

Long Range Plan of the Beaman Memorial Public Library

Directing programs & services from
fiscal year 2009 through fiscal year 2013

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Beaman Memorial Public Library
West Boylston, Massachusetts

Long Range Plan
FY2009-FY2013

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INTRODUCTION

The Beaman Memorial Public Library began the long range planning process in the spring of 2007. This process was completed in the fall of 2007. The result is a five-year plan that will benefit the community by helping the library to:

- Be responsive to the informational, recreational and enrichment needs of the people of West Boylston
- Make informed and thoughtful decisions about the development of library services and programs
- Allocate resources effectively
- Embrace the future

Implementation of the plan will begin in July 2008, and will continue through June 30, 2013.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We wish to gratefully acknowledge the following for their participation and support of this planning process. We were extremely fortunate to have such a fine group of individuals willing to commit to the process and to carefully examine the community and the library. The success of a process such as this requires an active and thoughtful group of committee members who envision ways that the library can best serve the people of West Boylston. Thank you to each.

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DEDICATION

This long range plan is dedicated to former directors Muriel H. Stiles and Ellen M. Dolan. Their commitment to excellent library services laid the foundation for this plan and inspired us all.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

The planning model used for this process was the American Library Association's The New Planning for Results: a Streamlined Approach. First created in 1998, this planning model provides an excellent method for local planning for public libraries of all sizes. The major strength of the Planning for Results model is its emphasis on creating goals that are directly based on identifiable community needs. The process consists of six steps: Prepare, Imagine, Design, Build, Communicate, and Implement.

Prepare: Planning to Plan: The key component in the preparation for the planning is the selection of the Planning Committee. The needs of the community are central to this process so the Planning Committee was chosen from interested citizens and from representatives of various organizations within West Boylston. The committee consisted of patrons with a long history of using the library as well as some who knew little about the library. Members were also representative of the various age groups in the community and included people who had lived in town all their lives as well as some relatively newcomers. We were fortunate to have attracted such a dedicated group of citizens willing to commit themselves to the process and to help envision the future of the Beaman Library.

Imagine: Identifying Possibilities: The Planning Committee's task (charge or mission) was to articulate a vision of West Boylston that would reflect the current and future needs of the community and determine how the library should respond to this vision. The vision produced is a picture of what the community would look like in ten years if everything were perfect. The Committee began with the existing Vision Statement for the Town of West Boylston. They felt that it still rang true in all essential aspects. Then the Committee identified current conditions in the community in relation to their vision for the future. Finally, they looked at the difference between where the community was and where they hoped it would be in ten years. Those differences were the needs to be addressed if the vision were to be achieved.

Design: Inventing the Future: During this part of the process the Committee defined the library services and programs that would best meet the identified community needs. This involved selecting from a wide range of service responses leading to three to five roles that most closely address the needs of our community. Following this step and based on these selected responses, the staff developed the Library Mission Statement.

Build: Assembling the Future: The next step of the process was to develop goals and objectives that: 1) directly support the new Library Vision and Mission Statements, 2) attend to the community needs identified by the Planning Committee as appropriate for the library to address, and 3) provide direction for future development of library service and a means of assessment for library administrators and staff. Based on the information and insight gathered from the Planning Committee, the Library staff developed the initial draft of the goals and objectives. The Planning committee then reviewed and approved the draft for Trustee Board approval.

Communicate: Informing the Stakeholders: Communication is an important component of the process. First, there was active and open communication about the process between the Planning Committee, the library staff and the Board of Trustees. The Planning Committee and the library staff acted as the key players in creating the plan draft and the Board of Library Trustees considered and approved the plan document. The plan will be distributed to various officials and agencies in the community, including the Board of Selectmen, the Town Administrator, the Town Wide Planning Committee, the Finance Committee and the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners.

Implement: Moving into the Future: This part of the process involves determining how resources should be allocated and choosing the activities that will best support the chosen service responses. Some of the goals and objectives cited in the plan can be accomplished with existing resources; others will require additional support from local funding, grants and donations. Prior to the start of each fiscal year, the Library Director and staff will develop an Annual Action Plan, identifying the activities that will be conducted to accomplish the goals and the objectives cited in the plan.

Evaluation and Update: This Long Range Plan will serve as an active document, guiding library activities and development for the next five years. Staff will refer back to it frequently. Goals outlined in the plan will be considered at monthly staff meeting. To accommodate new understandings and environments, Annual Action Plans will be developed prior to the start of each fiscal year to outline the activities necessary to meet the goals and objectives cited herein. The plan will then serve as the guide for future grant and budget activities. Evaluation, conducted by the Board of Trustees, the Library Director and the library staff, will be based on the goals and objectives listed in the document, and the corresponding Annual Action Plans. The Board of Library Trustees will amend and adjust the Plan as necessary. Upon completion of this Plan, the Board of Library Trustees will undertake a new planning initiative.

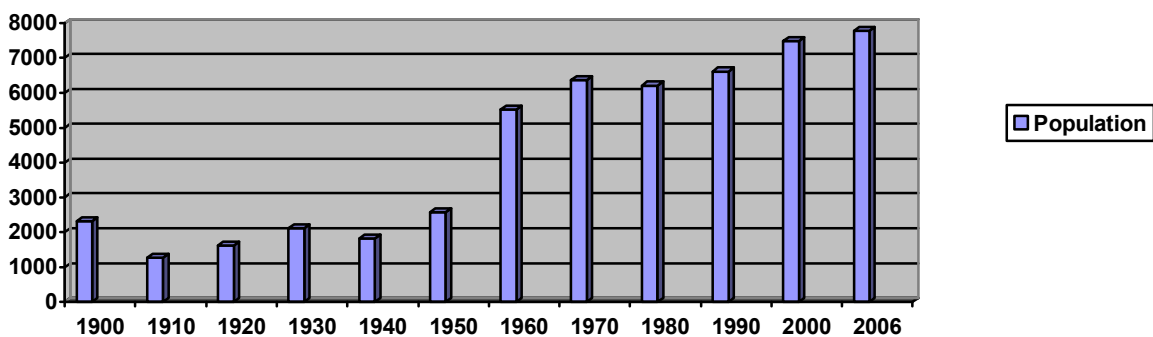
DESCRIPTION OF THE COMMUNITY – WEST BOYLSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

“The Town of West Boylston was created over a period of years from parts of Lancaster, Shrewsbury, Boylston, Sterling, and Holden. These lands had been parts of earlier land grants made to various settlers of the region. The 18th century witnessed the arrival of pioneers attracted to the area by the fertility of the soil and the opportunities for development afforded by its location at the site where the Quinepoxet River joins the Stillwater River to become the southern branch of the Nashua River.

