

**December 17, 2024
Board of Trustees Meeting
Agenda**

1. Roll Call
2. Public Comment
3. Consent Items (VOTE)
 - a. Nov 2024 minutes (Attachment) pg. 2
 - b. Nov 2024 financials (Attachment) pg. 5
4. President's Report
 - a. Trustee Education (Attachment) pg. 10
 - b. Trustee Dashboard (Attachment) pg. 11
5. Information Items
 - a. Staff Reports (Attachments)
 - i. Director's Report pg. 12
 - ii. Adult Report pg. 13
 - iii. Teen Report pg. 14
 - iv. Children's Report pg. 15
6. Board Discussion
 - a. Development Committee
 - i. Membership (Attachment) pg. 16
 - b. Building and Grounds Committee
 - i. Seawall Update (Attachment) pg 17
 - c. Heritage Committee
 - i. 2025 Mayor's Award (Attachment) pg. 18
 - d. Strategic Planning (Attachment) pg.19
 - e. Mission Moments (Attachment) pg. 23
7. New Business
8. Executive Session

Next meeting dates: Tuesday, January 28 – 7:30 pm
 Thursday, February 13– 7:30 pm – Annual Meeting

Minutes of the November 19, 2024 RFRR Board Meeting

Present: Kirstin Bucci, Lina Eroh, Katie Vernace, Jan Kelsey, Kathleen Riegelhaupt, Matt Anderson, Nicole Cunningham, Jennifer McArdle, Jill Macvicar, Elizabeth Parks, Emilie Reddoch, Georgia Dyer, Diane Martin

Kirstin Bucci called the meeting to order at 7:36. Four members of the public were present.

Consent Agenda

The consent agenda contained the minutes of the October 2024 board meeting and the October 2024 financial statement. Jan made a motion to accept the consent agenda. Kathleen seconded. All approved.

President's Report

Kirstin reminded the board about the trustee education requirement that must be completed by the end of the year. She also reminded the board that all members were expected to contribute to the library's annual campaign. She reported that the city council had given the library the funding that we had requested and had praised Chris and the library. Kirstin then complimented Chris and the entire library staff on the handling of the recent incident involving a homeless man at the library. Kirstin presented a proposal to reduce the number of board meetings in 2025 to encourage attendance and to increase committee participation. A discussion ensued. It was determined that the modified schedule as proposed of seven meetings left too big a gap in the summer. An additional meeting was added to the proposed schedule. Matt moved that the board approve the modified meeting schedule as amended. Kathleen seconded. All approved.

Staff Reports

Director's Report

Chris reported on having a very good meeting with the city. They are very supportive of and pleased with the library. He is working on the thank you lists for donors. He thanked all who attended the spelling bee. He reported that the library was contacted

by an online service that assists with will preparation and planned giving which, for a fee, facilitates the library's inclusion in bequests. He will know more about it in December. A part-time building manager will be hired soon. Chris presented the 2025 holiday closing schedule to the board for its approval. Emilie moved to approve the schedule. Jan seconded. All approved.

Children's Services

Catherine reported that the Discovery Zone is very popular. Sensory storytime is a new program. It is very different from the regular storytimes. It is growing in popularity. Attendance is up to 14 children. Christ Church Nursery School has been sending classes to the library.

Teen Services

Catherine reported that the library lock-in was held last week. The teens asked for a waffle program. Waffle Wednesday will take place once a month.

Adult Services

Catherine reported that the Rye Storytellers held a meeting on Saturday. Rye High School parents also had a meeting at the library. New patron folders have been sent to all realtors in town. The floral arrangement craft class was very popular. The next session of Pies & Pages will involve cookies.

Development

Lina reminded all trustees to give to the annual campaign. We are at 62% of the campaign goal going into December. Holiday Open House is the next scheduled Friends' event.

Finance

Katie reported that plans are being made about approaching the city about covering more of the library's operating expenses. This year's presentation gently laid the groundwork.

Buildings and Grounds

Chris outlined the history of the sea wall and his conversations with Steve Otis, Shelley Mayer and the city and county to address the sea wall comprehensively.

Nominating

Kirstin presented the slate for the class of 2028. Kathleen moved that the slate as presented be approved. Matt seconded. All approved. Kirstin then presented the officers for 2025: Lina as President; Georgia as Vice President; Jan as Secretary; and Katie as Treasurer. Jen moved to approve the slate of officers for 2025. Matt seconded. All approved.

