



**Rochester
Public Library**

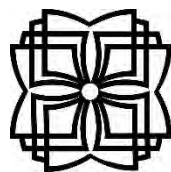
More Than You Think

115 South Avenue | Rochester | New York | 14604

**Rochester Public Library Board of Trustees Meeting
Arnett Branch Library
October 29, 2025, 9:00 a.m.
Agenda**

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|---|--------------|---------|
| I. PUBLIC COMMENTS | Benjamin | |
| II. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING | Benjamin | page 3 |
| III. PERSONNEL CHANGES | Suro | page 9 |
| IV. FINANCIAL REPORTS | Hasselwander | page 11 |
| V. NEW BUSINESS (Action Items) | | |
| 1. Maplewood Library Temporary Operations Lease Extention | Scanlon | page 15 |
| 2. Branch Tutoring Agreement, Laura Robinson | Scanlon | page 15 |
| 3. Election of Nominating Committee | Benjamin | page 15 |
| 4. 2026 RPL Board Meeting Schedule | Clasper | page 16 |
| 5. 2026 Holiday Schedule | Clasper | page 16 |
| 6. Northeast Branch Operations Budget Endorsement | Clasper | page 17 |
| 7. Northeast Branch Buildout Agreement Amendment | Hasselwander | page 17 |
| 8. Author Visit Agreement, Children's Book Festival | Hasselwander | page 18 |
| 9. Grant Acceptance and Budget Amendment | Hasselwander | page 18 |
| 10. Capital Improvement Program Request, FY 2027–FY 2031 | Harrison | page 19 |
| VI. REPORTS & DISCUSSION | | |
| 1. Liaison Reports | | |
| a. From the MCLS Board | Brandt | |
| b. From the Friends & Foundation of RPL | Borgus | |
| 2. Staff Reports | | |
| a. Director's Report | Clasper | |
| b. Central Library | Lehman | |
| c. Community Libraries | Scanlon | |
| VII. ANNOUNCEMENTS | | |
| VIII. ADJOURNMENT | | |

**Next Meeting
November 26, 2025
Central Library**



**Rochester
Public Library**

More Than You Think

115 South Avenue | Rochester | New York | 14604

**Meeting of the RPL Board of Trustees
Central Library, Rundel Memorial Building
September 24, 2025
Minutes**

RPL Trustees Present: Gary Brandt, Ellen Brenner, Elizabeth Call, Marcus Cooper, James Kraus, Sharon Salluzzo, Jeffrey Tucker, Mark Wyand (quorum present)

RPL Trustees Excused: Donna Benjamin, Sarah Murphy Abbamonte

Observed Online: Trustee Matt McDermott, City Council Liaison Mitch Gruber, City Administration Liaison Tammy Mayberry

Staff and Guests: City Law Department Liaison Allison Bartlett; FFRPL Liaison Donna Borgus; city staff members, Suzanne Warren, Emily Lohner; library staff members, Emily Clasper, Katy Hasselwander, Debi Mansour, BJ Scanlon, Ana Suro

Vice President Brenner called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m., welcomed trustees, staff, and guests, and confirmed a quorum was present.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No members of the public were present who wished to address the board.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the August meeting were approved as presented.

PERSONNEL CHANGES

Personnel Manager Suro called attention to the personnel changes and staffing levels for August 9, 2025–September 5, 2025, and offered to answer questions. Director Clasper added that a long-time employee in the shipping department, Dean Fleming, passed away suddenly over the weekend. The staff in that department are being offered counseling services. Trustee Call MADE A MOTION to approve the personnel changes. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Library Finance Manager Hasselwander reviewed the financial reports with the trustees and offered to answer questions. Trustee Salluzzo MADE A MOTION to approve the monthly financial reports as presented and approved by the RPL Finance Committee. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

Expanding Hours of Operation at the Winton Branch on Thursday Evenings

Deputy Director Scanlon reviewed the item and offered to answer questions. Trustee Call MADE A MOTION to approve changing the closing time at the Winton Branch library on Thursdays from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., effective November 1, 2025. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Branch Tutoring Agreement, Shuk Man Liu Conway

Deputy Director Scanlon reviewed the item and offered to answer questions. Trustee Salluzzo MADE A MOTION to approve an agreement with Shuk Man Liu Conway to provide tutoring services at the Wheatley Branch Library for an amount not to exceed \$4,930 with a term through May 31, 2026. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Agreement Amendment, Ibero-American Action League

Finance Manager Hasselwander reviewed the item and offered to answer questions. After discussion, Trustee Wyand MADE A MOTION to approve an agreement amendment with Ibero-American Action League to offer interpreting services for an additional year and increase the maximum compensation to \$7,600. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Lease Approval, Fernwood Avenue Branch Library

Finance Manager Hasselwander reviewed the item and offered to answer questions. In response to a request, she gave a brief history of the project. The groundbreaking is anticipated for December 2025, and completion is anticipated in the summer of 2027. After discussion, Trustee Salluzzo MADE A MOTION to authorize a 40-year lease agreement with the Rochester Housing Authority for 8,122 square feet of space at 100 Fernwood Avenue for operation of a new branch library, with construction costs applied in lieu of rent and annual expenses not to exceed \$25,000. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Library Fund Balance Allocation

Finance Manager Hasselwander introduced the item and offered City Budget Director Warren an opportunity to provide background on the request. Director Warren explained that the city originally planned to appropriate a portion of the General Fund toward the \$3.3 million construction costs when the Northeast Branch project was first introduced a few years ago. However, after the 2024–25 fiscal year close, the earmarked fund balance from the General Fund was no longer available. Director Warren stated that her office identified unspent cash capital from the library and other departments to utilize, but it did not cover the entire amount necessary for the project, which resulted in the request to use the Library Fund balance. During the conversation, Director Warren confirmed that the debt service replacing library cash capital will be general debt, not library debt.

Director Warren then opened the floor to trustees' questions.

Trustee Kraus asked about the impact of utilizing a large portion of the Library Fund balance. Director Warren reiterated that the Library Fund is healthy, stating it was about \$1.9 million as of that morning. Finance Manager Hasselwander noted that the RPL Board does not have an established fund balance policy and encouraged that one be drafted.

Trustee Wyand posed multiple questions about the risk the library faces by reducing the fund balance dramatically and whether this establishes any precedent for the city asking to use the Library Fund. Director Warren and Finance Manager Hasselwander both reiterated how the city offsets the Community Library budget with property tax support, in which expenses are estimated at \$5.6 million in FY26, not including benefit expenses, and revenue is estimated at less than \$300,000. This means that when expenses are lower than anticipated and funds fall to the Library Fund, that balance is also property tax supported.

Trustee Brenner asked if there were any plans to use the Library Fund balance in the near future. Finance Manager Hasselwander stated that there are no current plans and that any requests would be brought to the board for approval, typically during the budget process.

Trustee Brenner asked when the last time the Library Fund was around \$700,000, and the Finance Manager said that information would be provided. Deputy Director Scanlon recommended reviewing the historical fund balance as a percentage of the total operating budget to account for inflationary increases.

Trustee Call asked what would happen if the board did not approve the use of the library fund, and Counsel Bartlett stated that the project would come to a standstill until new funding could be identified. She also noted that City Council could not override the board's decision, as the library controls its own fund.

A discussion followed regarding other potential funding sources, including support from private funds and revenue generated from potential naming rights for the branch or a room within the branch. Counsel Bartlett stated that the naming rights are under review. Trustee Wyand MADE A MOTION to approve the appropriation of \$1 million of Library Fund balance towards the city contribution of the Fernwood Avenue Branch library project. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Approval, NYSED Division of Library Development Construction Grant

Finance Manager Hasselwander reviewed the item and offered to answer questions. After she and Director Clasper explained how the state construction grant process works, Trustee Kraus MADE A MOTION to approve a grant submission to the New York State Education Department, Division of Library Development, Library Construction for the Fernwood Avenue Branch Library in the amount of \$1,670,402. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

REPORTS & DISCUSSION

Liaison from the Monroe County Library System (MCLS) Board

Trustee Brandt reported that at its last meeting, the MCLS Board established several committees, including Executive, Nominating, Finance, Personnel, and Strategic Planning.

Other items included approval of the Monroe County Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), which designates \$280,000 for replacement of library delivery trucks and \$1.4 million over six years for maintenance of library automation hardware. The board also approved an amendment to a Wired for Opportunity professional services agreement, increasing the maximum expense to \$137,000—an \$8,000 increase from the prior agreement.

