



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 January 22, 2026
4. Scotia Branch Library
5. Strategic Plan – 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 March 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, January 22, 2026, 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; David Fronk; Julie McDonnell; Jude McQueen

ABSENT AND EXCUSED: Justin Chaires; Bernice Rivera

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

GUESTS: Michelle Ostrelich, Schenectady County Legislature, Vice-Chair Education & Libraries; Cathi Alloway, Library Strategies (via zoom)

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

Nancy Gifford and Wade Abbott spoke during privilege of the floor.

CONSENT AGENDA

A motion to approve the consent agenda was made by Julie McDonnell, seconded by Tina Chericoni Versaci. Motion passed.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The nominating committee presented the slate of officers for 2026:

President: Brenda Schworm

Vice President: Timothy Burke

Treasurer: Steven McCutcheon

Secretary: Tina Chericoni Versaci

As there were no nominations from the floor, a motion to approve the slate of officers was made by Julie McDonnell, seconded by Jude McQueen. Motion passed.

President Brenda Schworm presided over the rest of the meeting.

STRATEGIC PLANNING UPDATE

Cathi Alloway from Library Strategies reported that they are writing up the data from the staff in-service day sessions, focus groups, interviews, and community survey. Over 3,000 community survey responses were received. Library Strategies will present a draft strategic plan for approval at the February board meeting.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Trustees reviewed the written report by Executive Director Charity Thorne. Some highlights:

- Our libraries have been receiving new furniture as part of the plan for library upgrades. The board approved funds in 2025.
- New door counters for branches are being installed with the help of County IT and County Facilities.

- With our Polaris upgrade all locations can now print spine labels through Direct Print.
- Standardized signs for the Glenville, Woodlawn and Quaker Street branches are being installed.
- Thank you to Schenectady County Office of Facilities and IT Department for their support during all our recent projects.

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY

- Winter Book Sale will be held on Saturday, January 31 from 10 am-4 pm and Sunday, February 1 from 11 am-2 pm. A “Friends Members Only” preview will be held on Thursday, January 29 at 5:30 pm.

FINANCE COMMITTEE – No report.

PLANNING COMMITTEE – No report.

POLICY COMMITTEE – No report.

NEW BUSINESS – None

The meeting was adjourned at 6:48 p.m. on a motion by Tina Chericoni Versaci, seconded by David Fronk.

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, February 26, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. in the Swanker Boardroom at the Karen B. Johnson Library.

Executive Director Report to the Board

February 26, 2026

Strategic planning was still the top focus during the month of January as I worked with our consultants at Library Strategies to design goals around the themes emerging from all the staff, board and community engagement initiatives of the process. Additionally we also coordinated to arrange a fourth focus group to be conducted virtually in February to engage representatives of area organizations serving populations the Library might not be currently reaching and probe their needs and ways to make our services responsive and accessible to them. There are many exciting opportunities for SCPL ahead in the implementation of this new plan and I look forward to feedback from the Board once Library Strategies presents the draft plan for consideration. Other activities during this time included:

- Wrapping up our library-wide schedules review project and implementation of new templates and default shifts in Snap Schedule 365. The changes we've made in Snap Schedule allow schedulers to more easily see at a glance daily staffing levels as well as reducing manual work to manage schedules by shift location and as turnover or location assignments change, as well as providing a reference point for the six week schedule rotations. The new templates with new shifts went into effect the week of January 18.
- Meeting with Friends of the Library Board President Diane Wilkinson on January 7 to discuss the Library's upcoming annual funding request for 2026 to the Friends and winter book sale logistics, among other topics. Beth, Devon and I talked with Diane about providing a brief Powerpoint presentation at the Friends of the Library Board meeting on January 27 outlining some highlights of our requested budget lines. We also talked about the Friends utilizing the space to the right just inside the Library for the youth materials portion of their winter book sale to provide more room and reduce overcrowding in the McChesney Room.
- Developing a breakdown of our increased collections budget line for 2026 by collection in order to give each selector their annual spending amount and program the funds in Polaris. Managers were asked to provide requested amounts from the selectors on their team in early December so allocations could be made at the start of the new year. With the increase from \$658,500 available in 2025 to \$750,000 in 2026, we have ample room to continue to develop our collections as well as work to pilot and expand new and requested formats such as Wonderbooks and video games.
- Preparing to recruit for some vacancies as well as the newly added Public Services Manager positions with the 2026 budget. We worked with County Human Resources and Civil Service to create job postings for the new positions as well as for part-time

