
MINOT-SLEEPER LIBRARY

Strategic Plan 2019-2022

Prepared by:

MINOT-SLEEPER LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

INTRODUCTION

The Minot-Sleeper Library Board of Trustees and staff have engaged in a thought-provoking, challenging process of strategic planning. We have seen enormous growth in patronage, programming, and services in the six years since the addition was completed and opened to the public in 2013. When we began thinking about embarking on a plan for the future we knew that if we didn't plan the future would happen anyway.

We wanted to guide the future and we wanted to engage the community in the process. Our first step was to work with trustees and staff to understand our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT). We then invited community members to join us for a discussion of the Library's role in the community and were encouraged and inspired by their feedback. Finally, we conducted a survey asking patrons and non-patrons alike what they thought and what mattered to them when they thought about the Library in the community.

Then came the hard part, working together the staff and trustees began to assimilate the feedback, revisit the mission and create a vision for the future. Finally, based on the input from all sources we developed our goals and the objectives we needed to achieve to bring the goals to fruition.

We are pleased to share our strategic plan with the community that helped us chart our course. We see this as being the start of an ongoing effort to ensure that the Minot-Sleeper Library continues to be an essential institution in the life of our community. We hope you will continue to provide feedback, let us know what we are doing that is working and what we could do better.

Thanks to the many community members, Friends of the Library, Town officials and all who care about having a vital, thriving Library in the community!

-Minot-Sleeper Library Board of Trustees

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COMMUNITY PROFILE

The Minot Sleeper Library is located in Bristol, New Hampshire. The town was incorporated in 1819 and in 2019 has a population of roughly 3,000 residents and a seasonal summer population of approximately 6,500. In Bristol the median age is 43.5 years old. Of the population enrolled in school, the majority, 53.3 % are enrolled in elementary school. Family households make up 63.3% of all housing and non-family households are the remaining 33.7%. The median household income is \$50,080. The majority of residents do not hold a degree higher than a high school diploma. The population's race is 96.9 white; the second largest group being 0.7% Asian. Geographically, the town borders the southern end of Newfound Lake. Residents enjoy two town beaches on Newfound Lake, and several town parks including Kelley Park in the downtown area.

LIBRARY PROFILE

The Minot-Sleeper Library opened as a public library in 1885 thanks to the donation of funds for such purpose by Josiah Minot and Solomon Sleeper. Today, the library continues to serve all people in the Newfound Region. Residents and property owners in the towns of Bristol, Alexandria, Bridgewater, Danbury, Groton, Heborn, Hill, and New Hampton are eligible for library cards free of charge. The majority of cardholders live in Bristol year round. The library circulates roughly 45,000 items every year, including books, movies, e-books, audiobooks, and unique items like a telescope and ukulele. The library is frequently used as a gathering place and for library-sponsored programs. Since 2013, the number of attendees for these events has more than doubled. The use of public computers and accessing the library's wifi has also doubled in the past 5 years. The library receives support from taxpayers, its Board of Trustees, Friends of the Library, and a number of other area organizations.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

To better learn the needs and aspirations of those we serve, library trustees and staff engaged members of the Newfound Region in a variety of forums. The first was a community conversation held at the library with 25 participants in October of 2018. Following the dialogue, a survey was made available from December 2018-January 2019. The survey was available on paper and online. It was shared widely and completed by 174 respondents. Our findings include the following.

COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

- **Wants:** Attendees stated they want better and more effective communication across the community, have more access to and more awareness of library resources. Interest was expressed in having the community work collaboratively and have all people, of all ages be engaged. Attendees want to feel included, welcomed, respected, and live in a safe community. Some expressed a need for more affordable housing, and job opportunities, especially for younger people.
- **Roadblocks:** Current issues the community faces were identified as being: lack of opportunities, including jobs, education, student and young adult activities, as well as those for older adults. The two age groups that most felt were underserved were 18-39 and 65 and older.
- **The Library as Place:** Attendees see the Library as a community forum, a neutral/non-political venue for educational, cultural and informational programming that matter to the community. They would like to have the Library be a hub for information about what's happening in the community. Some suggested satellite libraries to address the needs of smaller communities that cannot sustain their own library. Some identified the arts as a particular opportunity including art displays and music programs. There was a suggestion that programs might be recorded and broadcast on the local cable channel for those who cannot attend a live event.

COMMUNITY SURVEY

- **Programs:** Respondents expressed greatest interest in: talks and lectures, art/craft/hands-on workshops, author talks, continuing education classes, and programs for children/grandchildren. The majority stated they attend programs to learn something, to meet others/socialize, and to hear a perspective that is different from their own. The majority prefer to learn about library events through digital services (e-mail newsletter, social media, etc.) and the sign in front of the library.
- **Use of the library:** The greatest number of respondents stated they would use the library more if they knew about the resources and services available and if it was open more or different hours, specifically additional weekday evenings and longer hours on the weekends, including Sundays. Others said if there was faster and more reliable wifi and there was more seating.
- **Physical space:** The most frequent response to how the library could improve its physical space was to have more comfortable seating. Other suggestions include opening windows during non-winter months and automatic door openers.
- **Areas to maintain:** The most valued resources that respondents wish to be maintained at the library is the staff and the library's welcoming and friendly atmosphere.



"A warm atmosphere with friendly, helpful people. The library does so much more for the community than merely checking out books. The programs offered are varied + interesting"
-Survey respondent.

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MISSION

The Minot-Sleeper Library provides resources that fulfill educational, informational, and cultural needs of the Newfound Area community in a welcoming, respectful atmosphere.

VISION

Enriching lives through community engagement

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Library resources will be available and accessible to a broader population within the region

- Connect with other agencies to expand the library's resources
- Broaden access for populations with limited mobility and special needs
- Utilize technology to expand the library's reach and create greater access to resources

The library's physical space will be optimized to meet the needs of the community

- Maximize seating alternatives for ease and comfort
- Expand availability of technology offerings within the library
- Complete space needs assessment

Innovative communication techniques will be used to disseminate information

- Build and implement a comprehensive and varied marketing plan to promote library events, resources, services, and hours of operation
- Facilitate community conversations
- Foster open and effective lines of communication among all stakeholders

"...a place of knowledge, that is non-judgmental, inclusive and fundamentally kind."

-Susan Orlean, The Library Book

TIMELINE

The library Board of Trustees in coordination with the staff will evaluate this plan at its midpoint and at its completion to ensure goals are met. Evaluations will be conducted by trustees and staff using statistical analysis of data, as well as patron reflections and surveys. Reports at both the midpoint and completion of this plan will be made available to the community.



March 2021

18 month
evaluation and
report of progress
made available to
community



March 2022

Community
survey and data
analysis



September 2022

Final evaluation
and report of
goals achieved
made available to
community

**“The future depends on what you do today.”
— Mahatma Gandhi**