

STRATEGIC PLAN 2016-2021

BEACON FALLS PUBLIC LIBRARY

Beacon Falls Library Board of Trustees

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BEACON FALLS PUBLIC LIBRARY
Beacon Falls, CT 06403



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Executive Summary

The Town of Beacon Falls has the smallest library in the State of Connecticut in terms of square foot per capita. Despite the limitations of its size, the Library has successfully met some of the goals of the 2008-2012 Long Range Plan. Its space considerations, however, restrict much of the possible progress that could be made. The goals and objectives outlined in this Strategic Plan include actions that can be made within the existing space and those which need to be taken to build a dedicated 10,000 square foot library connected to a community center for the Town of Beacon Falls by June 30, 2021.

Vision

The Beacon Falls Public Library builds bridges among neighborhoods and individuals, represents the character of Beacon Falls as a small New England town, and is a source of pride and opportunity for all residents.

Library Mission & Roles

The Library's mission is to express the social and cultural foundations of the Town and to play a leadership role in building collaborations and networks. Its roles are to serve the residents as a community center, a learning place for children, and a source of life-long learning and popular materials for all residents.

Library Motto: LEARN...PARTICIPATE...ENJOY

Our Beliefs, Values, and Expectations of Our Service to the Community

We believe the library needs to be the center of our community, a gathering place where

- everyone is accepted and included.
- community groups meet.
- all ages create and “re-create” in a comfortable setting.
- parents help their children get ready to read.
- the next best read is discovered.
- questions are answered.
- new skills are acquired.
- futures are pursued and lifelong learning is the norm.

We believe the Public Library needs to be the heart and soul of our town, an economic resource center, and the “living room” of Beacon Falls. Our library staff values excellent customer service. We learn patrons' names and greet them with “How can I help you?” We want our patrons to be confident that we will get them the information and materials that they need. We are committed to continue these small-town interactions.

Technology is quickly changing our lives and our libraries. We will extend our helping hands during these exciting and, yet sometimes stressful, times. While we will always be there to help one-on-one, we acknowledge there are those who want to become as self-sufficient as they can

be. We will provide training to our patrons who want to be more comfortable using new programs and devices, as needed. We will continue to assess our materials, services and programs and adapt to meet our community's changing needs. We will make our community more aware of our current and future digital resources. We strive to make visits to our digital branch as welcoming as in-person visits.

With the above tenets in mind, the staff of the Beacon Falls Public Library and its Board of Trustees evaluated data and experiences in the library and the Town since the 2008-2012 Five-Year Plan and have developed the following broad goals for the library.

- The Beacon Falls Public Library is the center of the community, building connections, developing partnerships, and fostering collaborations.
- The Beacon Falls Public Library communicates effectively with the community and within the library.
- The Beacon Falls Public Library offers safe, welcoming, and accessible physical and virtual spaces for the community, collection and staff.
- The Beacon Falls Public Library offers materials, programs and services that meet the needs of the community.

THE TOWN OF BEACON FALLS

Beacon Falls is a small town firmly rooted in its history and exemplifies the volunteer spirit. Its residents take pride in the New England small town atmosphere. Members of Town Boards and Commissions are volunteers. Beacon Hose Co. No 1, the volunteer fire department, is very active in the community hosting the annual carnival and Easter Egg Hunt, to name a few. Service organizations such as the Rotary Club and the Lions and the Lioness Clubs hold events such as the Haunted Hayride and the Duck Race/RiverFest. They also work together with a member of the police department and the local churches' food bank to take care of those in need. The Friends of Beacon Falls Library have supported the needs of the Beacon Falls Library for 25 years.

Beacon Falls is part of the Regional School District 16. Laurel Ledge serves as the elementary school for town children in grades K-5. Children in Grades 6-8 travel to the partner town to attend Long River Middle School with children from Prospect. Woodland Regional High School educates students in grades 9-12.

Children in Beacon Falls participate in a variety of sports available in affiliation with the Parks and Recreation Commission and the local school district. The Parent Teacher Organizations are very active as well, providing activities for children and families. The Library hosts an annual summer reading program and monthly craft activities for elementary school age students. The Library recently added Readers Theater and LEGO Mindstorm Robotics programs for the upper elementary school children.

DEMOGRAPHICS

The Naugatuck Valley Councils of Governments publishes a yearly profile of the 19 communities in their organization. Its “Naugatuck Valley Regional Profile 2015” describes Beacon Falls as an “Outer Ring” community. “The traditionally rural outer ring has become increasingly suburban in character over the last two decades. From 2000 to 2010, the outer ring population grew at 12.1%, far faster than the region, state, and nation. These towns have the lowest population densities, the highest incomes, and the highest proportion of elderly residents. With few local jobs, most outer ring residents commute to jobs in neighboring towns and cities.” (NVRP 2015, pg. 4)

Using the data from the NVRP 2015 as outlined below, Beacon Falls appears to be a growing community with more mature residents with greater overall wealth. It is assumed that much of the impact is due to the two communities in town which are limited to homeowners age 55 and older.

