

Approved Minutes June 17, 2025
Edward U. Demmer Memorial Library
Library Board of Trustees Meeting

Trustee Attendance: Dan McKissack, Dianna Blicharz, Rich Mahlerwein, Kathleen Olkowski, Karen Meyer(virtual),
Patty Wallesverd, Jeff Boehm (Jeff left 5:22pm)

Other Attendees: Jill Roth, April Hansen, Sue Harris (arrives at 4:15 pm, left at 4:52 pm)

Absent:

Dan McKissack called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m.

Agenda:

Motion by Patty, seconded by Rich to approve the agenda in any order. All ayes, motion carried.

Approval of Minutes:

Motion by Patty, seconded by Rich to approve the regular meeting minutes of May 21, 2025, with changes. All ayes, motion carried.

Correspondence: Key WVLS statistics were reviewed. Kris Adams Wendt shared that the Joint Finance Committee had approved an increase in state funding for libraries. The increase helped replace some of the lost federal funding.

Committee Reports:

Three Lakes Public Library Foundation: The Three Lakes Public Library Foundation planned to meet on Friday, June 20th in the afternoon.

Oneida County Library Board: The Oneida County Library Board scheduled its next meeting for July.

Director's Report: Chance to ask questions. The library let go the previous custodian and hired a new one for the summer. He was hired for the Three Lakes Historical Museum and was able to piggyback this job onto that one. A board member asked about the concrete update. The person, mentioned earlier in the year to fix the concrete, had a long list of jobs ahead of the library's request. The people pouring concrete for the Veterans Memorial did not specialize in this type of repair work and therefore could not help. One board member suggested placing sport flooring over the concrete, which might save the library from having to remove and replace it. Jeff agreed to speak with his contact about timing and availability of the sport flooring. A board member asked about the WIFI Hotspots and patron interest. Reducing to one hotspot should still meet patron demand. One hotspot remained useful during internet outages at the library by allowing circulation computers to function. Summer requests for hotspots were higher than in the winter. Karen suggested the Friends of the Library take over funding this item instead of adding it to the budget.

Building and Maintenance Report:

The board briefly discussed the paint spill and thanked Jeff for his quick work of fixing the carpet. (Sue arrives. President skips to the Budget Review w/ Sue Harris on the Agenda.)

New Business:

Budget Review with Sue Harris: Board members requested clarification about the wording of the letter sent to the library regarding budget timelines. Sue explained the cost of health insurance for a family plan and how it affected the Demmer Library budget.

Dianna asked Sue for additional ideas. Sue noted that the library had outside funds designated for buildings and maintenance. She asked whether foundations and organizations might allow access to these monies. Jill pointed out that while these funds could be used for one-time purchases, repeat purchases were considered operational costs. Jill added that she preferred to reserve building and maintenance funds for long-term projects. Sue pointed out that the library could receive donations and grants for items like books. Kathleen emphasized that there was no annual guarantee of how much support would come in and reiterated that the library operated with a lean budget.

A board member asked whether the library served as an emergency shelter. The board confirmed that it did not, as the building lacked an emergency generator among other issues.

The board thanked Sue for her input. (Sue leaves at 4:52pm)

Board members expressed concern about the tone of a letter from the Town Chair. They believed the library budget was conservative and that employees were undercompensated. They felt the letter implied the board was frivolous and the library mismanaged funds. Other board members acknowledged that rising healthcare costs were the main concern. The board discussed that continued reliance on the non-lapsing surplus fund would eventually create budgeting issues. The library reported over \$300,000 in expenses to the state. The library contributed to the non-lapsing account quarterly through fines and copy fees. The board emphasized the need to keep operational expenses lean while funding special projects selectively.

The board discussed public perception of the library. Members noted that non-users often misunderstood library funding and operations. They discussed ways to improve community engagement, such as reaching out to local businesses like Scottie's Bait and Tackle or Brian Fritz from Forward Bank.

The board acknowledged that the library operated as a town entity. Members discussed whether utility contracts could be bundled to reduce costs. The WPS accounts were not currently bundled. The board considered bundling cleaning contracts with the town to save money, but the library's cleaning budget was too limited. Two deep cleanings a year could be bundled to reduce cost. The maintenance account, governed by the Demmer Trust, included rules and required detailed post-spending reports. Mike Witt and John Stauner serve as trustees of the Demmer Trust.

Regarding the emergency generator, the board agreed that it would need to be funded from the building and maintenance account. Members agreed it was not a current priority, as the library did not serve as an emergency shelter and lacked the capacity to do so. Staff were already strained. The school currently sent high school students to the library in the event of an active shooter.

Budget Review:

Public Accounts: Motion by Patty, second by Rich, to pay bills listed on the public funds voucher list. Discussion. All ayes, motion carried.

Special Accounts: (Jeff Leaves at 5:22 pm.) Motion by Rich, seconded by Patty to approve payment of the bills from the Laona Bank Special Account. All ayes, motion carried.

2025 Budget Review: Discussion

Unfinished Business

Friends of Library revival: Jill prepared a statement for Karen comparing current revenue to previous years. The funds raised had increased, and many volunteers assisted with sorting and selling. However, no core group had committed to serving as board members. Patty wanted to move forward with purchasing heavy-duty rolling shelving for book storage in the Maple Room closets. Karen and Patty planned to meet to review shelving options.

O. Inclement Weather and Emergencies Policy - 03-2020: Motion by Rich, Second by Patty, to table this policy until the next meeting. All ayes. Motion carried

Oa. Emergency procedures - 09-2020: Motion by Rich, second by Patty to table this policy until the next meeting, second by Patty. All ayes. Motion carried

Landscaping Project – Stage 1 (Conceptual): The board had not yet received a line-item quote for the proposed celebration garden. Members discussed what land remained under library board control. A new concept was suggested for a Storybook Garden with play stations. To proceed, members agreed to mark property lines and schedule a planning meeting. They requested that someone inform Mari Lyn and Beth that a permanent garden could be installed, but it would require a new design with input from the Children’s Librarian. Motion by Patty, second by Rich that the exact lot lines of the Demmer Memorial Library Property be marked. All ayes. Motion carried. Karen reminded the board to be mindful of landscaping expenses so the library would not appear to have excess funds during budget requests.

Comments from public: One person asked for acronyms to be spelled out in the statistics infographic (e.g., TLPLF = Three Lakes Public Library Foundation). Another comment addressed active shooter drills and training. Jill responded that staff had received training videos. A suggestion was made to invite Police Chief Scott Lea to speak to the board about emergencies and training.

Next Meeting: Regular meeting on July 15, 2025, 4:00 pm in the lower level of the library and/or via video/teleconference

The meeting adjourned at 5:57PM. Motion by Rich, Seconded by Patty All ayes. Meeting Adjourned.

Respectfully submitted: Jill Roth, Director