



**Board of Trustees Meeting
Central Library
January 26, 2026, 5:00 PM
Agenda**

- | | | |
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| I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES | Shelly | page 3 |
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| IV. REPORTS & DISCUSSION | | |
| 1. Liaison Reports | | |
| a. To Rochester Regional Library Council | Knapp | page 11 |
| b. From Rochester Public Library Board | Murphy Abbamonte | |
| 2. Staff Reports | | |
| a. Director's Report | Clasper | |
| b. MCLS Associate Director's Report | Smathers | |
| c. Central Associate Director's Report | Lehman | |
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| V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS | | |
| None | | |
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| VIII. ADJOURNMENT | | |

Next Meeting:
Wednesday, February 25, 9:00 a.m.
Central Library, 115 South Avenue, 14620



**Meeting of the MCLS Board of Trustees
Board Room, Central Library
November 17, 2025
Minutes**

Trustees Present: Gary Brandt, Christopher Corcoran, Peter Knapp, Amy Moffitt (Vice President), Francesca Padilla, Mei Qi, Marjorie Shelly (President), Jamia Williams (quorum present)

Trustees Excused: Kimberly Brown, Suzanne Stockman

Trustees Unexcused: None

Staff and Guests: Monroe County Administration Liaison, Molly Clifford; Monroe County Law Dept. Liaison, Keana Williams; County Legislature Liaison, Ricky Frazier; staff members, Emily Clasper, Katy Hasselwander, Sarah Lehman, Debi Mansour, BJ Scanlon, Jennifer Smathers

President Shelly called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m., welcomed trustees, staff, and guests, and noted a quorum was present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the October meeting were APPROVED AS PRESENTED.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no members of the public wanting to address the board.

FINANCIAL CLAIMS

Finance Mgr. Hasselwander reviewed the financial claims with the trustees and offered to answer questions.

Trustee Williams joined the meeting at 5:07 p.m.

After discussion, Trustee Knapp MADE A MOTION to approve the financial claims as presented. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

LIAISON REPORTS

Liaison to Rochester Regional Library Council (RRLC)

Trustee Knapp reported there had not been a board meeting since his last report. He invited Director Clasper to report on the RRLC Members Celebration. Director Clasper shared that the RRLC Member Celebration, an annual event formerly known as the legislative event, gathered library staff, local leaders, and community members to recognize excellence within the library community. The event was held at the Central Library. Awards were presented, including the Library of the Year and several RPL staff honors, with acknowledgments extended to individuals for their outstanding service. The event also featured presentations on successful projects funded through RRLC grants, offering attendees insight into innovative practices and the impact of recent initiatives. Attendees valued the networking and recognition opportunities, and the celebration served as both an inspiration and a catalyst for future project ideas among library professionals in the region.

Liaison from the Friends & Foundation of the Rochester Public Library (FFRPL)

Executive Director Borgus reported on the "ROC the Day" campaign, aimed at raising \$22,233 for supplemental furniture, fixtures, and equipment upgrades at the Maplewood branch. She highlighted Maplewood's role as a vital community institution offering services for children, refugees, and new Americans. Major upgrades include a redesigned space, improved facilities, and new public and youth areas. The campaign had already reached the halfway mark in fundraising, with support from all four library boards. Board members were encouraged to continue promoting the fundraiser using a forthcoming custom social media toolkit. Additionally, annual campaign letters were distributed to board members, reminding them of their ambassador roles in community outreach and donor communications.

Liaison from the Rochester Public Library (RPL)

Director Clasper reported that the Rochester Public Library Board held a very busy meeting with numerous action items. Many items were routine, including the approval of meeting dates and holiday closures for the coming year.

The Board approved a short extension of the lease for the temporary space used by the Maplewood Community Library. The extension had long been anticipated, though the timing was uncertain. With the renovation project now in its final phase, the extension was needed to ensure a smooth transition back to the permanent facility. Staff are expected to regain access to the Maplewood Community Library building in January to begin preparing the space, with reopening planned for March.

The RPL Board held an extended discussion on the preliminary budget for the new Northeast Branch. The budget remains in an early stage, and the Board will revisit it as the project progresses. An agreement with Edge Architecture was also approved for additional funds to support build-out services for the Northeast Branch. Project work is advancing steadily, and construction is expected to begin in earnest within the next few weeks. Director Clasper noted that the branch will be located on the ground floor of a new Rochester Housing Authority development at Portland Avenue and Fernwood Avenue, creating an innovative model of embedding library services directly within a residential neighborhood.

The RPL Board approved funding for an author talk associated with the Children's Book Festival held earlier this month. They also accepted new grant funds to support the expansion of the Raising a Reader program into home-based day cares, allowing the program to reach more families.

Finally, Capital Improvements Manager Harrison provided an overview of capital needs across the Rochester Public Library system.

STAFF REPORTS

Director's Report

Director Clasper announced her recent appointment to the Regents Advisory Committee on Libraries. This is a five-year appointment made by the State Librarian and approved by the Board of Regents. The committee provides guidance on statewide library issues and helps ensure that Regents are informed about library needs and priorities. Director Clasper expressed enthusiasm about the opportunity and noted that the committee's work has a strong history of delivering meaningful results.

She reported that several Monroe County Library System member libraries have new directors. To support them, MCLS has launched a new-director cohort that will meet regularly to provide training, information, and peer support. The cohort held its first gathering recently, which she described as both a learning opportunity and a support system. She emphasized that this collaborative approach will strengthen the system as a whole.

Director Clasper announced that the documentary *The Librarians* will be screened the next Sunday at 2 p.m. at the Avon Park Theater. The film examines book challenges and bans and will be followed by a panel discussion. She will serve on the panel along with the director of the OWWL Library System, the executive director of the

New York Library Association, the director of the Henrietta Public Library, and author Linda Sue Park. She noted that the film is excellent and will also be shown at the Central Library during National Library Week in April.

