

Youngstown Free Library
Annual Meeting of the Library Association
Agenda
January 26, 2026, 6:30 PM

The mission of the Youngstown Free Library is to be a community center which inspires learning and provides access to a vast range of information and resources for patrons of all ages.

Meeting of the Library Association Called to Order

Nomination for President and Secretary Pro Temp

Public Comment

Minutes of the Annual Meeting January 27, 2025 presented for approval

Election of New Board of Trustees

- **Christopher Regan**
- **Diana Regan**

Annual Reports

President's Report	Karran Swayze
Financial Report	David Smith
Library Director	Sonora Miller
Friends of the Library Report	Kim Winning
Other Reports	

Old Business

New Business

Approval of authorization of prepaid or reoccurring expenses David Smith

-Pre-approval of the following schedule of recurring obligations for the 2026 fiscal year, so that they may be paid as they become due, without further action from the Board

The schedule comprises:

- All personnel expenses relating to salaries, wage and other wage related compensation
- All expenses relating to accounts, payroll preparation, and payroll tax payment
- Credit card
- Internet and phone
- ALMS fees
- Housekeeping
- Postage

These are expenses that we are obliged to pay as soon as they become due, and pre-approval provides for them to be paid in as timely a manner as possible.

Trustee signatures need to be provided on the following forms:

- Code of Ethics
- Conflict of Interest
- Whistleblower Protection

Trustee signatures are also required on the following documents, signifying support for the Collection Development Policy approved in 2022:

- Library Bill of Rights
- Freedom to Read Statement
- Freedom to View Statement

Trustees are reminded of the State policy requiring 2 hours of training in the duties or responsibilities of Library Trustees which was approved in 2023.

Adjournment

YOUNGSTOWN FREE LIBRARY
Minutes of the 75th Annual Meeting of the Library Association
Date: January 27, 2025 Time: 6:30 p.m.

The mission of the Youngstown Free Library is to be a community center which inspires learning and provides access to a vast range of information and resources for patrons of all ages.

Present: Karran Swayze, Mary Clinch, Dave Smith, David Brooks, Peter Pfohl, Kim Winning, Dr. Nancy Askins
Director Sonora Miller

Absent: Shawn D’Luhy (excused)

Call to order: By Karran at 6:37 p.m.

- A motion was made by David Brooks and seconded by Dave Smith to approve Karran as President Pro Tem, and Mary as Recording Secretary Pro Tem. The motion passed.

Comments from the public: None

Minutes: The minutes of the January 22, 2024 Annual Meeting were presented for approval.

- A motion was made by Mary and seconded by David Brooks to approve the minutes. The motion passed.

President’s remarks – Karran Swayze:

- Karran welcomed all returning members of the Board and thanked everyone for their commitment to the Library, including their participation at events supporting the Library.
- Karran thanked Sonora for her excellent leadership, high standards and commitment to the Library and its staff in 2024.
- Karran thanked the Friends of the Youngstown Library (FOYL) for their generous financial and personal support, which allows the Library to provide updated materials to patrons and to maximize the hours open to the public.
- Karran thanked those who volunteered their time at the Library, which helped programs operate and allowed the Library to run more efficiently.

Financial report – Dave Smith:

- Dave Smith presented information provided in his annual Treasurer’s report, highlighting:
 - A paper shortfall (approximately \$6800) for the year, as the contribution from the FOYL was deposited after January 1st, 2025.
 - Revenue was slightly less than anticipated for the year, with the largest shortfall seen in the annual drive.
 - Annual expenses exceeded the budget, primarily because of increases in Library Materials. Personnel costs came in below budget, and operating costs were slightly higher than expected for the year.
 - The FOYL provided an additional generation donation, putting the Library in good financial standing for 2025 and able to meet budgetary requirements for the year.