Lastly, the board approved library construction grant allocations totaling \$1.76 million, including \$1.67 million for the RPL's Fernwood Library project, \$62,000 for the Brockport Public Library entry door accessibility project, and \$25,000 for the Newman Riga Community Library to relocate their public restrooms.

Liaison from the Friends & Foundation of RPL (FFRPL)

Executive Director Borgus reported that the Friends & Foundation of the Rochester Public Library earned a Platinum Seal of Transparency from GuideStar, the highest possible recognition, helping to assure donors of the organization's accountability and strong stewardship.

As of September 8, FFRPL distributed \$14,082 in support of RPL and MCLS initiatives during the first two months of the fiscal year. Recent funding has supported a wide range of programs and needs, including summer reading prizes, back-to-school giveaways, Safe to Be Smart programming, community art and food programs, staff travel for professional and research purposes, loanable media equipment, literacy and youth services initiatives, and STEM and astronomy kits for MCLS.

The Annual Fund appeal was mailed in early September, including information on upcoming programs and giving opportunities such as the fall author series, online author talks, and ROC the Day. This year's ROC the Day campaign will benefit the Maplewood Branch, continuing FFRPL's multi-year focus on branch library support.

FFRPL also helped sponsor several cultural and literary events, including the *Art of the Book and Paper* exhibit, the sold-out event with author Shelby Van Pelt, and the *In This Moment* program at the George Eastman Museum.

Borgus encouraged everyone to participate in upcoming events and to support ROC the Day for Maplewood Branch.

Director's Report & Central Library

Director Clasper introduced the newly formatted Director's Report, noting that it represents the first iteration of the updated design and invited trustees to share feedback or suggestions for improvement.

Director Clasper also welcomed Sarah Lehman as the new Associate Director for the Central Library. Lehman has worked for RPL for twelve years, most recently as Branch Manager at the Lincoln Branch, and began her career at Central. Clasper expressed enthusiasm about Lehman's appointment and her positive transition into the new role.

Central Library once again served as a Fringe Festival venue, hosting several successful events, including the *Art of the Book and Paper* exhibit sponsored by FFRPL. One standout program, *Spooky Stories in the Stacks*, returned for the first time since before COVID. The event was so popular that the line extended around the building, and staff had to turn away attendees once the venue reached capacity. The overwhelming response demonstrated strong public interest in after-hours programming and reinforced the library's role as a vibrant cultural destination.

In response to a question, Director Clasper reported that the exterior restoration project—including window, parapet, and limestone façade work—is on schedule, with completion expected by mid-January 2026.

Trustee Brandt expressed appreciation for the clarity and design of the new report format, noting that it was well received by the Monroe County Library System Board as well.

Community Libraries

Deputy Director Scanlon shared several updates highlighting staff recognition, branch engagement, and community art projects across the Rochester Public Library system.

To align with community events, the Douglass Branch temporarily extended hours to coincide with the Anna Murray Douglass Academy open house, while the Arnett Branch will close early so staff can attend the City Employee Recognition Ceremony, where the entire branch team will be honored. Additional RPL staff, including members of the RPL GO! team, will also be recognized at the ceremony for their contributions to outreach and program excellence. A full report of staff recognitions will be provided at the next board meeting.

Scanlon noted that fall branch training closures are underway, beginning with Lyle Branch, which participated in training sessions on financial procedures, cataloging, and team development activities. The Lincoln Branch will hold its training next, including a screening and discussion of a PBS documentary, with similar staff development days planned systemwide.

He also shared a community story stemming from the RPL Sticker Contest, in which a Winton Branch family collected all six winning stickers, then created a storybook inspired by them. The book was printed and added to the Winton Branch collection, celebrating creativity and family engagement with the library.

Several art and mural projects are also underway. At Douglass Branch, a mural sponsored by Senator Cooney and managed by FFRPL is in progress, designed by a children’s book artist and inspired by classic stories like *The Chronicles of Narnia* and *Alice in Wonderland*.

At Sully Branch, a team of artists awarded a city grant will create a mural as part of the ROC Paint program, depicting family portraiture surrounded by symbols of the Beechwood neighborhood.

Looking ahead, the Lyell Branch is slated to participate in the ROC Paint outdoor art series in 2026.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Vice President Brenner reminded everyone that the next meeting will be at the Arnett Branch Library on October 29.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 10:29 a.m.

Debi Mansour

September 8, 2025–October 10, 2025

NEW HIRES

Gomez, Ceearra	Literacy Aide/PT/Maplewood Branch	10/09/2025
Krause, Kurt	Maintenance Worker/PT/Central/Facilities Department	10/06/2025
Pickering, Danielle	Library Page/PT/Charlotte Branch	09/29/2025
Vasquez, Chelsea	Clerk III/Typing/PT/Central/Art & Literature Division	10/06/2025

PROMOTION

Lehman, Sarah	FROM: Branch Manager/FT/Lincoln Branch TO: Associate Library Director/FT/Central Library Administration	09/08/2025
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RESIGNATION

Forbes, Emily	Clerk III/Typing/PT/Central/Technical Services	09/26/2025
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RETIREMENT

Cholewa, Nancy	Librarian I/FT/Arnett Branch 9 Years with RPL	09/26/2025
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DECEASED

Fleming, Dean	Shipping Aide/PT/Central/Shipping Department 29 Years of Service	09/22/2025
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STAFFING

Full-Time Positions	Central	Community
Budgeted	80	31
Filled	80	29
Vacancies	0	2
Part-time Positions	Central	Community
Budgeted	96	136
Filled	75	108
Vacancies	21	28

CENTRAL FINANCIAL REPORT, SEPTEMBER 2025***SALARY & BENEFITS***

Salaries, wages, and overtime are projected within budget. Benefits expenses reflect July, August, and September costs – previous report only included July.

EQUIPMENT & SUPPLIES

Materials expenses within budget (\$24,091). Supplies within budget, larger orders include stockroom items (\$1,180), Graphics paper (\$1,711) and janitorial supplies (\$1,443).

SERVICES & CHARGES

Services & Charges expenses are within budget. Includes: Print & copy machine monthly maintenance and lease payments (\$4,934); utility invoices (\$33,513); supplemental security services (\$1,279); Tech Center laptop cart maintenance (\$5,392). PITS subscription (\$2,080) and Brave Sensor renewed (\$500) – piloted via FFRPL in FY25; programming expenses (\$2,125).

CASH CAPITAL

No Central expenses.

COMMUNITY FINANCIAL REPORT, SEPTEMBER 2025***SALARY & BENEFITS***

Salaries, wages, and overtime are projected within budget.

EQUIPMENT & SUPPLIES

Materials expenses within budget (\$22,195). Supplies within budget, larger orders include stockroom items (\$721) and AED cases (\$1,040).

SERVICES & CHARGES

Services & Charges expenses are within budget. Print & copy machine monthly maintenance and lease payments (\$7,532); utility invoices (\$18,310); supplemental security services (\$2,150); FTAC summer invoices (\$8,397); PITS subscription renewed (\$2,080) – piloted via FFRPL in FY25; programming expenses (\$3,838).

CASH CAPITAL

Minor cash capital expenses within the last month, including cable for LAS (\$3,260).