clerks and to get an updated certified list for part-time library assistants so we can begin to canvas, collection applications, and schedule interviews.

- Responding to the heating pipes that burst due to the prolonged cold in late January and damaged portions of the Scotia Branch Library and collections. I'm very grateful to County Facilities and the branch staff along with Beth DeMidio who assisted in quickly removing the collections from the impacted areas to prevent further damage and begin next steps to restore the branch and prepare for reopening.

Public Services

Hon. Karen B. Johnson Main Library



Youth Services

In addition to the reliable crowds that come for Story Time and other Early Literacy programming, there was also a steady stream of young patrons who learned of and sometimes came back to participate in the search for Orwell the Owl, a large, loveable plush owl that was hidden in the Youth Services section by the last patron who found him. For the keen-eyed folks that found him, hiding Orwell for the next seeker was a great reward! The Launch Party for 2025's Pen to Paper magazine of

writing and illustrations by members of our Teen & Tween Writing Club had dozens of young adult library patrons clamoring to see their work in print. This 7th annual edition is packed with original poetry, prose, art, and design from patrons compiled with the help of many of our excellent Youth Services librarians, including those that work at KBJ, Rotterdam, Quaker Street, Scotia, and Glenville.



Adult Services

Our Friends of the Library started their highly appreciated Beat the Snow Concert Series to the McChesney Room with three dates this month with more to come through April. The REELS film series, including separate events for classic and contemporary cinema caught the interest of more than 50 patrons over a few screenings. A popular Financial Literacy Boot Camp series was also popular with some patrons coming for all three presentations.

Circulation

In January, the Circulation Department proactively addressed the needs of our community during the coldest months by hosting the "Winter Warm-Up" program in the McChesney Room. This initiative transformed the space into a 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.

This month was a continuation 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 labor support to the department.

Continuing the collaborative "Grubby Review" begun in November, staff—under the guidance of Collection Librarians—shifted focus this month to the DVD, Graphic Novel and CD collections. Audiobook and Large Type collections have been completed. All Audiobooks listed as "grubby" were inspected for scratches and cleaned. 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 AV and accessible print collections. The SJTA youth were key to this project.

The staff at the KBJ branch recently piloted the latest Bibliotheca software update to resolve any technical issues prior to a system-wide rollout. This update optimizes workflow by automatically managing security settings during the checkout and check-in processes, eliminating the need for staff to manually adjust configurations between patrons. Additionally, the Direct Print feature

was successfully tested by KBJ staff and has now been implemented across all branches. Finally, to support our sustainability efforts and reduce paper waste, the e-receipt prompt has been reactivated for patrons who have not previously opted into digital receipts.

Phyllis Bornt Branch Library and Literacy Center

Youth Services Librarian Kaela Wallman attended and presented at the MVLS/UHLS joint summer reading planning workshop. Kaela has been focused on collection management by shifting juvenile picture books, media and other items to optimize usage.

Mont Pleasant Branch Library

Kaela worked on similar collections management projects at Mont Pleasant to the ones she completed at Bornt. Thank you to Chelsea DeCicco from the KBJ Main Library team for providing ILL training at the monthly branch meeting.

Rotterdam Branch Library

Mary Carrier from MVLS came to the Rotterdam branch to hold a presentation on *Everyday uses of AI*. Mary discussed how artificial intelligence is used in an easy, approachable way, focusing on how people already use AI in their daily lives by helping with tasks like writing, organizing schedules, finding information, and making daily routines easier.

