TOWNSHIP OF SOUTH ALGONQUIN PUBLIC LIBRARY (SAPL)
AGENDA - REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD
March 24th, 2026, 6 pm Whitney Branch/Online

Land Acknowledgement: Charlene Alexander

As the light returns and the Madawaska River begins to flow again, we gather on the traditional, unceded territory of the Algonquin Peoples. We honor their ancestral connection to these lands and their millennia of stewardship. In the spirit of the Spring Equinox and the season of renewal, we offer our Community Seed Library as a tribute to the cycle of growth and the shared responsibility of nourishing this land. We commit to moving forward in a spirit of reconciliation, respect, and gratitude for the original caretakers of this territory.

Call to Order

1. **Approval of Agenda** *Motion Required*
2. **Approval of Minutes:** *Motion Required:* **February 24th, 2026**
3. **Report of the Chairperson:**
4. **Business Arising from the Minutes**
   - 4.1. **Astronomy in Action program 2026 –** confirmed Tuesday June 9th school 1pm public 7pm
   - 4.2. **Jackie Findlay Library Board Nomination:** Council has approved the nomination. Awaiting police check procedure from Township.
   - 4.3. **'Snakes and the Research Done on Them in Algonquin Park'** with Drayke Evans, AWRS, Possible programs: A presentation at the Whitney school in May and a presentation during the Canada Day celebrations on Saturday, July 4th at the Whitney Community Centre.
5. **New Business:**

6. Reports
   - 6.1. **Finance:** *Action:* Review of the bank statements. February $3509.69
   - 6.2. **Librarian's Report:** *Action:* Review and discuss librarian's and statistical reports.
   - 6.3. **Council Report:**

7. **Governance**
   - 7.1. **Policy:**
   - 7.2. **Strategic Planning/Strategic Doing***: Draft* MOU update. Article about Freedom to Read.
   - 7.3. **Canada Post Community Grant:** Application submitted.

8. **Correspondence:**
9. **Any Other Business:**
10. **In-Camera/Out of Camera:**
11. **Next meeting:** April 28th, 2026, 6 pm Madawaska Branch/Online
12. **Adjournment:** *Action: Motion Required*

Township of South Algonquin Public Library
Minutes of the Meeting Held
February 24th, 2026, 6pm Madawaska Branch/Online

Attendees: Rose Jessup, Councillor Laurie Siydock, Vicki Forward, Elaine Hare and Sarah Ennor
Staff: Charlene Alexander, Cynthia Haskin
Land Acknowledgement: Vicki Forward
I'd like to acknowledge the beauty & complexity of the land we live on and the world around us. I acknowledge the Algonquin people who lived here before us still do and will through the future. I give thanks to be able to live, work and play here and strive to ensure my actions honour the inter connections of all things.
Call to Order: 6:03 pm

1. **Motion # 2026-08**

Moved – Elaine Hare Seconded – Rose Jessup /To approve the agenda/Carried

2. **Motion # 2026-09**

Moved – Rose Jessup Seconded – Elaine Hare /To approve the minutes of January 27th, 2026, as amended. Carried

3. **Report of the Chair:** Wished Charlene Alexander a happy birthday.
4. **Business Arising from the Minutes**
   - 4.1. **Astronomy in Action program 2026 –** We are trying to coordinate the tour with possible dates of June 8th,9th or 10th. It will be the same dome as last year, The Orion.
   - 4.2. **Jackie Findlay Library Board Nomination:** The nomination has been submitted to council and will be reviewed at their meeting in March.
5. **New Business:**
   - 5.1. Potential wildlife program in partnership with Drayke Evans, Manager of the Algonquin Wildlife Research Station, who has expressed interest in delivering complimentary wildlife talks for the library.

6. **Reports**
   - **6.1. Finance:** Action: Review of the bank statements. February $3509.69
   - 6.2. **Librarian Reports**: Reviewed and discussed reports. Adam Shoalts April 19th 1 pm, Madawaska Hall.
   - 6.3. **Council Report:** Spoke to Kim at the grocery store regarding a bottle fundraiser. Waiting on a decision.
7. **Governance**
   - 7.1. **Policy: none**
   - 7.2. **Strategic Planning/Strategic Doing**: Sarah Ennor and Charlene Alexander continue to work on the draft MOU and are making progress.
   - 7.3. **Canada Post Community Grant:** Work continues, deadline February 27th, 2026.
8. **Correspondence: none**
9. **Any Other Business: none**
10. **In-Camera/Out of Camera:**
11. **Next Meeting**: March 24th, 2026, 6pm Whitney Branch/Online
12. **Adjournment**

    Motion #2026-10

    Moved by – Laurie Siydock Seconded by – Elaine Hare /To adjourn 7:12pm/Carried.