Population Growth

Beacon Falls is the second fastest growing of the eight “Outer Ring” communities in the Naugatuck Valley. The population growth in Beacon Falls from 2000-2014 has exceeded that of other “Outer Ring” communities (13.5% in BF, 11% average in Outer Ring). Beacon Falls has become more densely populated since 2000, seeing a 15% increase (vs. an average 12.5% in the Outer Ring communities). The 2010 U.S. Census and Connecticut State Data Center project a population of 6879 in Beacon Falls in 2025, a 13.5% increase (vs. a 10.1% average increase in the Outer Ring communities).

Age Distribution

Beacon Falls has experienced an increase in its elderly population, with the addition of two age 55 and older communities within the town. The median age of Beacon Falls residents increased 27.3% from 1990 to 2010 (32.6 to 41.5, respectively). While the median age in outer ring municipalities have risen only 20.6% during the same time frame, Beacon Falls remains a younger overall town than the rest of the Outer Ring communities (average median age = 45.1).

Projections for the youngest and most mature Beacon Falls residents show both groups increasing over the next ten years. Based on the 2010 U.S. Census and the Connecticut State Data Center’s Population Projections: 2015-2015, Beacon Falls is projected to have a 8.9% increase in the number of those below the age of 16 in Beacon Falls (vs. an average decrease of 28% in the Outer Ring communities). Those age 65 and over were forecasted to increase 53.8% by 2025 (vs. 68.6% in the Outer Ring). While there is a continued need to provide early literacy services and to entice the older elementary school population, the Beacon Falls Public Library will work to provide programming for the older adults as part of this Strategic Plan.

Income and Economic Sectors

Beacon Falls seems economically stronger than most Outer Ring municipalities. The median home value increased 20.8% from 2000-2014, compared to 18.7% increase in Outer Ring communities. This may be due to the price of homes in the age 55+ communities (Pond Spring Village and Chatfield Farms) which are valued between \$300K - 500K vs. the other parts of

town which have lower home values.

Poverty in Beacon Falls has declined to 1.8% of the 2014 population from 5.9% in 2000. When compared to the Outer Ring, Beacon Falls experienced a 64.1% decrease in poverty vs. an average 69.5% increase in poverty in comparable municipalities.

Beacon Falls experienced a rise in median household and median family income from 1999 to 2014. The median household income increased 8.6% from 1999-2014 (vs. decreasing 6.3% in outer ring) and the median family income increased 20.2% (vs. decreasing 5.1% in outer ring). . In fact, Beacon Falls is the only outer ring community to have an increase in both measures. Some of the increase is presumed to have been derived from those who have move to the 55+ housing from other wealthier communities. As the economy continues to improve, the impact of this increased wealth is that more residents may purchase their own reading/viewing materials, rather than waiting for items to be delivered to our small library via the reduced services of the state-wide DeliverIt system. The Beacon Falls Public Library needs to offer value-added services (such as librarians who are certified notary publics) and interesting programs to meet the needs of the wealthier residents.

Despite the increase in overall wealth, there are pockets of individuals that continue to have difficulty finding a new job. According to the Connecticut Department of Labor, Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS), by Town 2007 - 2014, unemployment levels in Beacon Falls moved from a high of 9.2% to a 6.1% unemployment rate in 2014. While this is an improvement and is better than the entire 18 Naugatuck Valley communities, the average outer ring unemployment rate in 2014 has decreased to 5.5%. The Beacon Falls Public Library will continue to provide programs, resources and computer training for those job-seekers.

HISTORY OF PREVIOUS PLANS

The library has had two previous 5-year (1999 – 2004) or Long Range Plans (2008 – 2012) before this current Strategic Plan was developed. The goals were determined via input of the Library Board of Trustees and library staff, town-wide surveys (1997) and interviews and focus groups (2008).

In the 1999-2004 5-Year Plan, goals were developed to:

- Increase the number of registered cardholders
- Expand the size of the collection and materials budget
- Research and plan for a free-standing library
- Expand the volunteer program and improve staff pay and benefits
- Connect programming with other organizations and employ effective publicity methods to increase attendance
- Increase annual financial support to the library
- Increase access to technology and provide staff and patron training

The 2008-2012 Long Range Plan included the following goals:

- Maintain circulation levels at overall annual increases of 10%
- Establish the library as the catalyst for a culture of collaboration within the educational and service community in Beacon Falls
- Evaluate and join an automation consortium to expand access to resources and support services.
- Establish a Beacon Falls Public Library website that supports blogs, wikis, and social networks to expand users' opportunities to take advantage of Library resources.
- Establish a network of individuals and organizations that will build community support for a new library.

The 2008-2012 Long Range Plan also included a Building Program for a 19,000 square foot library to serve a projected population of 8,000 residents. The Building Program was designed to be used by an architect as an initial basis for the new library.