The Non-fiction Rotterdam Book Club met on the third Wednesday of the month to discuss *Inflamed: Deep Medicine and the Anatomy of Injustice* by Rupa Marya and Raj Patel. Overall, it was an engaging and thought-provoking read.

518 Publishing, a women-owned business based in Albany, presented a three-part workshop at the Rotterdam Branch. The series focused on writing, editing, and publishing, with each session building on the last. Patrons learned practical strategies for drafting, revising, and preparing their work for publication. The first session was well attended, with 16 participants joining the workshop.

Our Library Assistant, Jody Monroe, continues to lead hands-on crochet classes drawing new participants at the Rotterdam branch, including a how-to-crochet workshop and a group crochet club, giving attendees the opportunity to learn new techniques, practice skills, and receive one-on-one assistance.

Rotterdam Imagination Stations story time continues to be popular and our Baby Playgroup this month also reached many families, with 23 people in attendance. January 10 also concluded Music Makers for the winter and that has always been beloved by some of our patrons.

The Rotterdam branch continues to see lots of activity at our TBS station. One patron exclaimed, "I love mobile printing! You need to advertise more! The library has so many great services."

The branch hosted yet another successful American Red Cross Blood Drive with 17 participants, exceeding their goal by one!

Quaker Street Branch Library

Despite the bitter cold at the Quaker Street branch, a few lively souls braved the weather to enjoy crafting projects during Wednesday's Cozy Crafters hour.

Quaker Street's story time has attracted some new families and our attendance numbers since returning in late January have been higher than they were before the holidays last year. LA Jody Monroe pitched in at the branch to offer a session of Imagination Stations to 12 attendees. The kids were excited to make their own polar bears to go with the polar bear stories read to them.

Niskayuna Branch Library

An astounding twenty-four people attended the Everything Fiber Arts meetings in January at the Niskayuna branch library. The Niskayuna Book Club read and discussed *Unfinished Love Story* by Doris Kearns Goodwin, invoking memories for one member of growing up near Plains, Georgia and Jimmy Carter's family.

The month of January brought back our regularly scheduled Youth Services weekly programs. The Build Zone program continues to pull in new families to build alongside our builders that have been attending weekly for the past year or two.

Preschool Full STEAM Ahead has also returned to new little patrons participating in a special story time offered at the Niskayuna branch. Our littles, with the assistance of their caregivers, listen to a story read aloud followed by activities that have components of some or all of our STEAM categories of science, technology, engineering, art, and/or math. For our first program back, children worked on math skills: matching, color recognition, and beginning counting concepts using buttons and matching mittens. The next week brought a funny tale about building snowmen, and a follow-up activity working on our science skills of measuring and mixing baking soda and conditioner to make indoor snow, which children then decorated in their own style of snowmen, snow fairies, and even a snow hippo!

Under the guidance of Youth Services Librarian Amy Relyea, the circulation staff completed a major shift and reorganization of the Children's section. The different collections' new shelving locations provide caregivers with a better flow of materials based on ages and reading levels.

Woodlawn Branch Library

The Woodlawn branch library is currently enjoying a six-week Yoga for Health and Fitness class. The group enjoys the instructor and her exercises.

Woodlawn also hosted a Craft Exchange on January 15th. We received many boxes of donated items. They were sorted and displayed: yarn, wool, cloth, crochet hooks, knitting needles, and craft supplies. Over a dozen people brought supplies to exchange. Two middle schoolers found yarn and asked for knitting lessons. We gave them yarn and a volunteer gave them a lesson in knitting for over an hour. The following week the teens returned and showed us the headband and scarf they knitted.

Instructor Evelyn Pachucki helped a group create beautiful Valentine's Day cards.

The Woodlawn Book Club met in person and on Zoom to discuss *The Boys in the Boat* by Daniel James Brown.

