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## Great Barrington Libraries Trustees

Strategic Planning subcommittee meeting

July 12, 2023 6:38 PM

Participants: Sandy Pantorno (trustee), Patrick Hollenbeck(trustee chair), Sharon Gregory( community member), Eileen Mooney(Newsletter), Michelle Loubert (community member), Marie Blauvelt (library staff), Carol McGlinchey (trustee/part of meeting), Ruby Chang (trustee/secretary).

PH: Lets hold on Next step for a second: we do need a name for this study itself and I would like to make a recommendation to call this "Reflect, Reimagine, Reconnect". So that is what we would like to do. The earlier strategic plan from 2018 has not been good but not fulfilled. Reflect is the word we really need to hold onto and also make sure that we move ahead. We need to take a look at that study. It expired one year ago. For example, on the last plan, first thing is we need to make sure the library staff has the skills/technological tools and that goal is not going to change. Technology is running the world. Their recommendation was have one staffer's position is the technology staff, which we don't have. The goals have not changed. With the openings that we have, we need to consider the Tech Staff position as a part time position and can teach the staff as well as the public. This part is already here as reflective part. We cannot ignore the suggestion that is already here. Since 2016, we wanted to continue the professional development of the library staff. It is a budget issue. Another was updating the library's tech systems by the end of 2017. There is no line item that is meaningful for that and did not happen to a meaningful extent. That is the first and foremost. I have looked to see if there are any LSTA Federal Grants for this pilot program that could bring someone in residence for one year to teach staff and us. Kids love virtual reality and gaming is getting more advanced and takes money to do this. We never have a budget for this stuff. That is the reflect part.

Approval of minutes from 6/20/23: minutes were reviewed by Sandy verbally and motion called and approved. "Aye" from all.

Sandy: Repetition of what we have done so far, survey is done and placed around town, including RSYF, Senior Center, CHP Family (not CHP due to flow issues), Berkshire South Community Center and Library and Town Hall, Macony Pediatrics. Press releases have gone out to Eileen's Newsletter, Library and town website with link to survey. Next day or two will go on the Berkshire Edge. Survey Data is being done by Rob and Sharon on Excel sheet. What are the categories that we should discuss? You mentioned tech?

Pat:

- Tech is a giant situation, let me go back to "back in the day" situation. By mid 2017, updating our computer classes never happened. Redesigning the website did happen in 2020. The web developer who lives in Stockbridge who noted we need enhancements to that, a button to hit for accessibility users. You want vocal, larger type or different language just hit one button which we do not have on our website. It is a money issue, we need a license to do that.
- By 2018, reassess tech use for both libraries. The town has a tech replacement schedule of every 5 years. We need to see where we are in that cycle. Computers are not good after 5 years and need to be replaced. Libraries are leaning away from desktop models due to the pandemic. Using laptop would keep people apart and take them off line to sanitize them. That has changed since the pandemic. There are two other items.
- By end of 2019, evaluate consortium of eBook holders. We have Libby —do everyone know about that? How do we communicate with the public. Marie noted when we have time we do sit down with the public and go over what is offered.

- Evaluate tech trends, Trustees are suppose to evaluate the trends. Sharon does not know how to go about doing that. The strategic plan will have plan and ideas. Pat: objectives and actions. Sandy: we are gathering data and what is the next step? Pat: Then we go to specialized focus groups. Sandy: The data need to be put out so everyone understands, need formulate the data. The focus groups will happen simultaneously. Sharon noted we should have everything by August. Pat: In the past, they planned to have several focus group meetings of about 22 people, invited various people. But out of 22 people, 3 responded and one made it. That was before zoom. Sandy noted we do want to have various community members involved in the focus groups. Sandy will have a focus groups with RSYF next week. Pat: the large focus group, I am hoping Robert Cullen will be able to come in, hoping to be held at Ramsdell or back of the Unitarian Church. He will be able to fill in where we were using power point. We will have survey results and have questions and answers. We do not have to have the same topics in all the focus groups. Last time it happened around August 14 and publicity will go out the week before. Sandy feel we need more than 2 groups. Housatonic Group or EST. We cannot do it at Ramsdell unless there is a ramp. Pat will ask Housatonic Improvement Committee for help. There are two Selectboard member who live down there and can step up in a large way. Sandy will check on the Senior Center. Accessibility would be a great topic to bring up at the Senior Center Focus Group. Pat mentioned meeting someone who preferred the Lenox and Stockbridge libraries because the seating was more comfortable and she can get out of them. Our seats are awful.
- Pat will request Lauren reach out to the Bipoc committee since she is on the W.E.B Du Bois committee.. Sandra will reach out to Leigh Davis. Selectboard members need to stay away from since they have to vote on this and we do not want to have conflict of interest.
- Sandy: How do we extend our reach to the community? Pat feel we will bring people into the focus groups.
- Sharon noted focus groups are getting input from the community. We have to understand not always physically meeting of people.
- Eileen: we could invite people to attend the meeting on specific topics and provide input but do not have to be official board members but working with the board can start immediately.
- Sharon: has done SP writing for at least 15 times in her career. She has done research.
- Eileen: for example if you have focus group on Technology, then reach out to the people and do not need to know if they use the library. Invite them to come and listen. It is a mini-focus group in a way but also reaching out for involvement. And keep them on the email list of people to notify them and send them minutes to.
- Sharon: The reason I got involved is the “elephant in the room” is the Ramsdell library renovation. This expand library capacity in general especially if you use the full space of the library. Only way to do that is a big fat grant. Town has to put money down as well. Concern about the town has the capacity to support. CPA is something you get taxed for into a fund for historical uses. It is important for us to get the \$150,000 which is already there.
- Pat feels we should get \$400,000. At least required is \$150,000 per Sharon. We have to apply by October first.
- Review of Focus Group: Pat will set up the large Focus group. MBLC also have focus group ideas which also can be used. Sandy will hold the RSYF and Senior Center Group. We will have categories.
- Sharon feel if Ramsdell is the focus then we have to have specific input to shaping the strategies of what we can do. She would like to have shuttle between the libraries but others do not. This is a big strategic plan and has to focus on the grant. Pat explained we have the statutory responsibility to structure the SP whether we like it or not. So we would be in big trouble if we don't get this done. This is like an investment prospective. So we can get money. Sharon feel we need to make sure people will make the investments.
- Eileen: recommend one of the first people to speak to is the Historical Commission. They were thinking of increasing storage on the third floor of the Ramsdell library. Pat feel this is a temporary thing. The grant will not account for that. Eileen feel they would be an important group to work with. It is a problem that is going to need resolution.

- Pat noted he has gone to the Historical Commission in the past for digital scanning. The state has federal money for scanning of documents. Pat is worried there is no climate control up there and the documents are getting ruined as we speak. The Grant application is due May 24, 2024.
- Sharon: we need to file the Strategic Plan by October 1st.

**Next meeting will be July 26, 2023 at 5:30 pm at the library.**

Meeting called to adjourn at 7:53 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Ruby Chang

