

Griswold Memorial Library

Colrain, Massachusetts

Long-Range & Strategic Plan ***2017-2020***



Submitted by the Director and the Trustees
of the Griswold Memorial Library

12 Main Road
Colrain, MA 01340

~September 12, 2016~

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Colrain Overview

The Town of Colrain, Massachusetts, is located in Franklin County north of Shelburne Falls. The eastern border of Colrain follows the Green River, bordering Leyden with Greenfield to the southeast. To the west lies Heath, with Charlemont to the southwest, and to the north are the towns of Halifax and Guilford Vermont. The town is in the northeastern part of the Berkshires, and is home to two state forests, Catamount State Forest to the southwest, and half of the H.O. Cook State Forest to the northeast. The land area of Colrain is 43.45 square miles.

As of the 2012 census, there were 1671 people living in Colrain. The town employs an open town meeting led by a board of selectmen. Colrain was first settled in 1735 and incorporated in 1761. The Town of Colrain is recognized as having the first flag flown over an American schoolhouse, in 1812.

As a rural community with limited employment options, most residents are employed in other areas of Franklin County or out of state. Some residents are talented artisans, farmers, and home-based business owners. Lack of town-wide high speed internet coverage limits opportunities for citizens.

Students attend a local elementary school and a nine town regional middle/high school. An issue of local concern is the problem of school budget increases which stretch the limited resources available through taxation. Tax revenues are set by the tax rate and when school budgets are mandated, other services must be cut so that revenues can cover the expenditures. Another problem which Colrain is grappling with is the revitalization of the center of town. The Board of Selectmen and others are working to make improvements for the benefit of the whole community.

Griswold Memorial Library Overview

In 1892, the Colrain Free Public Library was established when members of the school board persuaded the citizens to accept the provisions of the Acts of 1890, Chapter 347. The town voted \$25 for books, and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts sent \$100 worth. The Library was kept in Dr. Cram's house and Mrs. Katherine Cram was the first librarian. The Congregational Sunday School, the Springfield City Library, a defunct literary club, and others gave books to the new library. In 1898, the number of volumes owned was 940 and the circulation was 1,823. As years passed, the library outgrew the space at Dr. Cram's home.

As a solution to the need for more room, the Griswold Memorial Library was built and given to the inhabitants of Colrain by Joseph Griswold, owner of Griswold Manufacturing, as a memorial to his parents and wife. The library opened to the public on December 12, 1908. The slate-roofed library was built mainly of Roman brick and Indiana limestone at a cost of about \$50,000. Built in Greek Revival Style, the facility is Colrain's most elegant building. The library's interior includes a domed rotunda with a stained glass seal of Coleraine, Ireland (Colrain's sister town), mosaic floor, and Corinthian columns. The crown moldings, intricate fireplace mantle, and frescoes show the work of able craftsmen. The library is included in the Colrain Historic District on the National Register of Historic Places.

The building was renovated in 1994 with state and federal funds to support the Americans with Disability Act. A new doorway and ramp were constructed from the parking lot to ensure easy access for all. The bathroom was fitted for accessibility and aisles were widened. A new roof, building insulation, front walkway improvements, air conditioning and new wiring were some projects that the Trustees oversaw in the last 20 years.

When the library was given to the town, Joseph Griswold set it up to be self-supporting as far as maintenance and repairs. He gave railroad bonds with the intent that the interest earned would pay for the upkeep of the building. As years went by, the costs far outweighed the interest earned and the town appropriated monies to keep the library up. Grants paid for portions of major projects.

The library is a department of town government and governed by an elected six member board of Library Trustees. The Board's authority is derived from Chapter 78, Section 10 and 11 of the Massachusetts General Laws. Section 10 states in part that: "The board shall have the custody and management of the library...and of all property owned by the town relating thereto. All money raised or appropriated by the town for its support and maintenance shall be expended by the board, and all money or property which the town may receive by gift or bequest...shall be administered by the board...". Responsibility for library management, collection development, and provision of library services to the public is delegated by the Board to the Library Director. The Director is appointed and directly responsible to the Board, and is an employee of the town.

Mission Statement

The Griswold Memorial Library is a welcoming community hub, where open access to current tools, resources and services support the enjoyment of reading and the informational, educational, and communication needs of the public.

Vision Statement

The Griswold Memorial Library will be the recognized source of knowledge and information, and the social and cultural epicenter for all citizens of Colrain. A vital and widely relevant place to gather and discuss, and a steadfast encourager of reading, the Library will offer a full spectrum of services, materials and programming to support the changing needs of the community. The Library is committed to leading cooperative efforts with the town, schools and local organizations and being the gateway to lifelong learning for generations to come.