MCLS Associate Director's Report

Associate Director Smathers reported that MCLS is using a newly updated edition of *The Handbook for New Public Library Directors in New York State* with the cohort of new directors across the system. The handbook was released at the New York Library Association Conference, and copies were printed and distributed to support shared learning. Early discussions confirmed that the cohort's needs align well with the topics addressed in the handbook.

Advocacy visits with state representatives are underway, and Board members have participated in several meetings. A few visits remain, although one must be rescheduled due to a last-minute change. For those unable to attend locally, Library Advocacy Day in February will offer another opportunity to speak with legislators about MCLS priorities and demonstrate the strong return on investment for state support.

Smathers provided an update on the ongoing RFP process for a new integrated library system (ILS). Staff town halls have been completed, and patron participation in the catalog survey has exceeded expectations. The survey received more than one thousand responses in its first weeks, with particularly high engagement from mobile users. Early trends show strong interest in improvements to hold requests, search features, and item-level distinctions. Smathers noted that patrons praised the auto-renewal feature, which has reduced the need for manual renewals. As a pilot, all Tonie figures at Fairport have now been cataloged individually by character, allowing patrons to place specific requests.

Survey participants will be entered into drawings for local bookstore gift cards. A more detailed report will be provided in January.

Central Library Associate Director's Report

Associate Director Lehman reported that MiFi devices have circulated more than 8,600 times since January. Usage at the new Brockport satellite site has increased significantly, rising from two to three circulations per month to eleven circulations in the first eleven days of November.

Lehman also attended the New York Library Association Annual Conference, where they served on a panel with colleagues from the Brockport, Parma, and Pittsford libraries. The session focused on first-year experiences in new leadership roles. Lehman noted that the conference featured multiple presentations on new leadership, reflecting a statewide trend of retirements and transitions.

In response to a question, Associate Director Smathers reported that the end of Baker & Taylor's services has created significant challenges for libraries statewide. MCLS anticipated problems earlier in the year when fulfillment issues began. As a result, many orders have already shifted to Ingram, which is now the primary vendor for most member libraries. Smathers is negotiating with Ingram to reduce the cost of its reviews product, which is currently priced per library location and becomes prohibitively expensive for systems with multiple branches.

Other vendors, particularly those that previously focused on school markets, are beginning to enter the public library space and may offer more affordable integrated review options.

Smathers also noted that Baker & Taylor's platform housed twelve years of annual report data for all public libraries in the state. With that system's collapse, the New York State Library is working quickly to identify a replacement. MCLS has already downloaded and preserved all historical data and is rebuilding the annual report forms in Microsoft Forms so different staff can complete appropriate sections. New reporting questions are expected, and staff are preparing for them now.

These changes will affect future planning, including the 2026 system plan of service, which may be delayed. Despite these disruptions, required work will continue, though in a different format.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

MCLS–RPL Service Agreement

Director Clasper presented the item to the trustees and offered to answer questions. After discussion, Trustee Corcoran MADE A MOTION to approve the RPL–MCLS Services agreement for January 1, 2026–December 31, 2027. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Solar Table Agreements

Director Clasper presented the item to the trustees and offered to answer questions. She specified that these agreements would add thirteen tables to the ten that are already deployed. After discussion, Trustee Padilla MADE A MOTION to approve agreements to place and maintain Wi-Fi enabled, solar-powered charging tables on the properties of the selected partner agencies. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Access Agreement

Director Clasper presented the item to the trustees and offered to answer questions. She clarified that the MCLS is currently using a half rack, and she anticipates this will remain sufficient. After discussion, Trustee Williams MADE A MOTION to approve an agreement with Monroe County for access to the data center at 400 Freight Building Road, at a rate of \$410 per month for a half rack or \$690 per month for a full rack, with a term through June 30, 2030. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Professional Services Agreement

Assoc. Director Smathers presented the item to the trustees and offered to answer questions. She specified the training would address best practices and compliance with New York State laws and regulations for library policies, disclosures, websites, etc. After discussion, Trustee Qi MADE A MOTION to approve a professional services agreement with the Law Office of Stephanie Adams, PLCC for an amount not to exceed \$5,000, with a term through December 31, 2025. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Wired For Opportunity AmeriCorps Agreement

Director Clasper presented the item to the trustees and offered to answer questions. After discussion, Trustee Padilla MADE A MOTION to approve an agreement with Monroe Community College for the placement of two Rochester AmeriCorps members at the Central Library for an amount not to exceed \$17,000 and a term of January 14–September 20, 2026. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Other Business

None

ANNOUNCEMENTS

President Shelly reminded everyone that the next meeting is January 26, 2026.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:01 p.m.

Emily Clasper, Secretary

**MONROE COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM
FINANCIAL CLAIMS 2025**

MON	DAY	CLAIM VO	VENDOR	DESCRIPTION	EXPENDED	REMARKS
10	8	200062620	TRIDELTA 11104976	900 WIRED Mouses & 900 USB DRIVES	\$8,370.00	ARPA FUNDS
10	23	2000664796	OVERDRIVE - 11109903	MATERIALS HOLD	\$143.84	
10	29	2000664856	GENESEE WATERWAYS - 11128350	18 VIP PASSES	\$360.00	
10	29	2000664810	TMOBILE - 11117594	MIFI CHARGES	\$16,139.28	ARPA FUNDS
11	1				\$840.12	County Journal for Fleet Maintenance Fuel & Repairs
11	5	200066944	CROWN CASTLE- 11120635	INTERNET	\$2,075.00	
11	5	200066944	CROWN CASTLE- 11120635	DTS	\$16,942.88	
11	5	2000666579	OVERDRIVE - 11109903	MATERIALS HOLD	\$19.90	
11	5	2000666579	OVERDRIVE - 11109903	MATERIALS HOLD	\$170.43	
11	5	2000666579	OVERDRIVE - 11109903	MATERIALS HOLD	\$1,623.66	
11	5	2000667058	OVERDRIVE - 11109903	MATERIALS HOLD	\$1,673.88	
11	5	200066811	UNIQUE MANAGEMENT SERVICE - 1111025	MATERIAL RECOVERY 2025	\$2,126.25	
11	5	200066739	CAMPBELLNET - 11105635	CAMERAS	\$3,979.75	
11	6	2000665496	BRILLIANT REPAIRS - 11127748	DIGITAL LITERACY INSTRUCTION- WIRED FOR OPPORTUNITY OCTOBER 2025	\$7,207.00	ARPA FUNDS
11	6	200066714	DELL - 11126541	DELL LAPTOPS FOR KIOSK REFRESH & BOARD ROOM	\$12,444.00	
11	18	2000667095	LITERACY ROCHESTER - 11128531	MCLS BRANCH HRS OCT 2025	\$5,407.50	ARPA FUNDS
11	18	2000667479	STAPLES TECHNOLOGY - 11120905	250 CHROMEBOOK CAREPACK (3YR)	\$20,252.50	ARPA FUNDS
11	26	2000667479	STAPLES TECHNOLOGY - 11120905	250 CHROMEBOOKS	\$70,210.00	ARPA FUNDS

