

The Community Library

Long Range Plan of Service

2026-2030



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Background

A community survey and in-person sessions were conducted in the spring and summer of 2025. Significant input about The Community Library and the local community was provided by participants. In addition, Library trustees and staff completed a review of the 2021-2025 Long Range Plan in December 2025.

Overall, the previous plan was successful. The Library has managed to increase staffing and programming, as well as complete a large portion of the building renovation and expansion. Annual proposed tax levies were approved by voters each year, and this serves as recognition of the need for the Library and the contributions it makes in serving the community.

The information provided by the community, along with the analysis of the previous Long Range Plan has been very useful. Staff, trustees, and even the Friends of The Community Library were able to use this information to create the goals and tasks that are incorporated into this plan.

The plan's goals and tasks focus on a wide range of subjects. These include the growth and expansion of the collection, programming, staff and board development, community partnerships, safety, and continued fundraising to be able to complete the renovation of Library's historic building. The major focus of the Library, as demonstrated by the vision and mission statements, is to support the community, to be free, far-reaching, and to fulfill patrons' needs to connect, discover, and thrive.

The first year of this plan, 2026, marks 105 years of the Library's presence in the community. This plan celebrates that achievement and declares that just as the Library has been a community resource in the past, The Community Library is here now and seeks to be even better in the future.

2026 also marks 250 years since the establishment of the United States of America. The library will promote and participate in providing information, events and promotion related to the history of our country. Schoharie County and the Cobleskill area played a significant role in the eight year war of the American Revolution. Thus, The Community Library will be engage and present programming over the next several years related to our unique presence and impact on America's fight for Independence.

Vision Statement

Your community space to connect, discover, and thrive.

Mission Statement

The Community Library provides free access to a broad range of information, resources, technology, and programming to preserve the past, strengthen the present, and inspire the future.

Core Values Statements 2026

The Community Library holds the following Core Values to be of utmost importance to our community needs and organizational operations. These values are our focus as we deliver a broad range of free services, programs and materials to the people in our service area.

1. **Literacy:** We believe reading is an essential life skill that enables lifelong learning and personal growth, so we value providing access to high-quality information resources.
2. **Inclusive Engagement:** We recognize and respect the diverse needs of our entire community and offer programs, materials, and services that empower our patrons to explore and engage with the world around us.
3. **Freedom, Privacy, and Intellectual Property:** We defend the rights of readers to make their own choices regarding the materials they explore and access, while safeguarding patrons' privacy and protecting the intellectual property rights of creators.
4. **Sustainability:** We prioritize the deliberate consideration of the economic, environmental, and social consequences when making operational decisions about the library.
5. **Service:** We emulate providing efficient, courteous service and making all our guests feel safe, welcome, and valued.

Adopted May 26, 2026 by the Board of Trustees

The Top-Three Key Strategic Initiatives for the Community Library

We strive to provide the highest quality library services to our community. In identifying our key initiatives we are able to focus our actions to provide for the continuance of a comfortable, safe and well-equipped building, and active community engagement with high quality programming and materials for all to enjoy. Our top three key strategic initiatives are as follows.

1. Assess the current status of the entire building including roof, foundation, utilities, heat, air-conditioning, ventilation, parking, and grounds. Determine associated costs and plan a production timeline for both short and long term maintenance/improvements for the building, infrastructure and grounds on an ongoing basis.
2. Continue fundraising and grant-writing in order to complete the renovation project to expand library program space to include improved public access to meeting rooms, dedicated teen and children's spaces, historical collections, and functional optimization of the current library spaces, offices, and storage areas as the renovation project nears completion.
3. Expand community partnerships with businesses, organizations, schools, other libraries and community groups to enhance cooperative working relationships, magnify efforts, and share information and resources for broader outreach, cost efficiency and wise use of resources to benefit everyone in our community service area.

Adopted May 26, 2026 by the Board of Trustees

The Community Library's Long Range Plan of Service for 2026-2030

After holding several community listening sessions and customer surveys in 2025, library staff members, Board of Trustees committees, and the Friends of The Community Library created

specific goals to act as guidelines for this long range plan of service. Those goals, and the tasks necessary for achieving them, are listed below:

Staff Goal: Promote, encourage, and reward reading, intellectual curiosity, and lifelong learning.

- Offer a broad range of programs and materials to educate, entertain, and inspire patrons with diverse interests and backgrounds.
- Enhance or develop partnerships with arts, tourism, history, and cultural organizations.
- Seek opportunities to connect Library programming and resources to other events happening in the community.