By the end of that century, area families, unwilling to travel to the Congregational Church in Boylston, petitioned the General Court for permission to build a local church. The State Legislature granted the community precinct status in 1796. Incorporation was granted in 1808 and the town will celebrate its bi-centennial in 2008.

West Boylston prospered and grew through the 19th century and, by 1890, consisted of 3,000 residents, five churches, ten schools, as well as many mills and factories typical of the times. The availability of water power, which attracted the mills here, led to West Boylston’s selection in 1895 as the best site for a much-needed reservoir to serve the growing needs of the city of Boston.

From 1896 to 1905, West Boylston and its citizens endured the building of the reservoir and the resulting destruction of its industry, four churches and eight schools, hundreds of homes and farms as well as acres of fruit trees and miles of railroad tracks. In addition, twenty-five houses and a cemetery were moved and seventeen hundred residents were displaced. It took nearly fifty years for the town to regain this lost population. No longer an industrial mill town, West Boylston developed into a residential community enhanced, and defined, by the beauty of the tree-bordered Wachusett Reservoir.” (DHCD – Community Profile)



From 1930 to 1970, the town’s population increased 201%, reflecting the housing boom that followed the end of World War II. In 1973, the Worcester County House of Correction was built in town designed to hold 490 inmates further ballooning the town’s population numbers. The Jail was enlarged in 1991 by 300 beds. According to the 2000 Federal Census, the incarcerated population was 1298 and, as of the date of this plan, that

population has risen to over 1500. This growth has put a strain on the town's infrastructure without bringing in supporting revenue.

West Boylston is located in Worcester County, bordered by Worcester and Shrewsbury on the south, Holden on the west, Sterling on the north, and Boylston and the Wachusett Reservoir on the east. West Boylston is about 7 miles north of Worcester, 18 miles south of Fitchburg, 41 miles west of Boston, and 185 miles from New York City.

The Town is 13.85 square miles in area with a land area of 12.90 square miles, giving a population density of 512 per square mile. Our current (2006) population of 7,779 already outstrips the M.I.S.E.R. population trend estimates for the Town (7,477) in 2010. With this increase the population per square mile is now approximately 603.

Data from the 2000 U.S. Census shows that 56.6% of the population is male and 43.4 percent is female. Also, according to this census, the largest age group is between 35-44 years with the next largest group between 45 to 54 years. In fact, 23% of the Town's population is 55 years old or older. Race and ethnicity statistics show that 6,855 or 91.6 of the Town's residents are White, 399 or 5.3% are Black, 12 or 0.2% are American Indian, 64 or .9% are Asian, and, 47 or .6% Other. 103 residents, or 1.4%, are reported as of two or more races. In addition, 357 or 4.8% are reported as of Hispanic origin.

Perhaps most significant in terms of the Long Range Plan is the fact that the median age for West Boylston is consistently higher than the state median for each of the last three censuses. This is in spite of the fact that the median age of the jail population tends to bring down the town's overall median. In addition there has been a 32.1% increase in the 5 to 19 year old age group.

Principal highways are State Routes 12, 110, and 140, and Interstate Route 190 running north to south between Leominster and Worcester. Located nearby in the Worcester area, are three major cross-state highways: the Worcester Turnpike (Route 9), Route 20, and the Massachusetts Turnpike (Route 90). I-495 borders to the east, I-84 and I-395 connect to Connecticut and points south.

Passenger rail service to Boston, Springfield, Providence, and all other points on the Amtrak network is available through neighboring Worcester; The Springfield Terminal Railway provides freight rail service. West Boylston is a member of the Worcester Regional Transit Authority (WRTA), which provides fixed route service between West Boylston and Worcester. The WRTA also offers transit services to the elderly and disabled in cooperation of the West Boylston Senior Center. In addition, bus service eastward to Boston is offered through Worcester. The town is well connected by rail and highway to the ports, airports, and intermodal facilities of Boston and Providence.

There are approximately 2,413 housing units in the town of which 81.4 (or 1,963) are owner occupied and 460 rental units. The median house/condo value in 2007 is \$316,696. The fiscal year 2007 tax rate for all classifications is \$12.57 per \$1,000 valuation. The average single family tax bill is \$3,981 or \$19 above the state average.

West Boylston is classified an Urban fringe/Residential area. There are two industrial parks in West Boylston and a corridor of commercial development along Route 12. The unemployment rate for 2006 is 5.4% with the majority of workers employed by private companies; 92% commuting to work by private vehicle.

The town is governed by a 5-member Select Board with a Town Administrator form of government. Registered voters participate in two semi-annual Town Meetings. The town has a total of 3,835 registered voters. Of these, 779 or 20.3% are Democrats, 691 or 18.0% are Republicans, 1 Other, and 2,364 or 61.6% Unenrolled Voters. The town completed and approved a Master Plan in 2005.

The Town has an independent public school system with one school building housing Pre-K to Grade 5 and a second housing Grades 6 to 12. Both schools have been renovated and expanded within the last ten years. The total school population for 2004-5 is 1,170 ranking this school district 226 out of 328 in the state. The school system performs higher than the state average for MCAS scores at all levels. The Salter School, a private institution recently relocated in West Boylston offers men and women comprehensive training and preparation for careers in business, healthcare, computers and culinary arts. Numerous colleges and universities are located in the city of Worcester and its environs.

There is a limited number of local social service providers with Oakdale Nursing Home offering care for the elderly and two local churches participating in a homeless family shelter program in conjunction with the YMCA of Worcester. There is no youth center facility, but many organizations offer programs for youth: the town summer recreation program, youth sports programs, scouting programs, religious programs, school clubs and groups, and the library.

There are approximately 35 civic, ethnic, social, cultural, and fraternal or veteran's organizations in town. These include American Legion, Athletic Association, Beaman Oak Garden Club, Council on Aging, Firefighter's Association, Friends of the Beaman Library, Historical Society, Masonic Lodge and Odd Fellow's Lodge, Wachusett Area Rotary Club, and West Boylston Woman's Club.

Churches and religious groups in town include: Christ Lutheran Church, First Congregational Church, Our Lady of Good Counsel, Bethlehem Baptist Church, Oakdale United Methodist Church, Freedom Worship Center, and Hosanna Gospel Center.

The *Banner* and local community access cable Channels 11, 12 & 13 provide local media coverage. Also providing coverage of West Boylston news and events are the *Worcester Telegram and Gazette* as well as numerous Worcester radio stations and Charter Communications local news channel. High-speed broadband Internet access is available through the cable television provider, Charter, and Verizon.

Following the discussion of the town, the Planning Committee considered the Community Vision Statement as written in the Master Plan of 2005, the source for much of the statistics used in the discussion. With little alteration from the original the Committee wrote the following:

WEST BOYLSTON COMMUNITY VISION STATEMENT

As residents of the town of West Boylston, it is our vision to create and maintain an ideal community in which to live, learn, work, recreate, worship and raise a family.