\$169,985.99

**MONROE COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM
FINANCIAL CLAIMS 2025**

MON	DAY	CLAIM VO	VENDOR	DESCRIPTION	EXPENDED	REMARKS
11	18	2000668028	Webster Public Library - 11105346	MEMBER GRANTS-IN-AID	\$10,000.00	
11	18	2000669240	Fairport Public Library - 11101928	MEMBER GRANTS-IN-AID	\$10,000.00	
11	18	2000669270	East Rochester Public Library - 11105288	MEMBER GRANTS-IN-AID	\$7,500.00	
11	18	2000670194	Pittsford Community Library - 11103572	MEMBER GRANTS-IN-AID	\$7,500.00	
11	18	2000670196	Penfield Public Library - 11103746	MEMBER GRANTS-IN-AID	\$10,000.00	
11	18	2000670885	Irondequoit Public Library - 11105989	MEMBER GRANTS-IN-AID	\$10,000.00	
11	21	2000669262	US POSTMASTER - 11104699	POSTAGE	\$7,000.00	
11	25	2000667941	CDW - 11100275	65 SAMSUNG TABLETS	\$13,000.00	ARPA FUNDS
11	26	2000669328	TMOBILE - 11117594	MIFI CHARGES	\$17,290.76	ARPA FUNDS
12	3	2000670233	OVERDRIVE - 11109903	MATERIALS HOLD	\$200.33	
12	3	2000670233	OVERDRIVE - 11109903	MATERIALS HOLD	\$1,693.73	
12	3	2000670233	OVERDRIVE - 11109903	MATERIALS HOLD	\$1,652.28	
12	12	2000671354	Hamlin Public Library - 11101777	ONLINE FINES JUNE 25-NOV 25	\$343.00	
12	12	2000671358	Gates Public Library - 11102081	ONLINE FINES JUNE 25-NOV 25	\$2,932.68	
12	12	2000671370	Henrietta Public Library - 11105162	ONLINE FINES JUNE 25-NOV 25	\$634.56	
12	12	2000672144	Chili Public Library - 11102058	ONLINE FINES JUNE 25-NOV 25	\$2,166.64	
12	12	2000672385	Greece Public Library - 11104404	ONLINE FINES JUNE 25-NOV 25	\$8,866.63	
12	12	2000672391	Mendon Public Library - 11105398	ONLINE FINES JUNE 25-NOV 25	\$726.02	
12	15	2000670030	QUIPU - 11118740	E-CARD SUBSCRIPTION FEB 26-JAN 27	\$4,710.00	
12	15	2000671363	Brockport Seymour Library - 11103615	ONLINE FINES JUNE 25-NOV 25	\$3,624.40	
12	15	2000671494	Scottsville Free Library - 11106034	ONLINE FINES JUNE 25-NOV 25	\$686.01	
12	15	2000671694	Brighton Memorial Library - 11105432	ONLINE FINES JUNE 25-NOV 25	\$2,738.31	
12	15	2000671931	Pittsford Community Library - 11103572	ONLINE FINES JUNE 25-NOV 25	\$5,482.33	
12	15	2000671939	East Rochester Public Library - 11105288	ONLINE FINES JUNE 25-NOV 25	\$931.83	
12	16	2000670047	CROWN CASTLE- 11120635	INTERNET	\$2,075.00	
12	16	2000670874	Rush Public Library - 11104449	ONLINE FINES JUNE 25-NOV 25	\$394.45	
12	16	2000671123	Webster Public Library - 11105346	ONLINE FINES JUNE 25-NOV 25	\$2,012.29	
12	16	2000671123	Webster Public Library - 11105346	ASSEMBLY GRANT-IN-AID	\$20,000.00	
12	16	2000671365	Penfield Public Library - 11103746	ONLINE FINES JUNE 25-NOV 25	\$2,732.59	
12	16	2000671708	Newman Riga Library - 11106122	ONLINE FINES JUNE 25-NOV 25	\$160.07	
12	16	2000671923	Ogden Farmer's Library - 11101918	ONLINE FINES JUNE 25-NOV 25	\$394.45	
12	16	2000671924	Fairport Public Library - 11101928	ONLINE FINES JUNE 25-NOV 25	\$6,254.09	
12	16	2000671937	Rochester Public Library - 11105181	ONLINE FINES JUNE 25-NOV 25	\$8,146.33	