Central Financial Report, Fiscal Year 2025-26 Fiscal YTD (through September 30, 2025)						
Category	Description	Original Budget	Revised Budget	Expenses Fiscal YTD	Remaining Balance	% of Budget
Salary & Benefits						
	Full-Time Salaries	5,226,800	5,226,800	1,196,269	4,030,531	22.9%
	Part-Time/Temp Salaries	1,664,200	1,664,200	323,893	1,340,307	19.5%
	Overtime	19,000	19,000	1,064	17,936	5.6%
	Employee Benefits	3,642,600	3,642,600	423,455	3,219,145	11.6%
	Employee Development	34,100	40,320	5,006	35,314	12.4%
	Other	67,200	67,200	7,549	59,651	11.2%
	Sub Total	10,653,900	10,660,120	1,957,235	8,702,885	18.4%
Equipment & Supplies						
	Materials Budget	511,800	519,313	65,222	454,091	12.6%
	Other Furnishings & Equipment	10,100	10,100	1,517	8,583	15.0%
	Office Supplies	60,100	69,384	16,072	53,312	23.2%
	Other Materials & Supplies	59,800	68,487	9,267	59,220	13.5%
	Sub Total	641,800	667,284	92,078	575,205	13.8%
Services & Charges						
	Utilities	467,500	468,300	103,110	365,190	22.0%
	Facility Maintenance	109,300	123,869	11,245	112,624	9.1%
	Professional Services/Fees	236,600	241,647	122,350	119,297	50.6%
	Chargebacks	89,700	89,700	3,669	86,031	4.1%
	Service Charges - Other Gov't	51,400	51,400	12,564	38,836	24.4%
	Telecommunications	14,200	14,200	225	13,975	1.6%
	Other Expenses	172,300	177,367	12,480	164,887	7.0%
	Sub Total	1,141,000	1,166,482	265,642	900,840	22.8%
TOTAL EXPENSED						
		12,436,700	12,493,886	2,314,955	10,178,931	18.6%
Central Cash Capital						
		FY26 Budget	Prior Year Carryover	Expenses YTD	Remaining Balance	
	Facility Maintenance Allocation	50,000	171,850	0	221,850	0.0%
	Rundel Loading Dock Assessment	120,000	0	0	120,000	0.0%
	Cash Capital Total	170,000	171,850	0	341,850	0.0%
REVENUE RECEIPTS						
		11,736,100	11,736,100	744,410	10,991,690	
Original Budget Revised Budget City Prorate Share + Revenue YTD Outstanding Revenue						

Community Financial Report, Fiscal Year 2025-26 Fiscal YTD (through September 30, 2025)						
Category	Description	Original Budget	Revised Budget	Expenses Fiscal YTD	Remaining Balance	% of Budget
Salary & Benefits						
	Full-Time Salaries	2,157,700	2,157,700	456,739	1,700,961	21.2%
	Part-Time/Temp Salaries	2,022,700	2,022,700	465,582	1,557,118	23.0%
	Overtime	2,000	2,000	1,017	983	50.9%
	Employee Development	19,600	22,309	3,496	18,813	15.7%
	Other	27,400	27,400	2,329	25,071	8.5%
	Sub Total	4,229,400	4,232,109	929,163	3,277,875	22.0%
Equipment & Supplies						
	Materials Budget	536,600	543,840	57,349	486,492	10.5%
	Office Supplies	37,700	39,851	5,264	34,587	13.2%
	Other Materials & Supplies	41,200	54,786	14,049	40,737	25.6%
	Sub Total	615,500	638,478	76,662	561,817	12.0%
Services & Charges						
	Utilities	229,500	230,513	46,046	184,467	20.0%
	Facility Maintenance	39,700	48,306	1,837	46,469	3.8%
	Professional Services/Fees	402,000	466,025	15,813	450,212	3.4%
	Chargebacks	26,400	26,400	1,881	24,519	7.1%
	Service Charges - Other Gov't	7,500	7,500	0	7,500	0.0%
	Telecommunications	17,100	17,206	0	17,206	0.0%
	Other Expenses	50,900	62,688	14,685	48,003	23.4%
	Sub Total	773,300	858,838	80,262	778,376	9.3%
TOTAL EXPENSED						
		5,618,200	5,729,425	1,086,087	4,618,067	19.0%
Community Cash Capital						
		FY26 Budget	Prior Year Carryover	Expenses YTD	Remaining Balance	
	Library Furnishings	12,000	39,042	18,893	32,150	48.4%
	Library Facilities	40,000	112,133	6,860	145,272	6.3%
	Library Technology	0	108,664	35,896	72,768	33.0%
	Library Capital Projects*	0				
	Cash Capital Total	52,000	259,839	61,649	250,190	23.7%
REVENUE RECEIPTS						
		277,000	277,000	164,562	112,438	
		<i>Original Budget</i>	<i>Revised Budget</i>	<i>Receipts Fiscal YTD</i>	<i>Outstanding Revenue</i>	
* Projects administered by City DES						

Trust Funds Financial Report, Fiscal Year 2025-26						
Fiscal YTD (through September 30, 2025)						
	Allocation	Carry-forward	TOTAL	YTD Expenses	% of Total	
Fenevessy (Central + Branch bal)*	4224	\$81,871	\$26,256	\$60,127	\$8,674	14.4%
Gleason Fund	4225	\$16,362				
Gleason Fund (FFRPL)*	4225	\$12,572	\$15,976	\$24,910	\$1,630	6.5%
Taylor Fund	4226	\$3,723	\$13	\$3,736	\$0	0.0%
Beeney Fund (FFRPL)	4227	\$5,042	\$4,246	\$9,288	\$122	1.3%
Carnahan Fund	4228	\$1,604	\$818	\$2,422	\$0	0.0%
Reynolds Fund - RPL	4229	\$148,267	\$112,797	\$261,064	\$41,688	16.0%
Purton Fund	4231	\$17,543	\$11	\$17,554	\$0	0.0%
Boland Fund	4232	\$1,589	\$2,504	\$4,093	\$0	0.0%
Kenyon-Jeffries Fund*	4233	\$20,827	\$1,497	\$10,324	\$0	0.0%
Poletto Fund	4234	\$1,604	\$363	\$1,968	\$0	0.0%
Gervickas Fund	4235	\$6,236	\$7,823	\$14,059	\$17	0.1%
Craig Fund (FFRPL)	4236	\$2,803	\$2,642	\$5,445	\$233	4.3%
Lee Fund (FFRPL)	4237	\$1,524	\$1,365	\$2,889	\$150	5.2%
Vietnam Veterans Fund (FFRPL)	4238	\$701	\$1,896	\$2,597	\$110	4.2%
Holtzman Fund (FFRPL)	4239	\$1,604	\$330	\$1,934	\$0	0.0%
Tummonds Fund (FFRPL)	4241	\$103,307	\$52,168	\$155,475	\$20,077	12.9%
TOTAL		\$427,180	\$230,704	\$577,884	\$72,701	12.6%
*Support for staffing expenses removed in total column.						
Fenevessy \$48,000 for literacy aides; Gleason \$20,000 for SHH staff; and Kenyon-Jeffries for LHG staff.						
Gift Fund Financial Report, Fiscal Year 2025-26						
Fiscal YTD (through September 30, 2025)						
Fund	Allocation	Transfer In	TOTAL	YTD Expenses	% of Total	
Gift Fund	4230	\$33,188	\$0	\$33,188	\$176	0.5%

October 2025

NEW BUSINESS (ACTION ITEMS)

MAPLEWOOD LIBRARY TEMPORARY OPERATIONS LEASE EXTENSION (SCANLON)

Board Action Requested: A motion to approve a temporary lease extension with Providence Housing through January 31, 2026, for \$2,975.10 per month.

Details: The RPL Board approved a lease with Providence Housing Development Corporation (Holy Rosary Apartments, L.P.) for the temporary operations of the Maplewood Community Library in May 2024 with a term through December 15, 2025. As we approach the end of renovations to the Maplewood Community Library, we anticipate the need for an additional 45 days resulting in a new lease term ending of January 31, 2026. Subsequent approval requests are forthcoming for temporary library service closure, and staff are working on internal tasks for the move back to Dewey Avenue. The lease retains the same terms as current (\$2,975.10 per month prorated for January) and will be paid from the FY26 Fenyvessy fund. Mary's Place Outreach Center continues to co-occupy the space and will continue the shared use with the RPL for a pro-rated share of utility costs for the extension period.

BRANCH TUTORING AGREEMENT, LAURA ROBINSON (SCANLON)

Board Action Requested: A motion to approve an agreement with Laura Robinson to provide tutoring services at the Phillis Wheatley Community Library for an amount not to exceed \$4,930 with a term through May 31, 2026.

Details: The Rochester Public Library recommends the continuation of the after-school tutoring program at the Phillis Wheatley Community Library. The previous tutor could not continue services. Wheatley Branch Manager Lori Frankunas interviewed several tutors and is recommending Laura Robinson to tutor pre-K through sixth grade. The tutor will provide up to 170 hours of in-person tutoring, at a rate of \$29.00 per hour, for a maximum compensation of \$4,930. This expense was anticipated in the Branch Administration's operating budget.

ELECTION OF NOMINATING COMMITTEE (BENJAMIN)

Board Action Requested: A motion to elect Ellen Brenner and Sarah Murphy Abbamonte to the Board Nominating Committee as specified in the bylaws.