CURRENT LIBRARY SERVICES & PROGRAMS

The first public library in West Boylston opened in 1878, based on a \$100 donation from the estate of David Lee Child. First housed in school buildings, it was moved to the Town Hall in 1904. It remained in that building until local farmer George Calvin Rice donated \$20,000 to have a separate public library building constructed for the people of West Boylston. This building opened to the public in 1912. In different periods, changes were made to accommodate the growing importance and changing focus of library service to the people of West Boylston. In the early 1960's a second floor of metal shelving was added to the rear book stack. A large meeting room on the top floor was renovated to hold a growing reference collection and to provide an area for quiet study. In the early 1970's a children's room was modeled from basement storage space. In 1999, with a \$1 million grant from the state and generous local funding of \$1.34 million, the building was renovated and expanded. This facility is handicap accessible, provides room for future growth, accommodates new technologies and offers the public a comfortable and welcoming library.

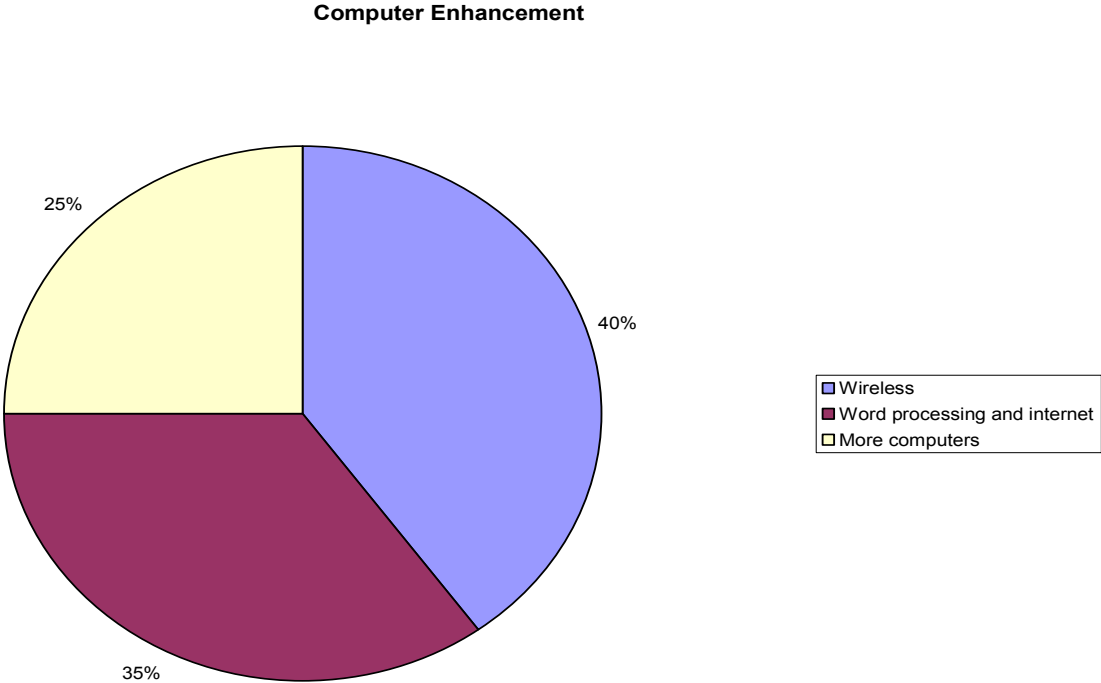
Today the library serves as the community center for learning, information and enrichment. It serves people of all ages and backgrounds and offers a wide range of services. The library offers a collection of over 55,000 items, including print and non-print resources. It provides robust electronic resources including online reference databases, a library web page and free in-library access to the Internet, including wireless access. Equipment to assist patrons with vision and hearing challenges was acquired through recent federal grants.

The library strives to meet the demanding and sometimes-contradictory roles of the traditional library and the newer demands as an information and technology center, while maintaining its commitment to excellent customer service. There is not adequate municipal funding to maintain a regular schedule of hardware/software upgrades and replacements making it more difficult to provide for that segment of the community needing technology support. A wide range of programs and events complement the collections, offering people of all ages a chance to reflect, learn and join in the fun.

The staff consists of ten employees, including three full time staff members, six part-time staff members, and one part-time custodian. This equates to approximately 5.3 FTE's in the public service staff. Over 100 volunteers assist with clerical tasks and on special projects. A six-member elected Board of Trustees governs the library with policy making and fiduciary responsibilities. The Friends of the Beaman Library support group, a key player in the library team, provides funds for programs for children, teens, and adults, the museum pass program, the library newsletter and other needs.

The library offers a website. This site offers information on library hours, services, and policies, links to numerous online resources and recommended Internet resources, email request forms for Inter-Library loan, online forms for making donations to the library and for informing the library staff about upcoming school assignments, and links to the library's events calendar. This web presence provides library users with access to many library services from their home computers at times when the library is physically closed.

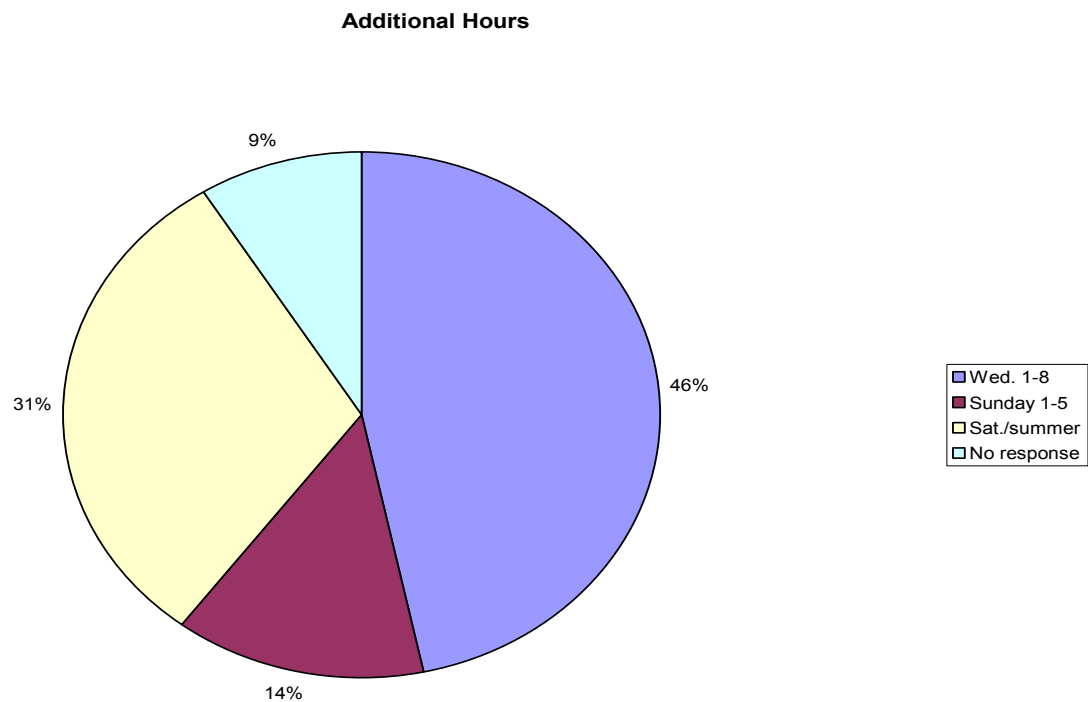
Internet access for the public is provided through partnerships with Charter Communications and with the C/W MARS network. Wireless access is available to patrons with laptops through service provided by Charter. The library began offering wireless access following the community survey results indicating that 40% of those responding to the question about technology needs of the library indicated they would appreciate that service. The infrastructure for Internet access is rapidly aging and there is, currently, no way to access both the Internet and word-processing software. This limits, for instance, people’s ability to type and send resumes or work on school assignments with any ease or without staff intervention in the process.