There were several steps taken to implement the building program from 2008-2012.

- August 2008: a Town Meeting was held to purchase property at 35 Wolfe Avenue.
- August 2009: the Wolfe Avenue "Lewis House" Exploratory Committee was convened to explore the potential uses of the property
- September 2009 – February 2010: Requests for Qualifications / Proposals were solicited for a consultant to assist the committee, committee conducted interviews and ultimately hired Paul Bailey's firm.
- May 2010: Bailey presented its Conditions Assessment and Reuse Study report to Board of Selectmen (see report at http://www.beaconfalls-ct.org/Pages/BeaconFallsCT_Bcomm/Media/TracyReport05-10-10.pdf)
- August 2010: Wolfe Avenue "Lewis House" Exploratory Committee completed its work

and sent recommendations to the Board of Selectmen. Board of Selectman voted to raze the structures on the property (2-1)

- September 2010: Planning and Zoning approved the demolition (4-2)
- October 2010: State Historic Commission approved “Lewis House” on the state registry.
- March 2011: Community Media Center Building Committee was formed with the following mission charges:
 - "To design a Community/Media Center to be located at 35 Wolfe Avenue in the Town of Beacon Falls, keeping in mind that the facility must meet the needs of the Community as well as serving as the 'hub' of the Community.
 - The building will be utilized in part to serve the needs of the Park & Recreation Commission, the Historical Society, various Municipal needs such as: Office Space and Meeting Rooms and the Beacon Falls Public Library.
 - To be cognizant of the fact that the facility should adhere to the Beacon Falls Plan of Conservation and Development as well as the Downtown Plan.
 - In developing a plan for the Community/Media Center, the Committee must be able to promote positive awareness of the project through a Public Relations Plan and must also investigate opportunities for funding via Federal, State, Local and Private and other funding sources."
- May 2011 – January 2012: The Community Media Center Building committee visited a variety of libraries, historical societies and community centers to develop the vision of the joint project.
- February 2012: The Board of Selectmen suspended the Community Media Center Building Committee.

LIBRARY PROGRESS SINCE 2008-2012 PLAN

There were five goal areas of the 2008-2012 Long Range Plan, noted below with their associated objectives:

1. Maintain circulation levels at overall annual increases of 10%.
2. Establish the Library as the catalyst for a culture of collaboration within the educational and service community in Beacon Falls.
3. Evaluate and join an automation consortium to expand access to resources and support services.
4. Establish a Beacon Falls Public Library website that supports blogs, wikis, and social networks to expand users' opportunities to take advantage of Library resources.
5. Build community support for a new library.

Progress toward completion:

Goal 1: Circulation increases

- In FY08 there were 24,354 items circulated. By the end of FY15, overall circulation was 31,323. The goal level was met in FY09 and FY10, but fluctuated after that time and could not sustain the 10% increase per year.
- In FY08 there were 142 programs for children with 1472 children attended. Overall children's circulation in FY08 was 9,239 items. In FY15 there were 192 programs for children, with 2552 attendees and 10,763 children's items circulated.
- In FY08 BFPL's children's circulation was 61% of all print circulation. Median/Average of all CT libraries was 43 and 43% respectively.
- In FY14 BFPL's children's circulation was 45% of all print circulation. Median/Average of all CT libraries was 35%.
- Since January 1, 2015, library staff has increased use of the Town Hall Assembly Room (one floor below) for children's craft programs. We have noticed that when programs are held there, it does not translate into increased circulation as it does when we host program in children's room. The downside of using the children's room is that there is no access to the picture book shelves, more noise, and less access to the circulation desk during the program.
- In FY08 DVD/Media circulation accounted for 36% of all circulations. Median circulation statewide was 23%; Average circulation was 26% of all libraries' circulations (not just print items).
- In FY14 DVD/Media circulation accounted for 36% of all circulations. Median circulation statewide was 23%; Average circulation was 26% of all libraries' circulations (not just print items).
- As of June 2016, the library was currently out of room for adult DVD collection and a new shelf unit has been installed.
- In FY08 adult print circulation accounted for 33% of all print circulations. Median circulation statewide was 54%; Average circulation was 53% of all libraries' circulations.

- In FY14 adult print circulation accounted for 50% of all print circulations. Median circulation statewide was 60%; Average circulation was 59% of all libraries' print circulations.
- The adult fiction area is at capacity. The library staff has moved new fiction into the nonfiction room and will again be weeding those which have not circulated in last 5 years, despite having done it one year ago. Books are in so tightly that patrons have difficulty removing them.
- The adult nonfiction collection is not readily accessible for browsing and difficult to reach at most times due to table with laptops.
- CT State Library guidelines indicate 721 square feet is required for the adult current collection within regular shelving; not counting space needed for existing computers and copier, and young adult collection (which are all housed in that area). Our entire library is housed in 1250 square feet.