Director's report – Sonora Miller:

- Sonora shared her annual report, which outlined actions and progress to the goals defined in the Library's Strategic Plan. This report is shared with the community, and it was noted that this is the final year of the current Strategic Plan.
- Sonora described the tasks accomplished in 2024. Highlights are included here; for full details please see the Director's Report in the Annual Meeting Packet:
 - Goal 1: Sustainability
 - Dividends from the Buffalo Community Foundation account were reinvested
 - Grants received during the year were outlined, including how grant funds were used for programs and materials
 - Several updates were made to the physical space, including painting of the foyer and repair of the ceiling in the Magazine Room
 - Goal 2: Responsiveness to the Community
 - The Library welcomed 19,723 people through its doors during 1773 hours of operation (an increase in traffic, despite a slight decrease in hours)
 - Late and past fines were eliminated for patrons as of July 2024
 - The Library executed a very successful slate of programs during the year, including events for the Eclipse, summer reading programs, and multiple active book clubs
 - The audiobook and digital collections were expanded during the year
 - Goal 3: Transparency and Communication
 - The Library was represented in numerous community events and groups, including the Youngstown Business and Professional Association and the One District, One Book initiative.
 - In 2024, the Library received the Robert J. Uplinger Distinguished Service Award from the Youngstown Lions Club, and had its history recognized with proclamations from the Village, Town, County and State levels.
 - Goal 4: Partnerships and Collaboration
 - The Library hosted a legislative advocacy meeting for our State Senator, and participated in efforts to advocate for state funding for libraries.
 - Local businesses and organizations rallied to support the Library with fundraiser partnerships during the year.
- Sonora recommended that Trustees review the recommended state policies for Libraries (in the back of the Trustee Handbook); an initiative is needed to ensure all are incorporated into the Library's own policies. Peter recommended that Trustees complete the review prior to the February meeting; Sonora will bring material to that meeting to guide discussion.
- Karran noted that a review of Library bylaws would also be a valuable initiative to plan for in 2025.

Friends of the Library Update – Kim Winning:

- Kim reported that new officers for the FOYL have been elected.
- 2024 was a very successful fundraising year for the FOYL, with over \$30,000 raised.
- In December, the Library requested its annual contribution from the FOYL; as the FOYL had additional funds available, it was decided to present the Library with an additional \$12,800 donation without restrictions.

- Sonora shared details of items that are on the active 'wish list', including obtaining an additional cart for audiobooks displays, and to augment the Juvenile Non-Fiction collection (which had outdated content recently removed). Dave Smith will share updates on purchases made back to the FOYL in a future meeting.

75th Anniversary Committee – Nancy Askins:

- Nancy shared a brief history of the Committee, which was organized in late 2023 and is jointly composed of Trustees and FOYL members.
- The first celebratory event was held on November 13, 2024 to commemorate the opening of the Library in 1949. This community event included a historical display created by Peter Pfohl, a Design-a-Bookmark contest for local students, and multiple official proclamations from the Village, Town, County and State entities.
- Customized banners are displayed at the Library and on Lockport Road at the Niagara Scenic Parkway exit.
- Multiple events are being planned for Spring 2025, including an event where the 50th anniversary time capsule will be retrieved, and a new one commemorating the 75th anniversary will be placed. Events will be publicized in the FOYL Newsletter.

Personnel Committee - Peter Pfohl:

- Peter shared accomplishments of the Committee in 2024, including:
 - A formal update made to the Director's job description
 - A formal evaluation process completed to the satisfaction of the Board and the Director

Old Business: None

New Business:

- A motion was made by Dave Smith and seconded by Nancy to approve the schedule of recurring obligations for the 2025 fiscal year. The motion passed.
- Sonora collected signed compliance statements from the Trustees, which are the forms that all Trustees must sign each year. These include the Code of Ethics, Conflict of Interest, Whistleblower Protection, Library Bill of Rights, Freedom to Read Statement, and Freedom to View Statement.
- A motion was made by Nancy and seconded by Peter to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed; the meeting was adjourned at 7:31 p.m.

The next Annual Meeting will take place on January 26, 2026 at 6:30 p.m.