The West Boylston Room collection is a unique and valuable source of local history information available for residents of West Boylston and others who are interested in the town, its people and its heritage. The room is not open to the public but materials will be retrieved for use during normal library hours and more in-depth research projects will be completed as staffing allows. The library has participated in the C/W MARS “Digital Treasures” project by funding digitization of 42 images from this collection. There is much to be accomplished in this area to provide increased access to this fragile and valuable collection.

Since the completion of the building renovation and expansion project statistics in all areas of library service have increased. The spacious children’s room attracts visitors from all over Worcester County and circulation to non-resident borrowers increased by 25% in the first year alone.

The building is open 30 hours per week, including three nights and Saturday hours, a decrease of 9 hours since the early 1980's. Circulation during this same time frame has increased three-fold. Results of the community survey this summer reflected the people's frustration with this trend. Ninety-three residents responded to the survey and all indicated the need for increased hours.



The library is a member of the Central Massachusetts Regional Library System, has its own automated circulation system, and is an on-line affiliate member of the Central Western Massachusetts Automated Resources Sharing Network (C/W MARS).

This level of membership within C/W MARS means that, while the library's materials are listed in the catalog or database of C/W MARS, staff uses the in-house or stand-alone system to process library transactions such as checkouts, reserves, shelf-status of materials, etc. for all materials returning to and leaving the physical library. This in-house system does give West Boylston patrons on-site access to a full range of options such as placing reserves, determining whether an item is on the shelf, etc. but does not allow them to access the internal catalog, and this information, from home or from other computers outside the library.

While West Boylston library patrons are able to use the C/W MARS web catalog to see if their home library owns an item, they are not able to determine if the item is on the shelf, nor are they able to reserve any items on-line from other libraries for delivery to West Boylston. The inter-library loan service currently provided requires staff to manually integrate the two systems by processing requests on both our internal system and the C/W MARS system. West Boylston's library patrons cannot participate fully in the state-

wide resource sharing system without staff intervention. Town residents will be further marginalized should their library remain stationary while the resource sharing systems and access to certain digital content move forward across the state.

The library provides a broad range of programs and services to an equally broad range of patrons. Over 200 programs ranging from story times to concerts and from animal programs to art shows were enjoyed by over 4200 people in 2006-2007. Technology training sessions are provided for all ages as well, helping students to access information databases and to use effectively Internet resources in school assignments, and assisting older adults utilize email, fill out employment applications and the like.

Over recent years the library has had the challenge of offering effective programming and excellent local services under persistently restrictive budgets. Because of the financial difficulties faced by the town as a whole most town departments, including the library, have been asked to “do more with less.” In four of the last five years, the municipal appropriation for the library fell below the Municipal Appropriation Requirement for certification from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners. The town has been required to submit a waiver of this certification requirement with a failure to do so resulting in loss of grant funding and reciprocal borrowing. Funding issues continue to be the major threat for both the library and the community. The library would benefit from an annual campaign or through the formation of a foundation to enhance municipal support and to encourage support for the library in the spirit of the generous donors of the past.

Needs Assessment

The Planning Committee discussed at length those things they felt made West Boylston a great place to live and those that presented challenges for the town. The Committee ultimately decided on the following list of needs for the town:

- A. The town/community needs greater civic participation from its citizens.**
- B. The town/community needs a commonness of purpose and a sense of greater transparency to the process of governing.**
- C. The town/community needs to improve inter-relationships among town boards and committees.**
- D. The town/community needs to review its political structure and strive for harmony.**
- E. The town/community needs to develop programs and opportunities for teens.**
- F. The town/community needs a central point from which to distribute or view town information.**
- G. The town/community needs to foster further economic development.**
- H. The town/community needs to develop a method to differentiate the tax base by age and/or need.**
- I. The town/community needs to institute a plan for a higher tax rate for businesses.**
- J. The town/community needs to develop a park system.**
- K. The town/community needs to work to create more jobs.**

- L. **The town/community needs to develop a community service program linking youth and seniors.**
- M. **The town/community needs to recognize and expand on diversity.**
- N. **The town/community needs a central community meeting place.**
- O. **The town/community needs an education program to break down resistance to change and to recognize opportunities.**
- P. **The town/community needs a way to systematize volunteerism and develop programs to encourage participation.**

Again, following much discussion, the list of needs was further refined to leave just the ones that the Library is suited to address. In doing this, the Committee considered those things that the library does well and the other groups in the town that are already doing that type of activity or who are better suited to address the expressed need. In several cases, the library was designated a supporting role in meeting the need.

Community Needs the Library Will Address

As a Priority

The town/community needs to develop programs and opportunities for teens.

The town/community needs to develop a community service program linking youth and seniors.

The town/community needs to recognize and expand on diversity.

The town/community needs a central community meeting place.

The town/community needs an education program to break down resistance to change and to recognize opportunities.

The town/community needs a way to systematize volunteerism and develop programs to encourage participation.

As a Supporting Partner

The town/community needs a commonness of purpose and a sense of greater transparency to the process of governing.

The town/community needs a central point from which to distribute or view town information.

The town/community needs greater civic participation from its citizens.

The Committee considered the remaining needs on the list and grouped them into three responses according to the Service Responses described in the planning process manual. This grouping gave the staff the necessary directions for establishing goals for the plan. These service responses are: Commons, Community Referral and Lifelong Learning.

Taking the Committee's instructions the staff wrote the new Mission Statement for the Library.

BEAMAN MEMORIAL PUBLIC LIBRARY MISSION STATEMENT

The Beaman Memorial Public Library brings people and information together. The Library enriches the community by providing print and electronic resources, a community gathering space, and opportunities for personal growth and development.

