

The regular monthly meeting of the Schenectady County Public Library Board of Trustees was held on Thursday, September 16, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. in the Swanker Boardroom at the Karen B. Johnson Central Library.

PRESENT: Brenda Schworm, Vice-President; Tim Burke; Justin Chaires (left at 6:04 pm); Steve McCutcheon; Jude McQueen; Carmel Patrick; Bernice Rivera; Tina Chericoni Versaci

ABSENT AND EXCUSED: Madelyn Thorne; David Fronk; Julie McDonnell

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

GUESTS: Diane Wilkinson, President, Friends of the Library; Michelle Ostrelich, Schenectady County Legislature, Vice-Chair, Education and Libraries

Vice President Brenda Schworm called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

OATH OF OFFICE

Tina Chericoni Versaci administered the oath of office to newly appointed trustee, Tim Burke.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Christine Witkowski/Scotia - She is looking forward to the roll-out of the library survey, part of the long-range planning process being conducted by Library Strategies. She is confident that the survey will include a diverse population and will be shared online, in paper form and available in different languages through translation services. This is based on the New York State minimum standards dictated by the State Education Department and Library Strategies Consultants.

David Gosda/Niskayuna – He reported that the Joint Automation Project and the Upper Hudson Library System are both installing the Vega Catalog System and it should be available by the end of the year and suggested with all public libraries in the capital district on the same catalog system perhaps JA could expand to include SCPL and UHLS.

Nancy Gifford/Scotia – October 1, 2025, will be the 50th anniversary of when she was hired at SCPL. Regarding the budget process: in the past, the board of trustees would meet with staff to ask their input; community members would also attend legislative meetings. She asked that the staff and public be included in the 2026 budget process. She mentioned that there has been no update on the Strategic Plan since the July board meeting.

CONSENT AGENDA

Moved by Bernice Rivera, seconded by Tina Chericoni Versaci. Motion passed.

ELECTION OF SCPL BOARD SECRETARY

Brenda Schworm asked for a vote to approve Tina Chericoni Versaci as Secretary of the Library Board of Trustees. The board approved with one abstention from Tina Chericoni Versaci.

ELECTION OF SCPL BOARD TREASURER

Brenda Schworm asked for a vote to approve Steve McCutcheon as Treasurer of the Library Board of Trustees. The board approved with one abstention from Steve McCutcheon.

RESOLUTION 1 -ELECTION OF MOHAWK VALLEY LIBRARY SYSTEM TRUSTEES

Discussion ensued, and Resolution 1 was amended to add Part A & Part B.

RESOLUTION 1 (Part A) – TO AUTHORIZE A LIBRARY TRUSTEE AND AN ALTERNATE TO VOTE AT THE MVLS MEETING TO BE HELD ON SEPTEMBER 25, 2025. Motion to approve Resolution 1 (Part A) – to authorize a library trustee and an alternate to vote at the MVLS meeting to be held on September 25, 2025, by Tina Chericoni Versaci, seconded by Carmel Patrick. Motion passed.

RESOLUTION 1 (Part B) – ELECTION OF MOHAWK VALLEY LIBRARY SYSTEM TRUSTEES

Be it resolved that Madelyn Thorne is designated to cast the votes for Mohawk Valley Library System trustees at the meeting to be held on September 25, 2025, with Brenda Schworm designated as an alternate in the event Madelyn Thorne is unexpectedly unable to attend. Motion to approve Resolution 1 (Part B) – Election of Mohawk Valley Library System Trustees by Carmel Patrick, seconded by Tina Chericoni Versaci. Motion passed.

RESOLUTION 2 – APPROVAL OF EXPENDITURES

Motion by Carmel Patrick, seconded by Steve McCutcheon. Motion passed.

MOHAWK VALLEY LIBRARY SYSTEM – FREE DIRECT ACCESS PLAN 2022 (2024 REVISIONS)

Motion to approve the MVLS – Free Direct Access Plan 2022 (2024 Revisions) by Tina Chericoni Versaci, seconded by Carmel Patrick. Discussion ensued and there was a failed vote, 4 Ayes, 2 Nays. After lengthy discussion again, there was another vote by roll call. Motion by Tina Chericoni Versaci, seconded by Carmel Patrick. Burke: Yes; McCutcheon: Yes; McQueen: Yes; Patrick: Yes; Rivera: Yes; Schworm: Yes; Versaci: Yes. Motion passed.

DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Trustees reviewed the written report by Executive Director Charity Thorne.

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY

Diane Wilkins reported.

- After Charity’s report to the Friends Board of Directors in August, a huge chunk of time was spent talking about the strategic planning process and how the Friends can support through the surveys.
- The Fall book sale will be held on September 27 and 28, 2025. Some volunteer slots are still available. During the last half hour of the book sale, we offer free books to teachers, principals and principals’ designees. Diane sent an email to all principals in Schenectady County.
- Membership has been increasing. We now have 419 new members.
- New bookstore manager is Crystal Hoyt. She will be managing both stores.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Steve McCutcheon reported.

- Resolution 2 – approved
- Finance Committee meeting on 9/9/25 discussions: security updates/upgrades, high cost of digital media.

PLANNING COMMITTEE – No report.

POLICY COMMITTEE – No report.

NEW BUSINESS

Carmel Patrick reported that the City of Schenectady has moved forward with the Poet Laureate. He works at Union College, and his name is Adonis Richards.

The meeting adjourned at 6:52 p.m.

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, October 23, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. in the Swanker Boardroom at the Karen B. Johnson Library.