Mary Clinch

Recording Secretary Pro Tem, Youngstown Free Library Board of Trustees



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Director's Report

Annual 2025

In 2025, the Library accomplished tasks from each of its four goals in its 2018-2025 Strategic Plan.

Goal 1: Sustainability

Ensure that the library is well-positioned to provide for the needs of current and future generations of members of the community of the Youngstown Free Library.

1. Ensure sustainable Library funding for the long-term future.

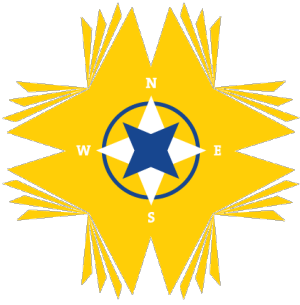
- a. The Youngstown Free Library Foundation, managed by the Buffalo Community Foundation, ended the year at \$133,758.45, an increase of \$12,987.46 over the course of 2025.
- b. In April 2025, the Library was awarded a \$400 grant from Nioga for summer reading programs for children and teens.
- c. In April 2025, the Library was awarded a \$1,500 grant from Legislator Irene Myers through the Niagara County Community Partnership Fund. This was used for summer reading programs for children and teens.
- d. In November 2025, the Library was awarded a \$220 mini-grant from Nioga for adult outreach. This was used for new magazine subscriptions.
- e. In November 2025, the Library was awarded a \$210 mini-grant from Nioga for youth services. This was used for children's audiobooks.

2. Ensure sustainable building and physical needs for the long-term future.

- a. Air-conditioning units' fan motors were replaced in October 2025.
- b. Medify air purifiers continue to run during all open hours to provide a more sanitary library environment.
- c. The carpets in the office, foyer, and children's room were washed several times in 2025.
- d. Since its purchase in December 2021, the Roomba i3 has been supplementing vacuuming in conjunction with spot vacuuming by the library director. It is proving to be an efficient and easy-to-use solution.

3. Recruit and maintain well-qualified Board of Trustee members who will use their tenure to represent, promote and fundraise on behalf of the Library.

- a. Trustee education programs were offered on Dropbox access, Google calendar access, open meeting law, and more.



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- b. Trustees independently and ably represented the Library at community meetings, groups, and fundraisers, where they were able to connect with the community and local lawmakers.
 - i. Friends' events like fall and spring book sales, Stone Jug 5K, Chili Cook-off, bake sales, Harvest Tea, and Christmas dinner
 - ii. Advocacy events like legislative visits and YBPA meetings

4. Support the health and work of the Friends of the Library.

- a. The Memorandum of Understanding between the Friends and the Trustees was signed in March 2025.
- b. The Library Director and Trustee Liaison attended Friends meetings in 2025.
- c. The Library Director and Trustee President regularly submitted articles for the Friends' quarterly newsletter.
- d. Trustees and Director volunteered at Friends' fundraisers in 2025 such as the fall and spring book sales, the Chili Cookoff, and the Harvest Tea.

5. Ensure that the Library policies and by-laws are kept current.

- a. Policies updated in 2025: copyright & copier use, inclusion, meeting procedures: public comment, meeting procedures: videoconferencing, constitution & bylaws.
- b. Library trustees, in accordance with NYS requirements, each took continuing education workshops in 2025.

Goal 2: Responsiveness to the Community

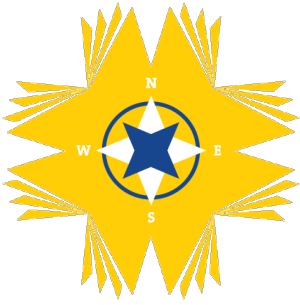
Integrate community needs with Library offerings.

1. Create an environment that encourages all members of the community to participate, making it a valuable center of the community.

- a. The Library welcomed 19,342 people through its doors during 1,776.5 hours of operation in 2025.
- b. 2025 was the first full year in which the Library was fine-free.
- c. The coffee, hot chocolate, and tea station welcomed patrons to relax and rehydrate at the Library in 2025.
- d. As of December 2025, Youngstown Free Library had 1,604 active patrons. This is a 2% increase since last year.