Kirstin requested a motion for the board to go into executive session to discuss employment for a particular person. Jan so moved and Jen seconded. The board went into executive session at 8:42.

The board came out of executive session at 8:55. Emilie moved that the board approve management compensation as discussed in executive session. Jen seconded. All approved.

There being no further business, Kirstin called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Kathleen so moved. Jan seconded. All approved. The meeting adjourned at 8:57.

Action : The Board approve the November meeting minutes

November Financials

The November financials reflect the library in a strong position going into the end of the year. The Annual Campaign is close to the goal for 2024.

The periodical budget is done on a semi-annual subscription, and so the timing varies from year to year. Catherine is reviewing the periodical subscriptions to see what changes can be made, but the budget timing changes each year for EBSCO.

Insurance reflects the 4th installment of the property insurance payment.

Following the three pay periods in October, the salaries line has balanced back out for November. The retirement payment was done December 9th.

Action : The Board accept the November financial statements

Rye Free Reading Room
Income and Expense Report
For 11 Months Ending November 30, 2024

	Current Month 2024	2024 YTD Actual	2024 YTD Budget	2024 Budget
Income				
City of Rye	\$ -	\$ 1,385,000	\$ 1,385,000	\$ 1,385,000
Annual Campaign	\$ 76,764	\$ 248,184	\$ 229,167	\$ 250,000
Miscellaneous Income	\$ 2,041	\$ 30,390	\$ 32,083	\$ 35,000
Osborn Branch Library	\$ 4,799	\$ 47,886	\$ 47,041	\$ 51,317
Auxiliary Board Transfer	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 64,167	\$ 70,000
Endowment Transfer	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 96,250	\$ 105,000
	<u>\$ 83,604</u>	<u>\$ 1,711,460</u>	<u>\$ 1,853,707</u>	<u>\$ 1,896,317</u>
Expense				
Library Materials				
Books	\$ 6,369	\$ 74,484	\$ 81,478	\$ 88,885
Audio Visual	\$ 947	\$ 38,445	\$ 23,778	\$ 25,940
Periodicals	\$ 4,941	\$ 14,597	\$ 11,825	\$ 12,900
Programs	\$ 1,204	\$ 10,300	\$ 12,375	\$ 13,500
Ebooks/ Binding	\$ 6,495	\$ 30,202	\$ 37,583	\$ 41,000
	<u>\$ 19,956</u>	<u>\$ 168,028</u>	<u>\$ 167,040</u>	<u>\$ 182,225</u>
Library Operations				
Supplies	\$ 408	\$ 13,571	\$ 13,750	\$ 15,000
Equipment & Systems - New		\$ -	\$ 4,125	\$ 4,500
Equipment & Systems - Maintenance		\$ -	\$ 4,583	\$ 5,000
Automated Systems	\$ 392	\$ 84,385	\$ 74,479	\$ 81,250
Telephone	\$ 511	\$ 6,123	\$ 6,050	\$ 6,600
Postage	\$ 850	\$ 6,762	\$ 8,250	\$ 9,000
Printing & Publicity	\$ 1,832	\$ 25,879	\$ 29,333	\$ 32,000
Auditing	\$ -	\$ 22,117	\$ 20,625	\$ 22,500
Legal Services	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,833	\$ 2,000
Interest	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Transfer to Designated Account	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Miscellaneous	\$ 969	\$ 12,074	\$ 7,150	\$ 7,800
	<u>\$ 4,962</u>	<u>\$ 170,911</u>	<u>\$ 170,179</u>	<u>\$ 185,650</u>
Building Operations				
Heat	\$ 1,485	\$ 17,905	\$ 18,333	\$ 20,000
Light & Power	\$ -	\$ 22,772	\$ 31,625	\$ 34,500
Water & Sewer	\$ 306	\$ 8,340	\$ 8,250	\$ 9,000
Fixtures, Furnishings & Equipment	\$ 274	\$ 5,888	\$ 4,583	\$ 5,000
Building Supplies	\$ 2,343	\$ 11,323	\$ 11,000	\$ 12,000
Contracted Services	\$ 6,195	\$ 55,983	\$ 65,725	\$ 71,700
Repairs & Maintenance	\$ 4,224	\$ 8,961	\$ 16,500	\$ 18,000
Insurance	\$ 7,244	\$ 36,313	\$ 31,511	\$ 34,376
Capital Projects Fund Transfer	\$ -	\$ 29,000	\$ -	\$ -
Miscellaneous	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	<u>\$ 22,071</u>	<u>\$ 196,485</u>	<u>\$ 187,528</u>	<u>\$ 204,576</u>
Personnel				
Salaries	\$ 78,658	\$ 943,634	\$ 946,279	\$ 1,032,304
Social Security	\$ 5,786	\$ 69,138	\$ 72,390	\$ 78,971
Retirement	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 95,695	\$ 104,394
Medical Insurance	\$ 6,308	\$ 70,662	\$ 75,004	\$ 81,823
Other Insurance	\$ -	\$ 3,987	\$ 14,667	\$ 16,000
Payroll Services	\$ 687	\$ 8,301	\$ 6,417	\$ 7,000
Staff Development	\$ 288	\$ 4,356	\$ 2,750	\$ 3,000
Miscellaneous	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	<u>\$ 91,727</u>	<u>\$ 1,100,078</u>	<u>\$ 1,213,201</u>	<u>\$ 1,323,492</u>
Total Income	<u>\$ 83,604</u>	<u>\$ 1,711,460</u>	<u>\$ 1,853,707</u>	<u>\$ 1,896,317</u>
Total Expense	<u>\$ 138,716</u>	<u>\$ 1,635,502</u>	<u>\$ 1,737,948</u>	<u>\$ 1,895,943</u>
Net Receipts (Expense)	<u>\$ (55,112)</u>	<u>\$ 75,959</u>	<u>\$ 115,760</u>	<u>\$ 374</u>

