

2019-2021 Strategic Plan

Freeport Community Library Board of Trustees

10 Library Drive | Freeport, ME 04032

Letter to the Freeport Community

The Freeport Community Library Board of Trustees is pleased to present the Library's Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2019-2021.

This is the first Strategic Plan ever developed for the library. Finalization of the Plan has taken longer than anticipated because our planning began as both the Library and the Board entered a time of transition and personnel changes. Director Beth Edmonds retired and Arlene Arris became our new Director. The library staff entered a lengthy period of change brought about by retirements and other transitions, and several new volunteers have replaced members leaving the Board.

As it turned out, working on a Strategic Plan in time of change was a valuable experience. It was a perfect time to question, to learn, to share, and to evaluate. Our work involved assessing the library's unique strengths, opportunities, and needs. In the process, we revised the Library's mission statement, reviewed past public surveys, and reached out to stakeholders in the community as we formulated our goals.



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We discovered that our library, like so many public libraries across our country, meets a growing need for social connection in these media and technology-focused times. Our library is a welcoming place for individuals to meet and community groups to gather and connect. We have a very unique and lively relationship with the students of Freeport Middle School. Freeport's students are not only the next generation of library users but also the next generation of community builders.



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Our library serves its traditional role as a place to access information and materials in ways that combine personal contact with patrons, new technology and careful hands-on collection building. Through membership in Minerva, library patrons have quick access to materials in a variety of formats from a large number of libraries across the state. The library's unique Maine Collection and Sportsman's Collection serve a community need that cannot be easily replicated.

The Plan that follows builds on the strengths of our library as an anchor institution in our town, highlights needs to be addressed as we reach out to all community members, and looks to the future as we continue to grow with Freeport. As we work to weave our mission statement into the other threads of community life, we

need to remember that the return our library gives back to the community is tangible and relevant.

Thanks are due to the Town Council members who first encouraged us to take on this project, to the library staff that has both answered and asked questions, and to the community members who offered helpful comments and support.

Sincerely,
Freeport Community Library Board of Trustees

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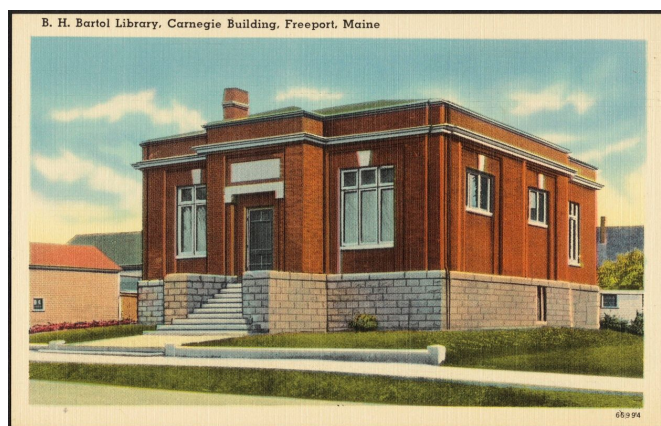
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A Brief History

By the early 1800s, Freeport residents wanted access to books and information so library associations were created. At the time, patrons paid a membership fee, could keep a book for four weeks, were charged a late fee of one cent a day and paid a \$2.00 fine for the serious offense of sharing a book with a nonmember.

By 1900, membership ebbed and the association disbanded which led to the indignity of needing a traveling library from Connecticut. Proud Freeporters formed a new library association that provided access to 600 books for a yearly membership fee of one dollar. At the same time, another group began fundraising to build a permanent library. Happily, this dovetailed with the Andrew Carnegie Foundation awarding grants to deserving towns throughout the country that met their requirements ("Carnegie Library"). Freeport was awarded \$6,500 to construct a library as long as it provided a building lot. They also had to invest the \$3,500 they had already raised. They used that income to support the library's needs. The Foundation required the town to provide \$500 a year from public funds to prove there was a local commitment. When the estate of B.H. Bartol, a successful mechanical engineer, offered \$1,000 to the building committee if the library was named after him, they agreed. On May 26, 1906, the B.H. Bartol library was ready to open (Thurston).