2. Provide or host Library programs that respond to community requests and interests.

- a. This year's Tiny Art Show distributed over 100 canvases, and received 68 completed artworks back from artists of all ages in Youngstown.



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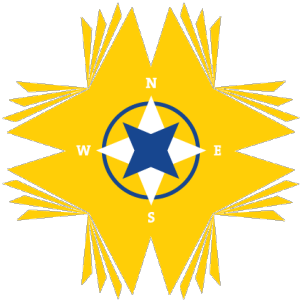
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The artworks were put on display on the gallery walls of the Magazine Room, distributed in a digital exhibit, and their reception and display brought in a lot of folks all summer and fall.

- b. Evening Book Club and Afternoon Book Club met monthly in 2025. Non-Fiction Book Club, created by community request, continued to meet bi-monthly in 2025. Attendance to these three book clubs increased by 38% in 2025 over 2024.
- c. Monthly tech help programs were held at the Senior Center as a way to bring friendly assistance to where the community needs help.
- d. Community-led Tabletop Gaming and Lewiston Writers' Groups met regularly (weekly & biweekly, respectively) at the Library in 2025.
- e. The Summer Reading Program and Reading Challenge welcomed children and teens in 2025.
 - i. Summer Reading Programs 2025: 45 programs were offered for children, teens, and families, with 2,488 total attendees. This was a 17% increase in attendees compared to 2024.
 - ii. Summer Reading Challenge 2025: 74 participants read 129,254 minutes in the ten weeks of the Challenge. This was a 35% increase in participants and a 10% increase in their minutes read compared to 2024.
- f. The Library has maintained its Zoom access to Evening and Non-Fiction Book Clubs in 2025. This expanded access has met continued community requests for those homebound, vacationing, and out-of-town patrons.

3. Provide Library materials that respond to community interests and requests.

- a. 2025 checkouts from digital collection: 5,128 items, a 32% increase over last year.
- b. Staff created a juvenile graphic novel collection in order to respond to requests for a separate collection. The response has been overwhelmingly positive; of Youngstown's 10 most checked-out items in 2025, 8 were from the juvenile graphic novel collection, with those 8 alone checked out 264 times in 2025!
- c. Staff reorganized the adult and juvenile DVD collections to make them more browsable for the community; this has led to an 8% increase in circulation in 2025.
- d. Staff integrated paperback books into the adult collection, which has simplified patrons' browsing. It's led to a 3.5% increase in circulation in the last four months of 2025 over the same time in 2024.
- e. 3,798 items from Youngstown's collection were sent to patrons from other libraries in 2025. This continues to justify the fact that we have items that not only our patrons want, but that patrons from other libraries also want!



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4. Provide Library services that respond to community needs.

- a. Hotspots, 24/7 wi-fi, and computer passes provided access to needed Internet service to the community. Together, they were checked out over 700 times in 2025.
- b. Faxing, scanning, printing, copying, and battery recycling services continue to be frequently used services.
- c. The Nearly New Book Sale continues to offer brand new books for one dollar each, a popular request by both locals and tourists in our community. A total of 222 books were sold in 2025.
- d. The Library continues to offer complimentary naloxone kits and fentanyl testing strips in the bathrooms. These supplies are made possible by the Erie County Department of Health.
- e. The Library continues to offer complimentary period products in the bathroom. A grant from Nioga provided the dispenser and the initial order of supplies.
- f. The Library continued its annual display of free tax forms and instruction booklets for checkout in 2025.

Goal 3: Transparency and Communication

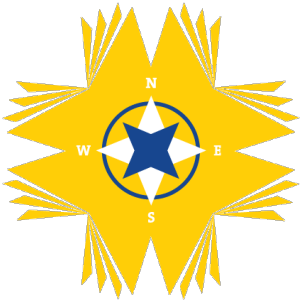
Inform, listen and communicate openly with the Youngstown community on all matters.

