

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

MEETING MINUTES
November 19, 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 and Barbara Tepper.

Rebecca Wintle was absent with prior notice.

Sheelagh Kaplan, Kala Marsh and Barbara Tepper Zoomed into the meeting.

Library Director Jessica Veissy was also present.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

A motion was made by Mrs. Colella and seconded by Mr. Schnapper to approve the minutes of the October 15, 2025 as submitted. All were in favor.

Announcements and Correspondences

The library is receiving an abundance of book donations for the Book Sale. Ms. Veissy would like to thank the community for supporting the library by donating books and other items to ensure a successful book sale. Special thanks to Anne Dehn, Circulation/Tech, for being the driving force behind sorting every single item that has come through the library for the Book Sale.

The Toys for Tots donation drive is in the library's front vestibule. The community is encouraged to drop off a toy when visiting the library during November and December.

New museum passes have been added to the offerings.

The writing forum Confetti is on the website and becoming quite popular.

Public Comment

There was no public present.

Treasurer's Report

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

Ms. Blair made a motion to approve the Abstract of Audited Vouchers #11, dated November 19, 2025 in the amount of \$15,577.49, which included voucher numbers 115725 to 115745. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Dillon. All were in favor.

The contractual amount spent this past month was \$15,577.49, including \$650.00 from the Gift Fund. The largest expenditures were: Amazon (office supplies) \$3,625.86, Baker & Taylor Books (books) \$1,492.75, and Bond, Schoeneck & King, PLLC (union negotiations legal fees) \$1,287.00. Payroll and benefits were \$72,989.10. Total library spending for all accounts was \$88,566.59.

Library Director's Report

As of the second week of November, the program room has been filled with boxes of donated books for the book sale. As previously mentioned, Anne Dehn has been sorting the items as they come in,

saving staff and volunteers hours of work. Friday, November 21st is the Vendor Preview Day for an entry fee of \$25.00. The Sale opens up to the community on Saturday, November 22nd and on Sunday, November 23rd, it will be fill-a-bag day for \$5.00 until closing time at 3:00 p.m.

Teen Librarian, Terre Thomas recently noticed that the library's website included very little about its history. This year marks 150 years of the Somers Library, and next year will be 45 years in the current building. Ms. Thomas has updated the website with the information found, which has inspired staff to begin planning a celebration for the 45th Anniversary and to redevelop the website's history page. Town Historian Doris Jane Smith has been wonderful in providing information and materials. Ms. Veissy looks forward to sharing more updates soon.

Baker & Taylor Books has caused significant disruptions this year, with many items backordered since January, affecting libraries nationwide. They have traditionally been the main source for library books, with Amazon and Barnes & Noble as backups. To ensure that the patrons received the newest releases, bestsellers, and replacement copies, many books were purchased through Amazon this year. The backorders also skewed the original budget estimates, and the reference team worked diligently to recalculate figures and cancel numerous delayed items. Baker & Taylor has now announced it will close at the end of this year, leaving libraries nationwide to find alternative distribution options. Looking ahead to 2026, the reference staff is exploring several purchasing options to prevent delays, though many vendors are currently backlogged due to Baker & Taylor's closure. The Westchester Library System is also assisting all libraries in the County by compiling a list of vendors. The library remains committed to ensuring that book ordering is back on track for the new year.

The library had 3,661 patrons visit the library in October. In September there were 3,572.

Buildings and Grounds

Sueco has addressed a few system issues over the past few months, including a boiler part replacement and both systems running simultaneously for several days. On November 10th, Ms. Veissy noticed multiple error messages on the online thermostat indicating the boilers were off, though the building remained warm. Sueco responded the next day, on Veterans Day, and confirmed that everything was operating properly. Ms. Veissy reached out to the site manager regarding the error messages and is awaiting a response. Fortunately, the HVAC project is progressing, and hopefully these issues will be in the past.

On Friday, October 24th, Ms. Veissy heard a loud buzzing sound in the hallway near the program room. One of the ceiling lightbulbs had cracked and burned slightly, which was causing the noise. Ms. Veissy contacted Denise Schirmer, who quickly sent Marty Stole to the library who safely removed the damaged bulb and replaced it with a new one. Mr. Stole also checked to ensure that all the lights in the area were functioning properly and installed correctly.