Goal 2: Collaborative programming, increase all program attendance by 25%

- The library successfully met this goal. In FY08 there were 1817 program attendees. By FY10, the total was 146% greater. Between FY11 and FY15, program attendance has varied between 2861-3862 attendees. Some of the variance may have been due to staff changes in FY10, FY12, and FY15.
- While exact numbers of collaborative programs were not tracked in FY08-FY15, the number of programs have increased from 178 – 246. Some programs have been done in FY16 in collaboration with Parks and Recreation, Beacon Hose Company No. 1 and other organizations.

Goal 3: Automation consortium

- In March 2010, the library served as a pilot library for Bibliomation's new open source system, Evergreen. That allowed the library to receive a substantially reduced rate in the yearly fees. The agreement was that the fee increase would be limited to 5% each year. Beacon Falls Public Library is currently part of the 60+ library consortium.

Goal 4: Website improvements

- In FY09 there were 5449 visits to the website with an additional 18876 in-person visits. (22% were website visits)
- In FY15 there were 12488 website visits with an additional 10175 in-person visits (55% of all visits were website visits).
- When first started, the new website had commenting capabilities. However, library staff found spammers were posting and turned it off.
- Prior to 2015, library events were posted on the Friends of Beacon Falls Library Facebook page as the library did not have its own Facebook presence. Starting in summer of 2015, the Library has its own Facebook page; with the Friends sharing the library's content as needed.
- Direct links were part of the old website but were removed during upgrade to the new website. Links were difficult to maintain on a regular basis with existing staff members.

- Staff has found that local schools are supplying students with appropriate curricular content and decided not to duplicate services.
- Promotional materials were not created by the former director during the 2008-2012 strategic plan timeframe.
- In 2014 the library had the website redesigned to its current state. All 3 full-time and 2 part-time members have been trained to update the website.
- The Library Director recently developed a job description for Technology Librarian and submitted to First Selectman and to the Library Board of Trustees. The Library Board of Trustees included a Technology Librarian in the FY17 budget, but the Board of Selectmen did not fund that position.

Goal 5: Building support for new library

- A Task Force, consisting of Library Board members, worked with a local videographer to create a video promoting the library. It was posted on YouTube.
- Meetings with community groups to deliver presentations did not take place.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK SUMMARY

The Library Board of Trustees has sought community input in a variety of ways throughout the past fifteen to twenty years. Surveys were conducted in the late 1990s and early 2000s. As part of the 2008 Long Range Plan process, the Britton Consultancy conducted interviews and focus groups. In preparation for this current Strategic Plan, another survey, with 315 respondents, was conducted in spring 2015. There has been agreement throughout the measures regarding the services, facilities and programs of the Beacon Falls Public Library.

There is a very high level of satisfaction with the customer service that patrons receive from library staff members. Over 80% of those who completed the 2015 service indicated customer service at our library was excellent.

The appearance and size of the library has been a recurring concern for the residents of Beacon Falls. Specific areas cited during the 2008 focus groups and in the 2015 survey included the inadequacy of the current library spaces. Areas that have been repeatedly noted as needed include, but are not limited to the following:

- User-friendly browsing and collection storage: wider aisles, face-out displays, movable shelving to accommodate reconfiguration, as needed.
- Separate children's area, with access to outdoor spaces and set-apart story time and program space and room for imaginative play.
- Kitchen/sink facilities adjacent to the children's program space.
- Quiet study areas and comfortable places to read.
- Space for conversation and informal small groups.
- An area for young adults, including group study and social activities.
- Display areas.
- Security and preservation conditions for local history and Connecticut collections.
- Small and large meeting facilities, including audiovisual and media capabilities and kitchen equipment.
- Separate exit from program and meeting rooms so they can be used when the library is closed.
- Separate staff areas and separate staff entrance.
- Drive up book and media return.
- Rest rooms.

Specific details will be outlined and available in a Building Program document that will be used to design the library component of the proposed joint library / community center facility.

CURRENT LIBRARY STATUS

The Connecticut State Library's Division of Library Development, in collaboration with the ACLPD Public Library Standards Task Force, has developed “Best Practices for CT Public Libraries”. This document identifies benchmarks to rate a library's facilities, finance, governance, resources & services, and staff as either meeting an essential level, an enhanced level or an exemplary level. The checklist, available at <http://libguides.ctstatelibrary.org/c.php?g=438554&p=2988086>, is one tool that the Library Board of Trustees used to evaluate the status of the Beacon Falls Public Library as of January 2016. Some items listed below have been addressed since that time.

