



Schenectady County Public Library Board of Trustees Meeting
June 26, 2025 - 6:00 pm
Swanker Room - Karen B Johnson Library

1. Call to Order, Roll Call
2. Public Comment
3. Consent Agenda
 - a. Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes for May 22, 2025
 - b. Board of Trustee Planning Committee Meeting Minutes for May 29, 2025
 - c. Board of Trustee Policy Committee Meeting Minutes for June 11, 2025
4. Approval of Expenditures for Volunteer Appreciation Picnic
5. Approval of Policy 1.3 Public Comment Policy
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 July 24, 2025 at 6:00 pm in the Swanker Room at the Karen B. Johnson Library.

SCHENECTADY COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

The regular monthly meeting of the Schenectady County Public Library Board of Trustees was held on Thursday, May 22, 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; Carmel Patrick, Treasurer; David Fronk; Steve McCutcheon; Julie McDonnell; Jude McQueen; Bernice Rivera

ABSENT AND EXCUSED: Justin Chaires; Angela Tatem, Tina Chericoni Versaci

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

GUESTS: Rory Fluman, Schenectady County Manager; Michelle Ostrelich, Schenectady County Legislature, Vice-Chair Education & Libraries; Jessica McDonald, Vice-President, Friends of SCPL

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

Patricia Gosda/Niskayuna – Expressed frustration with the hoopla budget implemented in May and receiving interlibrary loan books

Nancy Gifford/Scotia – She asked for clear information from the library to the public regarding the recent change in Hoopla.

Betsy Napier – She voiced her concerns about the recent unavailability of physical books and digital content from Hoopla.

CONSENT AGENDA

Moved by Carmel Patrick, seconded by Judy McQueen. Motion passed.

APPROVAL OF POLICY 1.3 PUBLIC COMMENT POLICY – Tabled.

APPROVAL OF POLICY 5.4 CHILD SAFETY POLICY

Moved by David Fronk, seconded by Steve McCutcheon. Motion passed.

APPROVAL OF POLICY 5.8.1 COMPUTER AND INTERNET USE POLICY

Moved by Brenda Schworm, seconded by David Fronk. Motion passed.

APPROVAL OF STRATEGIC PLANNING CONSULTANT CONTRACT

Discussion ensued and one correction was discussed and will be changed.

1. Page Two – Timeline. Changed from June 2024 to June 2025.

Motion by Carmel Patrick, seconded by Steve McCutcheon.

Before the vote, discussion was raised about adding language to Scope of Service, #9, Focus Groups to specify the focus groups consist of members of the community.

Amended motion was passed.

APPROVAL OF 2026 DRAFT OPERATING BUDGET

Motion by Carmel Patrick, seconded by Brenda Schworm. Discussion ensued. Motion passed.

APPROVAL OF 2024 NEW YORK STATE ANNUAL REPORT

Motion by Carmel Patrick, seconded by Jude McQueen. Motion passed.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Madelyn Thorne continues to serve on the governance committee with MVLS.

She reported that Steve McCutcheon has been appointed as Director of Veteran Services for Schenectady County.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Charity Thorne went over the recent Hoopla changes described in the written report.

Devon Hedges shared the Main Library now has a Period Pantry in partnership with the MoonCatcher Project and coordinated by Librarian Diana Hurlburt. a

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY

Jessica McDonald reported that the spring book sale netted over \$14,500. The membership team will be working to promote the Friends of the Library near the Whitney Book Corner during the Greenmarket on June 22, 2025.

FINANCE COMMITTEE – None.

PLANNING COMMITTEE – Members will confirm a date after this evening's meeting.

POLICY COMMITTEE

Public Comment Policy was tabled. Other three policies were approved.

NEW BUSINESS – None.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:55 p.m. on a motion by Jude McQueen, seconded by David Fronk.

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, June 26, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. in the Swanker Boardroom at the Karen B. Johnson Library.



Schenectady County Public Library Board of Trustees

Planning Committee Meeting

May 29, 2025

Minutes

Present: Carmel Patrick, Committee Chair; Brenda Schworm, Bernice Rivera

Absent: Angelia Tatem

Ex-Officio: Madelyn Thorne

Staff: Charity Thorne, Executive Director

The committee discussed potential candidates for the strategic planning steering committee based on the makeup recommendations from the consultant. Trustees identified key stakeholders and community leaders to recruit for participation and agreed to follow up with their contacts to gauge willingness and availability to serve on the steering committee.



Schenectady County Public Library Board of Trustees
Policy Committee Meeting
June 11, 2025
Minutes

Present: David Fronk, Committee Chair; Jude McQueen

Ex-Officio: Madelyn Thorne

Absent: Justin Chaires

Staff: Charity Thorne, Executive Director

The committee reviewed further suggestions from other trustees for the draft public comment policy. Proposed language was added to the draft for consideration by the full Board at the next regular meeting. Chair Fronk motioned to recommend the public comment policy to the Board for approval, McQueen seconded. All in favor.