The staff then considered the stated needs of the community and the selected service responses and put together three major goals for the library for the length of this plan. They then decided on certain indicators with which to measure progress towards the goals. And, finally, the staff considered the wide range of possible programs or actions that would bring these goals to fruition.

The Director will put together a yearly Action Plan to address how each of the programs will be implemented and will work with the Trustees and the Town, through the municipal budget process, to reallocate funds or obtain new funding. The Director will seek outside funding sources whenever possible to supplement limited municipal resources and the Trustees will investigate ways of increasing planned giving. As much as possible will be achieved without adding substantially to the overall budget.

Beaman Memorial Public Library Goals and Objectives

GOALS

GOAL ONE: All citizens of West Boylston will value the library as a community meeting place – the heart of the community

Indicator one

The number of bookings by outside groups (unduplicated) for both meeting rooms will increase by 5% per year

Indicator two

At least 90% of groups using the meeting rooms will indicate satisfaction regarding space, equipment, etc. on a user's survey

Indicator three

Participation in programs of all types for all ages will increase by 10% as measured by attendance sheets

SAMPLE OBJECTIVES

- 1. The Library will investigate ways of providing online booking of the library meetings rooms for outside groups.***
- 2. The Library will contact state and federal legislators and offer space for Local Office Hours.***
- 3. The Library will survey equipment related to the meeting rooms and update as needed.***
- 4. The Library will serve the community by providing a variety of programs to reflect the cultural diversity of the community, to expand current literacy efforts for children,***

to foster the partnership with the Senior Center and other West Boylston organizations.

5. The Library will include the use of emerging technologies to connect with its “virtual” citizens as well as the physical community.

6. The Library will increase communications regarding library resources and services to the community through speaking engagements, media releases, quarterly newsletter, and programming on local cable access public television.

7. The Library will investigate the feasibility of offering a “coffee cart” or afternoon tea.

GOAL TWO: The Middle/High School students of West Boylston will have the resources they need to pursue their extracurricular interests

Indicator one

The number of unduplicated participants in all YA programs will increase by 15% per year as measured by attendance sheets

Indicator two

The number of students indicating awareness of the variety of library programs and materials available will increase by 20% per year as measured by periodic surveys

SAMPLE OBJECTIVES

1. The Library will set up a schedule of programs for students on school release days.

2. The Library will develop a “Bring-a-Buddy” incentive program for middle school-age students.

3. The Library will implement new or improved methods of publicizing available programs, materials, and services to this group.

4. The Library will increase the purchase of suitable materials on a broad range of topics for students of differing abilities.

GOAL THREE: All residents of West Boylston will have the resources they need to meet and interact with others in their community and to participate in public discourse about community issues

Indicator one

At least 90% of participants in inter-generational programs will indicate satisfaction with the content as measured by exit surveys

Indicator two

The number of programs directed toward bringing the community together will increase by 10% per year

SAMPLE OBJECTIVES

- 1. The Library will investigate ways to encourage volunteerism.***
- 2. The Library will develop a community service program linking youth and seniors.***
- 3. The Library will expand awareness of diversity and celebrate its presence by hosting a series of musical programs from different cultures.***
- 4. The Library will hold a moderated forum on “West Boylston – My Kind of Town?” to provide the opportunity for the community to gather and find ways of cooperating on common goals.***

APPENDIX

Library Planning Committee Meeting Notes May 19, 2007

Members present: Rockie Blunt, facilitator, Louise Howland, library director, Ray Bricault, Ginny & John Brink, Sue Gomes, Matt Gomes, Marie Shaw, Chris LaBreck, Amy Bloom, Mike Fishbein, and Irene Woods.

The meeting began at 10 a.m. with Louise leading a quick tour of the library noting service and program areas as well as highlighting some of the specific collections contained within the library space.

The group convened in the Story Hour Room for a general orientation, a welcome from Rockie, and group introductions. There was a discussion of typical ground rules with a consensus on the following:

- No bad ideas
- Respect
- Short discourse
- Stay on topic
- Everybody!
- No sidebars
- Relax and have fun

Rockie further described how the day would develop and spoke about rest breaks and when/how to stop for lunch.

The group first tackled the vision statement for the Town, beginning with the one developed by the Town-wide Planning Committee. The group suggested that as there were sufficient areas of change needed that the group should develop a current vision for the purposes of our planning exercise. Rockie divided the group in to three groups and each produced a vision statement.

Group (A): As residents of the town of West Boylston, it is our vision to create and maintain an ideal community in which to live, learn, work, recreate, worship and raise a family.

Group (B): It is the vision of the community to make West Boylston the most ideal place in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to live, learn, work, recreate, worship and raise a family. We should extol our virtues.

Group (C): It is our vision to make West Boylston an ideal community in which to live, learn, work, recreate, worship and raise a family.

Through the consensus process, the group accepted version (A) as the basis for our vision for the Town.

The group next tackled the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) of the town. Our task was to brainstorm first all things that make our town strong and those things that serve to weaken the community.

Strengths

- A. Support for schools
- B. Size of town
- C. Community support
- D. Sports and children's activities
- E. Volunteerism
- F. Religious diversity
- G. Open Spaces
- H. Conservationism
- I. Control of your lives (safety)
- J. Good educational levels of populace
- K. Community spirit of various organizations
- L. Local beauty
- M. Local leaders
- N. School system
- O. The Library
- P. The Historical Society
- Q. Business support
- R. Location
- S. Family orientation
- T. Independence in Government

Weaknesses

- A. Finance
- B. Geography – resources that cannot be developed or used
- C. Mono-cultural mindset
- D. Isolated, small town
- E. Physical infrastructure failing
- F. Limited Business opportunity for town
- G. Culture that restricts growth
- H. 10% of volunteers do 90% of necessary work
- I. Many citizens have a local perspective only
- J. Lack of “community” between age groups
- K. # of students leaving the school system
- L. Deficiency of services for seniors
- M. Route 12 as our “Main Street”
- N. Small tax base
- O. Jail – no reimbursement
- P. Not enough cultural amenities
- Q. Not enough activities for teens

Through the consensus process, the group identified the top seven Strengths and the top six Weaknesses as follows:

Strengths

Community support
Sports & activities for children
Control of our lives – safety
School system
Library
Location
Family orientation

Weaknesses

Finances
Geography – land that cannot be developed
Mono-cultural mindset
Crumbling physical infrastructure
Lack of “community” between age groups
Small tax base

At this point the committee broke for lunch and gathered around the table for further conversation.

After this break, the committee tackled identifying Opportunities and Threats to reaching our Vision for the town of West Boylston.