Facilities Benchmarks

- Physical Space: BELOW Essential Level. Most benchmarks within this area are not met. The library should have minimum of 5445 square feet for its current operations and population and at least 7200 square feet for future population of 8,000. The 7200 square foot figure would not allow for any expansion of services, just allow for current operations with a larger population.
- Facility Plan and Energy Efficiency: BELOW Essential Level. The benchmarks which are not met includes ADA compliance and the lack of an Emergency Preparedness Plan.
- Safety/Security/Emergency Preparedness: Meets Essential Level, if staff levels are maintained with 2 employees on duty at all times.
- Access Hours: Meets Essential Level, if staff levels are maintained with at least 2 employees on duty at all times.
- Access Parking: Meets Essential Level
- Access Signage: Meets Essential Level
- Technology Infrastructure: Meets Essential Level
- Internet Connectivity: BELOW Essential Level. The library must upgrade its network / connectivity speed to meet the benchmark.

Finance Benchmarks:

- Funding: Meets Essential Level.
- Use of Funds: Meets Essential Level.

Governance Benchmarks:

- Laws and Ordinances: Meets Essential Level.
- Library Director: BELOW Essential Level. The benchmark that is not met refers to the need for the library director to conduct annual performance staff evaluations. The Town of Beacon Falls does not have a staff evaluation process in place. The Library Director and staff reach agreement on yearly staff goals. Staff works toward those goals and has conversations regarding their progress toward reaching the goals throughout the year at staff meetings and/or with the Library Director.
- Planning: Meets Essential Level.
- Policies: BELOW Essential Level. To meet the benchmark, the library board needs to establish policies on Challenged Materials, Gifts, Memorials and Sponsorships, and Financial Development, Foundations, Investment and Endowments.

- Funding: BELOW Essential level. To meet the benchmark, the library needs to establish a donations and gifts program.
- Assessment: BELOW Essential Level. To meet the benchmark, the library needs to report annually to the public on the impact of library services on the community.
- Advocacy: BELOW Essential Level. To meet the benchmark, the library needs to clearly outline the person responsible for media relations and identify a process for users to communicate concerns and suggestions.
- Friends of the Library: BELOW Essential Level. To meet the benchmark, the library needs to have a memorandum of understanding between FOL & Library and the Library Board needs to have a member serve as representative to the Friends.
- Volunteers: BELOW Essential Level. To meet the benchmark, the library needs to institute a planned volunteer orientation, handbook & training program.

Resources & Services Benchmarks:

- Resources: BELOW Essential Level. To meet the benchmark, the library needs to provide adaptive technology to ensure access for all persons.
- Services: Meets Essential Level.
- Programs: Below Essential Level. To meet the benchmark, the library needs to establish an ongoing method for public input to review programming.
- Circulation: Meets Essential Level. To meet the Enhanced level benchmark, the library needs to institute a process to allow remote payment of fines.
- Confidentiality & Privacy: Meets Essential Level.

Staff Benchmarks:

- Library Director: BELOW Essential Level. The benchmark that is not met refers to the need for the library director to conduct annual performance staff evaluations. The Town of Beacon Falls does not have a staff evaluation process in place. The Library Director and staff reach agreement on yearly staff goals. Staff works toward those goals and has conversations regarding their progress toward reaching the goals throughout the year at staff meetings and/or with the Library Director.
- Library Staff: BELOW Essential Level. In order to reach the benchmark, the library needs to have 0.5 Full-time equivalents per 1000 population. Beacon Falls Public Library has 0.43 FTE. The library must ensure a minimum of two staff members on main service area at all times.
- Personnel Policies & Compensation: BELOW Essential Level. To meet the benchmark, library staff would work 35 hours per week, similar to other municipal staff, receive salaries that meet Connecticut Library Association minimum salaries, and have annual performance reviews.
- Staff Safety: BELOW Essential Level. To meet the benchmark, there would be two paid staff members on duty at all times and a written emergency preparedness plan would be available to all staff.
- Continuing Education: BELOW Essential Level. To meet the benchmark, professional staff should have a minimum of 14 continuing education contact hours and part-time staff should have a minimum of 4 continuing education contact hours each year.

ROLES OF THE LIBRARY

Based on all of the above, the Library Board of Trustees has designated the following service responses for the Beacon Falls Public Library.

Role 1: Community Center

A library that provides a community center 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.

Role 2: Visit a Comfortable Place: Physical and Virtual Spaces

Residents will have safe and welcoming physical places to meet and interact with others or to sit quietly and read and will have open and accessible virtual spaces that support networking.

Role 3: Children's Doorway to Learning: Create Young Readers & Early Literacy

Children from birth to five will have programs and services designed to ensure that they will enter school ready to read, write, and listen.

Role 4: Satisfy curiosity: Lifelong learning

Residents will have the resources they need to explore topics of personal interest and continue to learn throughout their lives.

Role 5: Stimulate Imagination: Reading, Viewing, and Listening for Pleasure

Residents who want materials to enhance their leisure time will find what they want when and where they want them and will have the help they need to make choices from among the options.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, and ACTION ITEMS

The Library Board of Trustees worked collaboratively with library staff to develop the following goals, objectives and action items designed to meet the needs of the residents of Beacon Falls.