Township of South Algonquin Public Library CEO Monthly Report
Prepared By: Charlene Alexander

Daily Operations ● **Responsive ● Freedom ● Accessibility**

Assisted patrons with a variety of tasks, including:

- Printing, faxing, copying, scanning, and emailing documents
- Downloading, completing, and submitting online forms
- Providing readers' advisory services
- Proctored two, three-hour exams
- Assisted with two ETA travel documents
- Assisted with e-transfers
- Assisted with unlocking a laptop
- Assisted in setting up a new laptop and transferring data from old laptop
- Assisted three patrons to file income taxes using Wealth Simple
- Assisted in setting up a new Gmail account, provided an orientation on use and google drive. Assisted with transferring photos from phone to the drive

Other Tasks:

- Set up and takedown of seasonal and monthly library displays. St Patrick's Day and Easter
- Prepared new books for shelving.
- Ongoing collection maintenance and review
- Updates and maintenance completed on all public computers and Chromebooks
- Created and shared social media (Facebook & Instagram posts and responded to public comments and messages. February 36 posts
- Updated and maintained the library website
- Prepared donated items for addition to the collection
- Ordered and prepared seeds for seed library, reorganized and made new signage
- Ongoing book sales
- Shoveled snow from ramp, stairs & entrance, spread salt as needed
- Checked books in and out and completed shelving duties
- Maintained daily stats

Programming ● **Responsive ● Governance ● Freedom ● Accessibility**

- School Visits: Three bi-weekly class visits continued
- Author Visit – Adam Shoalts: Scheduled for Sunday, April 19, 2026
- Astronomy in Action: June 9th.
- Promoted Virtual author talks in library and on social media.

Governance ● **Responsive ● Governance**

- Prepared agendas, minutes, and reports; attended the regular monthly Library Board meeting
- Attended the monthly Township Committee meeting and compiled a report for Council
- Attended the monthly CEO Informal Zoom Meeting
- Reviewed and submitted staff payroll to the Township on a bi-weekly basis
- Conducted regular check-ins with the Branch Librarian via phone and email

- Memorandum of Understanding (MOU); working on a draft with Sarah Ennor
- Canada Post Community Grants: Application submitted.
- Annual Survey: has been completed and submitted.

Monthly Township of South Algonquin Public Library Librarian Report
Prepared By: Cynthia Haskin

Daily Operations and tasks ● **Responsive ● Freedom ● Accessibility**

- Assisted patrons with scanning, emailing, faxing, and printing documents.
- Assisted patrons with computer use and technology questions.

Other tasks

- Prepared new books for shelving.
- Created a St. Patrick Day display of books and Easter
- Checked books in and out and completed shelving duties
- Working on a list for new books to buy
- Tidied shelves and completed light collection weeding
- Checked washrooms to ensure cleanliness
- Created and posted social media posts
- Ongoing book sales
- Keeping track of daily stats
- Shoveled entrance way a few times
-

Programming ● **Responsive ● Governance ● Freedom ● Accessibility**

Governance ● **Responsive ● Governance**

- Continued weekly check-ins with Charlene via phone and email
- Working on Seed Library

Township of South Algonquin Libraries Monthly Stats					
March 2026	Whitney			Madawaska	
	Jan	Feb		Jan	Feb
Head Count	166	163		83	84
School/daycare visit headcount	52	65		0	0
Program headcount	0	0		0	0
Circulation	432	379		101	137
Activity Kits (includes Park passes)	9	5		0	6
Device	7	7		1	0
Computer users	16	20		16	20
Inter Library Loans	24	6		0	0
New Members	0	0		2	1
Print/fax/copy	32	110		5	9
Reference/Reader's Advisory	159	156		4	10
Tech/media/software support	14	12		3	3
minutes spent on above requests	815	540		41	56
In Library Use	58	81		28	27
Over drive users/both branches	23	13			0
Overdrive circulation/both branches	135	100			0
non members users	12	13		6	16
seed library	0	4		2	0
Head Count by Day					
Tuesday	0	0		30	36
Wednesday	65	51		0	0
Thursday	70	86		26	27
Saturday	31	26		27	21