**MONROE COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM
FINANCIAL CLAIMS 2025**

MON	DAY	CLAIM VO	VENDOR	DESCRIPTION	EXPENDED	REMARKS
12	16	2000671948	Irondequoit Public Library - 11105989	ONLINE FINES JUNE 25-NOV 25	\$7,231.65	
12	16	2000671958	Parma Public Library - 11106907	ONLINE FINES JUNE 25-NOV 25	\$708.87	
12	17	2000671945	CAMPBELLNET - 11105635	TELECOM MAINT	\$5,000.00	
12	22	2000671477	LITERACY ROCHESTER - 11128531	MCLS BRANCH HRS NOV 2025	\$5,407.50	ARPA FUNDS
12	30	2000671481	ENERFUSION-11128845	13 SOLAR TABLES	\$182,356.25	ARPA FUNDS
12	30	2000671492	AFFORDABLE GRAPHICS - 11129342	STYLUS PENS & CHARGERS	\$2,992.00	ARPA FUNDS
12	31	2000671634	UNIQUE MANAGEMENT SERVICE - 11102541	MATERIAL RECOVERY 2025	\$2,305.80	
12	31	2000672002	TMOBILE - 11117594	WIIFI CHARGES- PARTIAL PAYMENT - REMAINDER (\$11,103.17) WILL BE PAID ON THE 2026 PO	\$29,724.41	ARPA FUNDS
12	31	2000672459	BRILLIANT REPAIRS - 11127748	WIRED FOR OPPORTUNITY DEC 2025	\$8,400.00	ARPA FUNDS
12	31	2000672463	STEPHANIE ADAMS - 11128044	MCLS "OWNING THE MOMENT" TRAINING	\$3,105.00	PARTIAL PAYMENT - SPLIT WITH 504320
12	31	2000672463	STEPHANIE ADAMS - 11128044	MCLS "OWNING THE MOMENT" TRAINING	\$500.00	PARTIAL PAYMENT - SPLIT WITH 504320
12	31	2000672465	LITERACY ROCHESTER - 11128531	MCLS BRANCH HRS DEC 2025	\$5,407.50	ARPA FUNDS
12	31				\$3,354.37	County Journal for Fleet Maintenance Fuel & Repairs

\$428,342.13

Report to MCLS re RRLC January 14 Board Meeting

1. The RRLC Board approved the staff recommendations for various grant proposals
 - a. There were 5 MCLS member grant proposals. 3 were approved. These included
 - 1) Mendon Public Library-Capacity Building Grant-\$1450
 - 2) Central Library of Rochester and Monroe County-Special project Grant-\$7500
 - 3) Sully Branch RPL-Special Project Grant-\$3500
 - b. Other grant winners included Geneva Public Library, URMCMiner Library, RIT Libraries, Strong Museum of Play, and Williamson Public Library
 - c. RRLC will continue to work with unsuccessful grant application writers to help them improve their grant writing efforts.
2. The board approved two new member applicants: Buffalo Audubon Society and The Visual Studies Workshop.
3. The board discussed investment strategies/firms, Nominating and Development Committee work and a large private foundation grant effort
4. The RRLC draft 5 Year Plan of Service will be shared next month and reviewed in March.

Peter Knapp



January 2026

NEW BUSINESS (BOARD ACTIONS)

YOUNG ADULT TRAINING SERVICES (SMATHERS)

Board Action Requested: A motion to approve an agreement for staff training services with Sensational Inclusion, LLC, with maximum compensation of \$1,670 and a term through December 31, 2026.

Details: The Library plans to offer one in-person training session for staff serving teens and young adults in the coming months. The session, titled "*Adolescent Brain Development & Neurodiversity*," will be open to all MCLS staff working in young adult services. Sensational Inclusion, LLC, is recommended by Tonia Burton, Children's Services Consultant, based on successful prior trainings reported in the post surveys from training in 2025. The session cost is \$1,670 and will be funded through the MCLS training operating budget.

This training is essential for staff professional development as it provides research-based insights into adolescent brain development and strategies for supporting neurodiverse teens. By participating, staff will strengthen their ability to create inclusive, developmentally appropriate programs and services for young adults. Participants will complete evaluations immediately after each session to assess content relevance, presenter effectiveness, and confidence in applying new skills.

MCLS AT A GLANCE (2025)

Circulation Annual Increase

Penfield +16.1%
Rush +15.4%
Chili +14.5%
Scottsville +9.3%
East Rochester +8.7%

**Top 5
in 2025**

MCLS Libraries
circulated
6,839,862
items in 2025
Up **7%** from 2024



MCLS Libraries
have circulated
10,555
MiFis in 2025
Up **92%** from 2024



Technical Services
has added
29,652
items to the
catalog in 2025
On pace with 2024



The Shipping Dept.
moved
1,585,266
items in 2025
Up **3%** from 2024



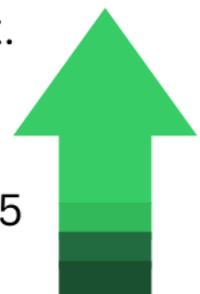
The Outreach Dept.
provided
14,838
items in 2025
Up **4%** from 2024



The Outreach Dept.
made
184
in-home visits YTD
Down **17%** from 2024



The Outreach Dept.
made
111
facility visits in 2025
Up **3%** from 2024



PATRON STORIES

HOLIDAY HEARTACHE EASED WITH HORROR MOVIES

Outreach staff visited one of the home delivery patrons, “V,” who lives alone in her own home on a fixed income and relies on the program to bring her books and movies to keep her occupied and entertained. V’s daughter is a snowbird who spends the colder months in Florida, and V had been anticipating major holiday blues this year with her family so far away. Staff were able to set her up with her favorite distraction: campy horror movies. V was overjoyed and grateful to receive festive titles such as Silent Night, Bloody Night and Mother Krampus to brighten her holiday season. Outreach Coordinator Maren Kyle compiled a list of additional titles to choose from the next time V could use a mood boost in the form of seasonal slasher films.

GRATITUDE FROM THE HEART

A newer patron in the In-home delivery program gave this note of thanks to Outreach Coordinator Maren Kyle. (edited for brevity)

Happy, Happy Maren

I really need to tell you this. You have made a huge difference in my life by bringing these wonderful books...I am quietly reclaiming my seat at the writing table. I belong here-I always have...This book you picked out for me: Writing, Creativity and Soul by Sue Monk Kidd is fundamental to my own very personal verbal journey...

It feels so ordinary and organic to write again it’s been many many years since I really gave an honest try and committed to a project – beginning, middle and end...As solitary as the life of a writer is, we cannot work in a vacuum.

You are the first person who stepped into my realm of imagination and led me to the possibilities of my craft and my spiritual journey. I felt seen and heard and respected as a writer and lover of books. I think we recognized each other in this fashion...