Trustees reviewed the current Board Code of Ethics and Conflict of Interest Policy and discussed potential revisions. Further examples will be reviewed and a draft prepared for discussion at the next committee meeting.

Trustees discussed the Plan of Service policy, which consists solely of a list of the elements in the New York State Public Library format for public library system (such as Mohawk Valley Library System) plans of service.

Trustees reviewed and discussed the Whistleblower policy and how it aligns with the County's fraud, waste and abuse procedures. Further research will be conducted on the context and application of this policy as it stands currently.

1.3 Public Comment Policy

The Schenectady County Public Library Board of Trustees values the voices of our community. We welcome and encourage public input as part of our ongoing commitment to transparency, equity, and responsive public service. This policy establishes procedures to ensure public comments are welcomed and addressed in an orderly and respectful manner. This policy applies to all regular and special meetings.

1. A public comment period shall be held at the beginning of each regular Board of Trustees meeting.
2. Sign-in procedure: Individuals wishing to speak must sign in prior to the meeting providing their name, address and topic they wish to discuss. Sign-in sheet will be available at least 15 minutes prior to the meeting.
3. Speaking order: Speakers will be called in the order in which they signed up.
4. Time allocation: Each speaker will be allocated (3) minutes to present their comments. The board reserves the right to adjust the time limit based on the number of speakers and the meeting's agenda.
5. Groups are encouraged to designate a single representative to speak on their behalf.
6. Public comment may be sent via email up until noon the day of the meeting to board@scpl.org and the person shall state it is intended to be public comment for the meeting. Written comments, including anonymous ones, are welcomed and thoughtfully reviewed. However, anonymity can limit our ability to ask follow up questions or engage in deeper dialogue. We encourage those comfortable doing so to include their contact information to help us better understand and respond to their concerns.
7. Board Response: Generally public comment is to hear the community's thoughts; therefore, trustees and staff may not respond to public comments during the public comment period except in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the President. If necessary, responses will be provided in writing or discussed at a future meeting.

Guidelines for Conduct

1. Speakers must address all comments to the Board as a whole, not to individual members, staff or the audience.
2. Comments must be relevant to library-related issues.
3. Disruptive, obscene or threatening remarks will not be tolerated and individuals engaging in such behavior will be asked to leave.
4. Personal attacks against library staff or other members of the public are prohibited.
5. The President of the Board may intervene if comments are excessively repetitive, off topic or violate an established decorum.

Executive Director Report to the Board

June 26, 2025

May is a busy month for any public library, with everyone gearing up for summer reading program - the Super Bowl of public libraries. This year SCPL is shaking things up a little by trying out a bingo card approach to incorporate more ways to engage with library programs and services and reading related activities instead of only tracking time spent reading. SCPL has used bingo cards for summer reading in the past and we'll be looking to continuously improve our summer reading program going forward to grow participation and help combat summer slide. All four age groups (ages 0-5, grades K-5, grades 6-12 and adults 19+) can either register in person at any library location and track their bingo process on a paper card, or register online using ReadSquared, the online application provided by the New York State Library. For each bingo achieved up to a maximum of five, kids of all ages can earn a small prize and be entered to win a prize basket if they complete all five bingos. Adults get a prize drawing entry for each bingo completed up to five; and an extra sixth entry if they complete all five. Prizes adults might win include a Kindle ereader or a pair of tickets to select Proctor's shows. Finalizing program details, configuring ReadSquared and developing staff procedures were a key task in May. Other key May activities included:

Attending the Mohawk Valley Library System Spring Symposium, which focused on succession planning in the form of documenting institutional knowledge. This is something SCPL has been working towards with creating and updating written procedures and cross-training staff so we have built-in redundancy and flexibility, so it was a topic of especial interest.

Several interviews for vacant part-time clerk positions at various branch locations; while we received a good number of applications and strong candidates, we are exploring posting further afield than within the library and county sites next time we are looking to recruit to attract a wider and more diverse candidate pool.

Demonstrations of four software and hardware solutions for door counters, the devices that track traffic into and out of our buildings. There are a number of more advanced options with sophisticated tracking, statistics, portals and reporting available and we are looking to upgrade to have better data on library usage going forward. County IT has been invaluable with this research and exploration and has also been assisting our efforts to upgrade public and staff printers library-wide to a universal model for consistent staff and patron experience and standardized toner supply.

A meeting with some key leadership at Schenectady City School District to discuss collaboration and partnership opportunities in the future as we look to grow our community engagement and outreach.