*B. H. Bartol Library, Carnegie Building, Freeport, Maine.
1930. Web. 20 Oct 2018.
<<https://ark.digitalcommonwealth.org/ark:/50959/5t34tb104>>*



For over 90 years Bartol Library was a vibrant and busy town library, but by 1994 it was clear that Freeport had outgrown the space and was experiencing problems with its location in the middle of a very commercial Main Street. As a result, on April 19, 1995 the first meeting of the Library Building Committee met to plan for a new library away from the center of town. Two types of planning began. First was an understanding of the community's needs and how the building could be designed as a modern

community library. To that end, Jay Lucker from MIT was hired and with Kay Haines, Bartol's head librarian, visits were made to other new libraries and surveys were circulated to Freeporters. Winton Scott from the Portland Design Team was chosen as the architect.

With gathered information as well as input from the library staff, he created the library's design. The next step was town approval of a bond for \$2,875,000 to construct the new library, purchase land for it, and restore and convert Bartol Library into a retail space. The bond passed on March 5, 1996 at a municipal election. The converted Bartol Library space is leased by Abercrombie & Fitch providing the town with income (Town of Freeport).

In the meantime, progress was made toward new construction with the purchase of a site behind the Baptist Church on land that abuts Freeport Middle School. As a result of this location, the library today is filled with middle school students after school. Construction began in October of 1995 and by the summer of 1997 the building was completed. The town named the new library the Freeport Community Library to signal its position as not just a lending library, but as a modern library committed to being a community center.

Population Demographics

Like most of Maine, the median age of Freeport residents is rising and the Town does not anticipate a change in this trend. The 2011 Comprehensive Plan for the town anticipates an increase in the over 65 population, stating that, "Freeport, because of its proximity to metropolitan services and attractions found in Portland or Boston, is a desirable place to retire. We should anticipate retirees 'from away' relocating in Freeport."

Population growth has been steady and is projected to remain at about 1.1% growth per year through the end of this decade. As a job and retail center with access to a variety of social, cultural, health, and financial services as well as rail and bus transportation options, Freeport is considered a service center community by the State. An estimated 3.5 million people visit town every year. The majority of those visits are in the summer.

Based on the most current available national, state, and local statistics, the town continues to show a positive trend in key demographics indicators such as: Population, Housing, Education, and Income.

Despite the fact that the age of Maine's population continues to rise as baby boomers age and retire, the so-called baby boomlet (those born in the 1980's and 90's) appear to be having a positive influence in communities like Freeport as they become first-time home buyers and renters and start families of their own. Both the under-5 year old and under-18 year old populations have increased since 2010, which is consistent with our own library observations and statistics over the same time period.

As libraries plan for the future, the following need to be considered:

- ❖ Changes in demographics will influence the way people interact and behave in public spaces including libraries.
- ❖ Trends in the way education is delivered will continue to affect the role and the services provided by public libraries.

- ❖ More and more people will use the library's technology resources.
- ❖ The general population will live longer and be more active.
- ❖ The value of interacting with others will continue, but the tools and approaches will continue to change as social media and other technologies continually evolve.

Population (2017 estimates)*

Population	8,456
Persons under 5 years	6.5%
Persons under 18 years	23%
Persons 65 years and over	16%
Foreign born persons	5.5%

Housing (2012-2016)*

Owner occupied housing	75.6%
Median value of owner occupied housing	\$277,200
Households	3,198
Persons per household	2.53

Education of persons age 25 +*

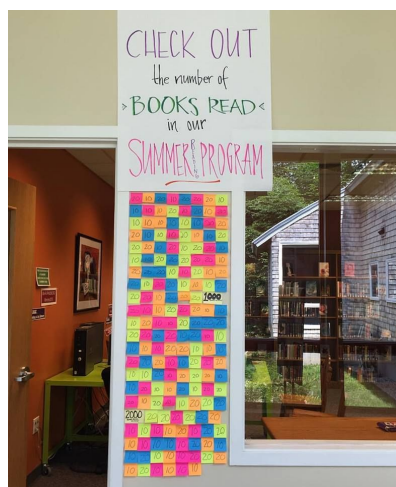
High school graduate or more	95.8%
Bachelor's degree or more	52.7%

Income (2012-2016 in 2016 dollars)**

Median household income	\$75,147
Per capita income (2012-2016)	\$41,732
Persons in poverty	4.9%

* From: U.S. Census Bureau "Quick Facts" 2017,
<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/PST045217>

** From "Quick Facts" 2016. Special thanks to Marti Hiat of Brett Davis R. Estate for providing additional resources.



Library Usage Statistics



The Freeport Community Library joined the Minerva network on December 16, 2014. Minerva is a shared library system that joins over 60 libraries in Maine. These libraries share their resources (e.g., books, movies, and music), allowing patrons to easily request material online that is not held at their local libraries. The requested interlibrary loan materials are delivered to the requestor's home library and then returned to the donor library once the requestor returns the item(s) to their home library.