Many blessings to you!

In gratitude,

Karen

RAISING A READER PARENT RECOGNIZED FOR SUPPORTING EARLY LITERACY AT HOME

Tiana Brown, a Raising A Reader parent with two children enrolled in the program, recently spoke at a Rochester City School District Literacy Meeting to share the meaningful impact Raising A Reader has had on her family. She described how the program’s weekly book rotations have supported her children’s early literacy development, helping them learn their letters, build vocabulary, and begin identifying words. Ms. Brown noted that these “small wins” in engagement and reading confidence are a direct result of consistent access to books through the program’s red book bags.

In recognition of her commitment to supporting her children’s early learning, the Rochester Public Library Raising A Reader program named Ms. Brown Raising A Reader Parent of the Month. She was recognized at Central Library, accompanied by two coworkers, and joined by partners and library leadership, including Dr. Shalonda Garfield, Rochester City School District Director of Early Childhood and Numeracy; Bonita Williams, Adult Family Educator with the RCSD Early Childhood Department and Rochester Preschool

Parent Program; BJ Scanlon, Deputy Director of RPL; and members of the Raising A Reader team, Margarita Chaves, Cheryl Johnson, and Destanee O'Neil. Ms. Brown also expressed appreciation to Ms. Chaves for her work with the program and for providing engaging activity packets and books, highlighting the value of strong staff and school partnerships in advancing early literacy.



MCLS SERVICE & PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

GREATER ROCHESTER LITERACY MEET & GREET

Children's Services Consultant Tonia Burton returned from a City Council Literacy Award Ceremony with a renewed awareness that many literacy-focused organizations in the community had not yet established partnerships with the library. This experience underscored the need to break down silos and intentionally strengthen connections across the local literacy landscape. In response, and with the support of Lincoln Branch Manager Suzanne Macaulay and Area Coordinator Bruce Tehan, Burton organized the Greater Rochester Literacy Meet & Greet to address this gap.

The objectives of the Meet & Greet were to develop a comprehensive inventory of local literacy programs to share with patrons; provide a forum for organizations to present their services, identify needs, and offer resources; and foster relationships that could lead to future collaboration.

The event was highly successful. Burton presented an overview of the Monroe County Library System, Rochester Public Library, and Central Library, clarifying how these entities collectively serve both county and city residents. She emphasized the importance of aligning organizational missions to identify opportunities for meaningful partnership. Attendees included City Councilmember Patterson and City Council Vice President Harris. A structured speed-networking session allowed participants three minutes each to share their organization, one current need, and one resource they could offer. Engagement was so strong that moving participants between rounds proved challenging, highlighting the high level of interest and enthusiasm for collaboration.

SHARING THE PAGES: A COUNTYWIDE COLLABORATION IN ACTION

Winton Branch Manager Kathy Wolf connected Children's Services Consultant Tonia Burton with a donor offering 20 cases of Ranger Rick notebooks, which Burton then shared with member libraries for distribution

through their community partners. Hamlin Library provided its notebooks to the Friends of Hamlin Beach State Park for use in the Bookworms at the Beach program, resulting in a heartfelt thank-you from the organization. This collaborative effort highlights the library system’s role as a substantial contributor to an enriched quality of life in Monroe County by supporting literacy and nature education for children and families. It also demonstrates effective countywide delivery of customer-focused services through thoughtful coordination, innovative reuse of donated materials, and strong cooperation among member libraries and community partners, reflecting the system’s commitment to leadership, innovation, and shared impact.

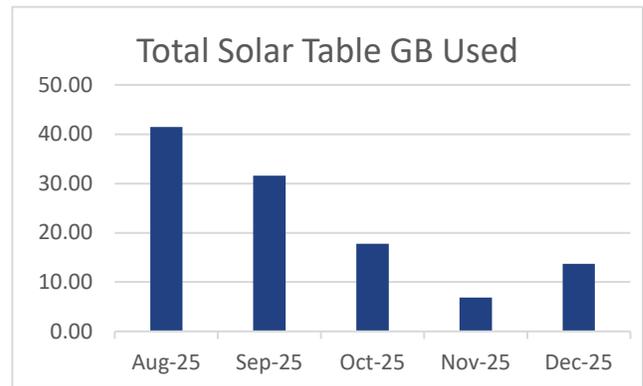
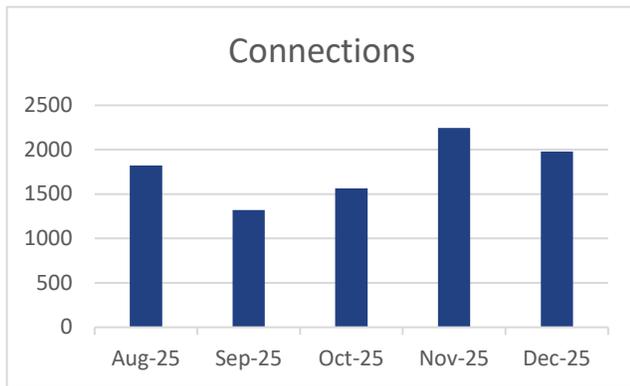
SPECIAL INITIATIVES

WIRED FOR OPPORTUNITY

PROGRAM STATISTICS

Month	Classes	Attendance	Class Topics	
Jul	25	170	Intro to Computers	Library Resources
Aug	29	187	Applying for Benefits	Intro to Google
Sept	26	175	Computer Catch-Up	Online Job Search
Oct	23	161	Scams and Security	
Nov	35	252		
Dec	21	109		
Total	159	1054		

SOLAR TABLE USAGE



OTHER

The Wired for Opportunity Program wrapped up the first of its two years with an influx of positive feedback. Comments for class participants in the past few months have included compliments for our instructors, appreciation for the library, and praise for the program in general. While solar table use has decreased due to winter weather conditions, it has not ceased, with the partners hosting the tables reporting a surprising level of activity given low temperatures. As we enter the final year of the program, plans to expend the last of the grant funds and wind down the program are in place. In the meantime, we expect a short-term increase of MiFis in circulation, expanding the units into Branches and MCLS Town libraries to help meet demand in the short term.