Details: Per the RPL Bylaws, a Nominating Committee shall be elected at the October meeting. It shall consist of three members, one of whom shall be appointed by the President and two of whom shall be elected by the Board. The Nominating Committee shall meet as needed and shall make recommendations to the Board for officers and new Board members. The Nominating Committee shall develop a slate of candidates for the positions of President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer, which slate shall be presented to the Board at the November meeting and voted on by the Board at such meeting.

President Benjamin selected Marcus Cooper as their appointee to the Nominating Committee. Ellen Brenner and Sarah Murphy Abbamonte are the nominees to fill the other two committee seats.

2026 RPL BOARD MEETING SCHEDULE (CLASPER)

Board Action Requested: A motion to approve the proposed schedule of 2026 RPL Board meetings.

Details: The proposed Rochester Public Library Board meeting dates are:

January 28
February 25 (joint budget meeting with MCLS)
March 25
April 22
May 27
June 24
No Meeting in July
August 26
September 23
October 28
November 25
No meeting in December

Meetings are generally held on the fourth Wednesday at 9:00 a.m. unless otherwise noted. Most meetings are held at the Central Library, with the occasional meeting scheduled at a Branch Library.

2026 HOLIDAY SCHEDULE (CLASPER)

Board Action Requested: A motion to approve the 2026 holidays as proposed.

Details: The following holidays are proposed for RPL staff in 2026:

New Year's Day Thursday, January 1, 2026
Martin Luther King Jr. Day..... Monday, January 19, 2026
Spring Floater to be taken between February 1 and April 30
Memorial Day..... Monday, May 25, 2026
Juneteenth Friday, June 19, 2026
Independence Day (Observed) Friday, July 3, 2026
Labor Day Monday, September 7, 2026
Indigenous Peoples' Day Monday, October 12, 2026
Staff Day Friday, October 23, 2026
(Library buildings will be closed to the public – staff reports for Annual Staff Day)
Veterans' Day Wednesday, November 11, 2026
Thanksgiving Day..... Thursday, November 26, 2026
Christmas Eve Thursday, December 24, 2026
Christmas Day Friday, December 25, 2026
Director's Discretionary Day to be taken during calendar year 2026

CSEA Agreement: As specified in the CSEA agreement: (6) holidays for PT employees working 650+ hours in the preceding calendar year; New Year's Day, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Juneteenth Day, Thanksgiving Day, December 24th, and December 25th. Three (3) additional holidays provided to PT staff with 650+ hours in the preceding calendar year and with 6+ years of service, Memorial Day, Independence Day & Labor Day.

NORTHEAST BRANCH OPERATIONS BUDGET ENDORSEMENT (CLASPER)

Board Action Requested: A motion to endorse the FY28 operating budget of \$434,100 for the Northeast Branch.

Details: In 2022, RPL, Rochester Housing Authority (RHA), Home Leasing, and Edgemere Development partnered to develop a proposal for a library branch co-located with affordable housing. RPL then prepared a preliminary budget for the proposed branch operations. The partnership is intended to create a neighborhood anchor, similar to successful branch libraries co-located in affordable housing projects in New York City.

The Fernwood Avenue Apartments project supports several local planning documents with significant investment by the City of Rochester, New York State, and RHA. It aligns with the recommendations in our Facilities and Operations Plan and is within our highest priority need area. The redevelopment of 100 Fernwood Avenue is a critical component of the Group 14621 Community Association's '14621 Revitalization Strategy' Master Plan. The project site was a former Brownfield Cleanup Program with Certificate of Completion in 2009.

The proposed operations mirror other RPL branches with a focus on digital literacy and job seeking services. With the current project schedule, we anticipate a FY28 start based on July/August 2027 opening projections. RPL may seek partial funding for Q4 of FY27 to support the preliminary hiring of a Branch Manager and Librarian I to establish community contacts and collection development. The FY28 cost for operations is \$434,100, not inclusive of undistributed (benefits) costs. This does include salary, wages, programming, materials, and the annual Common Maintenance and interest payments for the building. The cost is equivalent to the Phillis Wheatley Community Library operations.

The Sunset Park Apartments and Brooklyn's Branch Library, as well as the New York Public Library's relocated Inwood Branch at the Eliza Apartments, serve as models to how neighborhoods are transformed by co-locating vibrant community services. While maintaining the library's existing services, such as early literacy and story-time programs, technology classes, and bilingual resources, additional spaces will be provided for computers, classes, and community needs. These types of joint ventures are the future of community-centered affordable housing development.

RPL administration acknowledges that the upcoming budget cycles may pose challenges similar to the 2008-2010 City fiscal crisis, with co-dependence on New York State financial health. We are open to innovative approaches to deliver branch library services as well as solving long-term capital needs of our aging facilities more efficiently.

NORTHEAST BRANCH BUILDOUT AGREEMENT AMENDMENT (HASSELWANDER)

Board Action Requested: A motion to approve an agreement amendment with Edge Architecture for an additional amount of \$85,000 and a revised total amount not to exceed \$235,000 for Northeast Branch Library buildout services.

Details: The RPL Board authorized an agreement with Edge Architecture in October 2024 for design services and Library representation for the construction process. At that time, it was anticipated that design would be completed by spring 2025, however, we noted that given the unusual nature of this project, additional services may be required. Since that time Edge and its sub-consultant have provided additional design services above the original proposal, in particular support in negotiating the roles, responsibilities and projected share(s) of construction activity for the overall project, with design work continuing through last month.

We asked Edge to confirm the additional hours committed to the project and any additional construction management hours they anticipate needing for the project going forward through construction completion. Edge has 280 additional hours, and Turner Engineering (sub-consultant) has 150 hours. We are recommending

amending their current contract not-to-exceed amount by \$85,000 to cover the additional design and construction administration support.

The amended total cost of services is \$235,000, with funding from prior year Branch cash capital and Fenyevessy funds for NE branch support.

AUTHOR VISIT AGREEMENT, CHILDREN'S BOOK FESTIVAL (HASSELWANDER)

Board Action Requested: A motion to approve an agreement with Tracey Baptiste for an Author Visit on November 7, 2025, for an amount of \$2,500 as part of the Children's Book Festival.

Details: On Friday, November 7, author Tracey Baptiste will visit World of Inquiry School to engage students in an inspiring day of literacy and storytelling. Baptiste, known for her dynamic presentations and bestselling books, will lead two interactive sessions—one for grades 1–3 and another for grades 4–6—designed to spark curiosity, build reading enthusiasm, and connect students with the power of diverse voices in literature.

In a special highlight, a select group of students will be invited to join the author for an intimate lunch conversation—an extraordinary opportunity to deepen their connection to reading, ask questions, and see themselves reflected in the world of authorship. This visit not only supports the Rochester City School District's literacy goals but also reinforces the library's role as a bridge between young readers and transformative learning experiences.

This expense will be paid out of the Beeney Trust Fund, which is dedicated to children's materials and programming.

GRANT ACCEPTANCE AND BUDGET AMENDMENT (HASSELWANDER)

Board Action Requested: A motion to accept a Rochester Area Community Foundation grant for \$112,000 and amend the RPL budget to reflect the grant.

Details: Children's Services Consultant Tonia Burton applied for the Early Childhood Invitational grant to expand the Raising a Reader (RAR) program to support home-based childcare providers in Monroe County by addressing key barriers to early literacy. Many providers face challenges such as limited transportation, lack of confidence in literacy instruction, and difficulty accessing culturally appropriate materials, especially for bilingual and English Language Learner (ELL) families. This program will bring high-quality books and early literacy activities directly into childcare settings, eliminating access barriers and building provider confidence through bi-weekly visits, hands-on coaching, and training rooted in the *Every Child Ready to Read* framework.

Participating providers will be selected through an application process targeting those listed in New York State's Office of Children and Family Services database. Provider eligibility will be based on licensing, service to children ages 0–8, and willingness to engage in training and regular library visits. Library staff will receive specialized training in early childhood development, trauma-informed care, and cultural awareness to ensure inclusive, developmentally appropriate support. By embedding literacy services into trusted care environments, RAR aims to improve early literacy outcomes and create lasting impact beyond the grant period.

Through this grant, RPL will contract with an early literacy curriculum development specialist, hire a part-time early learning specialist, and purchase materials for the participants. The RPL budget will be amended to reflect these expenses.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM REQUEST, FY 2027–FY 2031 (HARRISON)

Board Action Requested: A motion to approve the FY27–FY31 Capital Improvement Program submission as described.