**Rye Free Reading Room
Annual Campaign
November 2024 YTD**

<u>Donations to the Current Annual Campaign</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>
Donations received & deposited in		
	JAN 85,387	32,982
	FEB 5,531	1,446
	MAR 5,764	2,953
	APR 3,659	4,214
	MAY 5,989	2,689
	JUN 4,953	1,736
	JUL 811	9,500
	AUG 203	1,032
	SEP 16,977	16,056
	OCT 81,183	134,064
	NOV 67,548	35,114
	DEC 66,435	64,832
	<u>Total 344,440</u>	<u>306,618</u>
 Donations to <i>Previous or Subsequent</i> Annual Campaigns		
Donations to <i>prior</i> Annual Campaigns	85,287	30,883
Donations to the <i>subsequent</i> Annual Campaign	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
<i>Sub-total</i>	<u>85,287</u>	<u>30,883</u>

Rye Free Reading Room
Endowment Report
November 2024

Endowment Inflows/Outflows:	YTD 2024	YTD 2023	YTD 2022	YTD 2021	YTD 2020
Beg of Period (Market Value)	2,160,398	2,109,492	2,388,851	2,188,828	2,233,617
Expenses	(15,538)	(14,636)	(14,834)	(15,674)	(13,845)
Transfer to/from Other Funds	0	(105,000)	(101,616)	(95,000)	(95,004)
Interest & Dividend Income	45,248	53,480	57,746	63,379	59,271
Appreciation	205,335	117,063	(220,654)	247,318	4,789
End of Period Bal (Market Value)	2,395,443	2,160,398	2,109,492	2,388,851	2,188,828
Endowment Performance	10.88%	7.39%	-7.44%	13.48%	2.25%
Return of S&P 500	28.07%	26.29%	-18.11%	28.71%	18.40%
Return of Barclays Bloomberg Aggregate Bond Index	2.93%	5.53%	-13.01%	-1.54%	7.51%

Silvercrest:		YTD 2024	YTD 2023	YTD 2022	YTD 2021	12/31/2020
Cash & Equivalents	10%	213,425	(27,006)	29,727	12,815	114,631
Fixed Income	31%	661,347	760,448	775,964	884,363	647,426
Equities	57%	1,224,628	1,166,785	1,046,548	1,170,444	1,143,143
Gold	1%	24,559	19,117	16,964	17,096	26,754
Other	2%	33,436	30,573	46,723	71,182	32,810
Silvercrest Total	100%	2,157,395	1,949,918	1,915,926	2,155,900	1,964,764

Endowment Breakdown at:		YTD 2024	Permanently Restricted	Temp Restricted & Board Designated	Total
Shea			41,680	60,831	102,511
Flores			76,650	(311)	76,339
Balf			27,390	31,808	59,198
Silvercrest			745,086	1,412,309	2,157,395
			\$ 890,806	1,504,637	2,395,443