INTEGRATED LIBRARY SYSTEM (ILS) RFP

The response to the recent patron survey on the MCLS library catalog far surpassed all expectations. A remarkable 1,543 patrons participated—an unprecedented level of engagement for an ILS-related survey and a powerful reflection of how deeply the community values its libraries. To analyze the results, Emily Clasper used AI tools to help identify key trends and paired those insights with her own expertise to distill the most significant themes and comments from respondents.

In short, patrons want:

- **Discovery, not just lookup**
- **Integration, not silos**
- **Transparency, not guesswork**
- **Participation, not passivity**

A similar process was applied to the results from the survey of Trustees. Their responses focused mainly on the Library Catalog, asking primarily for a **modern, unified, intelligent library system that works like the best digital platforms and spanning all Monroe County libraries, all formats, and all services**. This reflects expectations shaped by modern digital services.

They want the catalog to behave more like **Netflix, Amazon, or Spotify** for books and media, and would like to see integration between the Library's digital platforms and online catalog so that they can find e-content alongside physical items. They also asked for features to personalize their experience, allow patrons to suggest items, help provide more information about items, and enhance access.

A few trustees expanded their responses to include staff-facing functions designed to increase efficiency and better support operations, reporting, and decision making.

Results from the ILS library staff survey will be analyzed and presented next month. To ensure broad participation, the survey was distributed through multiple channels: the MCLS-wide staff email list, the front page of the MCLS ePortal (where it remained for two months), Director's Council meetings, QR codes and clickable links, and both before and after the town hall-style ILS RFP sessions for library staff. This multipronged approach helped maximize visibility and encouraged staff across the system to share their perspectives.

STAFF HIGHLIGHTS

TONIA BURTON RECIEVES HEALTI KIDS POWERFUL PARTNER AWARD

Healti Kids Coalition, an initiative of Common Ground Health said this about Burton's work, *"Tonia is the definition of a coalition partner who activates her network to make change happen. From hosting Pop-Up Play Days and supporting the Play Walk to championing funding for Infant Toddler Play Kits, Tonia consistently finds creative ways to amplify our work through the library system. Whether it's big projects or small gestures, we can always count on Tonia to take initiative and make an impact."*

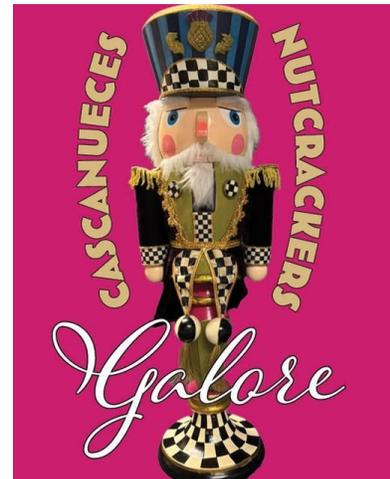


15 YEARS OF SERVICE RECOGNIZED

Tonia Burton was also recognized by the City of Rochester for 15 years of service to the Rochester Public Library. RPL and MCLS are so lucky to have her!

RPL AND MCLS SAY GOODBYE TO ANA SURO

After 23 years of service to the City of Rochester, Director of Library Administration and Operations Ana Suro announced her retirement. Staff celebrated her years of service at the opening reception for the Central Library's holiday exhibit, which featured Ana's personal collection of collectable Nutcrackers.



MCLS MEMBER LIBRARY HIGHLIGHTS

A LIFELINE AT THE LYELL BRANCH

The Lyell Branch's new Good Phone—installed earlier this fall by RIT to provide free phone access for the community—is already making a real difference. A young mother recently came in distressed after her partner stole her car, wallet, and phone, leaving her with nothing. While her toddler played safely in the children's area, she used the Good Phone to make the calls she needed. The library opened at 11:00. By early afternoon, she had connected with the right support services, and by 3:00, she was in safe housing at a domestic violence center. The phone gave her a lifeline when she needed it most.



LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S CORNER: EMILY CLASPER

TRUSTEE CALL TO ACTION

[Send a Postcard to Support the National Right To Read Act! \(H.R. 6440 / S. 3365\)](#)

RECOMMENDED READING

NPR: [Book distributor shutting down deals logistical blow to libraries](#)

Time Magazine: [The Supreme Court Just Opened the Door to a New Era of Book Bans](#)

Carnegie Corporation of New York: [How Libraries Became 'First Responders' for America's Opportunity Gap](#)

Minnesota Star Tribune: Brown: [High costs? Budget cuts? Even more reason to protect public libraries.](#)

IMPORTANT DATES

January 27, 5:00–6:30: Trustee Handbook Book Club – Open Meetings Law Zoom Session. [Registration](#)

February 3: NYLA Library Advocacy Day. Contact your Assemblymembers and Senators in Albany to express your support for Library funding. Post using #LAD26 on social media to show your support!

February 16: President's Day. East Rochester, Gates, Greece, Irondequoit, Ogden Farmers', and Scottsville libraries closed.

March 10, 6:00: County Legislature Meeting

UPCOMING LIBRARY PROGRAMMING

[Find Upcoming Library Programming Here](#)

DIRECTOR'S SITE VISITS

In 2025, Director Clasper visited all MCLS member libraries (19) and all RPL branch libraries (10) as directed by the Boards.

December	July	March
Greece Public Library	Newman Riga	Penfield Public Library
Webster Public Library	June	Henrietta Public Library
November	Fairport	Rush Public Library
Seymour Library (Brockport)	May	Sully Branch
Hamlin Public Library	Brighton Memorial Library	Arnett Branch
October	Mendon Public Library	Chili Public Library
Gates Public Library	Parma Public Library	February
East Rochester Public Library	Pittsford Community Library	Charlotte Branch
September	Winton Branch Library	Maplewood Community Library
Scottsville Free Library	April	January
Lincoln Branch	Ogden Farmers' Library	Frederick Douglass Comm. Library
August	Irondequoit Public Library	Lyell Branch
None	Phillis Wheatley Community Library	Monroe Branch

DIRECTOR'S UPDATES

The final months of 2025 passed in a whirlwind of meetings, events, and planning activities layered onto the day-to-day operations of RPL and MCLS.

