

Gardiner Library Timeline*

December 1974 – Gardiner Reformed Church women's meeting held. Suggestion made to form a book exchange.

April 1975 – The Book Exchange Club opened at the Gardiner Reformed Church. Free and open to all. The name, however, did not stick and the club became known as the Gardiner Library. **(Note: 2025 marks 50 years)**

August 1975 – The Gardiner Library was housed in the main Gardiner Reformed Church building.

November 1976 – The Gardiner Library expanded to two rooms in the Gardiner Reformed Church education building. Peggy Matice is issued the 100th library card.

1976 – Tensions developed between Elting Library and the Town of Gardiner over funding contributions. Elting requested additional funds from Gardiner, which Gardiner obliged to do, but reduced funding to Elting the following year. By 1980, Gardiner decided to give all library funding to the Gardiner Library, save for a token \$50 to Elting.

April 1977 – Gardiner Library supporters petition the Town of Gardiner to move into the old firehouse on Station Square. The Town of Gardiner unanimously approved the town's leasing the building to the Gardiner Library for \$1 per year. The old firehouse had a bare bulb hanging from the center of the ceiling and lacked a heating system, running water, and restroom.

September 1977 – Regardless of no heating system, running water, and restroom, a dedication ceremony was held and fundraising ensued.

January 1978 – A heating system was installed in the Gardiner Library thanks to an IBM community service grant.

1979 – Library trustees raised questions about the Gardiner Library's policy on allowing children to take out books that were "manifestly unsuited for them." The library now shelved 5,500 books and had 540 library card holders. Library Director, Peg Lotvin, is still a volunteer.

1980 – First salary paid to Library Director, Peg Lotvin.

1980s – Newsletters are sent several times a year. Programming thrives. Best sellers and specialized books stock the shelves. The Gardiner Library becomes the center of the town. Annual meeting dinners are held.

1982 – Gardiner Library trustees begin exploring an addition to the old firehouse.

February 1985 – The addition to the old firehouse is opened, funded in part by the Gardiner Library and the Town of Gardiner.

*Information gleaned from *Gardiner Library: Its Beginning, Its Growing Energy, Its Struggle for Space* by Carleton Mabee (2009)

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January 1988 – Operating over 10 years as a “reading center”, Peg Lotvin suggests applying for a state charter as a Legislative District Library.

December 1990 – Realizing they would need Town of Gardiner approval to apply for Legislative District Library status, Gardiner Library trustees instead decided to apply for a Municipal Library charter. New York State Board of Regents grants the provisional charter on December 21, 1990. **(Note: 2025 marks 35 years)**

1991 – The Friends of the Gardiner Library is formed. A representative of the State Education Department questions the structural soundness of the old firehouse.

February 1996 – New York State Board of Regents grants the absolute charter on February 7, 1996. **(Note: 2026 marks 30 years)**

2000s – Gardiner Library looks for a larger facility/location which proves to be a difficult task.

November 2003 – For the first time, the Gardiner Library presented their budget to voters for approval, thereby “going over the heads” of the town board. The budget passes.

February 2005 – The Town of Gardiner conveys the old Town of Gardiner garage property to the Gardiner Library for \$1.

June 2005 – The Gardiner Library hires architects Butler, Rowland, Mays to begin planning for the new library.

2005 – The Gardiner Library launches a capital campaign with a goal of raising over \$1,000,000 towards new construction.

October 2007 – Groundbreaking ceremony held for new Gardiner Library. Congressman Maurice Hinchey speaks.

October 2008 – The new Gardiner Library opens to the public. **(Note: 2028 marks 20 years)**

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