Transaction and balance statement report

Company name: CORP OF THE TWN C
SOUTHALGONQUIN

Library Board

001869679618 CAD

Transaction and balance details

Date	Description	Debit amount	Credit amount	Balance
Feb 01, 2026	**Opening balance**			**3,501.96**
Feb 04, 2026	CREDIT MEMO INT @ 2.6000% CIBC-AUTOMATED INTEREST SYST		7.73	3,509.69
Feb 28, 2026	**Closing balance**			**3,509.69**
	Total value		7.73	
	Total count	0	1	

BARRIETODAY.com

Libraries urge residents to defend right to read amid rise in censorship

Nikki Cole
Mar 15, 2026 2:30 PM

Vivien Keiling, left, the Barrie Public Library's manager of collections, and chief executive officer Lauren Jessop say pushing past book bans is about protecting the freedom to read and decide for ourselves what ideas are worth engaging with. | Image supplied

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00:09:43

Freedom to Read Week may have come and gone, but local library officials are urging residents to keep the momentum going by standing up for challenged titles and staying engaged in the growing fight over what belongs on public shelves.

The annual event, which took place in late February, encouraged Canadians to think about and reaffirm their commitment to intellectual freedom.

When decisions about what's available to read are driven by a small group, it limits choice for everyone else in the community, Barrie Public Library chief executive officer Lauren Jessop told *BarrieToday*.

Censorship is a double-edged sword, added Vivien Keiling, the Barrie library's manager of collections.

"It is not just a justification for 'social justice warriors' to add material that has previously not been given its place on the shelves, but also the neutral ground that requires that we place books with polar-opposite perspectives alongside those previously marginalized materials," Keiling said. "It's a delicate balance that even in the library field-trained staff face regular dilemmas in overcoming their personal bias.

"Public libraries serve diverse populations with different beliefs, backgrounds and interests," she added. "If one group's preferences determine the collection, we risk silencing voices and restricting access to ideas that others may find meaningful or important. Libraries work best when they reflect the full diversity of the communities they serve."

Springwater Public Library chief executive officer Jodie Player Delgado holds a small stack of books that have been challenged or banned in some places in North America. | Nikki Cole/BarrieToday

Jodie Player Delgado, chief executive officer for Springwater Public Library, says although she believes there's a book for every person, not every book is meant for every person.

“There are books that I personally don’t like and don’t read, but they need to be available for those who do,” she said. “I hate horror, but my husband loves them. Every person needs different information at different times and they need to be available.”

Advertisement

Books are the best way to learn in a safe environment, she added, and can often have an impact on readers that go far beyond the page.

“There have been studies done that children who have read the *Harry Potter* books end up being more empathetic to others because of the lessons in those books," said Player Delgado. "It’s really important to have a wide variety (of topics) and have books that cover controversial issues, because you never know what somebody is going through.

"A book can help that person not feel alone.”

Books provide hope and information, she added, and serve as windows into other worlds.

“They are sliding doors that you can step through, be more aware and be more helpful," Player Delgado said.

All three local library officials agree that readers should ignore book bans or challenges, and that can begin locally.

“At their core, libraries exist to ensure people can explore ideas freely," said Jessop. "When books are challenged or banned, it’s often because they make someone uncomfortable — but discomfort is sometimes part of learning, understanding and developing empathy.

"Pushing past book bans is about protecting the freedom to read and decide for ourselves what ideas are worth engaging with,” she added.

Libraries provide access to a wide range of perspectives so people can form their own opinions, said Jessop, adding controversial books often reflect real experiences, difficult histories or marginalized voices that haven’t always been widely heard.

“Their role in a library collection is to support learning, empathy and informed discussion, not to promote a particular viewpoint. Libraries strive to offer a balanced collection,” she said.

Libraries are unique institutions that provide information to everybody in the community, added Player Delgado.

“Across the spectrum, we provide education and recreation," she said. "It’s important that we have something for every member of the community who walks through our doors. And that does include controversial topics because we never know what people are dealing with in their life.

“There are a wide range of viewpoints, so we need to make sure we have materials for all viewpoints. People can learn and grow by reading something that maybe they haven’t been exposed to or don’t agree with.”

Both libraries have what they call a “robust” collection development policy, which outlines the process and criteria for adding to their collection, as well a reconsideration form and process for people who are concerned about an item.