Several notable meetings focused on advocacy for library funding and legislation. MCLS concluded its in-district meetings with state legislators, where we advocated for State Operating Aid, Construction Grants, School Library Materials Aid, and pending legislation to protect intellectual freedom and library worker safety. I also joined State Librarian Lauren Moore in several Zoom meetings with members of the Assembly Committee on Libraries to advocate for increased support for the New York State Library through a modest increase to the real estate transaction fee that benefits the Cultural Education Fund. This increase would help offset reductions in federal funding and ensure the State Library can continue providing essential services to New York's 23 library systems.

Other meetings helped RPL and MCLS build new relationships and strengthen existing ones. I met with the new RCSD Superintendent, Eric Rosser, alongside members of the RPL team to discuss opportunities for deeper collaboration. I also met with several Western New York public library system directors to explore grant funding opportunities for rural libraries, prompted by a promising potential opportunity. In addition, meetings of the MCLS New Library Director's Cohort gave Jennifer Smathers and me the chance to support and learn alongside new directors while building shared knowledge and camaraderie.

As expected for this time of year, much of our work focused on budgeting and planning. Our management team held a mini-retreat to review the RPL mission, vision, and strategic goals and to identify priorities for the year ahead. These discussions informed our upcoming budget development work for both RPL and MCLS, as well as plans to develop the required New York State five-year Plan of Service and undertake needed strategic planning and policy reviews.

The end of the year also included several festive and engaging events. I spoke on a panel about book bans after a screening of the excellent documentary *The Librarians* at the Avon Park Theater. I presented at Summit Independent Living Community, speaking with an enthusiastic group of seniors about current trends in libraries. I got to hang out at the Lincoln Branch Library as they hosted an open house for educators. RPL staff, trustees, and media toured the Maplewood Branch construction site for a preview of its progress. I attended a well-received installment of the Local History Division's Storied Saloons series at Rising Storm at the Mill in Penfield, highlighting the history of the Daisy Flour Mill. We also celebrated the opening of the Nutcracker exhibit featuring the personal collection of newly retired staff member Ana Suro, hosted a holiday brunch for Central Library staff, and closed out the year with a fun appearance on *Connections with Evan Dawson*, discussing favorite books of the year.

While 2026 has arrived without slowing the pace, we are well positioned to take on the challenges and opportunities ahead.

~Emily



MCLS OFFICE ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR'S UPDATE: JENNIFER SMATHERS

Professional conferences offer valuable opportunities for networking, particularly for seasoned librarians. At NYLA I met with new and former colleagues, exchanged mentoring, and learned about innovative programs across diverse library systems. The intriguing Freedom to Read Teen Ambassadors session from the Brooklyn Public Library has been promoted to both directors and teen librarians as a source of program ideas for both teens and adults. I also encouraged folks to consider pointing teens towards Brooklyn Public Library's virtual [Intellectual Freedom Teen Meetups](#).

A key connection was made with Stephanie Cole Adams. After the Public Library System Directors' meeting, I inquired if Adams would consider providing an in-person training for MCLS directors. As ideas were discussed, it became clear that MCLS directors would benefit from additional support in policy development and practice with responding to challenging situations. Adams noted she was preparing a similar training and welcomed the chance to pilot it in-person while visiting family in Fairport.

With board approval and assistance from Finance Manager Katy Hasselwander and county legal staff, MCLS hosted *Owning the Moment*, an interactive workshop led by Adams. The session focused on tools and strategies directors can use when responding to difficult circumstances. Challenge coins were awarded to participants who demonstrated effective practices, such as the "People First/Safety First" principle and the reminder to "Breathe/Create Time" before responding.



MCLS also encouraged directors to involve staff members identified as emerging leaders. Several attended, and their thoughtful questions and contributions reflected well on the future of MCLS. All training materials are available for those who attended to repeat this session with a new group of participants.

Additional tending to the future of MCLS occurs during the New Library Director Orientation meetings that started in November. Two of the newest directors have been active participants in discussing challenges, visiting other libraries, and receiving extra guidance through challenges such as gathering data for the annual report the first time. Our December meeting was rescheduled due to my being stuck in Webster during a snowstorm and unable to drive safely to our planned location. It turned out that it worked for the best, since the other participants were metaphorically snowed under with immediate issues.

The Shipping department now has two drivers out on long-term medical leaves and has experienced mechanical failures within the three trucks. Several delivery days in November and December were impacted through using just two trucks and two routes, a response known among staff as a "Split Route." More such routes are expected into January. With three full-time and two part-time truck drivers, there is not much wiggle room in Shipping's current procedures for responding to a combined series of unfortunate circumstances. The previously planned review of the shipping department location and loading dock have moved up the project priority list. Work will begin in January to examine all aspects of shipping.

January is shaping up to keep the MCLS office staff on the move as we officially enter annual report gathering season and will prepare for February's Library Advocacy Day in Albany.

~ Jennifer

CENTRAL LIBRARY ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR'S UPDATE: SARAH LEHMAN

New York Library Association Annual Conference

I had the opportunity at the start of November to attend and present at the annual New York Library Association Conference in Saratoga Springs New York. Led by Parma Director Grace Englebrecht, I was part of a panel along with Amanda Madigan from Pittsford, Grace and Patrick Pittman from Brockport. We shared some of our experiences on common 'first year in leadership' topics and answered questions from attendees. The informal nature of the panel led to some wonderful questions from attendees and great discussion that all of us enjoyed.

I also attended some very interesting presentations focused on addressing potential incidents within a library from a community support lens, two other presentations discussing new leadership challenges and a project from one small library that partnered with local small businesses to bring more community awareness around library services.