Unfortunately, JP McHale Pest Management had to return two more times because hornets/yellow jackets were finding their way into the teen area and the teen/adult book stacks. Three staff members are highly allergic to bee stings, and immediate action was needed. A tech came a third time at no cost to rectify the situation. He found one more entry point and treated it. Hopefully the upcoming cold weather will end this problem.

There have been continuous discussions at the monthly meetings with the Town about the need for new carpeting in the library. Unfortunately, many grants do not cover carpeting, but the NYS Construction matching grant will. Although good news, the application cannot proceed until the teen room renovation is complete. Ms. Veissy will continue to discuss this with the Town.

Grant Review

As of November 12th, the bullet aid has not yet been received. Ms. Veissy plans to reach out to Assemblyman Matt Slater's office for an update in another week or so. The Government Shutdown may have caused this delay. Many library system directors have recommended Agati Furniture for the new chairs. Agati is listed on the NYS Contract, which simplifies the procurement process. Ms. Veissy will set up a call with their representative during the first week of December and confirm their current NYS Contract status beforehand. According to the Comptroller's Open Book website, their contract is active through 2028.

Personnel

Effective October 31st, Alan Briones is now Librarian II and his new salary effective with Payroll #23 will be \$67,000.

Professional Development

Due to numerous programs and events at the library, along with varying staff schedules, it has been challenging to identify a suitable day for staff training and to plan for a potential half-day library closure. Ms. Veissy will be coordinating with Jeff Hopper of the Somers Volunteer Fire Department to find a good afternoon for a fire safety training session, hopefully in early January. In the meantime, the Westchester Library System (WLS) and other organizations, such as the American Library Association (ALA) and the New York Library Association (NYLA), have been offering excellent and informative webinars and seminars. The staff will continue to sign up for these sessions, and their participation certificates will be saved and put in their personnel files.

Monthly Statistics for October

New Library Cards – 32 (26 adults, 2 juveniles, 2 teen and 2 courtesy)

ILL Items Received – 1,569

ILL Items Supplied – 1,082

Monthly Circulation – 13,088

Computer Usage – 92

Door Count – 3,661

WiFi Usage Connections – 848

Reference – 1,091 (Adult/YA) and 136 (Children)

Programs/Attendance – Adult 62/595, Teens 24/147 and Children 18/1,272

Staff Meeting

The next staff meeting will be held in December.

Friends of the Somers Library

Ms. Blair announced that there were some guest visitors at the last meeting. Currently the focus is on the Book Sale and Giving Tuesday. Mrs. Rios has been in contact with the Friend's President to discuss ways in which the Friends can increase their membership. Mrs. Kaplan questioned whether there may be some issues with folks making donations to the Friends via PayPal. An acquaintance of hers tried to make a \$500 donation which got denied. Mrs. Marsh is more than happy to help the Friends with this situation.

Monthly Meeting with Town Update

Mr. Schnapper reported that meetings continue monthly and now is the time of give and take with the addition of budget friction. The conversation about what the library should be responsible for paying for and what the Town should be paying for continues.

Old Business

Teen Room Renovation Update

The project proposal continues to be tweaked slightly. Preparing bid documents is a work in

progress.

HVAC Update

At their November 13th meeting, the Town Board awarded the RFP for an HVAC design for the library to OLA in the amount of \$22,000.

2026 Proposed Budget Update

The preliminary budget will be voted on tomorrow evening at a Special Meeting of the Town Board and the public hearing set for December 4th with a final budget approval on December 10th. On a side note, it was determined that the street light bill should be paid for out of the Historic Properties budget. In addition, the individual budget lines will be somewhat condensed in 2026.

Staff Promotion

Effective October 31, 2025, Alan Briones is now Librarian II and is receiving a new salary of \$67,000 as of Payroll 23. A motion was made by Mr. Schnapper and seconded by Mrs. Tepper to approve Alan Briones new title of Librarian II at an annual salary of \$67,000 effective October 31, 2025 with Payroll 23. All were in favor.

New Business

2026 Holiday Schedule

A discussion ensued about the library being closed too often as it provides a service to the community. Ms. Veissy will go over the dates and make suggestions in an email to the Board for an approval at the December meeting.

At 7:55 p.m., the Board went into Executive Session to discuss union contract negotiations and personnel. They came out of Executive Session at 8:40 p.m. and the meeting was closed.

The Board will meet next on Wednesday, December 17th 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