SCPL Board Policy and Planning Committee meetings to continue our policy review and facilitate the recruitment and formation of a strategic planning steering committee.

Our final CollectionHQ training on the topics of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion tools, Scheduling, Outdated Stock and Long Overdue reports and Top Charts. Staff are now beginning implementation with the Collection Check report first, which identifies items that have not circulated in 4 or more years to search for and determine whether they are in fact still on our shelves, and if they are, the status of their condition and current demand for them.

And last but certainly not least, the preparation of SCPL's 2026 operating budget request to the County which was presented to the Board for approval in May.

Public Services

Hon. Karen B. Johnson Main Library

Electric City Comic Con planning continued with selection of the artists and vendors that will appear that day. This year's ECCC will expand its focus a little bit to include new technologies that have started to become more consumer friendly, such as 3D Printing for Cosplay and Figurines. We hope that all our Trustees can join us on Saturday, July 12th from 10am-4pm!

Circulation

The KBJ Circulation Team experienced a productive May, focusing on preparations for the upcoming summer months. A notable achievement includes being awarded an MVLS mini-grant for Outreach, which will support the launch of a new initiative: "Pages of Connection." Pages of Connection is designed to enhance library accessibility for visually impaired and homebound seniors within Schenectady County. This project will utilize the awarded mini-grant funds to procure 75 specialized transport bags. These bags will facilitate the secure and convenient delivery of large type books and audiobooks through the USPS Books for the Blind program. In partnership with the Schenectady County Office of the Aging, who will assist in identifying eligible participants, this program is projected to be fully operational within 90 days. Pages of Connection represents a significant step forward in providing direct access to literary resources for individuals who may otherwise face barriers, thereby fostering greater engagement and connection within our community.

We registered a total of 432 new patrons in May, with 222 of these registrations occurring at the KBJ branch. Additionally, I'd like to provide an addendum to correct a minor typographical error in last month's Board of Trustees (BOT) packet with regard to patron registration statistics. The figures have been thoroughly verified, and the corrected numbers are presented in the chart below.

	January	February	March	April	May	Grand Total
KBJ Main Library	209	264	249	209	220	1151
Rotterdam Branch	76	72	60	51	36	295
Niskayuna Branch	62	54	45	53	55	269
Glenville Branch	53	62	56	45	35	251
Scotia Branch	58	22	39	49	39	207
Mont Pleasant Branch	29	16	19	42	15	121
Quaker Street Branch	21	12	27	25	11	96
Bornt Branch	15	11	33	18	11	88
Woodlawn Branch	18	15	13	13	10	69
Grand Total	541	528	541	505	432	2547

Niskayuna

At the Niskayuna Branch, significant improvements were made to the meeting room as part of a month-long renovation project that began on May 5, 2025. The space was closed to the public during construction, which included installing sound attenuation panels on the ceiling and portions of the walls, replacing the carpeting, adding new wood flooring in select areas, and installing new window shades. The meeting room reopened on May 30 and is expected to make a strong impression on patrons with its refreshed and modern look.

Just prior to the renovation, an origami workshop led by one of our patrons was held on May 3. Participants enjoyed a creative afternoon learning how to fold paper into boats, rabbits, and boxes. Despite the temporary closure of the meeting room, the Niskayuna Book Club was still able to meet in the library and held a discussion on *The Sequel* by Jean Korelitz. The Everything Fiber Arts group, which typically meets at Niskayuna, temporarily relocated to a local temple for the month and plans to return to the library in June.

Woodlawn

A new weekly craft group called *The Crafting Nest* was launched at the Woodlawn Branch in May. Four participants attended the most recent session on May 28, and there is hope that the group will continue to grow in popularity. The Woodlawn Book Club also met in May to discuss *Vera Wong's Unsolicited Advice for Murderers* by Jesse Q. Sutanto. The group thoroughly enjoyed the book and engaged in a lively discussion.

In addition to programming, staff provided specialized reference assistance this month. A retired librarian working with NYS-ELA grading tests requested glossaries in Greek to support her work. Staff successfully located and printed both middle and high school-level glossaries. The patron was thrilled with the support, noting that the resources would help her study Greek and complete her grading more efficiently.

Rotterdam

At the Rotterdam branch, Library Assistant Jody launched a new program on May 1st called *Fiber Therapy*. Held every other Thursday from 3:00 to 4:00 p.m., the program helps

participants learn and practice crochet while engaging in shared creative projects. In addition to this drop-in program, Jody also began a five-part series called *Learning to Crochet*, which has been a great success. Participants have responded enthusiastically, with program surveys reflecting their satisfaction: "I loved this learn to crochet class. I'm amazed at how much I learned," one participant wrote. Others praised the clarity of instruction and the easy-to-follow format. Final projects will be completed next month, and photos will be taken to showcase the participants' work.

