

**Brooks Memorial Library  
Strategic Planning Committee  
Meeting September 3, 2015,  
4:30 PM**

**Present: Jane, Elizabeth, Jerry, Jennifer, Sue, Amy Howlett**

**Call to order 4:40**

**Public comment:** welcome to Alex Stinson who just moved from Kansas, working for wikimedia foundation and doing library outreach. A chance to get to know us.

**Approved minutes.**

Writing new 2017 plan. Amy here from VT Dept. of Libraries (VT Lib) to advise us on strategic planning. Amy was not involved with our last plan; Christine Friese was our helper from VT Lib.

Amy: there are a number of models available. Strategic Planning for Results by Nelson is what we used last time. It's the one Amy knows best, but if we've used it in the past, it might feel kind of "creaky." Service responses model. Amy does love the 2-community meeting-by-invitation method from Nelson's model. Can do a survey, can focus on Brattleboro and West Brattleboro in two different sessions if we think that makes sense. Young Adult in-depth services--are we considering? If so, maybe a YA focus group. Maybe also middle/elementary school. Questions around technology are often very different if asking young adults to comment. Reinventing Libraries from Wayne, PA is good.

State of Delaware has run with a statewide priority: lifelong learning. The libraries in the state interpret that locally.

Jerry: slim down our mission statement. He loves Free Lib of Philadelphia statement. Briefer can be used like a slogan.

3 things: mission statement (succinct), vision statement (aspirational, descriptive), and values (how you operate)

Amy encourages us to move on to another model. Maureen Sullivan pre-eminent library consultant who worked with Fletcher Free Library. Amy shared a great venn diagram from ALA. In intersection of circles: "Our library is a platform for community learning, innovation and networking." Alex noted that "platform" concept is being used in knowledge management circles.

Wowed by the people in the room at the Fletcher Free. Lots of major stakeholders. We should think what that would look like here.

Jane made a process list using "Strategic Planning in a Nutshell." We reviewed.

How much of this should we do while Jerry is here? We want benefit of his experience, but might be good for new director to hear what comes out of the staff retreat meeting and public meetings. Maybe do a survey now and schedule meetings for a little later when new person is on board? Also, we could educate ourselves in the next few months so we're ready to launch the process when the new person comes on board.

Important things noted: we believe people want access to online materials and also flexibility of use of space.

Consider contracting with somebody for planning advice. Maureen was about \$20,000. Vermont Community Foundation might be a resource for planning advisors.

Other models:

SOAR (instead of SWAT). More positive; what are the opportunities?

Aspen Institute. Could also be a framework for strategic planning. Most boards would be happy to include sustainability, but Nelson doesn't address it.

Amy can send us a reading list of additional models. Homework for next meeting.

**Brooks Memorial Library  
Strategic Planning Committee  
Meeting September 3, 2015,  
4:30 PM**

Note: Jerry likes Aspen Institute statement: "centers of learning, creativity, and innovation in the digital age."

More about planning timeline and process:

Amy said Mary White was happy to arrive at Howe in Hanover with the plan already done. Should we just extend current plan for a year?

Maybe we should seek the advice of director candidates about what to do.

Jerry-would be good to get out to satellite places. Amy said it didn't work well in Burlington. Jane noted that if you get invited, you're more likely to attend.

Get feedback from candidates and do research into what Amy suggests. We could aim to be ready to go in January. But watch out for winter weather/attendance if you do your meetings in, say, February. Last time, it was September-November.

We could do a survey. Also, how about a board with sticky notes in the library?

In March, there's attention to local government and budgets.

Decision: do some of this homework while Jerry is here, then new director has a couple months to get acquainted, and we start the process in March and write it over the summer and approve it in the fall. Ready by 2017.

Steps:

Read up on planning models/approaches  
Think about information-gathering methods  
Set up tentative dates  
Bounce this off director candidates  
Plan for launch in March with forum, staff retreat, etc.  
March-August, gather info and draft the plan  
Trustees review the plan in the fall  
It will inform fall budget planning

Jane proposes three meetings between now and end of December to talk about all this planning-to-plan. Amy invited, but she's overbooked and VT Lib is understaffed. She should be able to help at least through December but doesn't know yet what it will look like beyond that.

Meetings: Oct 7 (Weds), Nov 5 and Dec 3 (Thurs), at 4:30

Trustee Conference on Nov. 1 is going to look at this. Field trip to other libraries? Might be nice, but tough to schedule.

Budget for this process? Trustees have funds for this kind of thing. We could make a special request for this. What's the upper limit? We were thinking around \$5000, but maybe more? If we want to hire a professional facilitator,

Lawrence Webster is doing Colchester. She wants to use the Wayne, PA Library Alliance Project method.

How about Christine Graham? Does she do strategic planning as well as development?

**Adjourned 5:50 NEXT MEETING: October 7, 2015**