Rye Free Reading Room- Combined Report
For 11 Months Ending November 30, 2024

	Unrestricted (Operating)	Temp. Restricted (Designated)	Endowment and Board Restricted	Combined
Income				
City of Rye	\$ 1,385,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,385,000
Annual Campaign	248,184	0	0	248,184
Contribution	-	299,263	0	299,263
Grants	-	0	0	-
Osborn Branch Library	47,886	0	0	47,886
Income from Invested and Equity	-	18,933	45,248	64,181
Miscellaneous	30,390	101,749	0	132,139
Transfer: Auxiliary to Operating	-	0	0	-
Transfer: Operating to Designated	-	0	0	-
Transfer: Operating to Cap Projects	-29,000	29,000	0	-
	<u>1,682,460</u>	<u>448,945</u>	<u>45,248</u>	<u>2,176,653</u>
Transfer: Auxiliary to Operating	0	0	0	-
Transfer: Endowment to Operating	0	0	0	-
Appreciation/Depreciation		0	12,063	12,063
Total Funds	1,682,460	448,945	57,310	2,188,715
Expense				
Library Materials				
Books	74,484	24,097	0	98,581
Audio Visual	38,445	0	0	38,445
Periodicals	14,597	0	0	14,597
Programs	10,300	121,179	0	131,479
Online Resources	6,495	0	0	6,495
Miscellaneous	23,707	0	0	23,707
	<u>168,028</u>	<u>145,276</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>313,304</u>
Library Operations				
Supplies	13,571	1,278	0	14,849
Equipment & Systems - New	0	0	0	-
Equipment & Systems - Maintenance	0	0	0	-
Automated Systems	84,385	960	0	85,345
Telephone	6,123	0	0	6,123
Postage	6,762	0	0	6,762
Printing & Publicity	25,879	8,446	0	34,325
Auditing	22,117	0	0	22,117
Interest	0	0	0	-
Legal Services	0	0	0	-
Miscellaneous	12,074	6,647	0	18,721
	<u>170,911</u>	<u>17,331</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>188,242</u>
Building Operations				
Heat	17,905	0	0	17,905
Light & Power	22,772	0	0	22,772
Water & Sewer	8,340	0	0	8,340
Fixtures, Furnishings & Equipment	5,888	56,973	0	62,861
Building Supplies	11,323	5,636	0	16,959
Contracted Services	55,983	76,910	0	132,893
Repairs & Maintenance	8,961	0	0	8,961
Insurance	36,313	0	0	36,313
Miscellaneous	0	0	14,636	14,636
	<u>167,485</u>	<u>139,519</u>	<u>14,636</u>	<u>321,640</u>
Personnel				
Salaries	943,634	0	0	943,634
Social Security	69,138	0	0	69,138
Retirement	0	0	0	-
Medical Insurance	70,662	0	0	70,662
Other Insurance	3,987	0	0	3,987
Payroll Services	8,301	0	0	8,301
Staff Development	4,356	0	0	4,356
Miscellaneous	0	0	0	-
	<u>1,100,078</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1,100,078</u>
Total Expense	1,606,502	302,126	14,636	1,923,264
Net Receipts/Expenses	75,959	146,819	42,674	265,451
Prior Year Funds	242,605	136,416	2,109,492	2,488,513
Balance	318,563	283,235	2,152,166	2,753,964

Trustee Education

NEW – Trustees are required to complete an annual sexual harassment prevention training. You may credit any interactive sexual harassment prevention training course taken this year to fulfill this requirement. Contact Chris to self-attest, or submit a certificate of completion.

Please note this training does not count towards the 2 hour continuing education requirement.

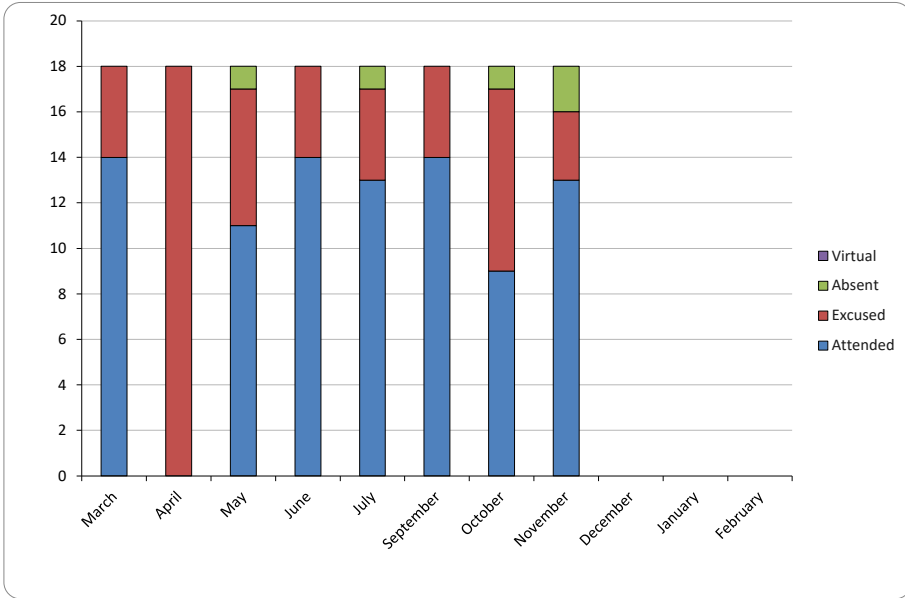
NYC Sexual Harassment Prevention Training -

