

Town of Hubbardston

Board of Library Trustees

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, April 25, 2024 at 7:00PM, Senior Center

Members present: Connie Strittmatter, Krista Goguen, Tom Robinson, Morgan Brinker

Members absent: Lucinda Oates

Others present: Chris Barbera, Library Director, Anne Goewey and Patricia Lowe, Library staff.

Chair Connie Strittmatter called the meeting to order at 7:13 pm

- **Strategic Planning**
 - **Community Survey Comments categorized**

Connie introduced the goals for tonight's special meeting: to review the library community survey responses and survey and focus group comments in detail and then conduct an informal SWOT/SOAR analysis with the trustees and library staff to identify the library's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats along with Aspirations and Results. The Trustees send a huge thank you to Josephine Amato for conducting the two focus group meetings.

Full survey and comments summary [Community Survey, Respondent & Focus Group Comments](#)

Library staff and trustees reviewed and discussed a categorized summary of the survey comments and shared observations. "Why do you use other libraries?" Comments: The main reasons are larger collections and more convenient locations. Other reasons include: more programs/more, better hours; use multiple libraries; larger facilities; better parking/ accessibility; and familiarity.

- "What the library is doing well" Comments: great staff/welcoming environment; programs/activities; collections; LIBBY/CWMARS access; community resource; the building.
- "What do you like best about the Hubbardston Library?" Comments: staff/customer service/ welcoming environment; location; the building; collections; programs; CWMARS/LIBBY; hours; community resource.
- "How can the library improve?" Comments: Most comments focused on accessibility and parking, collections and programming ideas; Other comments: improve/expand building/use of space/ HVAC; hours; publicity/outreach; technology.
- Additional comments focused on compliments to the library staff.

Two Focus group sessions were held with a total of 4 participants (out of 16 respondents who expressed interest in participating). Focus group participants commented on library strengths,

weaknesses, barriers to use, community awareness of the library, types of programs of interest and how to encourage attendance, vision for the next 5 years. Focus group comments emphasized ways to improve publicity, suggestions for collaborations, program suggestions, ideas for reaching a wider age range of users; highlighted safety/accessibility/lack of seating.

Discussion: Positive comments about the library staff are gratifying. Most comments were not surprising. A larger collection is not really possible, but we discussed some options for highlighting more aspects of the collections beyond the displays and new books (eras/themed displays, read-a-like, book/movie). Building accessibility and lack of parking inhibit attendance. Parking is also for the senior center so sometimes it is full. Strollers also need accessible access. Tricia mentioned ways to make storytime programs more accessible for participants with disabilities. Trustees discussed the suggestions and range of ideas for collaborations and ideas for reaching a wider age range of users.

- **Preliminary Community Survey Results**

Most respondents:

- were ages 50 or older, female, and white, live in Hubbardston (148/150).
- visit the library a few times a year;
- visit the library to check out books or pick up books transferred from other libraries;
- are very satisfied with safety, quiet, cleanliness; Satisfied with signage, lighting, HVAC, parking, accessibility; not satisfied with programming space.
- who don't use the library often: buy their own books, only use ebooks, use other libraries
- don't use the library website; those who do use it to access the catalog, place a hold, or access ebooks.
- get information about library events from the library website, Facebook, or the sign board
- are very satisfied with library customer service and satisfied or very satisfied with hours
- did not have an opinion on most programming or hours for programs
- rated fiction, new books/bestsellers, nonfiction, ebooks and museum passes as important or very important

Discussion: Consider how to better promote the library website and utilize social media tools to promote library programs.

- **Draft Strategic Planning Timeline**

May: Identify goals and strategies (SWOT/SOAR); Select Board presentation

June/July: Mission and Vision (done), consider developing Values Statements;
Review 2019-24 Strategic Priorities and Goals (Dec 2023 Progress Report);
Begin to Identify Strategic priorities and goals for 2025-29 plan

August: Discuss Draft Plan; Seek and Incorporate feedback; Make final adjustments to plan.

Action Item: Investigate MBLC resources and options for getting feedback on our draft plan refine goals and strategies

- **SWOT/SOAR Analysis**

Based on the survey and personal observations, library staff and trustees brainstormed library strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and aspirations and ways to measure results. Connie will write up these notes. We will use the notes and additional discussion questions for developing broad goals and more specific objectives. [SWOT/SOAR Analysis](#) notes

Motion to adjourn made by Morgan, Connie 2nd Meeting adjourned at 8:54pm

Respectfully submitted by Krista Goguen

Next meeting Thursday May 2, 7pm Slade Building.