Details: The RPL's capital improvement program requests fall into two categories; library operations requests and building repair and renovation requests, which we submit in collaboration with the city's Department of Environmental Services (DES), Architectural Services Division. Library operations requests detailed in the Director's Report are as follows:

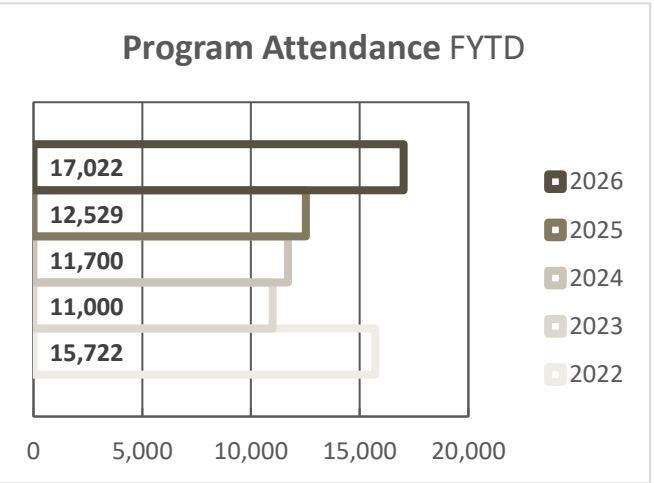
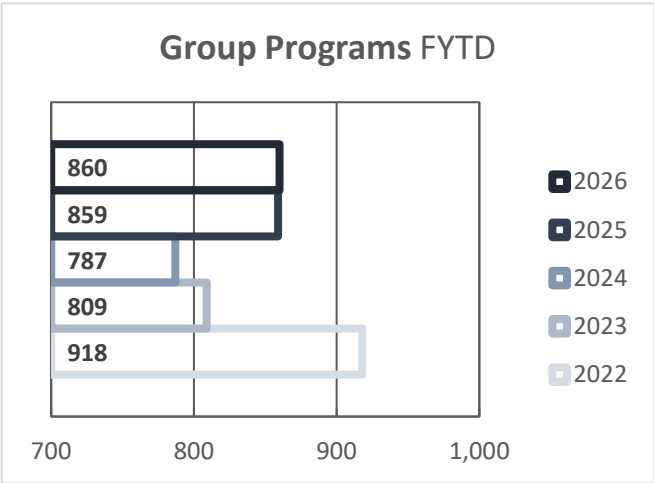
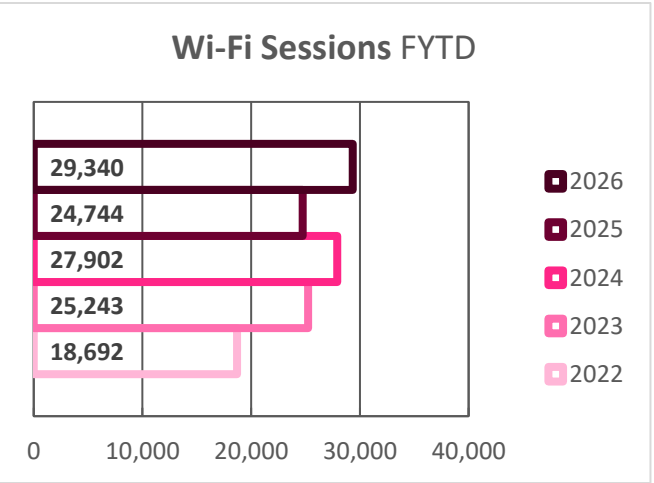
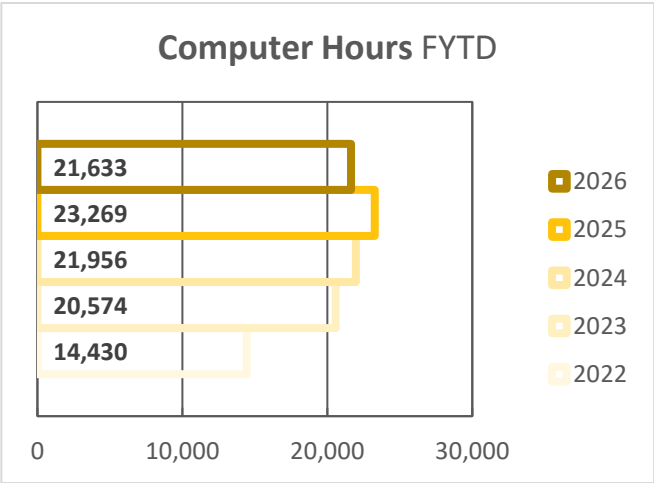
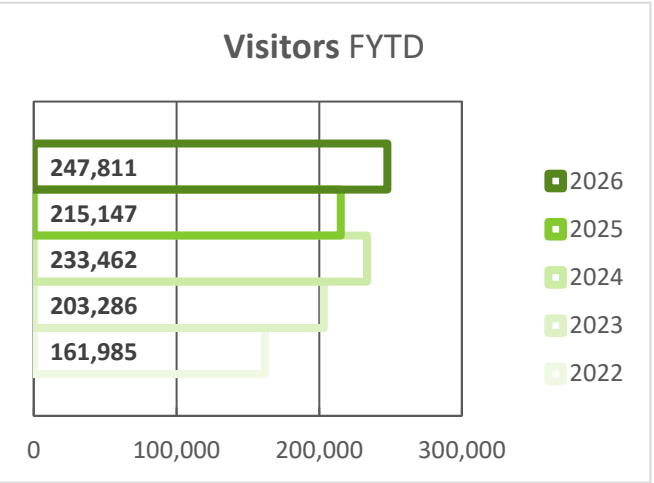
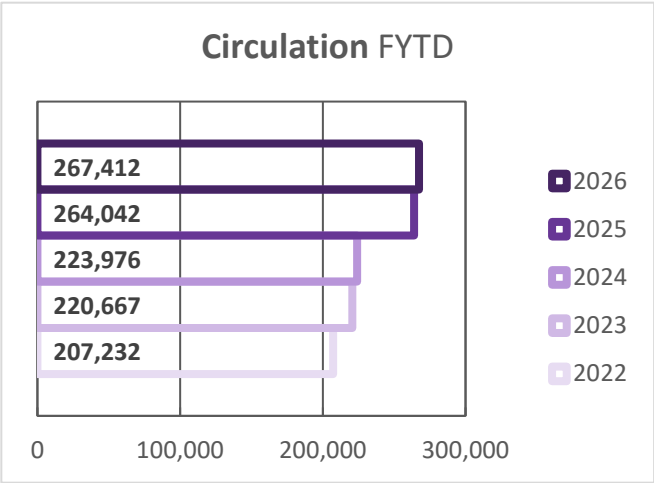
1. **Branch Library Computer Replacements:** The Library's five-year cycle for servers, large equipment, network/telephony, and computer replacements are as follows:
2. **Branch Facilities Annual Allocation:** Our requested allocation for FY27 is \$58,000 and we incorporate inflationary increases for proceeding years, ending with \$62,000 in FY31. This covers finish replacements and minor repairs to building systems and envelopes.
3. **Branch Furniture and Equipment:** We request an annual allocation of \$26,000 to replace chairs,

2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31
125,000	10,000	50,000	50,000	50,000

 tables, shelving, and equipment as needed in each branch, with inflationary increases for proceeding years, ending with \$30,000 in FY31.
4. **Central Facilities Annual Allocation:** Each year the city provides an allocation for the general upkeep of the Central Library. Our requested allocation for FY27 is \$96,000 with minor inflationary increases for proceeding years, ending with \$100,000 in FY30.
5. **Central Inspection Allocation:** This allocation is based on the growing requirements to inspect accumulation of Rundel raceway silt, structural inspections of Rundel terraces and HVAC inspections for the Bausch & Lomb Public Library Building. In prior years DES has recommended smaller annual allocations of between \$10,000 and \$50,000; they are increasing the annual request to \$500,000 for FY27 and similar going forward to accommodate costs for minor repairs as part of inspections.

Library facility repair and renovation requests are prioritized by the Department of Environmental Services (DES) Architectural Services, in consultation with RPL staff. Estimated costs are developed by Architectural Services and include design, construction, and a contingency allocation. This year due to budget concerns from the city administration, we will provide a summary document at the board meeting.