Threats

- A. Climate change
- B. Increased industrialization resulting in fewer personal contacts
- C. Finances
- D. Crime
- E. Overdevelopment
- F. Resistance to change
- G. 40-B and other State mandates
- H. Change in demographics/ratio of seniors to young families
- I. Lack of revenues growth leading to inter-departmental conflicts as well as inter-generational conflicts
- J. 40-B growth and the impact on schools
- K. Difficulty in maintaining the Town’s buildings and services
- L. Perceived school quality
- M. Lack of School funding support leading to a decrease in property values

Opportunities

- A. Develop Industrial Park
- B. Explore regionalization: Police, Fire, Schools
- C. Use of DCR land
- D. Bicentennial celebration as a link between seniors and students
- E. Develop new sources of funds: transfer station, cell towers, jail mitigation payment
- F. 40-B development
- G. Develop recreation areas and parks as a tourist draw
- H. Establish a cultural center
- I. Apply for more state grants
- J. Encourage inter-generational cooperation
- K. Wind farm
- L. Biotech in Industrial Park
- M. Use of Information technology
- N. Use of local representatives to speak for the Town regarding DCR land
- O. Salter School
- P. FDR Museum

Again, through the consensus process, the group identified the top six Opportunities and Threats.

Opportunities

Develop Industrial Park
Regionalize: Police, Fire, Schools, etc.
New funding sources: Transfer station, etc.
Develop Rec. & Parks as tourist draw
Develop Biotech in Industrial Park
Use local reps to speak for the Town re: DCR

Threats

Finances
Overdevelopment
Resistance to change
State mandates
Inability to maintain buildings & services
Perceived school quality and lack of funding leading to decline in property values

At this point the members of the planning committee compared the idealized future described in their vision statement with the current conditions that exist in the community. The outcome of this was a list of needs to be addressed if the community is to achieve their vision for its future.

Needs

- A. Greater civic participation
- B. Commonness of purpose with an increased transparency of the governmental process
- C. Improve interrelationships among Boards
- D. Review structure and strive for harmony
- E. Teen programs
- F. Needs a central point to distribute and/or view Town information
- G. Economical development
- H. Differentiate tax base by age/need
- I. Higher tax rate for business
- J. Development of a Park System
- K. Creation of jobs
- L. Community service program linking youth and seniors
- M. Recognize and expand on diversity
- N. Central community meeting place
- O. Educational program to break down resistance to change and to recognize opportunities
- P. Way to systemize volunteerism and develop programs

After a short break, library director Louise Howland presented information about the library: what it does, who does it, typical programs and answered questions from the group about what happens to a community whose library loses certification and ways to raise sufficient funds to avoid such a loss. Committee members received a Library Scan document and asked for the link to the statistics section of the MBLC web site so that they could more readily compare services, etc. between similar communities.

Rockie explained that our next task was to take our SWOT analysis of the community, and the resulting list of needs, and identify which boards, departments, or organizations are suited to addressing the items with the thought that the library, using current or potential library resources and staff skills, would be suited to play one of three roles: encouraging, supporting, or lead.

Service priorities

The town/community needs greater civic participation from its citizens.

The committee felt that the library is well suited to address this need but that many other Boards and committees as well as churches and other groups serve this need. The committee suggested a supporting role.

The town/community needs a commonness of purpose and a sense of greater transparency to the process of governing.

The committee felt that the library was poorly suited for this need but that there were few groups with this as a focus. The committee suggested that the library encourage leaders to address this need.

The town/community needs to improve inter-relationships among town boards and committees.

The committee felt that the library was poorly suited for this need but that there were few groups with this as a focus. The committee suggested that the library encourage leaders to address this need.

The town/community needs to review its political structure and strive for harmony.

The committee felt that the library was poorly suited for this need but that there were few groups with this as a focus. The committee suggested that the library encourage leaders to address this need.

The town/community needs to develop programs and opportunities for teens.

The committee felt that the library is well suited to address this need and that, while there are some groups like churches, scouting, or sports with this focus, the library is uniquely placed to put this as a priority.

The town/community needs a central point from which to distribute or view town information.

The committee felt that the library is well suited to address this need but that many other Boards and committees as well as churches and other groups serve this need. The committee suggested a supporting role.

The town/community needs to foster further economic development.

The committee felt that the library is poorly suited to address this need and that many other Boards and committees are working to further this development. The committee suggested a supporting role.

The town/community needs to develop a method to differentiate the tax base by age and/or need.

The committee felt that the library was poorly suited for this need but that there were few groups with this as a focus. The committee suggested that the library encourage leaders to address this need.

The town/community needs to institute a plan for a higher tax rate for businesses.

The committee felt that the library was poorly suited for this need but that there were few groups with this as a focus. The committee suggested that the library encourage leaders to address this need.

The town/community needs to develop a park system.

The committee felt that the library was poorly suited for this need but that there were few groups with this as a focus. The committee suggested that the library encourage leaders to address this need.

The town/community needs to work to create more jobs.

The committee felt that the library was poorly suited for this need but that there were few groups with this as a focus. The committee suggested that the library encourage leaders to address this need.

The town/community needs to develop a community service program linking youth and seniors.

The committee felt that the library is well suited to address this need and that, while there are some groups like churches, scouting, or the senior center with this focus, the library is uniquely placed to put this as a priority.

The town/community needs to recognize and expand on diversity.

The committee felt that the library is well suited to address this need and that, while there are some groups like churches, scouting, or service groups with this focus, the library is uniquely placed to put this as a priority.

The town/community needs a central community meeting place.

The committee felt that the library is well suited to address this need and that, while there are some groups like churches, senior center and schools with this focus, the library is uniquely placed to put this as a priority.

The town/community needs an education program to break down resistance to change and to recognize opportunities.

The committee felt that the library is well suited to address this need and that, while there are some groups like churches or service organizations with this focus, the library is uniquely placed to put this as a priority.

The town/community needs a way to systemize volunteerism and develop programs to encourage participation.

The committee felt that the library is well suited to address this need and that, while there are some groups like churches, scouting, or service groups with this focus, the library is uniquely placed to put this as a priority.

At this point the committee adjourned the meeting (3:30 p.m.) with the sense that they had accomplished much in their time together and will look forward to the next session when they suggested Service Responses for the library

Library Planning Committee Meeting Notes

June 9, 2007

Members present: Rockie Blunt, facilitator, Louise Howland, library director, Ginny & John Brink, Sue Gomes, Marie Shaw, Amy Bloom, Jean Costello and Irene Woods.

The meeting began in the Stiles Meeting Room at 10 a.m. Rockie thanked everyone for coming to the second session and complimented the group for how things went at the first.

Rockie reviewed the ground rules previously established:

- No bad ideas
- Respect
- Short discourse
- Stay on topic
- Everybody!
- No sidebars
- Relax and have fun

Rockie went over the agenda and spoke about rest breaks and when/how to stop for lunch. The group looked again at our Vision Statement and indicated that they were ready to tackle the tasks for the day.