Staff Goal: Effectively communicate to patrons and partners a broad, accurate understanding of all the Library offers the community.

- Develop a marketing/communications plan.
- Review, evaluate, and expand the collection of resources to address the needs of the community.
- Establish and strengthen connections among other community organizations, agencies, and institutions.
- Help prepare board members to serve as effective promoters of the Library.

Staff Goal: Identify and find new approaches to reaching underserved segments of the Library's service area.

- Analyze demographics of current Library users in the context of the demographics of the broader geographic service area to identify underserved populations.
- Develop outreach programming to increase visibility in the community and meet community members where they are.
- Develop programming and build collections to appeal to a diverse range of interests and segments of the community.

Staff Goal: Review, evaluate, and improve internal procedures to ensure safety.

- Work with the Director and local emergency planning and emergency service providers for training to determine the Library's role in the event of an emergency, weather, and disaster events.
- Develop an emergency plan to address the health and safety of employees and patrons of the Library.
- Establish regular emergency/fire evacuation drills using a step-by-step guide for evacuating and exiting the building safely and quickly in the event of an emergency.

Staff Goal: Implement Library-wide initiatives that promote economic, environmental, and social sustainability.

- Review internal practices and procedures to ensure that facilities, equipment, and financial practices prioritize sustainability and minimize negative environmental impacts.
- Provide collections and programs that enable patrons to make informed, responsible choices regarding recycling, waste reduction, energy efficiency, and affordability.

Finance Committee Goal: Provide for the annual finances and sustainability of the costs associated with all employees, programs, building and utility costs, and all other costs related to the operations of the Library.

- Monitor and assess the new accountant and payroll contracts and the number of corrections that need to be made. Monitor the expectation that the financial package is received at least one week before each board meeting.
- Report accurate financial status on time at each board meeting and arrange for training for all board members to be certain that they fully understand the financial statements as presented.
- Schedule a “needs” session to be led by the Finance Committee to obtain Board input to identify what cannot be covered by the annual budget.
- Start a reserve account for major maintenance projects such as the parking lot and roof replacement.
- Work with the Board and possible consultants to assist with writing grants. The Finance Committee will lead grant writing and/or assist the Director in gathering information, letters of recommendation, and other tasks as needed. Any grant opportunities identified by board members or staff will be brought to the Director and the Board for consideration for the grant application process. Additionally, the Finance Committee, with the Director, will set a realistic goal for the number of grants to apply for in a calendar year.
- Ensure that the annual budget process includes necessary increases to the annual tax levy to be able to meet the financial needs of running the Library, especially considering the increase in the size of the building, the number of staff, and the utilities required to effectively operate once the spaces undergoing renovation are opened.
- Work with the Personnel Committee to ensure that all employees are paid a fair market rate, and plan for funds to meet any cost of living and benefit package needs when approved by the Board.

Personnel Committee Goal: Provide for adequate staffing, job descriptions, handbooks, benefits, training, and evaluations of staff performance.

- Identify the type and numbers of staff that will be needed to continue to increase programming on an ongoing basis. Ensure that all policies and human resource practices are up to date, fair, and equitable for all employees, on a regular basis.
- Determine pay and benefits packages for staff on an annual basis, and establish procedures to define seniority in a fair and equitable manner.
- Work with the Board Development Committee to identify key roles to map for the purpose of succession planning in both planned and emergency situations.
- Request a Civil Service position and determine the timing of hiring a part time janitorial/maintenance person with input from Director and the Building and Grounds Committee in the 2027 budget process.
- Provide for annual staff education days with two paid staff training days by 2027.
- Provide opportunity for all staff to have regular CPR, choking, and cardiac defibrillator training on a regular basis.

- The Personnel Committee will work with the Policy Committee, (with input from the Board and the Director), to determine the feasibility of establishing a Volunteer Program, including youth. If feasible, they will work together to review insurance requirements, define the scope of the volunteer program, establish policies and procedures, and identify any needed training to create a Volunteer Program. The Volunteer Program will promote and safely allow teens and adult volunteers to do intermittent volunteer work to assist with Library programs, promotions, and tasks.

Policy Committee Goal: Provide the framework of policies and procedures to guide and support staff, board, and all library programs and operations in a fair, equitable, and legal manner.

