Bancroft Memorial Library

Board of Library Trustees

Minutes 8 August 2023

**Bancroft Memorial Library Strategic Planning Meeting (SOAR Exercise)**

**Community Focus Group - Tuesday, Aug 8, 2023**

**Facilitated by Kristi Chadwick, Consultant Massachusetts Library System**

The meeting was called to order by Library Trustee Chair Chris Seaver at 6:30 p.m. for discussions pursuant to Strategic Planning with the members of the Community Focus Group. Kristi Chadwick from the Massachusetts Library System facilitated the meeting and her notes constitute the Minutes of the entirety of the Meeting. Meeting was a hybrid meeting, with one individual participating via Zoom. Meeting was recorded by Hopedale Cable.

**In attendance:**

**Kristi Chadwick, MLS Consultant and Meeting Facilitator**

**Members of Library Board of Trustees:** Christine Seaver, Trustee Chair; Marie Riddell, Trustee Secretary; Frederick Oldfield III, Trustee

**Members of the Library Staff:** Tricia Perry, Library Director; Vinny Kaushik, Library Page; Katheryne Sheehan, Library Assistant; Keely Bethel-Penny, Senior Library Assistant/Technical Services

**Members of Community Focus Group:**

Bernie Stock, Member of Select Board

Lisa Pedroli, Town Clerk

Kristen Poissen, Principal Bright Beginnings Preschool

Mary Margaret Mulroney, Hopedale Jr/Sr High School Librarian

Reverend Steven Cook, Pastor, Universalist Unitarian Church

Dan Malloy, Town Historian

Greg Habel, Resident and representative of Facebook Group Hopedale For Change

Phyllis Foley, Resident and Library User

Michele LaReau-Alves, Resident and representative of Facebook Group Hopedale For Change

Public Participation: See Below

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m. The next Trustees’ meeting will be on September 5, 2023 at 4:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marie Riddell, Secretary

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**Strengths**: *“What are the library’s strengths?”*  *“What have been some of the greatest accomplishments by the library over the last five years?”*  *“How does Bancroft Memorial Library already address community needs?”*

* The staff – Tricia as the director, wealth of information and ideas
* Personal relationships with the community
* Hopedale historical material at the library
* Gathering place for the community
* beautiful architecture – woodwork is a gem, gorgeous
* Availability to borrow items – ILL
* Programs at the library
* Amount of resources/event despite the limited budget
* Friends of the Library
* Library staff reinvented library services during COVID, kept engagement going – recovery from COVID and new programs
* High school has great working relationship with Library and Friends
* Increase in circulation from library
* Self-advocacy during override process – library is open!
* Online catalog and Libby
* Book Club
* 1000 Books Before Kindergarten program
* Summer Reading
* Check It Out program – encourage new library cards
* Meeting space open
* Offer programs that appeal to all ages
* Digitization of a lot of historical material, available online
* Central location and easy access to get to location
* Very friendly place – good perception
* Welcoming space for kids after school
* Resourceful, resilient, kind staff – works well together

**Opportunities**: *“What community needs and wants are not currently addressed by the library?”*   “*Are there current strengths that the library could leverage to increase impact?”*

* Changing population demographics – more diversity
* Visibility of library for ESL/immigrant populations – welcoming
* Gap in children’s attendance at library – school age, storytime, Pre K, K-4
* Getting teens into library
* LGBTQ community, how to welcome and make more visible to bring into library – promote collection items more
* Expand graphic novel collection – for readers, YA
* Impact of Proposition and threat of closing showed more people about library, how to continue messages
* Identify the use of library for reference materials, opposed to online searching
* Show the impact of staff/people at the library versus no one
* Build on the youth programs that work – more STEAM, music and movement, enhance story times
* Book clubs for youth – young teens, after school activities/homework
* Variety of options for program times – meet patrons where they are, evenings and Saturdays
* Civic learning – local government and participation, town involvement, become a resource for community
* Previous program for students to interact with local organizations, can library be involved? - Not done last year, not sure about this year
* Relationship with day care programs in town, local learning centers
* Find a way to share local information for town resources/events, let public know about library databases
* Educating people on available databases, esp using multilingual options
* Expand social media presence more – understand our target market
* Tutoring and ESL – communicate through school/families? Tie to Spanish program at high school. National Honor Society does tutoring – could they do at library?
* Donation collection – capstone projects for community, think of library as a community space

**Aspirations**: **“***What are your aspirations for the library?”*   “*How can* *Bancroft Memorial Library make a profound difference for the community?”*

* More hours – more later hours, full day Friday
* More staff
* Every single person in town wants to come to the library – they feel welcome, library is a draw
* ESL program
* Expanded collection for world languages
* Outreach to ESL learners
* Mini lectures and learning opportunities – adult learning
* More adult programming in general
* Meet cultural needs of younger adults – art, etc
* Community display – photos, art, for local residents
* More collaborative programs – sponsorship, space available in other locations (church)
* Fix the air conditioning/functional HVAC system
* Library of Things – fishing poles, sewing machines, musical instruments, hobby work
* Outreach story hour in other places/businesses
* Reach older population in resident housing
* Reaching out to older grade school, young adults
* Sensory story times
* Homebound service
* Homeschool groups meeting together at library
* Better lighting upstairs – also historical impact
* Front door can be a struggle – Can use as façade with glass entry
* Ensure front walkway and steps are accessible
* Make handicap accessible entry automatically open

**Results**

*“What are the outcomes for achieving aspirations?”*   *“What does success for the* *library look like?”*

* Selectmen of town will promote bigger budget
* More virtual signage – modern visibility
* Wait to talk with staff – more people in library
* Everyone in town has a library card
* Every emerging kindergartener receives a library card
* Greater frequency and well attended programs
* increased circulation of materials
* More welcoming seating to stay in the library
* Better parking – increased accessibility
* Historical preservation of building
* Better technology and continuously updated

**Additional Question**

Finish this sentence: *“in Hopedale, I believe the library is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ .”*

* Hub of the community
* central to the civic and intellectual life of the community
* ever-changing
* here for now and in the future
* essential for growth as a community
* way to meet of the needs of the entire community
* a symbol of inclusion for all ages and all people
* place where everyone can go

**Final Thoughts/Questions***(open discussion)*

* Planning for the future – there may be a lot more people living in empty lot
* What funding and grant opportunities may be available to implement some of these aspirations?
* Can the library be expanded to meet the needs of the community?
* How much can the library be responsible for (dealing with conservancy)?
* Public relations – we need to get people excited about what the library has and get the community to be part of it. Promote it as the special place it is
* Focus on fundraising? Get all ages involved
* Hard to get volunteers in community – need to learn to draw people in and share information
* Various communication methods – still need to have people subscribe/opt in