An additional benefit to member libraries is continual technical support of software services, professional networking, and a shared knowledge base—all at a much lower cost than an individual rate.

The impact on the number of interlibrary loans requested by Freeport Community Library patrons was substantial.

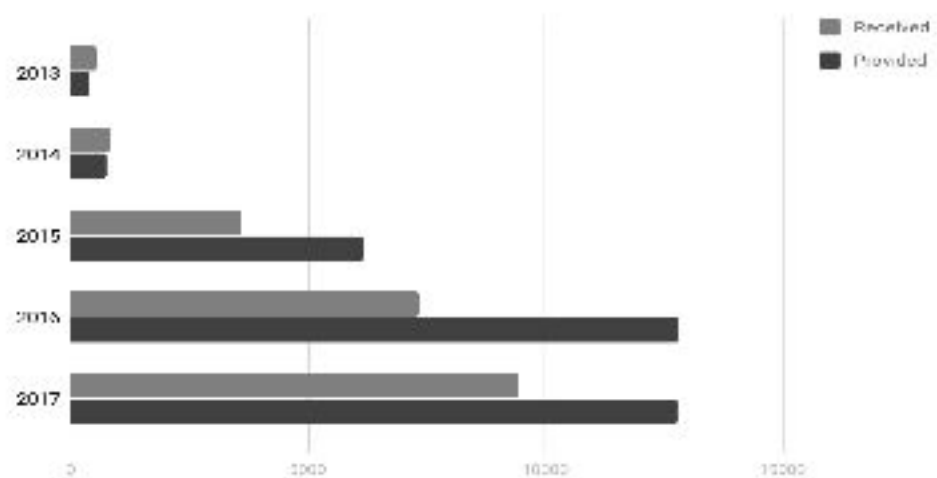


Figure 1. Interlibrary loan statistics at the Freeport Community Library. Retrieved from <https://www.maine.gov/msl/libs/data/annualreportstats.shtml>.

Although circulation of materials has been steadily declining, program attendance has remained strong. This trend is echoed in public libraries across the United States, according to a 2017 survey conducted on behalf of the Public Library Association (retrieved from

<http://publiclibrariesonline.org/2017/12/the-2017-public-library-data-service-report-characteristics-and-trends/>).

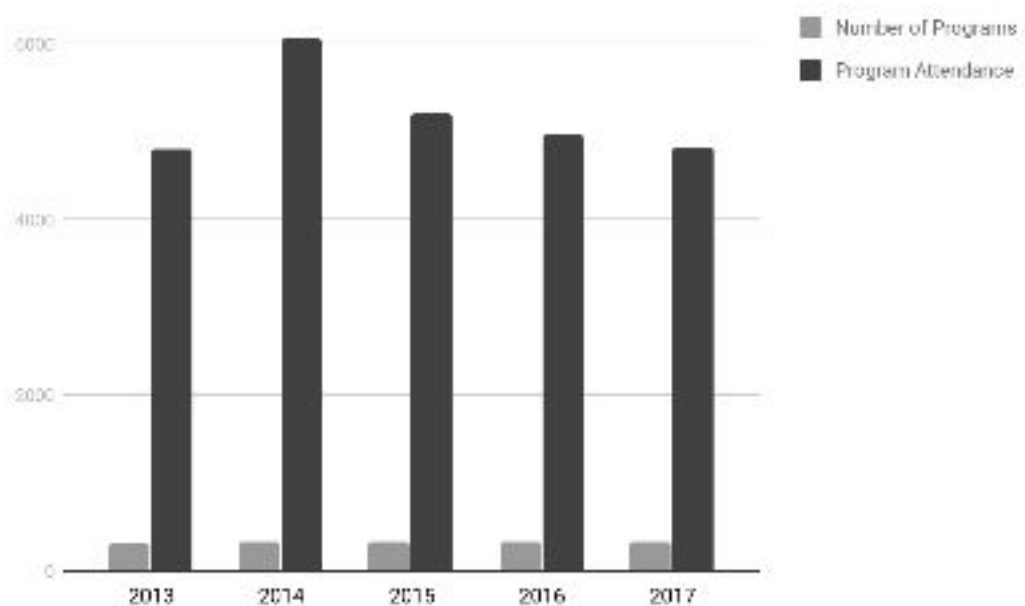


Figure 2. Programming and attendance at the Freeport Community Library. Retrieved from <https://www.maine.gov/msl/libs/data/annualreportstats.shtml>.