<https://www.nyc.gov/site/cchr/law/sexual-harassment-training.page>

Pre-recorded Education Opportunities for 2024

- Pre-recorded webinars from New York State available at the link below.
 - <https://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/trustees/webinars.htm>
- Pre-recorded videos from Trustee Handbook Club discussion series from the Mid Hudson Library System:
 - https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLd_RtTwqkH2bNgVIcb1pWaTSa7dZRfPbJ&feature=shared
- Pre-recorded videos from Trustee Handbook Club discussion series from WebJunction
 - <https://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/webjunction/index.html>

Trustee Attendance



Trustee Attendance

	Attended	Excused	Absent	Virtual
March	14	4	0	0
April	0	18	0	0
May	11	6	1	0
June	14	4	0	0
July	13	4	1	0
September	14	4	0	0
October	9	8	1	0
November	13	3	2	0
December	0	0	0	0
January	0	0	0	0
February	0	0	0	0

Trustee Committees

Executive

Kirstin Bucci (Chair), Lina Eroh, Katie Vernance, Jan Kelsey, Kathleen Riegelhaupt

Building

Emilie Reddoch (Chair), Jill Macvicar, Kathleen Riegelhaupt

Finance

Katie Vernance (Chair), Kathleen Riegelhaupt, Maria Seiler, Jaclyn Shanahan

Strategic Planning

Nicole Cunningham (Chair), Matt Anderson, Meghan Monaghan, Lizzie Parks, Kathleen Riegelhaupt

Development

Lina Eroh (Co-Chair), Jaclyn Shanahan (Co-Chair), Whitney Whipple

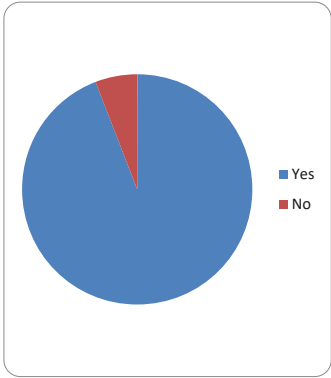
Nominating

Emilie Reddoch (Chair), Jackie Cohen, Meghan Monaghan

Policy

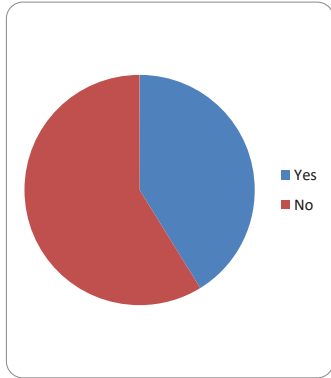
Shelley Huber (Chair)

Conflict of Interest



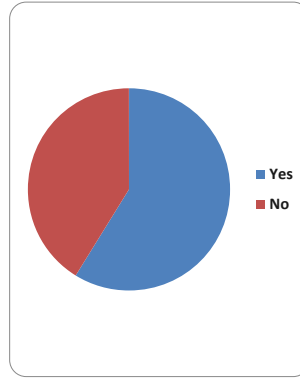
Yes 16
No 1

Trustee Education



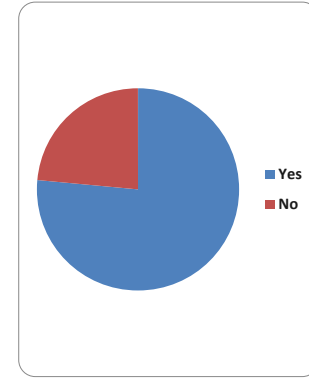
Yes 7
No 10

Trustee Giving



Yes 10
No 7

Sexual Harrassment



Yes 13
No 4

Director's Report

LIBRARY OPERATIONS:

- Budget
 - Shared 2025 budgets with departments
 - Projected personnel spending for 2025 - 2029
- Strategic Planning
 - Reviewed community needs survey
 - Attended WLS data visualization workshop

FUNDRAISING, OUTREACH & COMMUNITY RELATIONS:

- Annual Campaign
 - Continued thanking new, major, and returning Friends
- Community Relations
 - Offered hot cocoa craft at Mistletoe Magic
 - Planned 2024 Friends Open House
 - Met with Bird Homestead president to discuss Bird Classic Storytime program
- Fundraising
 - Reviewed Nonprofit Security Grant program and NYS Department Office of Faith and Nonprofits funding opportunities.

BUILDING & GROUNDS:

- Completed holiday decorating with Little Garden Club of Rye

STAFF & PERSONNEL

- Completed hiring of part time building manager
- Met with CWA Business Liaison to discuss labor contact
- Discussed staff training opportunity with Rye Youth Council

Adult Services

PROGRAMMING:

- Read in Rye: Malina Malkani - Safe and Simple Food Allergy Prevention: A Baby-Led Feeding Guide to Starting Solids and Introducing Top Allergens
- Pie & Pages: Holiday Cookie Edition - One patron let us know how much she loves the pairings lists and shares them with her friends and family!
- Holiday cookie exchange

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

- **Strategic Priority 1: Independent Reading Services**
 - Library Book Groups - Cookbook Book Club, Current Events Book Club, Rye Readers Book Group, Thursday Afternoon Book Club (hybrid), Friday Morning Virtual Book Club (virtual)
- **Strategic Priority 4: Community Interest Advancement**
 - Holiday Decorating in the library done by The Little Garden Club of Rye has been met with great enthusiasm by patrons!
 - Hidden Figures: The Egyptian Timeline - Presented by RFRR & Peter Feinman of ARCE/IHAE
 - Provided meeting/program/rental space for: AuPair in America, HSWC Annual Meeting, RW250, Rye City Lions Club, Rye Reads Holiday Showcase, Rye Sustainability Committee, Rye YMCA

SPACE BOOKINGS

- Local History Room – 42
- Left Study Room – 43
- Right Study Room - 38

ONE ON ONE APPOINTMENTS

- Notary Appointments – 12
- Technology Training - 18

Teen Services

PROGRAMMING AND DISPLAYS:

- We had 24 attendees for this year's annual Gingerbread House lock-in event! 100% attendance with a few last minute sign-ups
- International Snack Club continues to be popular, though with the school break we will see how many kids attend this month. 12/20 (the day their break begins) will be a movie day.
- 14 teens have signed up for painting their own nutcracker program later this week
- Will it Waffle started off with 4 attendees, and more kids interested in it for this month.
- The Volunteer Club and the Teen Advisory Club will be combined into "Crafting for a Cause" and launched in 2025 to see if we can get more kids interested in participating for community service.

Strategic Goals - #1 Independent Reading

- Reader's advisory services continue to be popular, though the Cookies & Books club has needed to be cancelled. Something new will be thought of for 2025 to try again
- Plans for the new book shelves are tentatively moving forward with new shelves expected to arrive in the next 6 or so months

Strategic Goals - #2 Community Interest Advancement

- Planning will start soon for the WLS county-wide Teen Resume workshop that I organize and partner with the WLS Career Coaching services team to present.

Materials

- Board games continue to circulate well though pieces can and do still go missing in the library as patrons are able to pull and play the games directly from the shelf without checking them out.
- Ordering for books, manga, and graphic novels continues with pre-orders 3-6 months in advance where possible, and an evaluation system for B&T's efficacy in delivering our orders is in the works.

Children's Services

Community Interest Advancement

- Our Film Friday series is continuing through December. A handful of attendees stay for at least the first hour of the film.
- We have had STEM Sparks Boxes on Saturdays. They have been drawing visitors occasionally. The boxes are filled with fun STEM activities for preschoolers and change monthly. December's box is gingerbread themed.
- Crafty Kids on Wed/Thurs and Cooking with Kids on bi-monthly Mondays are both well attended. Both will continue in the new year.
- This month we featured an Inclusivity Week book display requested by RAISE (Rye's All Inclusive Special Education) to pair with National Inclusivity week at school.
- The end of December will feature our special Winter Break Programming. We will have a Gingerbread Man Scavenger hunt on Thursday 12/26, a Build Your Own Sticker Book on 12/27, and our annual Noon Year's Eve Party on 12/31. Special Programming will continue into the new year.