Planning Methodology

- Discussion at monthly Trustees' meetings with the Library Director about the importance of a Long-Range and Strategic Plan, 2014-2016.
- Two visioning meetings attended by the Trustees and Library Director. During the first meeting, held on November 1, 2014, the group identified three potential projects for the GML: a community survey (information gathering); space (utilization & expansion of existing and potential space); and infrastructure (staffing, building maintenance, library collections, technology, and equipment). During the second meeting held on April 25, 2015, the group brainstormed ideas for the mission and vision statements and discussed the community survey and the types of questions to be asked.
- Planned and wrote two Library surveys, one for adults and one for children. Summer 2015.
- Solicited prizes from community businesses to entice survey participation.
- Paper surveys were distributed at key locations around Colrain. These included the town transfer station, post office, Pine Hill Orchards store, the Library, town hall, and the monthly senior lunch at the Colrain Community Church. Online surveys were available through the Library's Facebook page and on Survey Monkey. Fall 2015.
- Publicity for the survey was placed in local newspapers, on social media, and printed on flyers around town.
- Children's survey was distributed to every student in the Colrain Central School. Fall 2015.
- Planned and held a Public Forum at the Library on June 7, 2016. Results from the survey were shared, and people were invited to discuss how the Library can best move into the future and meet the changing needs of the community.
- Forum was attended by the Trustees, Library Director, members of the Friends of the Library, local organizations and the school community, as well as the new owner of the meetinghouse, and Library patrons.
- Trustees and Library Director met to discuss the "Goals, Objectives, and Actions" of the Strategic Plan.

- Collaborated through a Google Doc to write the Plan.
- Voted to accept the Plan at the September 12, 2016, Trustees meeting.

Assessment of User Needs

- Talking with Library Patrons and Non-users
- Survey Results (paper and electronic)
- Children’s Survey Results
- Public Forum
- Circulation Statistics

TALKING WITH LIBRARY PATRONS & NON-USERS

Library Director engaged in active conversations with library patrons about their ideas for the future of the Griswold Memorial Library. Trustees volunteered time at the transfer station and spoke to patrons and non-users. Non-users were especially helpful with reasons why they do not use the library.

SURVEY RESULTS

How often do you use the library? (Number of people and answers)

13 more than once a week; 37 weekly; 48 monthly; 53 never;
41 varies = not recently, occasionally, rarely, almost never

How do you use the library?

137 books; 33 videos; 79 dvds; 32 cds; 31 magazines; 31 museum passes; 25 computer use; 42 audiobooks; 17 attend meetings; 35 reference and research; 22 children's programs; 29 wireless; 21 historical archives; 10 use children's room; 3 kindle/nook; 68 C/WMARS interlibrary loan; 4 special collections

What additional services, programs, or activities would you use if offered?

70 art showing; 27 home delivery; 49 poetry reading; 75 lectures and music; 79 coffee house; 66 gathering spot; 55 historical tour/museum exhibit; 38 toy/tool borrowing---more tool answers than toy; 22 teen programs

If there was an opportunity to expand or renovate the library for more space for community meetings, expanded hours, art collections, workshops, training opportunities, would you support the action?

164 yes; 14 no

Will you join us to ensure the future of the library?

47 volunteer; 24 Friends of the Library; 32 share skills; 20 forum;
59 monetary donation

Total Number of Surveys: 136 Adult paper surveys with names; 36 without
21 Survey Monkey results with names; 10 without

Sampling of Survey Comments:

“To me the library is the most important building in this town. I will support it any way I can. Many thanks to the staff!”

“We need a gathering/program/meeting space in town.”

“It is already an amazing resource! More hours would be good.”

“More space and more events are always good.”

“Hours are hard to remember. Need for meeting space.”

“Expansion- yes- It’s our community center! We could do so much more if it was bigger.”

“Reason for not using - Internet”

“I just read my own books.”

“Tool Library....yes please!”

“Expansion only if not affecting the original building and as long as taxes don't go up”

“Too difficult to get around - home delivery needed.”

CHILDREN'S SURVEY RESULTS

What do you use the library for? (Number of people and answers)

22 books; 2 video; 16 dvd; 4 cd; 1 magazine; 1 museum pass; 5 computer; 3 wifi;
12 play with stuffed toys; 10 play with farm; 5 C/WMars ILL

Additional uses? bathroom

Do you participate in the summer reading raffle?

12 yes; 8 no; 1 want to

Do you participate in the summer craft program?

8 yes; 12 no; 1 want to

Are you interested in toy borrowing?

2 maybe; 9 yes; 10 no

Total Number of Children's Surveys: 21 paper surveys with names; 1 without

“I like that it is a library because I love to read books of all kinds. I like picture books. I love chapter books. Please keep the library open. I love libraries. It's My PLACE!”

PUBLIC FORUM

The Public Forum was held June 7, 2016, at the Griswold Memorial Library. It was facilitated by Trustees, Cynthia McLaughlin and Nancy Turkle.

The Forum was attended by the Trustees, Library Director, members of the Friends of the Library, community organizations, and school community, as well as the new owner of the local meetinghouse, and Library patrons.