RPL AT A GLANCE (FISCAL YEAR 2026 JULY–SEPTEMBER)



PATRON STORIES

PATRON OF THE MONTH

Join us in celebrating Caidan, our August Patron of the Month. Twenty-one-year-old Caidan recently moved to Rochester from Miami. An avid reader throughout her childhood, she would walk to the library every day after school, checking out stacks of books, especially those featuring utopian or dystopian worlds and romance fiction. Earlier this year, she rediscovered her love of reading. Caidan first visited the Central Library while looking for a quiet space to complete her online college coursework. She wandered into the beautiful Rundel Memorial Building, signed up for a library card, and has been a regular visitor ever since. For her special title, Caidan selected *Greek Myths* by Gustav Schwab. She'll receive her own personal copy, and the Central Library will add a copy for the community to enjoy.



HONORING A HERO: LOCAL HISTORY TEAM HELPS FAMILY SECURE WWI VETERAN HEADSTONE

Special Collections staff in Local History recently assisted a patron in gathering the vital records needed to apply for a commemorative headstone recognizing his ancestor's World War I service. When the patron sent a last-minute request for the ancestor's Social Security number, staff promptly located the information and replied right away, ensuring the application could be completed in time.

FOR THE LOVE OF MANGA

Winton Branch Youth Services Librarian Emily Quevedo Smith chatted with a young patron searching for his favorite manga series, *Demon Slayer*. When he learned some volumes were missing, Quevedo Smith explained how materials sometimes go missing and can be difficult to replace. The next day, the patron returned with manga from his own collection to donate, saying he wanted other kids to enjoy the series too. Quevedo Smith was deeply touched by his generosity.

MAPLEWOOD LANGUAGE STUDENTS FIND SUCCESS

Students in the Maplewood Community Library's language program for new English learners are achieving exciting milestones. One Ukrainian participant who completed the program is now studying accounting at Monroe Community College and has secured a part-time job assisting an accountant at a local business. Another student from Myanmar recently adjusted her Zoom English class schedule to accommodate her new job at McDonald's.

SPECIAL INITIATIVES

A WONDERLAND OF ART AT THE FREDERICK DOUGLASS COMMUNITY LIBRARY

Artist Laura Babiuk is painting a stunning new mural in the children’s area at the Frederick Douglass Community Library. Funded by State Senator Jeremy Cooney, the design features imagery from *Alice in Wonderland* in honor of his mother and from *The Chronicles of Narnia*, the senator’s favorite childhood story. The mural is expected to be finished by the end of October.



STAYING CONNECTED AT LYELL

A Good Phone has been installed at the Lyell Branch, providing free phone access for the community. Calls can last up to 15 minutes, with no time limits for those related to Medicaid, SNAP, DHS, emergency shelter, and behavioral health. Lyell staff are excited to offer this new resource, which helps ensure equitable access to essential services and connections. The Good Phone Project repurposes payphones into free community phones, giving individuals a reliable way to connect with the people and resources they need.



WIRED FOR OPPORTUNITY (MCLS)

PROGRAMS

In September, 41 students completed their courses and received a free Chromebook.

Month	Classes	Attendance	Class Topics	
Jul	25	170	Applying for Benefits	Intro to Google Workspace
Aug	23	146	Computer Catch-Up	Library Resources
Sept	26	175	Intro to Computers	Online Job Search
				Scams and Security

SOLAR TABLE USAGE STATISTICS – SEPTEMBER 2025

Location	Data Usage (GBs)	Connections
Brockport	5.16	91
Connected Communities	3.71	210
East Rochester	0.99	136
Father Tracy Center	10.66	94
Freestyle Mercantile	0.25	132
Gandhi Institute	4.79	107
Greece Canal Park	1.4	205
Honeoye Falls	2.3	143
Parma	0.78	72
Riga	1.54	132

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

TEENS DESIGN THEIR OWN BOARD GAMES AT CENTRAL

The Technology Center and Teen Central have teamed up to introduce participants to the world of board games. Staff members Cy Shropshire and Josh Tomaszewski lead engaging sessions where they share popular games and spark lively discussions about what players enjoy or would change. Using these insights, participants are encouraged to design their own original games, complete with custom pieces created on the 3D printer.



A REVIEW OF WARHOL'S MUSES

Librarian Donald Hyatt presented a review of *Warhol's Muses* by Laurence Leamer for the FFRPL's [Books Sandwiched In](#) program. Through a review of Warhol's artistic career, Hyatt focused on the aspects of fame that were a part of Warhol's mystique and the pervasiveness of fame in today's culture. It seems people of all ages engage in the pursuit of fame, no matter the decade.

THE LIBRARY IS ALL CLASS

The Arnett Branch welcomed a group of eighty made up of fifth-grade students, parents, and teachers from Rochester Prep Middle School. The group walked ten blocks to the library and rotated through three activities: a library-themed scavenger hunt, library card sign-ups and replacements, and a building tour. The visit concluded with an energetic glow-in-the-dark bingo game complete with light-up glasses, rings, bracelets, and music. One child remarked, *"I never knew the library was so much fun."*

The Monroe Branch hosted two classes (4th and 6th) from Genesee Community Charter School. The students visited to learn about the library and check out books. They enjoyed engaging with staff and exploring resources firsthand.

CEILINGS COME ALIVE

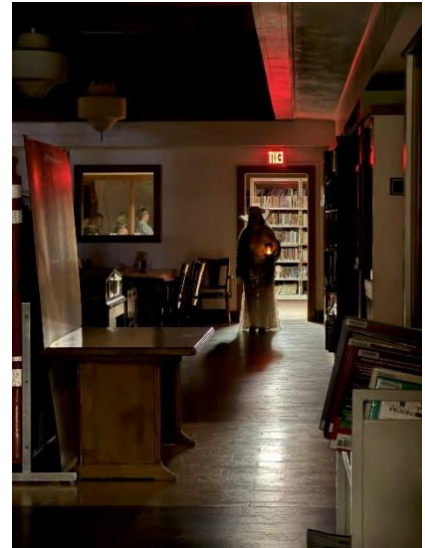
The Arts Bloom Tiles of Culture project has been in full swing this month, giving teens the chance to create artwork for the ceiling tiles in the Media Lab at Central. Members of the 9th Floor Collective have been collaborating with youth artists, guiding them as they design pieces that will become a permanent part of ImagineYOU's creative space.

SPOOKY STORIES IN THE STACKS

As part of the Rochester Fringe Festival, the library held its first in-person "Spooky Stories in the Stacks" since 2019. The revived program, led by Brandon Fess and Alicia Gunther, was a massive success! Ninety-six people went on the tour—and it was reported that another one hundred or so had to be turned away! Feedback from both the staff and guests was overwhelmingly positive, to the point that the staffs' end-of-night discussion was about how to expand the event next year.

TRANSFORMING ANGER INTO ART

The Monroe Branch hosted a workshop led by freelance artist Rachel Ortiz, titled Art: An Alternative to Violence. Participants explored ways to express anger through art on canvas and discussed how creative activities can provide a healthy outlet for managing emotions.



HANDS-ON FUN

The Lyell Branch's Fun Zone Kids Club had an action-packed month. Young patrons participated in a lively paint-n-pass activity, colored salt art projects, and an imaginative cardboard crafting session using the ChompSaw. Each session provided kids with the opportunity to explore new materials, express themselves in new ways, and share their creations with friends.



IT'S CRUNCH TIME

Arnett teens sampled five types of apples: Gala, McIntosh, Sugar Bee, Honeycrisp, and Ginger Gold. While Gala had taken the crown in 2024, it ranked last this year due to its unpleasant texture. The group discussed pricing differences—Honeycrisp can cost \$2–3 per pound, compared to \$1 per pound for McIntosh or Ginger Gold—and how cost influences food choices. Teens noted that they are often less likely to choose apples over other snacks, sparking a conversation about balancing quality with price. In the end, Sugar Bee emerged as the favorite, followed closely by Ginger Gold.

A TOWERING ACHIEVEMENT AT PHILLIS WHEATLEY

Teens from the Phillis Wheatley Community Library completed the LEGO Marvel Daily Bugle set—a project they have been working on since April. The impressive build includes twenty-five characters and a total of 3,772 pieces, showcasing the teens' teamwork, patience, and creativity.



OUTREACH & PARTNERSHIPS

PHONE A FRIEND

Evanna DiSalvo, Branch Manager at the Frederick Douglass Community Library, received a call from a librarian in Grand Haven, Michigan. Inspired by Douglass' recent flea market series, the librarian reached out for tips on organizing a similar event at their own library.