Legislative Breakfast Planning Meeting

At a previous meeting of county directors, there was interest expressed in holding a Legislative Breakfast celebration event again. A team led by Deputy Director BJ Scanlon, me, and two other county directors was formed to plan an event for 2026. The event will tentatively be held at the Central Library in late April to coincide with National Library Week. The team met in November to begin planning, and we look forward to seeing this event come to fruition.

Memorial Art Gallery, Aging INSPIRED! Community Event

Rochester Public Library was approached and invited to be part of an event held by the Memorial Art Gallery to share information regarding recreational activities offered by Central, RPL and the Monroe County Library System for retired individuals. I attended the event along with Alicia Gunther from the MCLS office and Maren Kyle from the Extension and Outreach Division. We were able to share information on specific items such as prints available for circulation, Cricut machines, sewing machines and other arts materials. We also brought and spoke about countywide offerings such as VIP Passes, Empire Passes and databases such as Medici.TV, Hoopla and Libby.

"Owning the Moment" Stephanie Cole Adams Training

I attended a training presented by Stephanie Cole Adams; a lawyer who often works closely with libraries throughout the state. The presentation focused on common topics that many directors and public libraries may encounter from a legal perspective-such as first amendment audits, developing a code of conduct, developing a mission, FOIL, privacy and confidentiality as well as many other topics. It was a very well-presented training that allowed for significant interaction from the audience and allowed participants to role play potential scenarios and practice how they may manage these if they occur in our real-world positions.

~Sarah

MCLS Circulation

Town Libraries				
	Nov-25	Nov-24	+/-	%
Brighton	48,183	49,227	(1,044)	-2.1%
Seymour	11,651	11,548	103	0.9%
Chili	21,526	20,202	1,324	6.6%
East Rochester	3,793	3,543	250	7.1%
Fairport	56,489	57,089	(600)	-1.1%
Gates	20,201	19,983	218	1.1%
Greece	48,369	48,502	(133)	-0.3%
Hamlin	4,408	4,469	(61)	-1.4%
Henrietta	39,499	39,341	158	0.4%
Irondequoit	37,470	39,783	(2,313)	-5.8%
Mendon	9,180	9,146	34	0.4%
Newman Riga	2,134	2,141	(7)	-0.3%
Ogden	10,805	11,763	(958)	-8.1%
Parma	7,526	7,936	(410)	-5.2%
Penfield	40,883	39,528	1,355	3.4%
Pittsford	49,000	48,332	668	1.4%
Rush	2,438	2,438	-	0.0%
Mumford	693	617	76	12.3%
Scottsville	2,757	2,769	(12)	-0.4%
Webster	36,046	36,267	(221)	-0.6%
<i>Towns Subtotal</i>	<i>453,051</i>	<i>454,624</i>	<i>(1,573)</i>	<i>-0.3%</i>
<i>RPL Subtotal</i>	<i>81,567</i>	<i>75,495</i>	<i>6,072</i>	<i>8.0%</i>
MCLS Total	534,618	530,119	4,499	0.8%

MCLS Circulation

Town Libraries				
	Dec-25	Dec-24	+/-	%
Brighton	48,819	49,911	(1,092)	-2.2%
Seymour	11,306	11,439	(133)	-1.2%
Chili	20,094	18,811	1,283	6.8%
East Rochester	3,754	3,414	340	10.0%
Fairport	54,175	55,671	(1,496)	-2.7%
Gates	18,301	17,979	322	1.8%
Greece	47,459	45,560	1,899	4.2%
Hamlin	4,014	4,287	(273)	-6.4%
Henrietta	38,598	37,541	1,057	2.8%
Irondequoit	37,004	38,794	(1,790)	-4.6%
Mendon	9,044	8,485	559	6.6%
Newman Riga	2,120	1,926	194	10.1%
Ogden	10,541	10,310	231	2.2%
Parma	8,134	7,317	817	11.2%
Penfield	38,859	37,432	1,427	3.8%
Pittsford	46,572	44,293	2,279	5.1%
Rush	2,513	2,479	34	1.4%
Mumford	451	580	(129)	-22.2%
Scottsville	2,566	2,601	(35)	-1.3%
Webster	35,340	34,589	751	2.2%
<i>Towns Subtotal</i>	<i>439,664</i>	<i>433,419</i>	<i>6,245</i>	<i>1.4%</i>
<i>RPL Subtotal</i>	<i>81,076</i>	<i>75,323</i>	<i>5,753</i>	<i>7.6%</i>
MCLS Total	520,740	508,742	11,998	2.4%

Top 10 Unmet Needs Our Catalog Users Want to See

1 One-click "Request/Suggest a Purchase"
When a title isn't in the catalog, users want an easy way to suggest that the library purchase it, and to then get updates on the results of that suggestion

2 Integrated searching across physical & digital collections
Show Libby/Overdrive and Hoopla availability alongside results from the physical collections

3 Improved Browsing & Discovery, Not Just Known Item Search
Browse by genre/subject/theme/audience; display curated lists, "nearby on shelf", and real time "What's New/Coming Soon."

4 Series support that actually works
Show series pages and reading order; link from a title to its series; make it easy to hold the right volume, especially for manga

5 Smarter, more forgiving search
Typo tolerance with "did you mean" spelling suggestions, better results with partial titles, natural-language/keyword discovery, and clearer relevance ranking.

6 Clearer, faster "availability at my library" experience with a true home-branch default
Preferred library set once; more obvious "at my branch" indicators; fewer clicks to see what locations have available copies

7 More transparent loan rules and hold restrictions
Clear, upfront display of how items circulate and which items are eligible to fill holds. Ability to place holds on on-order/upcoming titles; clearer reasons when holds aren't allowed; better estimated wait/arrival info.

8 More functional Saved Title Lists
Don't jump back to top; bulk add/move/remove; add to list directly from results display; filter lists by branch and availability; mark read/owned/checked out

9 Improved Personal Reading History Functions
Easy searchable and exportable checkout history; show "you borrowed this before" on search result display; integrations with external tools such as Goodreads or StoryGraph

10 A real mobile experience
App-level usability (not a web wrapper), easier login including biometric options, better navigation on phones/tablets, UPC scan title lookup, "library nearest me" function