Louise reviewed the staff and trustee responses to the Vision and statement of needs that were produced and then began the explanations and implications for each of the thirteen library service responses. For each, she reviewed the type of need the service response is designed to address; what a typical library providing this service offers to its community; some of the kinds of things libraries do as a part of carrying out a particular service response; how targeting a particular audience helps narrow the focus; what resource allocation issues might need to be considered; and, possible measure to consider when developing objectives. She gave examples of types of services the library already provides that would fit under a particular service response and answered questions as they arose.

Some suggestions that came from the group were that the director might suggest to the Region that all library events should be listed in some central place and that unique service responses should be made generally known so that staff could send patrons directly to libraries that “specialize.”

At this time the group took a ten minute break and returned to link the defined community needs to possible library service responses. Individuals suggested which of our expressed needs could be reasonably covered by which of the thirteen service responses. Louise listed the thirteen service responses on a flip chart sheet and the service priorities were numbered one to six, with supporting roles numbered seven to nine.

Basic Literacy, Business & Careers, and Consumer Information received no “votes.” **Commons** and **Community Referral** matched up to all nine of the needs. **Cultural Awareness** was matched with needs two through five. **Current Topics** matched up with needs one, three, and five. **Formal Learning Support** matched up with needs one and six. **General Information** matched up with needs one, four, eight, and nine. **Government Information** matched up with needs four, five, seven, eight, and nine. **Information Literacy** matched up with needs one and nine. **Lifelong Learning** matched up with needs one, two, three, and six. **Local History & Genealogy** matched up with needs two, three, and eight.

At this point, Rockie told the group that we had identified six preliminary service responses based on the voting and that we would now break for lunch and continue to narrow down the service responses during our meal to the final three responses. There was a great deal of discussion as to whether we really needed to vote for three or just one since two service responses, **Commons** and **Community Referral**, each had nine votes. The group also found it difficult to balance simple number totals when the needs were divided up into lead roles and supporting roles. It was finally decided to concentrate on those library service responses that responded to “Lead” needs and make our decision based on that set of priorities.

The committee voted for each individual service response by consecutive shows of hands with the winners being **Commons** and **Community Referral** and **Lifelong Learning**.

A library that provides a **Commons** environment helps address the need of people to meet and interact with others in their community and to participate in public discourse about community issues.

A library that offers **Community Referral** addresses the need for information related to services provided by community agencies and organizations.

A library that provides **Lifelong Learning** service helps address the desire for self-directed personal growth and development opportunities.

Rockie congratulated the group for a job well-done. Louise thanked the members and told them that the next steps will fall to the staff who will work on a Mission Statement for the library as well as Goals, Objectives, and Activities for the 3 to 5 years of the plan. That work should be completed by September. Louise will then put together a draft of the Long-Range Plan that will be presented to the committee at a meeting in October and amended or approved by the trustees at their November meeting. Louise also invited the committee to call or email her with any specific program ideas or further comments on the process. Jean Costello invited any and all interested to write brief statements about the experience to be posted on a library blog under development.

The meeting adjourned at 1:30 p.m.

Library Planning Staff Committee Meeting Notes **July 30, 2007**

Members present: Rockie Blunt, facilitator, Louise Howland, library director, Cecile Lindberg, Denise Donoghue, Susan Gomes, Susan Smith.

The meeting began in the Stiles Meeting Room at 2 p.m.

Louise reviewed the service responses selected by the full planning committee: **Commons** and **Community Referral** and **Lifelong Learning**.

A library that provides a **Commons** environment helps address the need of people to meet and interact with others in their community and to participate in public discourse about community issues.

A library that offers **Community Referral** addresses the need for information related to services provided by community agencies and organizations.

A library that provides **Lifelong Learning** service helps address the desire for self-directed personal growth and development opportunities.

Keeping these service responses in mind, the group tackled the Library's Mission Statement. At the group's suggestion, Louise made copies of the current statement to use as a starting point. Rockie suggested that we choose specific phrases that resonate with the staff and reflect the new service responses. The group mentioned: *center of the community, gathering place, provide information, technology, meeting and resource center*. Rockie explained that this statement will be our "words to live by" as we go forward and should be short, to-the-point, and easy to remember.

After much tweaking it was decided to suggest the following for Trustee approval:

Mission Statement

The Beaman Memorial Public Library brings people and information together. The Library enriches the community by providing print and electronic resources, a community gathering space, and opportunities for personal growth and development.

Rockie felt the group was ready to begin the goal setting process and went over a hand-out to explain the steps. The Goal is the long-term destination; where the organization wants to be. The Objective is the short-term target to be achieved on the way to a goal. The Strategy is the action that helps accomplish the objective. Each major goal may have several objectives and each objective may have several strategies or actions. He stressed that the goals derived from this process must be: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Timely.

Keeping these points in mind, the group devised a first goal:

GOAL ONE: The Library will increase the public's awareness of the value of the Library as a community meeting place. (DATE)

Objective One: The Director will communicate with Town Boards, Committees, and Departments to let each know the benefits of using the library for meetings or programs as well as the process for doing so.

Strategy One: Investigate the possibility of an online booking calendar system and secure funding if appropriate.

Strategy Two: When available, load the calendar system on the library home page

Strategy Three: Design and produce a simple brochure highlighting the benefits.

Strategy Four: Deliver the brochures in person, if possible, and provide a demonstration.

Strategy Five: Produce and distribute a press release highlighting this service.

Objective Two: The Director will provide similar demonstrations to community non-profits, civil and social groups, businesses, and home-schoolers.

Strategy One to Four: See above.

The group next tried to address the needs of teens:

GOAL TWO: The Library will develop a schedule of programs to attract a larger segment of the local teen population.

Objective One: Develop a Bring-A-Buddy program to encourage young teens to invite a friend to all Library programming.

Objective Two: Investigate the feasibility of a Middle/High School release day program schedule

At this point, the meeting was adjourned with the group given the assignment of producing draft goals for each of the priority needs identified by the full committee. The staff will meet again on August 8, 2007 at 8:30 a.m. to continue this effort.

Library Planning Staff Committee Meeting Notes

August 8, 2007

The meeting began at 8:30 a.m.

Members present: Louise Howland, library director, Cecile Lindberg, Jackie Pruneau, Susan Gomes, Susan Smith.

Louise reviewed the Mission Statement as written at the last meeting:

Mission Statement

The Beaman Memorial Public Library brings people and information together. The Library enriches the community by providing print and electronic resources, a community gathering space, and opportunities for personal growth and development.

And Sue Smith commented that it definitely will work as a way of succinctly stating what we do as a library within the community of West Boylston. She commented on how energized she has felt this summer by the enthusiastic response of the public to the library as a whole and the Summer Reading Program in particular.

Louise reviewed the goal that was developed at the meeting with Rockie Blunt and reminded the group about the S.M.A.R.T. requirements for goals. Jackie questioned the wisdom of assigning a date to a goal that will be ongoing throughout the life of the plan. Louise will clarify that aspect of goal writing with Rockie and let the group know going forward.