Independent Reading and Reading Drop-off Prevention

- Both the younger (1st - 2nd grade) and older (3rd - 5th grade) Books and Beyond Book Club will be cancelled this month due to low attendance. Come the new year, the 3rd - 5th grade book club will try transitioning to the last Thursday each month at 6pm.

Outreach

- December 7th kicked off our storytime partnership with the Bird Homestead and Meeting House Conservancy. Every Saturday before winter break, we will host a brief storytime featuring a picture book from the Doris Bird Collection.

Other

- Joan, the new employee in the Discovery Zone, started this month. She has been helping us monitor and clean the space during the afternoon hours. Her help is much appreciated.

Annual Campaign / Development

2024 Be a Friend Campaign

There are currently 621 gifts to the Annual Campaign, with 121 of those gifts being made by new donors. Total giving stands at \$275,537 against a goal of \$250,000.

The Year End Annual Campaign mailing has been delivered.

The holiday open house is planned for Saturday, December 14th. Instead of a general community open house, this year's plan is to do a Friends Holiday Open House, with caroling, hot cocoa storytime, crafts, and holiday music. It will be from 4 to 6 pm. 54 families are registered.

Building and Grounds – Capital Plant / Seawall

Chris, Lina, and Katie had a productive meeting with Shelley Mayer. Chris and Steve connected at Mistletoe Magic and Steve indicated he was waiting on some additional information from the City of Rye and the Rye YMCA.

2024 Mayor's Award

The Rye Free Reading Room Mayoral Award honors an individual with a strong connection to Rye for significant contribution to literature and the literary community.

Robin Jovanovich has long had a passion for local stories and sharing news with her community. Prior to joining the Rye Record, she worked at Time Inc, before becoming an Editor at numerous publications, including The Westport News, Family Weekly, Good Housekeeping, and Self.

Part of the Rye Record since 1997, Robin has been a shoe leather journalist, traveling across Rye to speak with political candidates, local authors, non-profit organizations, while covering civic works, community interest stories, and so much more. From her starting role as a writer, Robin became a Contributing Editor in 1009, was named Editor in 2000, served as Co-Publisher in 2002, and became the majority owner of the Rye Record in 2008. She served as publisher from 2008 until the sale of the paper in 2023.

In addition to her journalism career, Robin has served on numerous non-profit boards, including the Francis Parker School, the Alfred Harcourt Foundation, 5 Steps to 5, and the Rye Free Reading Room.

Robin earned a Bachelor's Degree in American Studies from Skidmore College and was awarded a Doctor of Humane Letters from the College of Staten Island.

Action : The Board approve the 2024 Mayor's Award nominee

Strategic Planning Committee

The Rye Free Reading Room implemented a Community Needs Survey to gauge community's satisfaction with the Library and its services, as well as gain feedback for strategic planning. The survey was launched on September 3, 2024 and ran till November 1, 2024. It was promoted by the Highlights newsletter, e-blasts, social media, the website, and in an ad in the Rye Record. Trustees and Auxiliary Board members also distributed the link among their contacts.

Summary of Findings

- The survey received 311 starts and 61 completed surveys. The summary highlights below reflect the combined results of both survey versions.
- Demographically, the respondents were predominantly female, white, highly educated, have lived in Rye for 10+ years and fell into the 35 – 65+ age groups. Most have access to technology and high-speed internet in their homes.
- The survey was primarily completed by “Friends/Donors” of the Library: approximately 80%.
- There was prevailing agreement-- 93% -- that the Library is “very valuable” to the community.
- The question “Why are you a Friend of the Library?” elicited positive responses with potential use as testimonials (see Appendix I for key list).
 - “We use the library as a family - we love the children’s programming - and we love attending events for adults!”
- There was also positive feedback on “What’s your favorite thing about the Library?” – i.e. “its public spaces, the children’s play area, the lounge chairs in winter.”
- Respondents had clear perceptions of the Library’s goals for adults, teens, and kids: Agreement with the statements:
 - 56% Social space for the community to gather and make connections
 - 64% Encouraging teens to play, read, and learn
 - 78% Encouraging kids to play, read, and learn