Rotterdam's Non-fiction Book Club held its third meeting on May 21st, with growing attendance each month: five participants in March, seven in April, and eight in May. This month's discussion focused on *The Boys in the Boat* by Daniel James Brown, and the group's enthusiasm continues to build.

This month was quieter on the technology front, with a noticeable increase in patrons who are now independently handling their printing and copying needs after learning the new systems and equipment. However, there were a few standout interactions. One patron came in to scan and resize a photo for printing multiple copies on one page. During the process, there was an internet service outage. The patron was incredibly understanding, and arrangements were made with Central Library to complete the project. When she returned to pick up the photo, she brought handmade treat bags for staff as a thank-you gesture for the extra effort.

The following day, another patron brought in a very old, red-tinted photo and asked for a copy. Using the TBS photo-editing system, we worked together to adjust and restore the photo's quality. The patron was pleased with the results and mentioned plans to bring in more old photos for restoration. It's encouraging to see more patrons using the added functionality of the TBS system.

In addition to ongoing programs and services, Rotterdam hosted a unique event in partnership with the Schoharie River Center: a *Trash Parade Workshop* on May 3rd. This event served as preparation for the First Annual Trash Parade in downtown Schenectady, which took place on May 16th. The parade, themed around "water," encouraged participants to repurpose recyclable materials into costumes, puppets, masks, and banners. Open to all ages, this creative community event promoted environmental awareness through hands-on learning and celebration.



Outdoors, the Rotterdam library grounds received attention as well. The lawn was mowed, dead plants were cut back, and new flowers were received and planted, enhancing the building's curb appeal and welcoming atmosphere.

Quaker Street Branch

Several patrons received one-on-one help setting up Hoopla and Libby on their tablets and Kindles. One memorable case involved a patron with a Kindle Paperwhite, which does not support third-party apps like Libby. Staff were able to download Libby on her Fire tablet, walk her through borrowing a book in Kindle format, link it to her Amazon account, and sync it to the Paperwhite. The patron was grateful, and step-by-step photos of the process were provided to use as a guide at home.

A two-part Spanish language program was introduced for children in grades 2–6 and their families. Taught by Mrs. Ivonne from Duanesburg Elementary School, the classes focused on conversational Spanish with a thematic focus on colors, gardening, birds, and insects. While designed to complement each other, attendance at both sessions was not required. The program offered a fun and educational opportunity for families to engage with language learning in a relaxed environment.

Support Services

A brand-new AWE computer was purchased and installed in our pre-school section of our Children's Room at KBJ. This unit replaced a unit that was unrepairable.

Beth and Charity conducted several interviews for part-time clerk positions across all nine locations. Candidates had a variety of experience and interviews went well resulting in several offers of employment being made.

Renovation of the Niskayuna Branch program room took place in May. The installation of the new art gallery system will be done in June which will complete the project. Enhancements to the space included new flooring, refinished walls, the addition of sound attenuation and new blinds. Feedback from the community has been extremely positive.



The elevator at Karen B. Johnson Central Library is on track to be completed in July 2025.

The Soil and Water Conservation District offers the opportunity to order plants and flowers for pick up in May. Many of the branches have volunteer gardeners who work with library staff to acquire the items and plant at the branch, helping keep our landscaping in great shape. Planting was done in May.

Annual safety walk-throughs were conducted earlier this year. All eight branch visits were completed with Karen B. Johnson being scheduled within the coming months. The walk-throughs were successful except for minor items that can be addressed through the work order process with the facilities department.

MONTH	TYPE	VEWS	ORGANIC REACH	AD REACH	INTERACTIONS	FOLLOWERS
November-24	FACEBOOK	70,375	20,252	4,259	817	5,672
November-24	INSTAGRAM	2,672	483	98	80	1,611
December-24	FACEBOOK	36,919	6,526	3,235	384	5,672
December-24	INSTAGRAM	1,596	292	9	46	1,611
January-25	FACEBOOK	43,252	11,906	672	541	6,301
January-25	INSTAGRAM	2,097	690	216	128	1,621
February-25	FACEBOOK	20,717	6,940	1,452	906	6,305
February-25	INSTAGRAM	2,227	497	9	64	1,626
March-25	FACEBOOK	14,327	5,578	895	158	6,312
March-25	INSTAGRAM	1,566	417	5	50	1,641
April-25	FACEBOOK	58,379	30,091	13,211	601	6,356
April-25	INSTAGRAM	4,492	2,316	1,458	179	1,657
May-25	FACEBOOK	20,128	13,080	0	378	6,370
May-25	INSTAGRAM	1,429	402	0	36	1,668