The number of young adult programs offered at the Library has increased, as well as the number of people using the children's and young adult rooms.

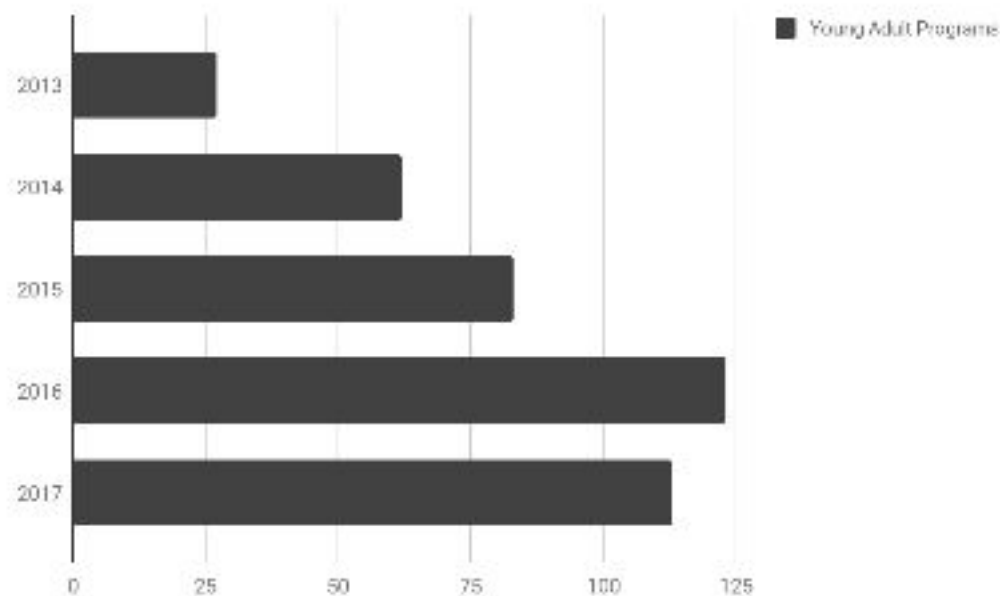


Figure 3. Young adult program statistics. Retrieved from <https://www.maine.gov/msl/libs/data/annualreportstats.shtml>.

There has been one library use survey of the general public. This survey was conducted November 4, 2014 (Election Day) by the Friends of the Freeport Community Library. Two-hundred and thirty-six surveys were returned. A selection of the results follows.

Do You use the Freeport Community Library?

Answer	# of Responses
Frequently	91
Sometimes	111
Never	34

If *Sometimes* or *Frequently*, please indicate what ways you use the Library (check all that apply)

Option	# of times checked	Option	# of times checked
Borrow books	156	Borrow music, movies, audio	104
Children's programs	39	Free movies on Thursdays	19
Read magazines	34	Quiet study	34
Computer usage	30	Copy machine	16
Author book talks	20	Museum passes	9
Wildlife park pass	4	Tutoring	2
Personal research	18	Business meeting	9
Do puzzles	5	Buy used books	30
Travel series talks	12	Friends Recommends	2
Book group	4	Other adult education	3
Art shows	32	After school programs	6
Toddler story time	18	Summer reading program	13

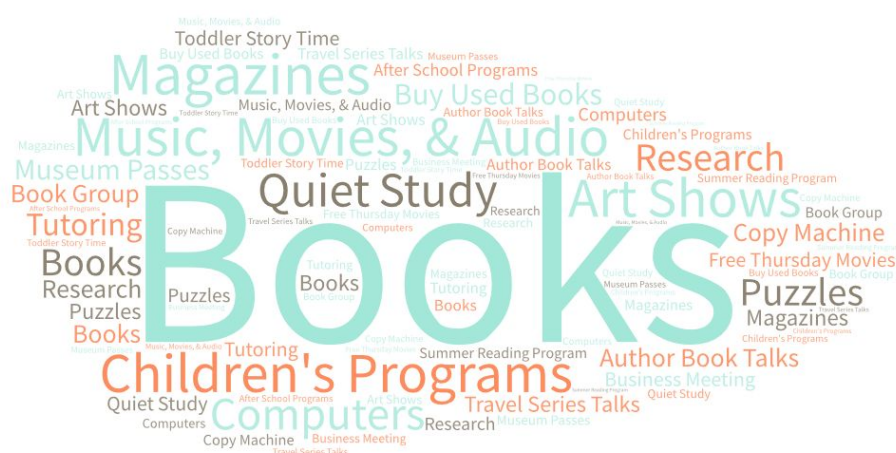


Figure 4. How respondents stated they used the library. Words used more frequently are displayed in a larger font.