- Review and update all policies on a three-year rotational basis or more often as needed. Update the policy tracker and create an update schedule. **Completed April 2026.**
- Identify the need for new policies and provide the framework and assistance to other committees when new policies are needed related to the work of the committees. Create a “policy needs” form to share with committees to help them identify when a policy is needed and an outline of what information the Policy Committee needs to develop a new policy by **August 2026.**
- Establish the policy and procedure needed to ensure a smooth transition for succession planning for key roles in both staffing and board membership/roles. Work with the Development Committee to create policies and procedures that are needed based on succession planning for the key board roles identified by that committee by **March 2027.**
- Determine policies and procedures that will allow for volunteers to assist in Library programs, operations, and simple maintenance, and work with the Personnel Committee to establish a volunteer handbook if this type of program is determined to be feasible. Identify policies that may currently hinder volunteer involvement and assistance in Library programs and operations by **September 2029.**

Buildings and Grounds Committee Goal: Provide for the ongoing monitoring, provision of maintenance, capital improvements, and safety in regard to the entire property including its buildings, furnishings, grounds, and utility systems.

- Work with Spaulding landscapers and grounds maintenance to improve native gardens, improve turf quality and grading to make the grounds more accessible, inviting and usable for outdoor programming, and improve overall beautification of the grounds. Meet with Spaulding and determine project scope and design with cost estimates **completed March 2026.** Grant application for a native garden and grounds improvement project will be submitted in July 2026.
- Work with the Director to determine appropriate security and camera systems as well as exterior lighting and any necessary building signage for the entire library and grounds. Buildings and Grounds meetings will keep these items as standing agenda items, and progress will be noted as systems are selected, approved by the Board, and installed. It will be important to consider uniform systems and lights to be put in place for the existing Library space and the renovated space. Because renovations are not complete, the work may or may not occur all at one time depending on scope and costs.

- Provide for the maintenance and repair of building and systems in both a proactive manner and in emergency or unforeseen situations. The committee will identify major maintenance items, such as the roof, parking lot, HVAC, and boiler, as well as routine cleaning and maintenance items, such as carpet cleaning, refreshing paint in bathrooms, woodwork cleaning/refinishing, high area dusting, blinds/window cleaning, etc. These items will be published on a regular schedule with the expectation that the entire Board, (as physically capable), help to complete these tasks whenever possible. The tracking list will be compiled and completed by **August, 2026**. It will be reviewed at each committee meeting for completion/assignment of tasks and revised and updated as needed.
- Review annual mowing/groundwork and snow removal contracts and their performance. Annual review of all contracted service providers will be carried out at the end of each season to determine if service is satisfactory, meets the needs of the Library, and meets budget requirements. If a new service provider is needed, requests for bids will go out several months in advance of the upcoming season.
- Identify any necessary redesign and associated costs for the current Library spaces in the front of the building to blend with the renovation area in the back of the building to transform the entire Library space into one building. Timing will depend upon grants, fundraising and construction schedules.
- Provide for the ongoing planning and oversight of the Renovation Project as fundraising and work progresses over the next several years.

Board Development Committee Goal: Provide for the ongoing recruitment, training, sustainability and engagement of the Board of Trustees to meet legal guidelines and to produce a united, effective Board that is successful in working with the Director and staff.

- Determine key board positions that require mapping and delegation for both succession planning and emergency vacancy situations. Outline key board positions and identify potential succession planning and process for filling emergency vacancy situations by **November 2026**.
- Recruit new board members continually in preparation for resignations, ends of terms, and unexpected vacancies in a manner that will be representative of the diverse patron base as well utilize board member knowledge and skills to complement Library needs. Create a Board profile document/outline that includes current individual board member strengths starting with individual board interviews/bios. Identify current and future Library needs to match up with Board strengths and to identify gaps by **October 2026**.
- Establish a comprehensive, structured initial orientation for new board members as well as provide at least one qualifying annual training for the entire Board. Create a working orientation course that identifies and outlines key sources of information and resources for new board members. Work with current board members and other similar libraries to create an outline for annual board training by **March 2027**. The training documents will require at least annual updates.
- Establish a system for an annual self-assessment for each board member and the Board operations as a whole including an assessment of Board strengths and weaknesses. Share the results with the Board to be able to make adjustments to practices and areas of focus. Establish a timeline for completing self-assessment annually and for sharing the

results with the Board. Target date for completing the assessment survey tool is **February 2027**.