A new year brings new projects to the library. Our circulation staff at the Woodlawn Branch is dedicated to providing our youngest patrons with fun activities. Coloring sheets and small, easy crafts are available for kids to create and take home to hang on their refrigerators for their caregivers to enjoy. Many times, however, our littles love to color and create art pieces to decorate the patron-side of the circulation desk.

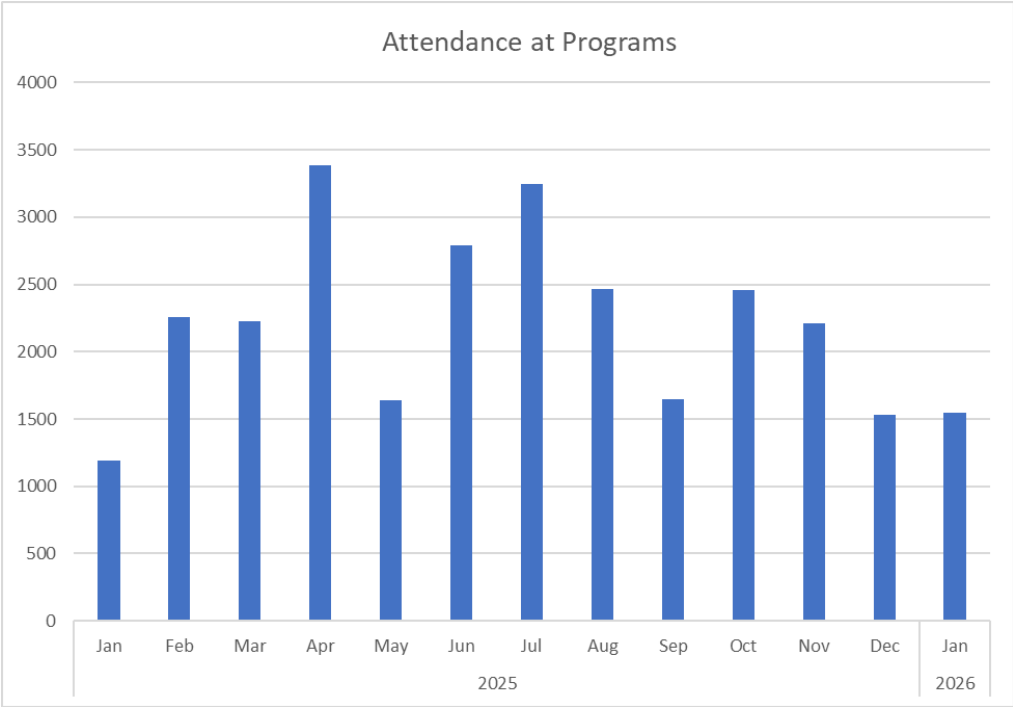
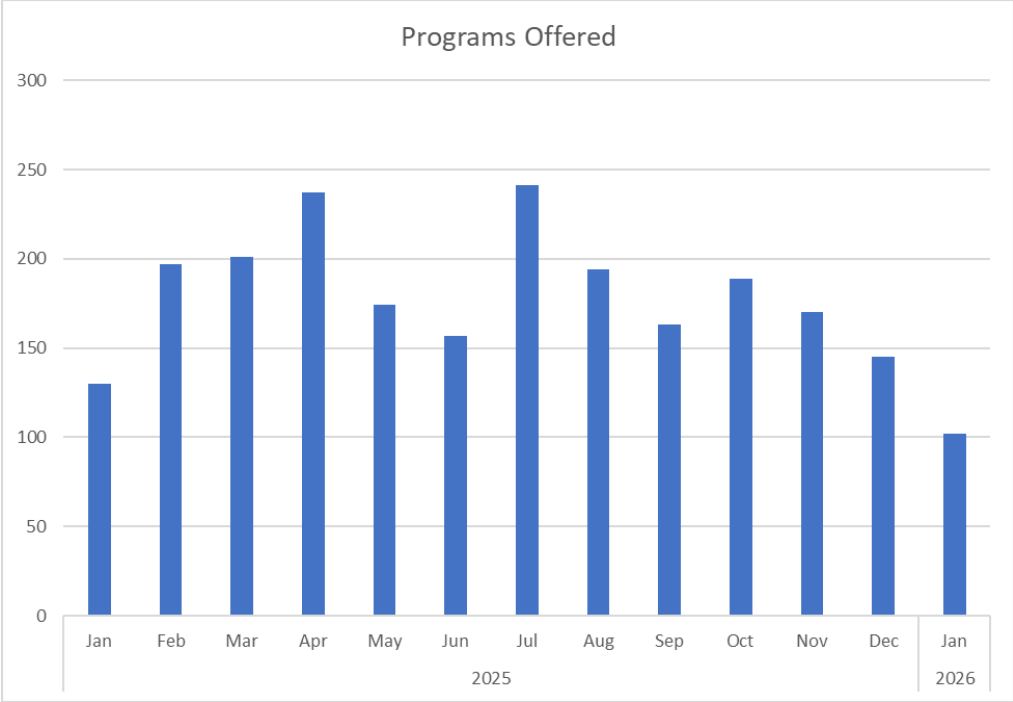
One of the most enjoyable and important experiences at the Woodlawn Branch Library is welcoming our younger patrons who visit each week. It's fulfilling to see these children enjoy and participate in book selection, as well as the special moments where Youth Services Librarian Relyea can sit down, play, and have engaging conversations with these children whom she has had the pleasure of seeing grow from toddlers to kindergarteners.

