



Red Jacket Community Library

The RJCL Board of Trustees has been negotiating with the School District since September 2021 in an attempt to come to agreement on a new contract for our shared use of the School Library space. The Superintendent recently shared a Q&A detailing the District's position. Here is RJCL's position.

What is the status of the contract negotiation?

The District presented the RJCL with a contract that had many items the RJCL could not agree to, as responsible stewards of the public library. We have reached a compromise on many of those areas. Two significant points of disagreement remain:

- 1. We do not agree that the District is required to charge the RJCL rent.** We don't agree that *State Education Law Section 403-a* applies in our case. Our legal counsel, who specializes in education law and libraries, argues that *State Education Law Section 414* applies instead. We have shared with the District and their legal counsel in great detail our reasons for this. The District has not accepted our arguments. Nor have they accepted our arguments that, while the education law they cite allows a District to charge rent, it does not require them to do so.
- 2. We do not agree that the RJCL hours should be restricted *in the contract*.** We have presented several options that we feel would address all of the school's concerns about safety and school needs, and still allow some flexibility regarding hours of operation, especially in the summer, that would allow both of our organizations to meet their goals and adapt to the school's changing needs. The District has not been open to compromise in this regard.

We have been unable to make progress on these two points.

What next?

The RJCL Board of Trustees is **developing a cost/benefit analysis** to decide what to do for the future. We are comparing:

- the costs of remaining in the school facility under the new contract
- our ability to serve the community if we remain
- the costs and benefits to the public of moving
- the available options for other facilities in the community

What about costs?

For more than 20 years, the RJCL has paid a nominal usage fee of \$365 per year under our shared-use agreement. Under the new contract drawn up by the District, the RJCL will have to pay the District \$12,205 per year in "rent" while also accepting the additional limits on our hours and operations.

We have begun working on budgets that would allow us to pay this additional \$12,205 to the District. This is about 5% of our current budget of \$243,000.

We have also begun to explore the availability of other facilities in the community and the costs.

What about hours and accessibility?

The lack of daytime hours during the school year has always been a problem for our patrons. Until now, the financial benefits of the shared-use agreement made it worthwhile to work within the limits. That may no longer be true.

1. We have never been able to offer **regular daytime hours** to the public when school is in session. We have been trying to find innovative ways to compensate, for example by experimenting with “branch locations” in the villages with the support of the village governments.
What we are doing: We are evaluating the success, limitations, risks, and costs of this “branch location” approach. What do you think? Email us at rjcltrustees@owwl.org or call (585) 289 3559
2. Until last year, we were able to offer daytime hours to the public during the summer and school breaks. It seems this will no longer be allowed.
What we are doing: We continue to try to reach a compromise with the District on summer hours for public access to the main library facility.
3. Until last year, we were able to open to the public at 3:00 on school days. Students came directly to the public library after school for elementary after-school programs run by our staff, or to work independently on homework. This will no longer be allowed.
What we are doing: We have no expectations for a compromise in this area. As a result, we no longer offer after-school programs. However, we continue to offer evening programs for all ages, including school-aged patrons.

Is the Public Library moving?

The RJCL Board of Trustees is working on a cost/benefit analysis of remaining in the school facility under the new contract, and evaluating other options. We welcome public involvement in this effort. Please contact rjcltrustees@owwl.org or call or call (585) 289 3559 if you would like to help.

What is the Public Library’s long-range plan?

Our mission is: *To provide **all residents** of the Manchester/Shortsville Central School District (MSCSD) with a wide variety of programs, resources, materials and services that will meet the community’s need to satisfy curiosity, access information and support formal learning opportunities within a safe and welcoming environment for all.* Our specific goals for 2022-2027 are :

1. Increase access to library facilities and services
2. Increase community visibility and awareness
3. Enhance collections, programs and services
4. Focus on development and sustainability

We encourage you to read our Long Range Plan, which spells out how we plan to meet these challenges. It is online at <https://redjacket.owwl.org/about-us/long-range-plan/>

How can I help?

Learn more about becoming a Trustee at <https://redjacket.owwl.org/about-us/trustees/> Would you like to be involved in the cost/benefit analysis? Contact us at rjcltrustees@owwl.org or call (585) 289 3559.