

**Somers Library Board of Trustees
PO Box 443
Somers, New York 10589**

**MEETING MINUTES
June 18, 2025**

President Rios called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

The Trustees present were Nola Blair, Allison Colella, Susan Dillon, Sheelagh Kaplan, Kala Marsh, Christine Rios, Brian Schnapper, Barbara Tepper and Rebecca Wintle.

Councilman Richard Clinchy and Library Director Jessica Veissy were also present.

Mrs. Dillon attended the meeting via Zoom.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

A motion was made by Mrs. Tepper and seconded by Mr. Schnapper to approve the minutes of the May 21, 2025 as submitted. All were in favor.

Announcements and Correspondences

Suggestions in the Suggestion Box - please have activist events for teens and offer a medium program. There was also a thank you in the box for keeping the new books close to the front door for those who have difficulty walking.

Top social media posts: 8,899 views - top posts/reels Cardinal - 499, Birdfeeder bouncing bird - 493

Circulation fielded over 270 calls.

Tot Time with Miss Rachel on Tuesdays saw strong attendance this month, and she has gotten rave reviews from the regular attendees. Plans will be made to have her return in the summer.

The Bubble Bus will be at the library on Thursday, June 26th, at 6:30 p.m. to kick off Summer Reading.

The Friends of the Somers Library sent a letter of gratitude to Elizabeth Anastasi and Terre Thomas for their involvement and hard work with the Mahjong Fundraiser. Ms. Veissy is grateful for Ms. Anastasi as well as Ms. Thomas and proud to have them as part of the staff. Thank you to Ifay Chang, Susan Liss, Gary Rikoon, and Pamela Suett for volunteering their time to make this fundraiser possible.

There was a formal complaint from a resident, along with verbal complaints from the Knitting Group regarding the same issue. The staff managed the situation exceptionally well, Ms. Veissy's opinion, and will work to prevent future occurrences. Ms. Anastasi addressed both parties in Ms. Veissy's absence, responding with respect and the utmost professionalism.:

Dear Somers Library Management,

I am writing to formally express my deep concern regarding an upsetting and alienating experience I had at Somers Library on the morning of June 6, 2025.

I took the day off from work and arrived at the library at 10:00 AM and set up a quiet workstation with my laptop and noise-cancelling headphones, expecting a peaceful environment in which to study.

However, about 30 minutes later, a group of individuals began arriving, eventually forming what I later learned was a knitting club. They engaged in loud conversations, laughing and speaking at such a volume that I could hear them clearly through my noise-cancelling headphones.

I politely asked the group if they could lower their voices, at which point one member told me to speak to the librarian or move, while another commented that they were “there every Friday.” The tone was defensive and dismissive. Seeking clarification, I approached a librarian at the front desk, a younger male, who informed me that the group was indeed a knitting club and that there was supposed to be a sign indicating as much. When I asked if this meant the space was no longer considered a quiet area during their gatherings, he said yes.

Since the area was no longer considered quiet, and I couldn’t hear my course videos even with headphones, I briefly used my laptop’s speakers. When the group’s conversation quieted, I respectfully lowered the volume. Despite this, members of the knitting group complained to staff about me, and what followed was deeply unsettling.

When I asked what the issue was, the entire table erupted in criticism toward me. It was immediately apparent that the club members and staff were familiar with one another and had an established rapport. The director arrived, whom was the only member of the staff that acted with professionalism, and we began speaking and walking away from the table. As I walked away, I overheard the blond librarian stay behind with the group, laughing with them. This behavior was humiliating and unprofessional. It gave the impression that staff were siding with the knitting group not based on fairness or library policy, but out of familiarity and social bias.

To make matters worse, another male librarian who had been present in the room for close to an hour said nothing until the group started their attack. It felt as though the staff chose to engage only once their regulars, the knitting club, voiced an issue. This selective enforcement of behavior felt unjust and exclusionary.

Moreover, the noise generated by the group could be heard from the front of the library and was clearly disruptive to other patrons as well. The director and I observed the sound traveling all the way to the front of the library together. It is troubling that such a visibly disruptive group is not held to the same behavioral expectations as other guests.

As a long-time resident and taxpaying member of this community, I expect equal access to public resources and respectful treatment from staff. What I experienced instead was favoritism, disregard for quiet workspace norms, and ultimately, public humiliation.

I strongly request that:

1. The knitting club receive a formal written warning regarding appropriate behavior, including noise level and discouraging them from directly confronting or targeting other patrons.
2. The group be permanently relocated to one of the library’s larger, enclosed conference rooms, of which there was at least one visibly available, so their meetings do not continue to disrupt shared public space. It feels painfully obvious that a social club should confer in a conference room.
3. The library reviews its policy on how group activities are communicated to other patrons, and ensures clear signage and communication to avoid future misunderstandings.

I would appreciate a written response acknowledging this complaint and outlining how the library plans to address it.

Sincerely,
Somers Resident

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Treasurer's Report

Ms. Blair prepared and presented the Treasurer's Report which was reviewed and discussed.

Mrs. Dillon made a motion to approve the Abstract of Audited Vouchers #6, dated June 18, 2025 in the amount of \$19,761.85, which included voucher numbers 114739 to 114760. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Colella. All were in favor.

The contractual amount spent this past month was \$19,761.85, including \$525.00 from the Gift Fund. The largest expenditures were: OverDrive (eBooks, audiobooks and videos) \$4,678.04; Baker & Taylor Books (books) \$2,833.58; and Bond, Schoeneck & King, PLLC (union contract attorney) \$2,607.00. Payroll and benefits were \$69,430.62. Total library spending for all accounts was \$89,192.47.