National Trends

The American Library Association and its affiliate, the Public Library Association, annually document trends in public library services. The following information comes from these Associations' websites and related articles in American Libraries magazine and Library Journal ("Trends"). The trends listed below especially reflect Freeport Community Library's mission statement and goals.

Creative Aging

The population of Freeport, like the rest of Maine and our nation, now has a larger percentage of people 65 and older than ever before. Members of this older demographic are both working longer and spending more time in retirement. Health issues that affect access to services and resources are increasing. The implications of an aging population affect a library's programming (e.g. more enrichment activities and technology training), its collection (e.g. more leisure reading and large print materials), and its services (e.g. book delivery). Adequate staffing and trained volunteers are needed to meet these needs.

Welcoming Teens

Teens are our future adult library patrons. A good teen service program strengthens relationships with schools and with parents in the community. Because teens focus more on what a library does than what a library has, they are drawn in with programs, space, and services. Welcoming staff, adequate spaces and flexible programming create a place teens see as a vital resource. Here in Freeport, focusing on this trend would take advantage of the physical proximity of Freeport Middle School and an already successful relationship with the students.

Maker Movement

Makerspaces offer experiential learning opportunities in science, technology, and collaborative problem solving for patrons of all ages. For young children and students maker opportunities can be as simple as kits, toys or games that develop building or programming skills. For adults, hands-on skills may be traditional or involve technology

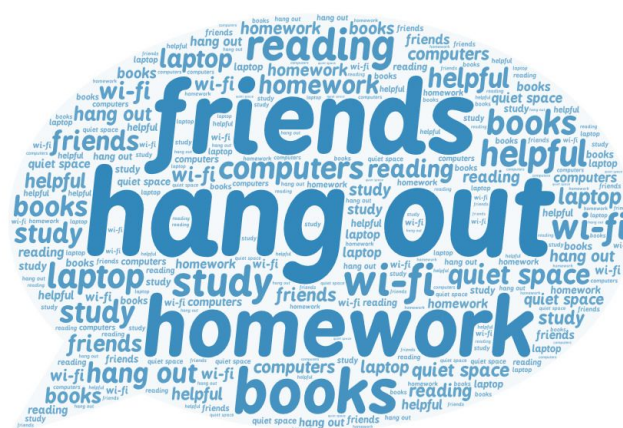


Figure 5. Comments written by Freeport Middle School students. Collected by Freeport Community Library Young Adult Librarian the week of 10/1/18.

training. Maker opportunities may require additional space, technology (e.g., 3-D printers), and staff or volunteers.

Connected Communities

Public libraries are usually seen as anchor institutions in towns and cities, but they are also part of the large ecosystem of services that create a vital community. Public libraries across the country are partnering with local social services, other community organizations, schools, and local businesses to solve problems, address health and financial literacy, engage and involve citizens, and create more welcoming and inclusive communities. Adequate staffing, trained and involved volunteers, and more flexible space and schedule are necessary for this outreach.

Planning Process

This is the Freeport Community Library's first strategic plan. Instigated in part by a recommendation from the Freeport Town Council, the Board of Trustees has spent the better part of two years working through the strategic planning process. This included revising the library's mission statement, considering a wide variety of strategic options, and streamlining those options into a more concise and actionable list of strategic goals and objectives.

The community and staff supported this endeavor by attending workshops to help analyze the current strengths and potential for the library, as well as commenting on the proposed goals drafted by the Board of Trustees. The resulting strategic goals were created to support the library's place within the community over the next three years.

To date, the strategic goals and objectives developed during this process has resonated with community members. While there was input received that went beyond the proposed goals and objectives, for the most part there has been agreement that the strategic goals and objectives support the current direction of the library.

Much of the plan solidifies what the library staff does every day: creating a warm, welcoming, resource-rich environment for all. The biggest challenge moving forward will be to become a more efficient organization so that the current staff have the ability to better focus on the strategic goals and objectives while maintaining the high level of customer service the Freeport Community Library is known for.

Mission Statement

Our library is a safe, welcoming, community space connecting people to information, ideas, and each other to promote curiosity, discovery, and informed citizenship.

