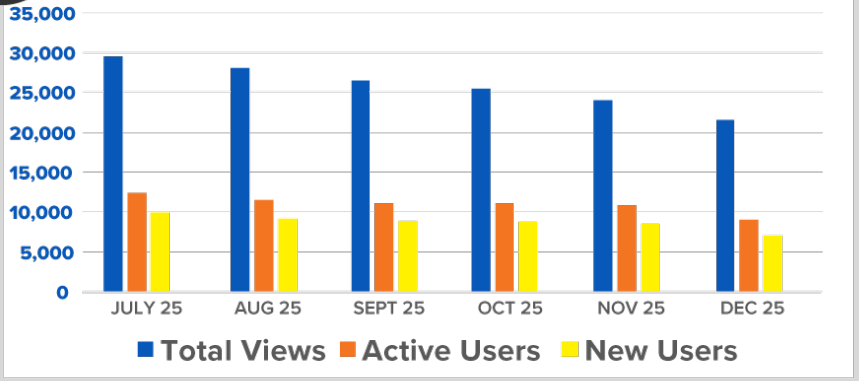
begin the install; we look forward to having online access to this building traffic data over having to manually check a break-beam counter daily at each location and record the number.

Credit card sales through self-checks were up \$137.54 from December 2024 to December 2025. Sales at the new public printing, coping and faxing kiosks began trending upwards in December.

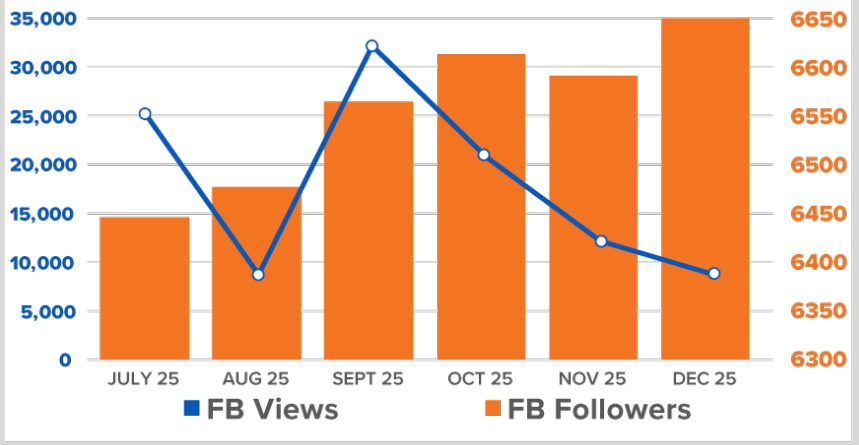
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September	\$4,559.95
October	\$4,834.00
November	\$3,501.10
December	\$3,838.25
Total 2025 Sales	\$45,752.80



SCPL.org 6-Month Metrics



6-Month Metrics



6-Month Metrics