1. Originate, facilitate and operate a broad cross-community information exchange to enlighten and inform the community.

- a. The Library operates an active and responsive presence on social media networks. News, programs, community alerts, and photos continue to enlighten and inform this growing community.
 - i. Facebook saw an increase from 1,571 followers to 1,629 followers: <https://www.facebook.com/youngstownfreelibrary/>
 - ii. Instagram saw an increase from 760 followers to 818 followers: <https://www.instagram.com/youngstownfreelibrary>

2. Ensure all modes of dispersing information about the Library are accessible, transparent, up-to-date and accurate.

- a. The Library updated its profile to a Gold Seal of Transparency from Candid in 2025. Sharing information about the Library's finances and leadership allows more people to have access to quality information about the Youngstown Free Library.
- b. The Library's website posted board packets of agendas and reports prior to every library board meeting



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(<https://youngstownfreelibrary.org/library-board-reports.html>) in 2025.

- c. Information about Library programs and services were shared in the quarterly Friends of the Library newsletters in 2025.
- d. Email newsletters were distributed to over 500 community members who have opted in to receive direct information from the Library.

3. Anticipate and provide for community information needs.

- a. Social media was used to share local information from community groups, local governments, and snow emergency information with the community.

4. Develop working relationships with local leaders, organizations and community groups within the Youngstown Free Library service area.

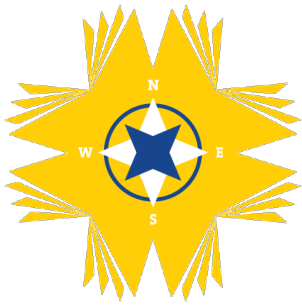
- a. The Library was an active member of the Youngstown Business and Professional Association, meeting regularly with local government leaders, organizations, and community groups.
- b. A ninth year of “One District, One Book” was held in winter and spring of 2025. This annual, district-wide reading program partners schools with community businesses and libraries to read a single book together. As a member of the committee, I organized book voting at the Library, attended Reveal Night and Family Literacy Night, and represented the Library throughout this successful program for *Life According to Og the Frog*.

Goal 4: Partnerships and Collaboration

Strengthen the position of the Library within the Youngstown community with ongoing partnerships and collaboration with government, organizations, businesses and individuals.

1. Cooperate with local organizations to offer programming to the community.

- a. The Library Director presented a program at the Lewiston Senior Center on senior-friendly collections and services in April 2025.
- b. The Afternoon Book Club and Tech Help met monthly at the Lewiston Senior Center, and that partnership with the Senior Center has increased the visibility of the Library in the senior community.
- c. Bi-weekly storytimes during the school year were provided to the toddlers and preschoolers at The Children’s House Montessori program at the First Presbyterian Church.



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- d. The Friends' funding allowed the Library to continue its family memberships to Old Fort Niagara, Aquarium of Niagara, and Empire passes, so we are honored to continue to provide access to these local attractions to our library patrons.

2. Strengthen connections with local government leaders individually and as a group in order to facilitate camaraderie and partnerships.

- a. Friends and Library Trustees met with Senator Ortt's staff to advocate for NYS funding for libraries in the next budget year.
- b. Friends and Library Trustees met with Legislator Morinello to advocate for NYS funding for libraries in the next budget year.

3. Collaborate with local businesses and individuals for Library fundraising opportunities that will lead to financial sustainability.

- a. Local businesses and organizations rallied to support the Youngstown Free Library with fundraiser partnerships in 2025. Youngstown Business & Professional Association, Ray's Tavern, Stone Jug, and Bandana's organized and held stand-alone fundraisers to benefit the Library.
- b. The Friends of the Library and the Lewiston Service Guild organized their 2nd annual joint fundraiser, Harvest Tea, to support both the Lewiston Service Guild and the Youngstown Free Library.

Respectfully submitted,
Sonora R. Miller
Library Director