

Director's Report
April 2026

It's been a busy and exciting month at the Valley Cottage Library. Along with the longer days and warmer temperatures, spring has us planning for lots of exciting things ahead including summer reading and our generator install both just right around the corner.

Facility

A termite swarm was noted behind the Children's Services desk in mid-March. On the appearance of the second swarm a few weeks later, the exterminator company sent their expert to discuss termite behavior, concerns, and remedies. Once a colony is present they will continue to find opportunities to come above ground to wood sources, in this case, the cellulose in the carpeting. As they have the potential to pose significant structural and/or material damage, the exterminator will attack this colony directly through the slab foundation but also will put bait traps outside to attract the colony away from the structure. This work will be completed in late April/early May.

Termites travel only through the dirt and do not pose any harm to humans or threat of transferring to other locales.

Two new custom display shelves were installed in the Children's Room to bring more display shelf functionality to this end of the room.

The shelves look lovely and fill the need for additional display opportunities for our children's non-fiction items.

The next planned upgrade in the Children's Room is the lighting above the Learning Backpacks unveiled last year. This has been planned with the electricians and are now awaiting an install date.



I have been working with the electricians and Orange & Rockland to plan for the CT cabinet switchover. During this time the backup generator will also be out of service and the library will be closed. Pending final confirmation from Orange & Rockland, this work is expected to take place on April 28 which will require a full building shutdown.

A tree fungus was brought to our attention by a neighbor who has trees on their property suffering the same affliction. The neighbor reached out via email on April 8 and recommended I speak with an arborist. Joaquin Luna and I met with the arborist on April 10, and he recommended a fungicide sprayed four times a year during the growing season of the trees. This would be an annual obligation to keep the fungus from spreading. The neighbor's impacted trees are in very close proximity to our trees. The trees are the Colorado Blue Spruce near the rain garden and the ones located at the far end of the parking lot on the hillside are also impacted.

VCL Strategic Plan 2024-2027 Two: Rethink and repurpose the physical space
VCL Strategic Plan 2024-2027 Goal Four: Plan for the next generations

[Staff and Staff training](#)

Ashley has organized training for staff on itypes in Koha with RCLS Software Administrator, Alex Carver that will take place on April 10. The feedback from staff was positive about the training.

A full staff meeting is scheduled for April 17, 2026. The topic will be a review of the Code of Conduct, the Situation Manual, and a fire drill. The meeting will take place after library hours.

In late April/early May the library will begin working with an intern from [Another Step](#). Another Step is an agency that builds workplace skills and opportunities for with individuals with developmental disabilities. Head of Technical Services, Diana Mendoza, and I will be meeting with our candidate on April 29 with the aim of welcoming him into the Technical Services department in early May.

VCL Strategic Plan 2024-2027 Goal Four: Plan for the next generations

[NYS Annual Report](#)

After much delay due to the Baker & Taylor bankruptcy, the annual report software log-ins were made available on April 2 with a due date of April 13. The workload is divided between myself, the Assistant Director and the Bookkeeper and involved the pulling together of data from many sources. The board reviews and accepts the report submission which is typically done earlier in the year.

[Audit](#)

The program notes were updated to better reflect the work that is done at the library. The previous notes were limited and had been stagnant for a long time. The exit conference is scheduled for the May board meeting with George and Dave presenting the audit report.

VCL Strategic Plan 2024-2027 Goal Four: Plan for the next generations

Construction Grant updates

Final Budget Expenses were submitted to New York State Division of Library Development (DLD) on March 19 for the project completed in 2025 of the Teen Room Expansion and Study Rooms construction. 90% of the funds which equalled \$103,329 was deposited in the bank account on March 27. In early April I received notice from DLD to mail in the signed FS-10 forms to the state which was completed on April 7. Once received, the final 10% awarded to the project will be released for deposit in the library account.

The work in the Teen Space is now complete. The signage was completed and installed on April 10. And the long-awaited window seat cushions were completed and delivered on April 6.

For the Construction Grant application submitted in summer 2025, the HVAC install and the whole building generator install are expected to be completed this spring.

On April 2, I met with library architect Mike Esmay to consider an idea for a future construction grant project. This was a preliminary vision meeting with no specifics at this point.

VCL Strategic Plan 2024-2027 Goal One: Inspire and facilitate the strengthening of our community by building connections.

VCL Strategic Plan 2024-2027 Two: Rethink and repurpose the physical space

VCL Strategic Plan 2024-2027 Goal Four: Plan for the next generations

Energy contracts

Our gas and electric contracts were due for renewal in 2026. A timing miscalculation resulted in the library being one month out of contract on the electric bill resulting in a significant out of contract assessment from the supplier.

The new gas contract was signed on January 6, 2026. The effective date on the contract was incorrect and resulted in a change to the contract to start in April versus starting in February. The current global energy issue has drastically changed energy prices and the new company decided not to honor the old contract due to the change of the effective date. Rather than sign a new contract at the current higher rate, the library is now in a variable rate with O&R as the supplier is waiting until prices stabilize at a hopefully lower rate. As the winter heating season is now behind us time is on our side to wait for a hopefully more advantageous rate.