“If someone has concerns about a title in the collection, they can submit a request for review and the item is evaluated against our collection development policy," Jessop said. "This policy emphasizes intellectual freedom and professional selection standards."

She also noted that a challenge doesn’t automatically mean a book is removed, but rather that it is reviewed carefully.

“Like most libraries, we do occasionally hear concerns about specific titles, but the process in place ensures those decisions are thoughtful and consistent rather than reactive,” Jessop said.

Player Delgado says they ask that the person making the challenge read the entire book — or watch the film — and outline exactly what they are concerned with and other considerations. A committee is then created to review the title.

“We also have an intellectual freedom policy and we adhere to the Ontario Library Association’s statement on intellectual freedom and the intellectual rights of the individual and the Canadian Federation of Library Association’s statement on intellectual freedom and libraries," she added.

In the 10 years Player Delgado has been with the township’s library, there has only been one formal challenge, which was settled amicably and the title was not removed.

That book was *Heartstopper*, a British coming-of-age story that follows the lives of Nick Nelson and Charlie Spring as they meet and fall in love, she added.

“We’ve had some instances of children’s books about 2SLGBTQ+ characters being hidden in the library, so we do routine sweeps to check for that,” Player Delgado said.

In Canada, there have been many books challenged over the years, says Player Delgado, pointing to recent events in Alberta where a ministerial order issued in 2025 attempted to ban many well-known books from school library shelves, including *Melissa* by Alex Gino, *Gender Queer* by Maia Kobabe and *This Book is Gay* by Juno Dawson.

These titles are also among the most challenged in the United States, she added, simply because they are pro-LGBTQ+, have “explicit content,” or are considered by some to be “inappropriate.”

“I feel that often the books are not read fully, so information is taken out of context, especially in the case of *Gender Queer.* There is also lots of misrepresentation about who has access to the challenged titles," said Player Delgado. "For example, no middle grade child will be reading *The*

Handmaid's Tale and it will not be in the children's section of a library or in an elementary school, but older teens should have access to it."

Another book that has been challenged many times is *The Giver* by Lois Lowry, added Jessop.

"It's often read in schools, but it's been challenged because it explores themes like control, memory and difficult moral choices," she said. "What makes the book so important is that it encourages young readers to think critically about the world around them — about individuality, freedom and what makes a society humane."

Staff at both local local libraries have recently discussed their own favourite "banned" titles that have raised the ire of someone enough to file a complaint.

For Player Delgado, *Speak* by Laurie Halse Anderson tops her list.

"It is a young adult novel about a girl who was sexually assaulted at a back-to-school party before she enters Grade 9, and how she deals with the fallout during the school year," she said. "That is an example of a book that can really help people who have gone through similar experiences.

"There is no violence or sex in the book. Everything is off the page before the book even starts, but yet just because of the topic it's often banned for being explicit or inappropriate for the age group. But, I feel like if things like that can happen to that age group, they need to be able to have the tools to help them understand it," Player Delgado added.