Library Director's Report

Life Scout, Aidan Kimmel has completed the garden project; however, he is waiting for the pollinator garden sign to come in. The front of the library looks fantastic, and already have new visitors buzzing about the new pollinator garden located just outside the bird-watching window.

3,371 patrons visited the library in May.

Buildings and Grounds

The new Bullet Aid grant's disbursement will be used to purchase new library chairs for visitors.

Light Electric examined the generator; it was low on oil, and they replaced the coolant. They also inspected the battery thoroughly to ensure that there are no issues next time.

Paving of the path outside the emergency exit started on June 11th. The path will extend around the library to provide access to the front in an emergency. A railing will be installed in the back. Mrs. Tepper suggested the edges of the path be marked in white for easier navigation in the dark. Many thanks to the following for their time and effort with this project – Highway Superintendent Nick DeVito, Maintenance Repair Technician Martin Gnip, Parks and Recreation Superintendent Steve Ralston, Supervisor Rob Scorrano, Buildings Secretary Denise Schirmer and Building Inspector Tom Tooma.

A service call was placed to Sueco on June 10th as the staff and Ms. Veissy noticed the main area of the building was becoming increasingly warm while other areas were cool. The filters were completely filled with dirt and this created a blockage.

Grant Review

Ms. Veissy received word from Assemblyman Matt Slater's office that the Somers Library will be considered again for the Bullet Aid Grant. It is expected that \$20,000 will be received this time around. Ms. Veissy is waiting for more details, but as requested, told them that the plans for the funds is to buy new visitor chairs and allocate additional funds for programming. It is possible the funding may not arrive until the end of the year. Ms. Veissy looks forward to working with Assemblyman Slater's office on this initiative.

Personnel

Unfortunately, the Librarian 1 list had to be closed due to lack of interest. The general response was "the pay is too low". The Children's Librarian I list included candidates from the Librarian I list, so it didn't make sense to canvass from that list. The job has been posted online, and currently there are a few candidates applying through the posting. Interviews were finalized the week of June 9th. Hopefully someone will be in place in the children's room by August.

Alan Briones is preparing to take the Librarian II exam very soon. A passing grade and approval will lead to a promotion as Head of Children's.

Professional Development

Staff development will resume in the fall.

Monthly Statistics for May

New Library Cards – 56 (50 adults and 6 juveniles)

ILL Items Received – 1,336

ILL Items Supplied – 1,126

Monthly Circulation – 12,624

Computer Usage – 122

Door Count – 3,371

WiFi Usage Connections – 715

Reference – 1,077 (Adult/YA) and 123 (Children)

Programs/Attendance – Adult 32/484, Teens 7/79 and Children 20/706

Staff Meeting

The agenda included discussions on timesheets, scheduling, projects around the library, a new google form for time off requests, staff development and training for the fall as well as a few small updates around the library.

Friends of the Somers Library

The Mahjong Tournament was attended by 50 people. Raffles were available. The net profit for the library was over \$1,000. Funding of the Book Page program was approved. The Friends increased the amount of funding they give to the library.

Monthly Meeting with Town Update

Another discussion took place about the amount of money being spent on legal fees for the union negotiations. The budgeted amount is not for these types of legal fees. The meetings continue to happen monthly and are very useful.

Old Business

Teen Room Renovation Update

The Town Board has approved the add-ons for the teen room renovation and Supervisor Scorrano signed the paperwork. Bob Galbaski from Lothrop Associates has been notified, and Ms. Veissy is waiting to hear about the next steps.

HVAC Update

Unfortunately, no bids for an HVAC design for the library were received. The Building Inspector is in the process of determining whether it can be solicited as an RFP and getting professional input on the scope of work.

Library Foundation Remaining Funds to Harris Fund

A motion was made by Mrs. Rios and seconded by Ms. Blair to move the \$3,300 received and deposited into the Gift Fund to the Harris Fund. All were in favor.

New Business

Accept Rebecca Rogan's Resignation

A motion was made by Mrs. Tepper and seconded by Mrs. Collella to accept the resignation of Rebecca Rogan effective May 29, 2025. All were in favor.

Accept the Elimination of Shane Aiello and Quinn Bolte's Positions

A motion was made by Mrs. Dillon and seconded by Mr. Schnapper to accept the elimination of Shane Aiello and Quinn Bolte's positions. All were in favor.

Discussion – Policy for Book Selling During Author Visits

A discussion took place about creating a policy for book selling during author visits. Many ideas were shared. This will be discussed again.

Personnel Policy Addition – Disciplinary Action for Habitual Tardiness

A personnel policy for disciplinary action for habitual tardiness will be discussed in Executive Session.

Approval for Lily Konys' Jury Duty Pay

A motion was made by Mrs. Tepper and seconded by Ms. Blair to pay Lily Konys' for four days that she will miss work as a result of jury duty, May 30 and June 9, 13 as well as 20. The rate of pay is \$16.87 for 7 hours a day. All were in favor.

Approve New Hire Marie Nania

The approval of new hire Marie Nania will take place in Executive Session.

At 8:00 p.m., the Board went into Executive Session to discuss union contract negotiations and personnel. They came out of Executive Session at 8:30 p.m.

A motion was made by Mrs. Tepper and seconded by Mrs. Rios to approve Marie Nania for the full-time Children's librarian position at an annual salary of \$54,000. The start date will be contingent on civil service exam results. All were in favor.

The meeting was closed. The Board will meet next on Wednesday, July 16th at 7:00 p.m. in the library.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise Schirmer, Secretary
Somers Library Board of Trustees

cc: Library Board of Trustees
Town Board
Town Clerk
Finance Department – Carolyn Brush and Bob Kehoe