MAPLEWOOD HOSTS OACES JOB FAIR

The Office of Adult and Career Education Services (OACES) Literacy Zone hosted a job fair at the Maplewood Community Library, connecting community members with local employers. Representatives from Hurlbut Care Communities, Excellus BlueCross BlueShield, RG&E, Alliance Precision Plastics, and Monroe Community Hospital were on hand to share job opportunities and answer questions. Library staff enjoyed engaging with attendees and supporting their career goals.



BUILDING CONNECTIONS ONE SCHOOL AT A TIME

Rochester Public Library staff made meaningful connections with families and students throughout the community by participating in multiple school open house events.

At the Frederick Douglass Community Library, staff engaged families both in the school and at the branch during the Anna Murray Douglass Academy No. 12 open house. Youth Services Librarian Jennifer Nesbitt and Literacy Aide Lillian Kent greeted families at a table inside the school, while Branch Manager Evanna DiSalvo, Clerk Roarke Delany, and Page Andrea Reithmayr kept the library open late to welcome visitors exploring the shared space.

At Lincoln Branch, Youth Services Librarian Matt Seidel and Branch Manager Suzanne Macaulay connected with families during the Helen Barrett Montgomery School open house. Seidel even discovered several talented young chess players among the students, sparking new opportunities for library engagement through games and learning.

From the Phillis Wheatley Community Library, Youth Services Librarian Alexandra Haehn attended an open house, where she distributed free books, take-home crafts, and program flyers, and registered twenty-five children for new library cards—helping students and their families begin a lasting connection with their neighborhood library.

Youth Services Librarian Steve Shon represented the Sully Branch at two school open houses, sharing free books and inviting students to contribute to a giant whiteboard of reading requests. Their suggestions ranged from *Gabby's Dollhouse* and *Dog Man* to books about majorette dance, offering valuable insight into what inspires local readers.

Finally, Winton Branch Manager Kathy Wolf attended back-to-school night at The Children's School of Rochester, reconnecting with a familiar space—one where she once attended kindergarten and first grade.

Across all locations, these events offered powerful opportunities for library staff to strengthen relationships with students, families, and educators, demonstrating the library's continued role as a trusted and active partner in the community.

LIBRARY LOVE AT THE NORTH WINTON VILLAGE FESTIVAL

The Winton Branch Library had a table at the North Winton Village Festival on September 20. It was a beautiful day, with hundreds of neighbors strolling through Linear Garden on Main Street to enjoy music, food, crafts, and community. As always, the Winton prize wheel was a crowd favorite. With the fall book sale underway, visitors to the Winton table could win coupons for the sale, along with fun stickers and bookmarks. Several families with young children learned about the library's Rhyme Time program, and Youth Services Librarian Emily Quevedo Smith connected with many enthusiastic members of the Comic Club. The best part of any tabling event, though, is meeting people who are amazed by all the free services MCLS libraries offer—and hearing *"I love my library"* from those already in the know.

SULLY STAFF STAY CONNECTED DURING CLOSURE

During the Sully Branch's temporary closure, library staff have found opportunities to stay engaged with the community. Branch Manager Maria Heeks-Heinlein, Page Derionna Jackson, and Clerk Jose Mendez attended



the third annual Special Education Resource Fair, hosted by the Special Education Parent Advisory Council and the Office of Special Education. Positioned between Lollypop Farm and RocDog, it quickly became apparent that books and dogs are a winning combination.

Maria Heeks-Heinlein and Jose Mendez also attended the New Hope for Marketview Heights' Annual Health Fair, engaging attendees in conversations about library services. While some participants expressed disappointment about the temporary closure, they appreciated the library's continued presence in the community. Many thanks go to Tonia Burton for supplying books for distribution at this and other outreach events.

STORIES IN THE PARK

RPL GO! staff partnered with Jennifer Nesbitt from the Frederick Douglass Community Library to host a special outdoor story time at Highland Park. Nesbitt engaged families with stories, while Lyell staff distributed free books and signed visitors up for library cards.



COLLECTION UPDATES

EXPANDING ACCESS TO INCLUSIVE HISTORY

The Rochester City Council provided a full set of *Black History 365* and *Latino History 365 Companion* books to one library in each quadrant. These comprehensive texts offer an inclusive exploration of American history for students in kindergarten through 12th grade. Community members can explore the collections at the Arnett, Lincoln, Maplewood, and Sully Branch Libraries.

STAFF HIGHLIGHTS

A FOND FAREWELL

Arnett Youth Services Librarian **Nancy Cholewa** retired at the end of September. Before her departure, the children, teens, staff, and Friends of the Arnett Library gathered to celebrate her next chapter. The event was filled with gratitude, warm wishes—and, of course, cake. Reflecting on her time at the library, Cholewa shared, *"I will miss being a part of the Arnett team and working with the patrons in the 19th Ward. This has been a joyous experience."* Nancy started working for the RPL in 2016 as a substitute librarian for the Central Library. She worked as a part-time librarian at the Maplewood Community Library in 2017 and was promoted to full-time librarian at the Arnett Branch in 2018.

TEAMWORK MAKES THE DREAM WORK

The Lincoln Branch & Toy Library held its Fall Staff Day. Staff viewed and discussed the PBS documentary *Free For All: The Public Library*, engaged in an interactive presentation from NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) Rochester, and got creative in a Neurographic Art class led by Stephanie Kelly of Art Happy, Happy Art! Clerks also met with Jordan Dotson from LAS to review cataloging practices, and everyone had time to focus on individual tasks, projects, and required annual online trainings.



INSPIRING LIBRARIANS NATIONWIDE

Jennifer Byrnes joined the American Library Association's Digital Inclusion Working Group and will be presenting on Wired for Opportunity later in the fall.

CELEBRATED BY ALL

Lincoln Branch Clerk **Victoria Velasquez** celebrated her birthday this month, and countless patrons stopped by to wish her a happy birthday. Visitors came on their lunch breaks, on the way to and from work, and throughout the day. The outpouring of well-wishes was a true testament to the positive impact Vicky has on the Lincoln Branch and Toy Library community.

25 YEARS AND COUNTING

Kate Bliss, of the Winton Branch, recently celebrated 25 years of service with the Rochester Public Library. Kate started her career as a Clerk Typist and now serves as a Clerk III. She's known for her reliability, efficiency, and kindness, and, according to her coworkers, is always organizing, fixing, and finding ways to keep the library

running smoothly. Loved by patrons and colleagues alike, Kate brings calm and compassion to every interaction. She has a talent for easing tense situations and making everyone feel welcome. Kate also has a special gift for nurturing plants, caring for the Winton Branch's collection, and even helping staff rehab their own. Congratulations, Kate!

RPL STAFF CELEBRATED AT CITY OF ROCHESTER EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION AWARDS CEREMONY

George Carter (Sully) received the Mayor's Special Recognition Award for his vision and dedication in creating the Aviation Station Program. Mr. Carter gave Rochester teens the chance to train on simulators, tour airports, and even take their first flights. His labor of love has opened doors of possibility for the next generation.



Marianne Diaz (Maplewood) received the Margaret Popolizio Sunshine Award for her ability to make everyone she interacts with feel welcomed and valued.

Sharon Kunkel (Maplewood) received an Innovation and Problem-Solving Award for her pivotal role in designing the floor plan and overseeing the relocation of library collections, supplies, and technology when Maplewood moved to its temporary site. Thanks to her careful planning, 414 Lexington Avenue feels like home.

Natalie Soto (Lincoln) received a Customer Service Award for her quick and compassionate response when an individual was struck by a car while crossing Avenue D. She immediately rushed outside to offer support, demonstrating dedication and care for the community.

The Arnett Team (**Ginger Brewer, Joniah Anderson, Nancy Cholewa, Curtis Jackson, Carmetha Jones, Stephanie Knapp, Ceola Lester-Bacot, Prudence Leusch, Colleen Murray, Kate Peck, Mary Santiago, and Bruce Wilbur**) received a Team Customer Service Award for their outstanding dedication and consistent commitment to serving patrons with care and excellence.

The RPL GO! Team (**Jamie Ahmed, Chelsea Arnold, Tonia Burton, Richard Cato, Erin Clarke, Scott Corser, Amy Discenza, Alicia Gunther, Brie Harrison, Cathy Kyle, Brenda LaCrosse, Stephanie Lane, Artemis Markarkis, Caleb Paul, Natasha Prelevic, Ronald Schulz, Manju Sharma, Bruce Tehan, Jim Whittemore, Dennis Williams, and Shalis Worthy**) won a Team Innovation and Problem-Solving Award.