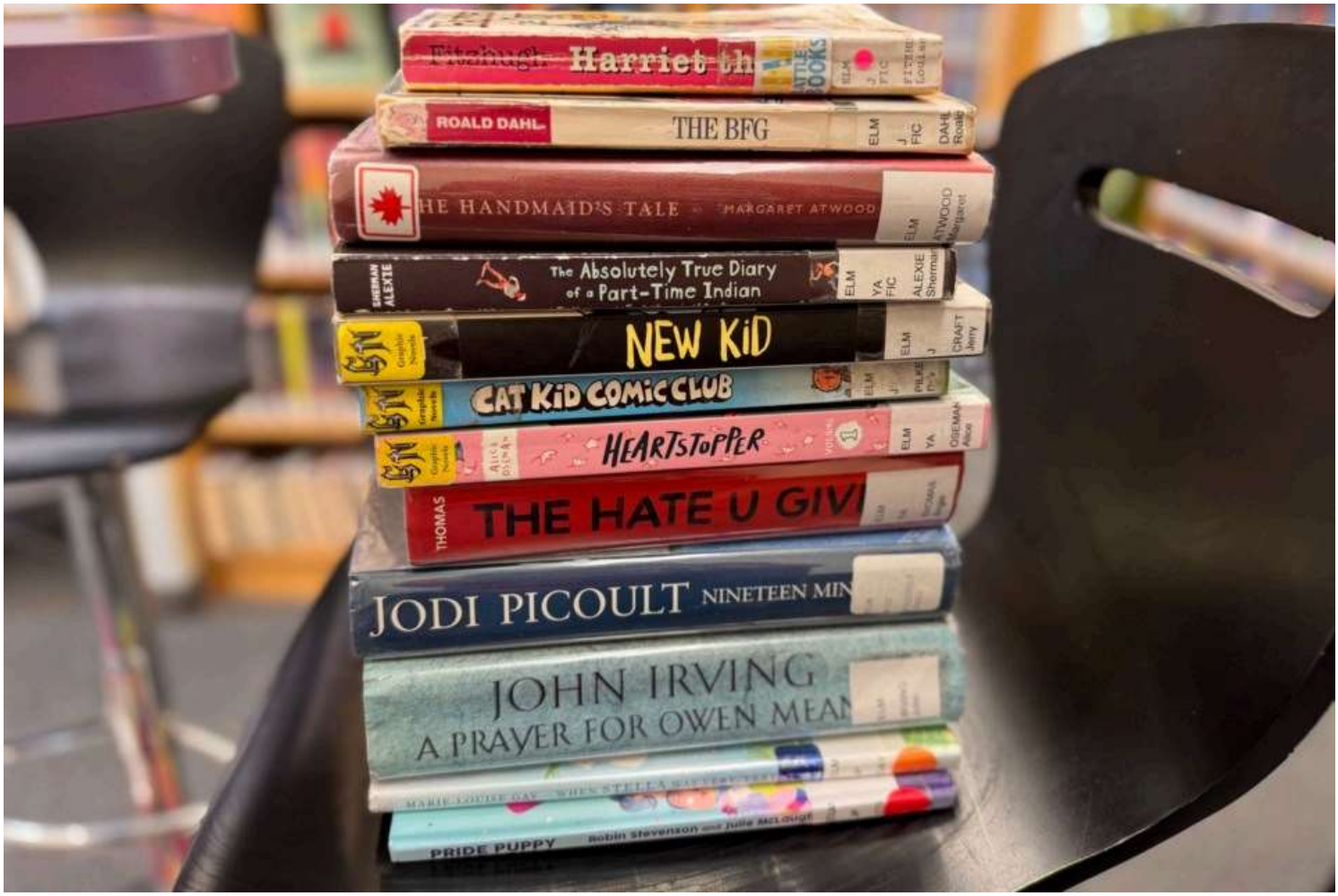
Looking ahead, what gives both Jessop and Player Delgado hope is the curiosity of readers themselves.

"People come to libraries because they want to explore, question and discover," Jessop said. "Every time a book is challenged, we often see renewed interest in it — readers want to understand why it matters enough to challenge.

"Libraries, teachers, and communities continue to champion the freedom to read, and that shared commitment helps ensure that important stories and perspectives remain accessible," she added.

Intellectual freedom is one of our most basic rights, says Player Delgado, and without it we lose the right to freedom of religion, of protest, of independent media, of thought and of democracy.

"If we don't fight for books and the Freedom to Read, it is a slippery slope to losing those other rights. And who gets to decide?" she asked.



A large pile of books that have been challenged for their content. | Nikki Cole/BarrieToday

Comments (3)

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Monika Nink Verified Mar 15, 2026 4:19 PM

Reading is one of the most important ways we learn about the world and about each other. Not every book will resonate with every reader, and some topics can be uncomfortable — but that's often where learning begins. The role of a public library isn't to decide what people should think or read. It's to provide access to a wide range of ideas so individuals can make up their own minds. In a diverse community that matters. If a book isn't for you, the solution has always been simple — choose another one. Limiting what others are allowed to read is a very different step.

SH

Seaghan Hancocks Verified Mar 15, 2026 4:34 PM

Censorship in ANY culture or society is unforgiveable. If you chose to remain uneducated, that is your, PERSONAL choice. If you don't like the book, don't read the book. Politicians, "Educators" and Religian have NO PLACE in deciding what people can and can't read. That is called brainwashing.
It's shameful that we're even HAVING this conversation in this day and age.

FF

Fighting the good fight Mar 15, 2026 5:21 PM

I agree the library should not be a part of censorship. When will they be stocking books written by Stalin, Marx, Mao, Saddam, Mussolini and Hitler?

Or is it okay to censor some things? Censorship cannot apply to some things or it applies to all things.

If you would like to apply to become a **Verified Commenter**, please fill out this form.

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