

SPL Report to the Board

MEETING DATE: October 14, 2025
FROM: KRISTA ROBINSON, CEO | LIBRARY DIRECTOR
SUBJECT: CEO MONITORING REPORT



Financial Condition

- The Library submitted its annual request for the 2025 Connectivity Reimbursement from the Ontario Library Service. The OLS administers the Connectivity Funding on behalf of the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Gaming.
- The Library has submitted its annual request for the Ontario Public Library Grant from the Ontario Government. The PLOG grant is \$51,402 annually.
- Year to Date Financials for 2025 are included in this package. Items to note include:
 - There is an expected favourable variance in the Wages and Benefits line of the budget due to position gapping and a Long-Term Disability leave.
 - Billing to PCIN partners for digital collections has yet to occur and as a result, there is a negative variance the Collections line.

Staffing Updates

- The City of Stratford's annual Employee Appreciation Lunch was held on September 24. 16 staff attended the lunch which was held at the Rotary Complex and catered by Features.
- The Library hired a Special Projects Coordinator on a part-time two-year contract, and they started on September 22. While it was hoped their time with SPL would be much longer, they have subsequently accepted a permanent role at another organization and is no longer with the library. We will look at hiring again in the near future.

General News

- Performance indicators and statistics for the third quarter of 2025 are included in this Board Package as 10.2. Items of particular interest include:
 - Most key performance indicators saw increases over the first and second quarters, as well as over third quarter 2024. Specific year to date increases over 2024 include active library cards (+4%), monthly active cards (+4%), library visits (+5%), and program participation (+3.5%).
 - Physical library collection circulation has stabilized, and some collections are seeing decreases while others are seeing substantial growth. This is generally related to certain technologies no longer being used (DVDs and CDs). Digital collection usage continues to increase month over month, and year over year (+6%).
- The Library was invited to participate in the *Your City. Your Future.* event on October 2. This full day event was organized to by the Mayor to gain insights from over 500 local grade 10 students on their thoughts on community, belonging, and the future of Stratford. Additionally, there were booths where organizations could introduce youth to the story of the organization, their work and its impact on Stratford, potential volunteer opportunities, and future pathways for students. The library participated in a number of ways:
 - Participated in the initial planning of the event
 - Had a booth sharing information about the library. This booth was managed by the MakerSpace Coordinator and the Teen Librarian. They shared all sorts of fun engaging activities and information on what the library offers teens.
 - Had a booth asking youth a variety of questions regarding a future library space. Questions were



asked about space, programs, services, and the future. Results of the questions are still being compiled.



- The current Canada Post strike is affecting the library in a few different ways. We are not receiving new copies of periodicals, are unable to send out printed library notices, and are unable to order in or send back InterLibrary Loan materials. To address the challenge of library notices not being sent, staff are phoning impacted patrons to notify them of overdue or lost materials. Due to most patrons using email notification, the volume of phone calls required is minimal.
- The Library participated in Welcoming Week, September 15-19. During this week, the library offered a tour of the library alongside the YMCA Settlement Services to newcomers in the community. This resulted in requests for two more tours for local ESL classes. Additionally, there was a display on works by new Canadians.
- The Library Auditorium is holding an art exhibit by local artist Yanni Chen. Chen moved to Canada from China in 2017, and has worked as an art educator for more than 30 years and has held numerous exhibitions in China. This marks her first exhibition in Canada. [More on this display.](#)
- As of the end of September, SPL has 107 volunteers and collectively they have contributed:
 - to 796 programs and services so far this year
 - 1,386 hours in total across all areas of the library
- SPL has partnered with Destination Stratford to ask residents what they feel the Heart of the Community is. This is a tie in with the large LED heart hung on the Grand Trunk building. Feedback is being solicited until October 17 in the library, at the Destination Stratford office, [and online.](#)

Programming News

- In September the library partnered with the Stratford Writer's Festival. The library was the host location for five different events, including an event by Stratford Poet Laureate David Stones. Melanie Kindrachuk, Adult Outreach and Collections Librarian offered a session on Bibliotherapy as part of the Festival as well.
- For National Day of Truth and Reconciliation, SPL offered a variety of opportunities for the community to learn and reflect.
 - The Orange Shirt Story was shared as a story walk in the library garden
 - Partnering with the BIA and the City of Stratford, the library presented three short films from



- the National Film Board. After the films there was a group discussion.
- There was an interactive “Look and Learn” activity on the children’s floor, encouraging children to display various orange shirts and learn more about the unique art and designs.
- A special outcome from the Writers Festival was staff being introduced to local Indigenous Poet Scott Tilson. Staff invited Mr. Tilson to share a poem he had written about Truth & Reconciliation for Truth & Reconciliation Day. The Library recorded the reading of this poem and shared it on social media, encouraging the community to learn and reflect. [Watch the powerful poem being recited here.](#)
- Chess Knights are now being offered on Monday nights on the adult floor of the library. Chess Knights are opportunities for chess enthusiasts of all ages to come together and play – or learn to play. This is one of the library’s initiatives to help build community and combat the loneliness epidemic. The program has been extremely popular, drawing over 100 participants to 3 evenings in September.
- A book themed Drop & Swap was offered on September 18-20. This popular event drew over 100 people on the Saturday’s swap portion. The Stratford General Hospital was the recipient of the surplus books and they will be used for their books sale.
- The library was invited to share information about services and programs available to seniors at the SLAAA open house on September 13.

Select CEO Activities

Meetings

- Sept 3: PCIN Management
- Sept 15: Grand Trunk meeting with Svec Group
- Sept 15: Grand Trunk Renewal AdHoc
- Sept 22: Grand Trunk Tour with Svec Group
- Sept 26: downloadLibrary Consortium
- Oct 8: PCIN Management
- Oct 9: Library Board Finance Committee

Professional Development

- Sept 25: Attendance Management workshop
- Sept 29: AI Summit

Advocacy

- Sept 24: Business After 5, Libro Credit Union
- Oct 2: Your City. Your Future.

News and Coming Events

SPL in the News

- [Writer’s and readers connect through upcoming Stratford library events](#), Sept 11, StratfordToday
- [Chinese art exhibition opens at Stratford Public Library](#), Sept 18, Stratford Times
- [Heart installation lights up Stratford’s Grand Trunk site](#), Sept 25, StratfordToday
- [Destination Stratford Library ask ‘What’s in Your Heart?’](#), Sept 26, Beacon Herald
- [Stratford honours National Day for Truth and Reconciliation with events and film screenings](#), Sept 30, StratfordToday

Upcoming Events

- Ontario Public Library Week: October 19-25

Patron Feedback

In response to an email sent by the Community Engagement Supervisor to our volunteers regarding their



contributions year to date:

“Thank you for your lovely comments on the volunteer community at the library - they make all of us feel special and appreciated. We do it, of course, because it makes us feel good but also because the library is such a special place - one of the very few left in our consumer driven world that is not monetized and only available to those who can afford it. As well, it is a welcoming and inclusive spot, open to all and non-judgemental. I often wonder, and worry, about what would happen if the bean counters, zealots and book banners who seem to be taking over our public discourse were to decide to defund libraries to save a buck or to make sure that we do not have access to ideas, opinions and unbiased knowledge that would go against their agendas. If that were ever to happen, we might as well say goodbye to freedom and democracy which seem to be threatened right now as it is. So, the few hours each of us volunteers give is a small price to pay for the privileges and benefits we all share. It is an honour to be among those who give freely of their time and experience to help and educate others.”
Joe O.