Goal 1: The Beacon Falls Public Library is the center of the community, building connections, developing partnerships, and fostering collaborations.

Objective 1.A: Open a new joint library and community center building by June 30, 2021.

Action 1.A.1. Library staff and Library Board of Trustees will work with a Board of Selectman appointed Library/Community Center Building Committee, starting in FY 16-17, to explain this Strategic Plan and associated Building program in order design the Library component of the project according to its standards.

Action 1.A.2. Library staff, Library Board of Trustees and Friends of Beacon Falls Library will work with a Development subcommittee to raise funds and seek grants to be used toward upgrades in the new building that would not otherwise be possible through municipal bonding.

Objective 1.B: Actively participate with a variety of town boards, commissions, organizations, and businesses to further develop resources, services and programs.

Action 1.B.1. Library staff will collaborate with the ~~[Rotary Club]~~ *Service Clubs* of Beacon Falls to seek grant sponsorships of literacy programs.

~~Action 1.B.2. The Library Director will attend Board of Selectmen meetings to stay current with community issues and activities.~~

Objective 1.C: Collaborate with other organizations to host a minimum of 30 co-sponsored programs each year.

Action 1.C.1. The Assistant Librarian will continue to serve as the Reading Merit Badge Counselor for local Scouts.

Action 1.C. 2. The Program Librarian will continue to collaborate with the Beacon Falls Parks and Recreation Commission to provide the staff and publicity for co-sponsored Nature and Robotics programs

Action 1.C.3. The Program Librarian will continue to hold two preschool story time programs at/with United Day School each month during the school year.

Action 1.C.4. The Program Librarian will continue Kindergarten outreach in September, inviting students to obtain their first library card.

Action 1.C.5. Library staff will continue to co-sponsor the Nutmeg Battle of the Books at Laurel Ledge Elementary School each Spring.

Action 1.C.6. Library staff will develop an outreach program to meet with grade 3 and grade 6 students in order to encourage renewal of library cards.

Goal 2: The Beacon Falls Public Library communicates effectively with the community and within the library.

Objective 2.A: Share information on a face-to-face basis with community members.

Action 2.A.1 The Library Director will meet with community groups on a regular schedule to share information regarding resources, activities and services

Action 2.A.2. The Library Director will have a booth at local events (St. Michael's Church Fair, Duck Race, etc.)

Action 2.A.3. Library staff shall promote programs as people are checking out materials.

Objective 2.B. Provide information on library services and programs to the community in a variety of formats and media.

Action 2.B.1 Library staff will purchase "A" Frame Sandwich board (or similar item) to place in front of building to promote programs.

Action 2.B.2. The Program Librarian will continue to send press releases to print media (Newspapers).

Action 2.B.3. The Program Librarian will promote and advertise events on Social Media.

Action 2.B.4. Library staff will continue to publish quarterly newsletters in Citizens News.

Action 2.B.5. The Program Librarian will bring program fliers / information to businesses whose customers would likely be interested.

Objective 2.C: Provide clear directions for the location of library, its materials, and its hours.

Action 2.C.1. Library staff will provide signage for each section of the library, as needed.

Action 2.C.2. The Assistant Librarian will change the call numbers for materials in some/all areas of the juvenile collection, as needed.

Action 2.C.3. Library staff will provide signage in the stairwell to indicate the library is upstairs.

Action 2.C.4. Library staff will ensure the message on the phone indicates library hours, and indicate when those hours are changed (staff development, holiday closings)

Action 2.C.5. Library staff will provide signage inside the library to show patrons where materials should be returned.

Action 2.C.6. Library staff will contact the American Legion to request a sign be placed on their flag box to indicate that is not for library materials.

Goal 3: The Beacon Falls Public Library offers safe, welcoming, and accessible physical and virtual spaces for the community, collection and staff.

Objective 3.A. Implement realistic and economically feasible recommendations from the ADA checklist survey (See Appendix B).

Action 3.A.1: Library staff will purchase tactile signs to be placed outside the two main rooms of the library.

Action 3.A.2. The Library Board of Trustees and the Library Director will send a request

to the Board of Selectman asking that the town hall maintenance department take the following actions:

- a. Lower floor signs on elevator's door jamb 2 inches, making the center line 60 inches above the ground.
- b. Replace cracked / misaligned tiles in hallway floor.
- c. Install tactile signs outside of the town main rooms of the library

Action 3.A.3. Library staff will ensure that the hallway floor is as clear as possible and does not have materials jutting out into the walkway space.

Action 3.A.4. The Program Librarian will organize the program materials and media closets to place materials that are used most often at the lowest levels, closest to the door openings.

Action 3.A.5. The Library will purchase a foldable ADA-compliant table to be placed in front of large print books, if/when requested.

Objective 3.B. Ensure that the new library / community center building is accessible to all

Action 3.B.1: As an ex-officio member of the building committee, the Library Director will support and defend all universal design components included the library building program.