Brainstorming yielded many creative uses for Griswold Memorial Library:

- As a meeting place and home base for the community.
- As an informational hub for a community bulletin board, as a base for a Colrain newspaper, and as a distribution center for magnets with Hilltown Library schedules.
- As a space for: knitting, afternoon tea, local author talks and readings. live music, art exhibits, poetry readings, Jazz, literary and historical events, living history events, instructional workshops (such as fishing, gardening, bicycle and appliance repair), series workshops (such as nature sightings and painting), plant swap, book club (GML already has one but this needs more outreach), bike club, community skills database, annual book sale, town meetings, (the GML currently holds committee meetings for the Cemetery, Broadband, and Trustees), yoga classes, and computer help which could connect elders and youth.
- As an outdoor venue for: wood fired pizza oven, patio/terrace, garden, movie nights, bonfires, dances, festivals, and Farmer's Market.

Other ideas, thoughts, questions:

- The importance of bringing in young families and teens. And what makes a space a good hangout for teens? Video games, snacks, clean-up squad, privacy, study area, Wifi, and air conditioning.
- Hosting a one day event with several classes and workshops to see what works and what is popular.

- Coordinating a fix-it day with a transfer station day, when many different folks who tinker/fix various things such as bikes, small appliances, and small engines, would help community members fix their broken items.

CIRCULATION STATISTICS

Adult Circulation

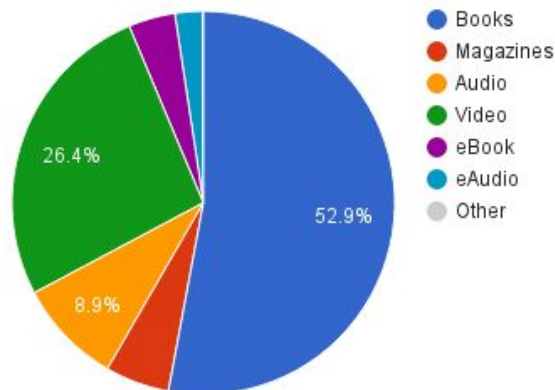
Books	5289
Magazines	868
Audio	1329
Video	4038
eBook	631
eAudio	370
eVideo	2
Passes	11
Sub Total	12,542

Children & Young Adult Circulation

Books	3176
Audio	90
Video	194
Sub Total	3,460

Total circulation for FY16

16,002 Items



Goals, Objectives, Actions

PATRON BASE

The first goal of the Griswold Memorial Library is to support the whole community as a primary and relevant resource for every household, providing each community member the tools for lifelong learning.

OBJECTIVE: ENGAGING PATRON BASE

- *Action:* FY 2017. Promote the wide number of resources available through C/WMars interlibrary loan.
- *Action:* FY All. Involve the community in the Library's 21st century campaign to expand community events and programming at the Library.

OBJECTIVE: BROADENING PATRON BASE

- *Action:* FY 2017. Seek out local organizations interested in developing partnerships.
- *Action:* FY All. Coordinate volunteers to help with different aspects of the Library.
- *Action:* FY All. Keep Library collections current and interesting by weeding out-of-date formats and expanding high demand selections.

OBJECTIVE: INCREASING PATRON BASE

- *Action:* FY 2017. Create a monthly newsletter to reach out to patrons and showcase Library news and events.
- *Action:* FY All. Develop programming that brings more people to the Library.
- *Action:* FY All. Market and promote the Library through social media and print sources.

FACILITIES

The Library's second goal is to maintain, preserve and expand its physical structure, creating a convenient, accessible and vital space for contemporary needs.

OBJECTIVE: MAINTAINING HISTORIC INTEGRITY OF BUILDING

- *Action:* FY 2018-2019. Develop a strategic plan for restoration and conservation of architectural elements.
- *Action:* FY 2018. Consult an antique art specialist for advice on preserving, cleaning, and valuing the Library's paintings and sculptures.

OBJECTIVE: EXPANDING SPACE

- *Action:* FY 2017-2018. Contact an advisor to make an initial evaluation of the use of the existing space, both outdoor and indoor, for use in programming, offices, collections, and public engagement.
- *Action:* FY 2017-2019. Form a committee consisting of experts in the field and community members dedicated to the library's vibrant future.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Library's third goal is to recruit and retain exceptional staff, supply the tools, training, and inspiration for them to succeed in their work, and provide a clear and constructive framework for communication and review.

OBJECTIVE: LIBRARY PERSONNEL

Staff will work together as an organization that is responsive to changing information and future trends in the library environment.

- *Action:* FY All. The director will perform an annual review of staffing needs, including new configurations for scheduling and job responsibilities.

- *Action:* FY 2018. Increasing budget for professional development.
- *Action:* FY 2019. Increasing hours for programming.
- *Action:* FY 2018. Increasing budget to fund substitute staff.
- *Action:* FY 2017-2018. Evaluating the schedule to insure that staff has the time and tools to provide exceptional customer service.

Approval of the Governing Board

The Governing Board of the Griswold Memorial Library is formed of the Trustees: Michael Friedlander, Michelle Hillman, Jill Horton-Lyons, Cynthia McLaughlin, Cheli Mennella, and Nancy Turkle.

The *Long-Range & Strategic Plan for the Griswold Memorial Library* was approved by the Board on September 12, 2016.

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