- Establish a short “Road Show” and schedule of presentations which any board member could take to a local group, club, church, or similar organization to help to publicize what the library has to offer and to establish ties with more people in the community. Train all board members to be able to do the presentation. Work with the Director, staff, and Capital Campaign Committee to create a PowerPoint document (or similar format) that can be used to share what the library has to offer. Share a calendar of potential events/meetings for the purpose of obtaining board volunteers to present. (Outline of presentation modules to be completed by **November 2026**.)
- Foster cooperative ties with local libraries for shared ideas and resources that help enhance programs and systems that are mutually beneficial. The Board Development Committee and the Director will plan and schedule a “mixer event” to allow questions, knowledge, and information to flow amongst local library boards, staff, and Friends groups. With the assistance of all board members, staff and Friends, this event will take place **before the end of 2027**.
- **Long Range Planning Committee Goal:** Gather input from patrons, the community, the Director, staff, and board members to create and modify the Long Range Plan that defines initiatives, guides progress, provides a roadmap for financial stability, and outlines necessary actions to improve maintain and improve the facility and services in alignment with The Community Library’s vision and mission.
- Monitor the progress of the Long Range Plan (LRP), with board committee input and feedback over the plan’s scheduled timeframe. Remind committees of their responsibility to continually work to meet the goals of the plan. Request each committee provide timely information about their work and progress, roadblocks, and/or the need to modify the plan. Information will be shared and requested from committees and board members at each monthly Board meeting. Formal LRP review and updates will be provided at least twice per year.
- Modify or add to the Long Range Plan as needed over the course of the plan’s duration. Any major changes, additions or deletions of the plan will be explained in the formal LRP review process.
- Be proactive in recognizing opportunities and projecting areas of focus that will need to be addressed in the *next* five-year plan. The LRP committee will keep a running list of opportunities to consider adding to future LRP initiatives. This list will be kept by the committee chair and shared with successors as leadership changes. Plans will be put in place in year four of this plan to undertake another survey of the community, Board, and staff to ensure that the Library is able to provide the services that meet the needs and values of the community.
- The LRP Committee will establish a process to help to identify, train and transition to new leadership when such change occurs. The LRP Committee will ensure that the Library maintains an accessible history of the long range planning process over the years, to help with historical review and the development of new plans in the years to come.
- The LRP Committee will gather input from trustees and staff in 2026 to establish Core Values Statements and create a list of three to five major strategic initiatives for The

Community Library. These will further support the Library's vision and help with Library branding for grants, fundraising, and publicity. (Completed May 2026)

General Library Board Initiatives (In collaboration with Director and Staff)

1. Ensure robust publicity for library events and programs. Create a specific process to gather and provide information, news releases, advertising etc. Designate a "point person" to ensure consistency and accuracy of information in regards to detailed inquiries and decision-making.
2. Always encourage accessibility and environmentally sound practices when considering library programs, building improvements, capital projects, equipment and supplies. Provide support and input to the Director in selecting products, equipment, technology and building needs that are accessible, sustainable and environmentally sound.

The Friends of The Community Library Goal: Provide for support and fundraising for Library programs and initiatives.

- The Friends will continue their already established programs and support and provide assistance to Board and staff programs, events, and fundraisers as they are able.
- Increase membership numbers. Continue to provide outreach and opportunities to invite new people to join the Friends group. This can include invitations to join the Friends Bookmarks in February book bundles, information in newsletters, the *Times Journal* library column, and while hosting Library events.
- Increase the numbers of active members participating in fundraising and other events in the Library such as decorating, hosting snacks for programs, book sales, etc. As member numbers increase, and when need for assistance is identified, the Friends will contact all current Friends to ask for help.
- Consider establishing a partnership with a Teen Friends of the Community Library group to have youth available to help with programs, events, and fundraisers. The Friends will discuss this initiative and consider if and how they can establish this type of partnership. This type of program will require input from the Board, Director, and staff in regard to logistics and program design.

Plan Evaluation and Updates

As part of the Long Range Plan of Service, the Board of Trustees will review this plan at least twice annually. The Long Range Planning committee will remind each committee 1 month ahead of time to review their portion of the plan and report the current status, accomplishments and any difficulties or changes that need to be made with the initiatives or processes. The timeframes contained within this document are set as target dates. As work progresses and goals are accomplished, the completed dates will be included in the semi-annual review process. Any updates or changes to this plan will be identified during those reviews. A significantly altered Long Range Plan may require approval by the Board of Trustees depending on the extent to which it impacts library operations, human and/or financial resources.

Adopted June 23, 2026 by the Board of Trustees