In the meantime, the group went directly from the Needs to put forth Goals, starting with the first two developed at the previous meeting.

GOAL ONE: Increase the public's awareness of the value of the Library as a community meeting place.
(DATE)

GOAL TWO: Develop a schedule of programs to attract a larger segment of the local teen population.

GOAL THREE: Investigate ways to encourage volunteerism.

GOAL FOUR: Develop a community service program linking youth and seniors.

GOAL FIVE: Expand the Town's awareness of diversity and celebrate its presence.

GOAL SIX: Provide opportunities for residents to engage in dialogue with Town officials.

The group was eager to begin putting forth strategies but was asked to think about the Objectives for our various constituencies to be included under each goal, about the necessary steps to accomplish each objective, and about how we will measure our success.

The next meeting will be on Thursday, August 30 at 8:15 a.m.

Library Planning Staff Committee Meeting Notes
August 30, 2007

The meeting began at 8:30 am.

Members present: Louise Howland, Library Director, Jackie Pruneau, Cecile Lindberg

Louise announced that, following conversations with Beth Wade of the MBLC and further reading of the text, goals must be from the perspective of the community and that the goals may be general enough to combine some of the ideas previously developed so that the remaining goals are easier to keep in the front of our minds as we develop budgets and programs during the planning period.

After some discussion, the following goals were developed:

GOAL ONE: All citizens of West Boylston will value the library as a community meeting place – the heart of the community

GOAL TWO: The Middle/High School students of West Boylston will have the resources they need to pursue their extracurricular interests

GOAL THREE: All residents of West Boylston will have the resources they need to meet and interact with others in their community and to participate in public discourse about community issues

A long discussion followed about how to measure progress towards these goals. It was decided that we needed further input from Sue Gomes regarding the necessary measures for the second goal and discussion continued about activities to plan to meet the stated goals.

Suggested activities:

Goal 1: Art Exhibit, Friends Book Sale, Family Reading Night and Ice Cream Social, Festival of Greens, Meeting Room Use, College Night, MGOL activities, Chocolate Tasting, Website development with increased social networking components, Pumpkin Decorating, Summer Reading Program, Community Reads, Pet Show, Concerts on the Common, Craft Classes, Games & Goodies, Mother/Toddler Groups (bulletin boards, “Did You Know”, services, handouts), Improve community bulletin boards and handouts, achieve an on-line catalog, coffee cart or afternoon tea, town-wide meeting agendas posted here

Goal 2: Middle school advisory group, Improvement of advertising for age group, continue TAG, Book Discussion Groups, Computer Lab classes for IL learning, etc., consideration of upgrades to computers used for word processing/Internet search, Creative Writing workshops, M/HS Service projects (“my own book” or “Adopt a soldier”)

Goal 3: Volunteer fair, Diversity fair or series of programs, hot topics meetings (information on Town Meeting warrant or Planning Board matters), Volunteer page on the website, Blogging, Open House or Office Hours for federal, state, local officials, Newsletter (with funding for individual mailings for special series), moderated “My Kind of Town?”, Baby Welcome Packets, Library Welcome Wagon, Art Students volunteering skills to Story Time activities, Home School Resource Group, inter-generational programs – seniors reading to toddlers, kids & seniors sharing hobbies and crafts.

The last step will be to develop measures and write the action plan. Next meeting is scheduled for September 14 at noon.

Library Planning Staff Committee Meeting Notes
September 14, 2007

Members present: Louise Howland, Jackie Pruneau, Sue Gomes, Sue Smith, and Cecile Lindberg.

It took a while but the group finally decided on measures for progress towards goals. The types of measurements could be similar for many different types of activities: measures of satisfaction, measures of unique participation, and measures of overall participation.

GOAL ONE: All citizens of West Boylston will value the library as a community meeting place – the heart of the community

Indicator one

The number of bookings by outside groups (unduplicated) for both meeting rooms will increase by 5% per year

Indicator two

At least 90% of groups using the meeting rooms will indicate satisfaction regarding space, equipment, etc. on a user's survey

Indicator three

Participation in programs of all types for all ages will increase by 10% as measured by attendance sheets

GOAL TWO: The Middle/High School students of West Boylston will have the resources they need to pursue their extracurricular interests

Indicator one

The number of unduplicated participants in all YA programs will increase by 15% per year as measured by attendance sheets

Indicator two

The number of students indicating awareness of the variety of library programs and materials available will increase by 20% per year as measured by periodic surveys

GOAL THREE: All residents of West Boylston will have the resources they need to meet and interact with others in their community and to participate in public discourse about community issues

Indicator one

At least 90% of participants in inter-generational programs will indicate satisfaction with the content as measured by exit surveys

Indicator two

The number of programs directed toward bringing the community together will increase by 10% per year

Louise thanked all the staff for their participation and will asked for their assistance as needed in developing specific action plans for each year going forward.

Beaman Memorial Public Library
Annual Community Survey 2007 (Responses)

- 1.) How often do you visit this Library?
 - (16) all the time (2-3 times a week)
 - (69) regularly (2-3 times a month)
 - (7) occasionally (2-3 times a year)
 - (1) never
- 2.) How old are you?
 - (4) 18 or younger
 - (1) 19-26
 - (28) 26-50
 - (60) 51 or older
- 3.) If the library were able to be open more hours, which hours would you prefer?
 - (47) Wednesday from 1 PM to 8PM (currently open 6PM to 8PM)
 - (14) Sundays from 1 PM to 5PM (currently not open on Sundays)
 - (31) Open Saturday during the summer (currently closed from Memorial Day to Labor Day weekend)
- 4.) Why do you come to the library? (please check all that apply)
 - (90) Borrow books or materials
 - (13) Use the internet
 - (48) Attend programs
 - (5) Tax Forms
- 5.) How do you use the library computers? (please check all that apply)
 - (48) Card catalog
 - (14) Internet access
 - (6) Word Processing
- 6.) Which computer enhancement would you prefer? (please check all that apply)
 - (16) Wireless access
 - (14) Word processing and internet access on the same computer
 - (10) More computers
- 7.) What type of adult programming would you attend? (please check all that apply)
 - (61) Lecture or information
 - (47) Performance
 - (39) Instructional (handwork, crafts, painting)
- 8.) What type of children's programming would you attend? (please check all that apply)
 - (28) Animal show
 - (29) Musical
 - (19) Puppet show
 - (9) Other _____
- 9.) Check-out desk
 - (92) Excellent Good Just ok Poor (1) Don't use
- 10.) Children's Room Desk
 - (47) Excellent Good Just ok Poor (21) Don't use

**Please return to Beaman Library or Town Hall
(93 Surveys returned)**

Resources

Books

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