The BRAVE Overdose Detection Sensor Team (**Ana Suro, Frank Russo, Sam Marciano, Max Giancursio, Alicia Gunther, and José Cruz**) won a Team Innovation and Problem-Solving Award.

WELL-DESERVED RECOGNITION

The Raising a Reader program was acknowledged by Rochester City Council during National Literacy Month. MCLS Children's Services Consultant **Tonia Burton** accepted the award. This event honored a variety of other literacy organizations and inspired Tonia to spearhead the creation of a regional literacy meeting. This meeting will bring together the myriads of literacy organizations in our region to collaborate and share best practices.



LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S CORNER: EMILY CLASPER

TRUSTEE CALL TO ACTION

NYLA is calling on Library Advocates everywhere to contact Governor Hochul and urge her to sign the Freedom to Read Act (S.1099/A.7777) today! <https://app.oneclickpolitics.com/campaign-page?cid=pLyz0Gi2nfumjiN97lxNx>

EveryLibrary has partnered with CivicMail to provide a straightforward way to send physical postcards to government officials regarding issues that matter to you. See their [Book Banning postcard campaign](#) to try it out!

RECOMMENDED READING

LAist: [LA County libraries forced to end digital lending services after FCC decision](#)

Publishers Weekly: [For Banned Books Week 2025, Literary Orgs and Allies Determine to Make Noise](#)

Times Union: [Instead of librarians, schools staff libraries with teachers, aides— or close them](#)

WBUR: [Libraries are public health hubs](#)

IMPORTANT DATES

October 27, 11:00: In District Advocacy Meeting with Assemblywoman Clark. 500 Helendale Rd. Ste 90 Rochester, NY 14609

October 29, 11:00: In District Advocacy Meeting with Assemblywoman Lunsford. 317 Main St, East Rochester, NY 14445

October 30, 10:00: In District Advocacy Meeting with Assemblywoman Andrea Bailey. 5977 E. Henrietta Rd., Rush, NY 14543

October 30, 12:00–3:00: [RRLC Member Event & Celebration](#). Kate Gleason Auditorium, Central Library.

October 31, 9:30: In District Advocacy Meeting with Assemblyman Manktelow. Online meeting

November 5–8: NYLA Conference. Saratoga Springs

November 11: Veterans' Day, all RPL locations closed

November 18, 6:00: City Council Meeting, City Hall

November 23, 2pm: Park Theater, Avon screening of [The Librarians](#), followed by panel on Book Bans

UPCOMING LIBRARY PROGRAMMING

[Find Upcoming Library Programming Here](#)

DIRECTOR’S SITE VISITS

September	July	March
Lincoln Branch	Newman Riga	Penfield Public Library
August	June	Henrietta Public Library
None	Fairport	Rush Public Library
	May	Sully Branch
	Brighton Memorial Library	Arnett Branch
	Mendon Public Library	Chili Public Library
	Parma Public Library	February
	Pittsford Community Library	Charlotte Branch
	Winton Branch Library	Maplewood Community Library
	April	January
	Ogden Farmers’ Library	Frederick Douglass Comm. Library
	Irondequoit Public Library	Lyell Branch
	Phillis Wheatley Community Library	Monroe Branch

DIRECTOR’S UPDATES

In September, I had the pleasure of speaking at Cloverwood Senior Living in Pittsford, where I gave a talk on Book Bans and Challenges to an absolutely wonderful group of lifelong library supporters. Opportunities like these, often made possible through the Friends & Foundation of RPL (FFRPL), are so valuable because they keep our library-loving community informed and engaged with the issues shaping the future of an institution they care so deeply about. Each time I visit, I am reminded how profoundly libraries have touched people’s lives, as attendees share personal stories that highlight the lasting impact of access, inclusion, and the freedom to read.

I have also been serving as a regular contributor to the City and County Joint Homelessness Committee, bringing the library’s perspective to the table by sharing real stories and insights from the unhoused individuals who rely on our libraries every day. These discussions have been essential in strengthening our collective understanding of community needs and ensuring that compassion remains at the center of our public service.

Meanwhile, the MCLS Directors’ Council continues important conversations about how we can better collaborate and deliver efficient, equitable service across the county. Our recent work has focused on reducing eBook and eAudiobook hold times through OverDrive, refining cataloging practices to improve access to our growing “Library of Things,” and providing communication options for patrons who may not have access to text or email notifications. Each of these efforts reflects our shared commitment to making the library experience accessible and responsive to everyone we serve.

As we approach New York State Library Advocacy Season, we are preparing for several in-district meetings with our state legislators. While our talking points remain consistent—sustained funding, fair eBook licensing, and support for media literacy—this year we are especially emphasizing the importance of passing the Open Shelves Act, vital legislation that would protect public libraries across the state from costly and politically

motivated materials challenges. Together, these priorities ensure that New York's libraries can continue to stand as open, trusted spaces for learning, connection, and discovery.

~Emily

CENTRAL LIBRARY ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR'S UPDATES FROM SARAH LEHMAN

I spent much of last month meeting with the different divisions, getting to know staff and hearing from them about their roles. There is such an incredibly wide range of talents, projects and experience held by the staff here at Central. It has been wonderful to learn all the exciting things that are happening, meet all the staff I have not yet and re-acquaint myself with all the things that Central and its staff have to offer.

I have had an opportunity to spend time subbing in the Teen Center, getting to know staff and patrons. It is one thing to hear about the public-facing work that our staff does every day, and it is another thing entirely to experience it myself. I am looking forward to continuing this in other divisions as well in the coming months.

The Art of the Book Exhibit opened again in September for the 14th year. The exhibit will run until November 15th. A reception was held in Harold Hacker Hall on September 17th. This year the display also includes art from Donald Hyatt (Walking Scroll); one of the librarians from the Art and Lit Division. Finally, as part of the display this year, the exhibits team created a stunning 'selfie station' complete with crepe paper flowers for visitors to use. The flowers are absolutely stunning!

I continue to collaborate with Deputy Director BJ Scanlon and the Health and Safety Committee to review our current response plans for fires and building evacuation. We have two fire drills planned for the end of October: one for the Rundel Building and one for the Bausch and Lomb building. I look forward to implementing these new plans in real time.

Finally, we will be bringing the programming team back together for regular meetings and planning for building-wide events. We received a request from WXXI to partner for a screening of *The Librarians* in April to coincide with National Library Week. The programming team will begin with focusing on building-wide programming for National Library Week (4/19-4/25) to culminate in a screening of the film in the Kate Gleason Auditorium.

~Sarah

COMMUNITY LIBRARIES DEPUTY DIRECTOR'S UPDATES FROM BJ SCANLON

September was a busy and rewarding month at the Rochester Public Library. I am pleased to share highlights in three areas: communications, partnerships, and community connection.

Communications and Media

I helped connect the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) Rochester Chapter with the library to host a four-hour *Press Playbook* training led by Barbara Pierce, the city's Director of Communications. In exchange for free meeting space, MCLS staff were invited to attend at no cost, with twelve staff participating. The session included guidance on pitching stories, and the team put these skills to work immediately. I worked with Carlet



Cleare to pitch a story about a local family who created the books that were shared with the Board last month. The story was picked up and featured by Spectrum News.

Partnerships

Partnerships remain at the heart of RPL's work. The library received five hundred one-ride bus passes from the Greater Rochester Community Transportation Foundation, which will be distributed across branches to help reduce emergency transportation barriers for patrons. Sarah Lehman and I are also exploring a collaboration with the Rochester City School District to help students with learning disabilities gain job skills through workforce training in the library. Early discussions are underway with the University of Rochester Medical Center to install air quality monitors on the roofs of libraries and potentially other city buildings, and ArtsBloom will soon bring cultural programs to libraries—starting with Grupo Cultural Latinos En Rochester at Central, Douglass, and Lincoln. I also attended the Annual Community Update: Five-year Review of the Commission on Racial and Structural Equity (RASE).

Community Connection

During a Saturday shift at the Douglass Branch, I assisted a patron who was creating a slideshow for her mother's celebration of life. I guided her through the process of cropping photos, organizing them in Google Drive, and building the presentation. After returning from overseas, the patron reconnected with me to finalize the project. She had independently completed much of the work, demonstrating new digital literacy skills she had learned from our earlier session. Together, we completed the slideshow—an example of how library staff empower community members through personalized support and technology assistance.

~BJ