The energy broker wrote a check to the library to cover the full cost of the out-of-contract electric bill as a measure of good faith due to the errors. That check has been received and deposited.

Employee Handbook review

As is considered best practice, the VCL Employee Handbook was reviewed and prepared for submission to the library's attorney for legal compliance and update. After several preliminary email contacts, I met with the library attorney on April 8 to discuss attorney proposed edits to the handbook in advance of board approval. Our conversation led for the need of additional clarification by the part of the attorney and will be ready for board review at the June meeting.

The previous board review of the full document was completed in March 2025.

VCL Strategic Plan 2024-2027 Goal Four: Plan for the next generations

WCAG training

A training for relevant staff on WCAG standards took place on Friday, March 20. Eleven staff members were trained in preliminary guidance on complying with the standard. WCAG compliance is necessary by April of 2027 for organizations under 50,000 population.

To meet the compliance requirements, a new website is in design. Caroline Siecke-Pape and I worked on preliminary look-and-feel design templates and Department Heads have been tasked with reviewing content. This necessary change presents a good opportunity to evaluate website usage and content.

WCAG compliance goes further than the website to our social media and our printed newsletter. Templates will need to be created to ensure compliance. The library will also have to ensure compliance with third-party vendors that we contract with to deliver library services.

VCL Strategic Plan 2024-2027 Goal One: Inspire and facilitate the strengthening of our community by building connections.

Administration

Former longtime library staff member Marion Gimpel passed away in March. Her family contacted the library regarding making a donation in her name and available opportunities to perhaps do something that would benefit the library community.

The Disaster and Situation Manual received a full review with small edits for clarification ahead of the review by the board.

The library's SAM.gov registration was renewed.

The library received a mandatory survey from the U.S. Department of Commerce that was completed. The survey was the 2025 Annual Integrated Economic Survey.

VCL Strategic Plan 2024-2027 Goal Four: Plan for the next generations

Library Sketch

The commissioned sketch of the library by Nyack artist Bill Batson was unveiled on April 4. The reception hosted by Bill was well attended and the unveiling took place with a crowd of about 20 people in attendance. Nyack Mayor Joe Rand, Bill Batson, and I each addressed the crowd. It was a wonderful feel-good moment, and I invite all to stop by the wall outside of the Teen Room to see the piece in person.

The art has been added to the library's inventory and insurance coverage.



VCL Strategic Plan 2024-2027 Goal One: Inspire and facilitate the strengthening of our community by building connections.

[Meetings Attended](#)

DATE ATTENDED	MEETING TITLE	LOCATION
March 19, 2026	Department Head meeting	VCL
March 19, 2026	ILS Committee Meeting	Online
March 19, 2026	RCLS Civic Engagement series: Moderating/Hosting a non-partisan forum for candidates (best practices and logistics)	Online
March 20, 2026	IonicNet WCAG training for VCL	In-person
April 1, 2026	DA Executive Committee	Online
April 6, 2026	An Introduction to Grants in Aid	Online
April 7, 2026	LARC Executive Committee	Online
April 8, 2026	Director's Association	Online
April 9, 2026	Combating Mis-Dis- and Mal-Information	Online
April 15, 2026	Advanced Certificate in Public Library Administration	In-Person

[Board Training Opportunities](#)

Two hours of continuing education is an **annual** requirement for library trustees. Trustees should send certificates of attendance to Christy for record-keeping. Register using the links below.

LIVE TRUSTEE TRAININGS

April 14, 2026 [Trustee Education: Supporting Library Sustainability](#) Presenter: Joanna Goldfarb, RCLS 6:30pm-7:30pm Online

April 16, 2026 –Trustee Handbook Book Club [Hiring and Evaluating the Library Director with Brian Hildreth](#) 5:00-6:30pm Online

April 20, 2026 [‘The Librarians’](#) film screening – In-person at Valley Cottage Library 6:30pm - 8:30pm

June 10, 2026 [Summer Reading fosters Community Connections](#) Presenter: Michelle Muller, RCLS 6:30pm-7:30pm Online

June 17, 2026 –Trustee Handbook Book Club [Laws and Regulations](#) 5:00pm-6:30pm Online

October 29, 2026 – Trustee Handbook Book Club [Duties & Responsibilities of Key Officer Roles](#) 5:00pm-6:30pm Online

PASSIVE TRUSTEE TRAINING

- The [Trustee Handbook Book Club](#) presentations are archived and may be viewed on demand.
- RCLS hosts trustee training recorded presentations on [Niche Academy](#). Need a Niche Academy password - scroll below the email/password fields and click "Create a free account" (**green** text). Select ‘Trustee Education’ from the list of offerings to view sessions eligible for trustee credit.

After the snowy and notably cold winter, everyone at the library is thinking spring and filled with the new energy the warmer temps and increased daylight brings to all.

Respectfully submitted,
Christy Blanchette
Director