Scotia Branch Library

An unfortunate plumbing emergency closed out January and the Scotia Branch, asking for lots of flexibility and unanticipated tasks for our staff. Usual staff reports have been delayed as records are in the building while it has been inaccessible other than for facilities and collection assessment. Those notes will be compiled into a future report.

Glenville Branch Library

Over one hundred patrons came to programs for children and adults at the Glenville Branch in January. Our most popular offerings are for the younger crowd, with Early Literacy programming being the most popular, although young builders also love time with our librarian and LEGO sets. Patrons also routinely come for the flow of Vinyasa yoga classes, where participants link movement and breath to create a continuous flow of invigorating poses.



1/2026 CIRCULATION	CURRENT	LAST YEAR	CHANGE	FYTD	LAST FYTD	CHANGE2
Bornt	694	1,198	-42%	694	1,198	-42%
Main Library	16,739	19,464	-14%	16,739	19,464	-14%
E-Resource	15,626	17,770	-12%	15,626	17,770	-12%
Glenville	4,442	4,454	0%	4,442	4,454	0%
Mont Pleasant	1,033	1,390	-26%	1,033	1,390	-26%
Niskayuna	9,545	9,748	-2%	9,545	9,748	-2%
Quaker Street	1,551	1,390	12%	1,551	1,390	12%
Rotterdam	6,361	5,913	8%	6,361	5,913	8%
Scotia	2,305	3,091	-25%	2,305	3,091	-25%
Woodlawn	1,137	1,502	-24%	1,137	1,502	-24%

Support Services

The new year kicked off with a staff holiday party on January 9 to celebrate the accomplishments of staff in 2025 and look forward to all that 2026 has to offer. Library leadership decided to have the holiday party after the busy holiday season in hopes that more team members would be able to attend and it paid off with 25 team members attending, more than the prior year! A heartfelt thank you to Janice Martin, Jennifer Malave and Angelique Graf for all their hard work planning and preparing for the event.

Usage of the new public printing, scanning, copying and faxing Scan EZ stations was significantly higher in January 2026 versus January 2025 based on sales. January 2026 sales were \$3,605.35 compared to \$2,140 in January 2025.

In late January the Scotia Branch Library had two pipes burst from the frigid temperatures resulting in water damage and an unexpected closure. Thank you to County Facilities who have been heavily involved in working to assess damage to determine next steps.

Bases for the new exterior signage at Glenville, Woodlawn and Quaker Street were installed in late 2025 and signage is being installed at the end of the month into early February.