Strategic Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: Develop understanding of expansion options for earmarked capital funding to take advantage of unique connection to Freeport Middle School

Objective A: Understand desired outcomes (FY19)

- ❖ The Library Director in consultation with staff and Trustees as appropriate, will develop an outline of questions to ask town personnel with relevant expertise
- ❖ Using that outline, the Library will consult with others in town (middle school, teen center, Trustees with relevant experience, etc.) to get ideas for what might work to give young middle school students space and resources
- ❖ The Library will collect data on current usage of the space utilized by the students

Objective B: Understand physical/financial constraints (FY19-20)

- ❖ The Library director and others as appropriate will consult with the architect who designed library to learn about possible solutions (load bearing walls, rough costs, etc.)
- ❖ If more money is needed, develop a plan to work with town, Friends, donors to raise
- ❖ Find out from town how to go about a bidding process, RFPs, etc.

Objective C: Make recommendation about potential expansion to town manager/council (FY19)

Goal 2: Update and revise website

Objective A: Determine what users and staff want/need from the website (FY19)

- ❖ Find out from staff what questions people have about using the web site and/or look at detailed usage stats if available
- ❖ Conduct a small staff and trustee survey of functions currently on web site home page, rate most needed/used; consider how the site should look and function from mobile devices
- ❖ Have Trustees and others as appropriate recommend features that we may not yet have (FAQ, Local links, staff profiles, information for specific audiences, etc.) for consideration
- ❖ Look for ways to enhance the user experience.

Objective B. Determine what options are available (FY19-20)

- ❖ Find out how much time/expertise staff members currently have to update on ongoing basis
- ❖ Find out if/how the Library might spend money on a new one-time site with flexibility to update

- ❖ Check that the town supports this effort (time and money; one-time and/or ongoing; consider the need for periodic updates)
- ❖ Recognizing the need for independent control of the website by the library, consider vendors that provide the town or community websites or others as appropriate
- ❖ Find out from the town what an RFP would look like; set a budget if necessary

Objective C: Develop new website (FY19-20)

- ❖ Work with library director on proposal to town manager/council
- ❖ Library staff will work with web developer to create new web site
- ❖ Library staff will test and refine web site before going live

Goal 3: Given staffing and resources, prioritize and implement new ways to connect people in the community to information, ideas, and each other

Objective A: Consider new or complementary collections, programs, services and communications (FY19-20)

- ❖ Look at the entry from new patron point of view and consider pathfinders, signage, library map or directory to be displayed at entrance
- ❖ Feature available genealogy resources, including Ancestry and local history materials (partner with Historical Society)
- ❖ Consider new options for Programming by utilizing a program evaluation form to solicit feedback and new ideas from the community
- ❖ Publicize library processes and policies that keep records secure
- ❖ Establish a community committee to explore other service offerings that would be unique or necessary to a library of Freeport's size such as book delivery
- ❖ Establish process to regularly review library policies
- ❖ Support professional development opportunities for library staff and Board of Trustees
- ❖ Consider programs or web tutorials showing how to make lists in Goodreads, LibraryThing, Minerva, etc.
- ❖ Feature networking programs such as LinkedIn as well as resume skills by partnering with organizations such as New Ventures Maine

Objective B: Explore possibilities to engage additional volunteer support for staff (FY19-20)

- ❖ Talk with Elizabeth Adams (Friends of the FCL Chair) and the Library Volunteer Coordinator to gather input on feasibility, utilizing their experience with volunteers
- ❖ Have staff create checklists or procedures for volunteers who may wish to coordinate a special display (can also serve to cross-train staff)
- ❖ Create a process to vet and approve ideas/timelines, with priority for local nonprofits
- ❖ Aim to have one volunteer-coordinated display within a year, if possible, with emphasis on Freeport-specific information (or other mission-statement priorities)

Objective C: Explore ways the library can deepen its connection to the community
(FY19-21)

- ❖ Consider asking LL Bean to feature some Freeport history books in their store and/or put together a display of the hunting and fishing collection
- ❖ Consider a similar display in the Town Hall alcove
- ❖ Increase library presence in community dialogue
- ❖ Work with library director on opportunity areas to participate in community meetings/events
- ❖ Continue engagement with RSU5 school libraries
- ❖ Review current library communications with the community
- ❖ Work with library director to develop a formal communications plan of record

Conclusion

Creation of this strategic plan is the culmination of many hours of hard work by the Board of Trustees and the Freeport Community Library Director and staff, and take great pride in the results. The Board of Trustees will work with the Director and staff to track the progress against the strategic goals and objectives in this plan over the next three years.



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