- Respondents were most interested in the Library for:
 - 91% borrowing materials
 - 80% Learning something new from a class or lecture
 - 64% Opportunity to meet other community members
 - 60% Learning crafts, languages, or other activity
- The primary source of Library information is “information mailed to home,” followed by emails and going to the website.
- There was also positive feedback on “What’s your favorite thing about the Library?” – i.e. “its public spaces, the children’s play area, the lounge chairs in winter.”
- The majority of respondents agree that the Library is a unique source for programs, resources, and digital learning services
- Nearly 80% strongly agree that having a library card “saves my family money.”
- Most have visited the Library once a month or more and most feel the hours are convenient --with equal usage for weekdays versus weekends, as well as mornings versus afternoons.
- Most find the Library to be a positive experience: they feel comfortable, safe, and relaxed with the physical space and staff, and are familiar with how to find things.
- No actionable input to the open-ended question “Are there other services or roles for the Library to provide?” Some offering, “We are happy with the current service” or “I don’t know.”
- Only one suggestion for improvement was provide – renovate the library bathrooms.

Conclusions

The Library is effectively meeting the needs of the survey respondents. Overall, satisfaction is high and perceptions of the Library’s space, program, and services is very positive. Note the sample size is small and not predictive, and respondents were self-selected and primarily current Friends/Library donors.

Considerations for the Future:

Fewer more focused questions may encourage higher complete rate. Add prompted answers to the open-ended questions to encourage more specifics. Reminder to unloop mandatory questions to avoid confusion.

Comparisons to Past surveys
2017 / 2018 – 77 Responses
2020 – 68 responses
2024 – 61 responses

Consistent Feedback Across Surveys

1. Community Hub and Valued Resource:
 - The library is consistently recognized as an essential community asset. Many respondents express its role as a gathering place, educational hub, and a source for fostering a love of reading.
2. Staff and Service Quality:
 - Across surveys, the staff received high praise for being friendly, helpful, and supportive. Testimonials emphasized the positive atmosphere created by the staff.
3. Diverse Programs and Events:
 - Respondents appreciate the library's variety of events, especially children's programming and adult events. Many surveys mentioned this as a significant draw for visiting the library.
4. Access to Resources:
 - Both physical and digital collections are highly valued. This includes eBooks, audiobooks, and access to broader systems like the Westchester Library System.
5. Quality Offerings:
 - Library programs, museum passes, online services, craft activities, and music programs were all cited as draws to the library or benefits to the community.

Consistent Suggestions for Improvement

1. Limited Awareness of Services:
 - Several patrons were unaware of specific library offerings such as tech training and reader's advisory services.
2. Parking Accessibility:
 - Parking remains a challenge for many patrons, with some indicating it deters them from visiting more frequently.
3. Engagement Opportunities:
 - Respondents suggested more tailored events for teens, seniors, and other groups, as well as intergenerational programming to foster community interaction.

Mission Moments

Become a Friend of the Rye Free Reading Room before the end of the year! Friends support FREE access to information and resources for all and promotes literacy, culture, and community connections. Friends get exclusive access to purchase Novel Night tickets, invitations to author meet and greets before the public program, early access to the library book sale, fee-free art exhibits, reduced price meeting room, and more. Make a donation in any amount at <https://friends.ryelibrary.org>

Notable Activities

Wednesday, December 18 at 6 pm – Hidden Figures : The Egyptian Timeline

Egyptologists have made decisions about how to organize the study of ancient Egypt. Typically at an ARCE conference, this world focuses on the art, artifacts, and literature within a given space and a given time period. This presentation will address one specific decision, the Egyptian timeline as found in textbooks. It may be considered a springboard to additional discussion about both ancient Egyptians and the discipline of Egyptology.

Monday, January 6 at 6 pm – The Writer’s Room

A brand new program to support Rye’s local writers meets on first and third Monday of the month for concentrated and focused writing time! We provide the ambiance and scheduled time to work independently, with the periodic visit by a writing professional to provide their insight on the writing process.

Wednesday, January 8 at 7pm – The New Blue of Yale

Join us for an evening of song with The New Blue of Yale singing ensemble from Yale University! The New Blue was established in 1969, making them not only Yale's first all-women's a cappella group, but also the oldest all-women's undergraduate organization on Yale's campus.

Thursday, January 16 at 7 pm - Read in Rye : DEFY: The Power of No in a World That Demands Yes by Dr. Sunita Sah

Navigate the path to "True No", including transforming defiance into a tool for change and value-aligned living. Dr. Sunida Sah is an award-winning professor at Cornell University and an expert in organizational psychology, and her work has been featured in The New York Times, Los Angeles Times, Harvard Business Review, and Scientific American.