The installation of the new people counters began in the middle of the month, replacing the use of old "break-the-beam" counters. County Facilities and IT have completed work at four locations. The upgraded system will provide more accurate data on building traffic with remote access to the information. Locations with separate entrances into the main library versus a community room or other areas are new metrics that will be available to analyze over time.

15 new RFID pads were delivered in early January and installed across our locations. These pads have updated technology that helps eliminate faulty or unintentional scans.

Support hardware has arrived for KBJ allowing for a second public printer at KBJ which will be installed during the first week of February. This will allow for one public printer to be utilized

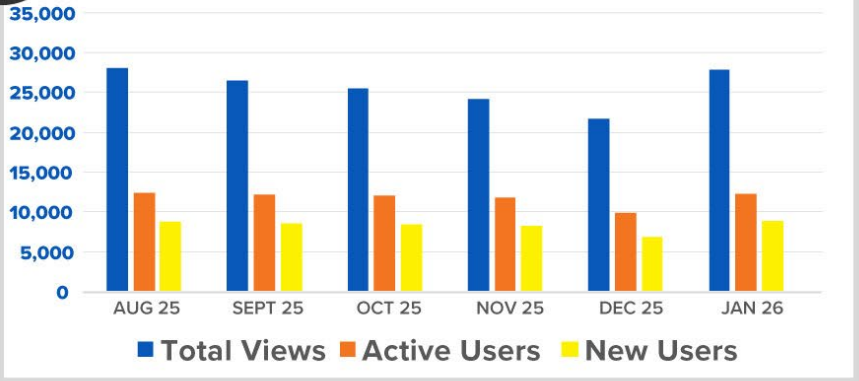
with the ScanEZ station for copies, scans and faxes while the other is dedicated to print release from the public PCs and mobile printing.

Efforts continued to install more docking monitors at staff workstations to enhance their work experience by adding a second monitor.

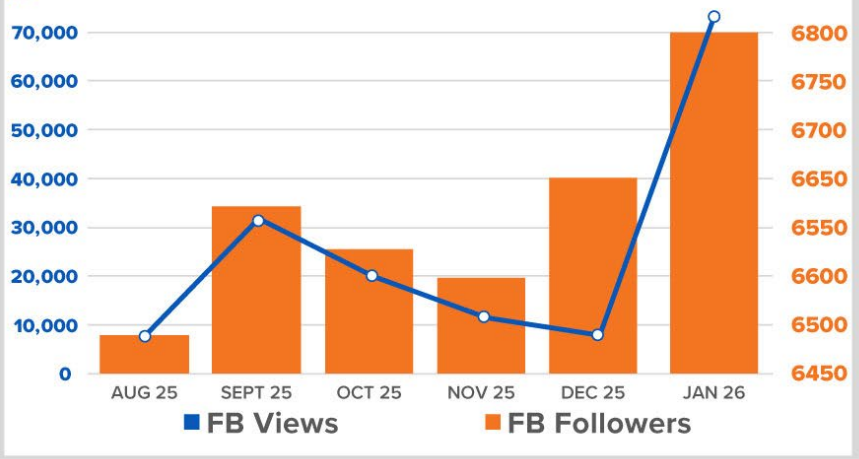
Support Services Manager Doug attended a program at Upper Hudson Library System, put on by Sarah McFadden from the State Library, detailing the importance of web accessibility. With our updated website from fall 2024, we are better equipped to follow all the layers of guidance dictated in WCAG 2.1. Our upgrade to the Vega discovery layer for our catalog in December 2024 also means we are ahead of the new legal requirements around accessibility that are resulting in other area systems upgrading to Vega before the deadline to be compliant this spring. We continue to offer the classic catalog interface that patrons were accustomed to from the Joint Automation Project catalog for those who prefer it and to integrate Worldcat searching for interlibrary loan until that feature is available in Vega.



SCPL.org 6-Month Metrics



6-Month Metrics



6-Month Metrics