Action 3.B.2. As an ex-officio member of the building committee, the Library Director will encourage the Library/Community Center Building Committee to be familiar with and utilize "Checklist of Library Building Design Considerations" by William W. Sannwald.

Action 3.B.3. As an ex-officio member of the building committee, the Library Director will ensure that a changing table in a family lavatory is located near the children's room.

Objective 3.C. Ensure that online resources provided by the library are easy to use and accessible to all.

Action 3.C.1. The library staff will evaluate the library's website to ensure adherence to web accessible standards <https://www.w3.org/standards/webdesign/accessibility>

Action 3.C.2. The library staff will assign a library volunteer the task of checking links on the website twice per year.

Objective 3.D. Offer visual pleasing spaces within the existing library and hallway.

Action 3.D.1. Library staff will purchase an additional shelving unit for the under-the-stairs storage area on the ground floor in order to organize that area.

Action 3.D.2. Library staff will ensure that the hallway and Friends book sale area is visually pleasing by storing book sale items which do not fit on the hallway shelves in the under-the-stairs storage area.

Action 3.D.3. The Program Librarian will store craft materials in appropriate area after use.

Action 3.D.4. Library staff will continue to monitor usage of library materials on a yearly basis, removing and/or replacing items which are no longer of interest or visually unappealing.

Action 3.D.5. The Assistant Librarian will continue to develop and implement the library's records retention policy and remove documents no longer needed.

Action 3.D.6. Library staff will encourage artists to display photos or artwork related to a specific theme for a 1 to 2-month showcase.

Action 3.D.7. Library staff will create book / material displays for both children and adults according to seasonal or program themes.

Objective 3.E. Ensure that the new Library/Community Center includes a variety of spaces for community members to gather.

Action 3.E.1. The Building Program, at minimum, will include the following areas:

- a. Areas for a tutor and a student to meet
- b. A 10 person "board room" area
- c. A 25-50 person program room which has access to water
- d. A program room for 100-200 people
- e. A kitchen next to the largest program room

Objective 3.F. Ensure that staff works in a safe and healthy environment.

Action 3.F.1. The Library Board of Trustees and the Library staff will develop an Emergency Preparedness policy in collaboration with the Town of Beacon Falls and its Emergency Management Team.

Action 3.F.2. The library will ensure that a minimum of two staff members are working on the main level of the library during any given shift and, unless there are extenuating circumstances, staff members are not alone for more than 30 minutes at any time.

Action 3.F.3. Ensure that the new library/community center has a restroom on each floor.

Goal 4: The Beacon Falls Public Library offers materials, programs and services that meet the needs of the community.

Objective 4.A Offer a wide variety of adult programs that allow attendees to learn new skills, participate in new activities, and meet new people.

Action 4.A.1. The Program Librarian will develop a list of local talent (business people, artists, authors, etc.) who would be willing to share their knowledge at a library program.

Action 4.A.2. The Program Librarian will increase the number of programs that appeal to men.

Objective 4.B. Improve/Expand early literacy materials and services for preschool children and their parents.

Action 4.B.1. Library staff will analyze the picture book collection to determine weaknesses in terms of themes and purchase books to meet those needs.

Action 4.B.2. Prior to moving to a new building, library staff will reorganize the picture book collection according to themes (i.e. all concept books together, all vehicle books, all

animal books, etc.)

Action 4.B.3. Library staff will display new books.

Action 4.B.4. The Program Librarian will have access to professional development opportunities to stay current on early literacy research.

Action 4.B.5. The Program Librarian will use current early literacy research to modify existing preschool story time programs.

Action 4.B.6. The Library will institute a “1000 books before Kindergarten” program.

Objective 4.C. Offer additional STEAM activities for children.

Action 4.C.1. The Library Board of Trustees will advocate for the hiring of a Technology Librarian, who can present additional STEM programs.

Action 4.C.2. The Program Librarian will collaborate with other organizations (i.e. Parks & Recreation, Friends of Beacon Falls Library, etc.) to provide additional materials to support STEAM programs.

Action 4.C.3. The Program Librarian will increase the number of creative arts programs for children, those which are open-ended and not step-by-step craft programs.

Action 4.C.4. Library staff and/or volunteers will continue to offer Math Mondays or other student assistance during the summer.

Action 4.C.5. The Program Librarian will identify agencies to present inexpensive STEAM programs.

Objective 4.D: Expand training opportunities to increase patron's ability to use computers and other electronic devices and software.

Action 4.D.1. The library will continue one-on-one classes with volunteers and/or Book-a-Librarian sessions.

Action 4.D.2. The Library Director will ensure that library staff has access to reference training resources to improve their knowledge and proficiency in the use of library databases.

Action 4.D.3. The Library Board of Trustees will advocate for the hiring of a Technology Librarian who shall hold small group classes for adults focused on one technology product/type (i.e. Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Facebook, etc.).

Objective 4.E. Ensure the existing library resources meet the needs of the community.

Action 4.E.1. The Library will add additional titles with a “New Age” or Self-Help focus.

Action 4.E.2. The Library will add additional nonfiction titles with a focus on history.

Action 4.E.3. Library staff will review the copyright date of books in the juvenile nonfiction collection and purchase new titles to replace those which are out-of-date.

Action 4.E.4. Library staff and Library Board of Trustees will survey residents in 2018 to evaluate the library’s progress toward meeting their needs.

IMPLEMENTATION

The following narrative provides some perspective on implementation of the recommendations in this Strategic Plan.

Implementing Objectives and Action Plan Items

Staff time: Many of the action items require reallocation of staff time.

The Library Director will need to spend time working with the Community Media Center Building Committee and time outside of the library attending meetings. The Library Director will also need to spend time working with Library Board of Trustees and other town officials to develop the Emergency Preparedness policy. Objectives 1A, 1B, 2A, 3B.

The Program Librarian will need to reallocate time to learn about early literacy and the 1000 Books before Kindergarten program. It will be important to learn about grant writing and other ways to fund programs.

Many objectives and action items are continuing activities of existing staff. There is a limited additional time required for Action 1.C.6 (to develop an outreach program for grade 3 and grade 6 students). There are some purchases required (A- Frame Sandwich board, ADA compliant folding table, signage) which can be made through the existing library budget.

Other action items can be completed with the use of volunteers. These areas include helping to evaluate and periodically weed the collection, helping to reorganize the picture book collection, and checking the website for broken links and information, to name a few.

Financial Costs: This Strategic Plan requires an increase in funding to carry out its components.

Building Costs: Members of the Community Media Center Committee will be responsible for the capital plan for building a new library / community center. Experts previously consulted determined that the committee should estimate building costs at approximately \$400 per square foot.

A Connecticut State Library building grant of up to 1 million dollars may be available for the project. The grants are awarded on a competitive basis and can cover up to one-half of the cost of the library portion of the multi-use project. According to requirements published on the CT State Library website (http://libguides.ctstatelibrary.org/ld.php?content_id=6054372), the library portion of the project must be a minimum of 1.6 square feet per 1000 population (1.6 x 6.055 = 9688 square feet) to gain preferred status in the grant award process. Should the 9688 square foot space be built for the library, that portion of the building would cost approximately \$4 million dollars. This cost does not include additional space added on for the purpose of the Parks and Recreation Commission, the Historical Society or any other town group or agency.

For future reference, according to the state guidelines, *“In a multi-purpose building that contains a library, space shared with another town agency for multi-purpose or meeting room use counts toward the square feet, provided that during at least 50% of the library’s open hours, the room(s) is/are available for library-sponsored and library-related activities and that there are policies regarding the availability of shared multi-purpose and meeting room space. The percentage of such space that counts toward the square feet of the library must match the percentage of time it is available for library purposes during the library’s open hours. In a facility containing the library and another town agency, the ratio of library space to total building space determines what portion of the total mechanical space counts toward the square feet of the library.”*

Staffing costs: A criterion for the Connecticut State Library Building grant award process is the number of hours that a library is open to the public. Beacon Falls Public Library is currently open 42.5 hours per week during the school year. In order to increase our chances of procuring the \$1,000,000 grant, the library must be open a minimum of 45 hours.

Unless staff is added before the new facility opens, the town should plan for an additional full-time staff member. With current staffing levels, using the state standard of 40 hours as the full-time work week, the Library has 2.6 full-time equivalent employees, or 0.43 FTE per 1,000 of our population. As noted earlier, in order to meet an ESSENTIAL level on State Benchmarks, the library needs to have 0.5 Full-time equivalents per 1000 population. Staffing levels average 0.61 FTE per 1000 statewide.

This Strategic Plan calls for the hiring of a Technology Librarian. That staff member should hold a Masters of Library Science (MLS) degree and/or other professional degrees or certifications and work a minimum of 30 hours per week. Current Connecticut Library Association (CLA) salary guidelines for a librarian with an MLS require a rate of \$27 / hour. While the Town does not meet the CLA guidelines for its entire library staff, this position will require a high level of technology skill and 10% of the employee’s time can be shared with other town departments. The town should plan for \$42,210 added to the library’s full-time salary line item.

The Library Board of Trustees included a 20 hour/week Technology Librarian in its 2016-2017 budget proposal. The Boards of Selectmen and Finance did not support that recommendation. This Strategic Plan recommends that this position is added as soon as possible to allow the STEM program goals to move forward. Currently the Library Director is fulfilling some of the program responsibilities in that area. However, due to increased work responsibilities to work with the Community Media Center Committee on the implementation of a building project, the Library Director will not have the time to fulfill those STEM program responsibilities. Adding the position now as part-time will lessen the overall salary increase prior to the opening of the new facility.

Ongoing costs of a new facility: Once the new facility is operational, the town should plan for additional costs for building utilities and maintenance.