

Merrill Memorial Library

Strategic Plan 2023 – 2027

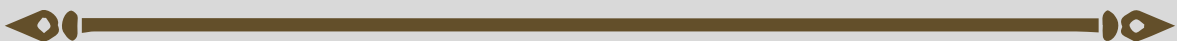


Table of Contents

Letter from the President of the Board	page 3
History of Merrill Memorial Library	page 4
Background	page 5
Vision & Mission	page 6
Goal 1	page 7
Goal 2	page 8
Goal 3	page 9
Goal 4	page 10
Director's Summary	page 11
Staff	page 12
Trustees	page 13

215 Main St Yarmouth, ME 04096

207-846-4763 yarmouthlibrary.org



A Letter from The President of the Trustees

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

The Trustees present to you the Merrill Memorial Library 2023-2027 Strategic Plan.

These past few years have brought unprecedented challenges and the Library Director and Staff have risen masterfully to continue to provide the high quality service our community has grown to expect for more than 100 years. We owe a debt of gratitude to our librarians for their willingness to brave pandemic hazards so that we could continue to use our Library. The community was able to enjoy curbside pickup, Facebook shelf browsing, video trivia contests, story times, outdoor science experiments, and much more.

The Trustees' primary mission is to maintain our historic building. In recent years, the board has addressed issues with drainage, flooding, and most recently, repairing the elevator. This Strategic Plan includes a goal for maintaining the building going forward. We have a strong sense of responsibility to the Library and a clear vision of how to achieve that goal.

The Trustees' endowment remains fiscally healthy with an investment strategy that will keep it strong for years to come. Funds have been contributed to pay for major repair expenses, like the elevator, without significant risk to our bottom line, and we continue to contribute funds to enhance the programming offered at the Library.

As I finish my ninth and final year as a Trustee, I extend great thanks to those who have served along with me, especially Michael Shay who also joined the Board in 2014 and has been our Treasurer since then. I also want to express special thanks to Tim Kittredge who led our Strategic Plan committee and Nat Bessey who not only served on that committee, but also led the Trustee recruiting efforts this year and will take over as Board President in November.

I urge the community to take advantage of what the Library has to offer and continue to show your support for the outstanding work of our librarians!

Sincerely,

Joan Dollarhite, President

Library Trustees:

Joan Dollarhite, President; Tim Kittredge, Vice President; Michael Shay, Treasurer; Stephanie Small, Secretary; Nat Bessey; Emily Birchby; David Kitchen; Betsey Reinsborough; Andrew Tonks

October 2023

History of Merrill Memorial Library

Joseph Edward Merrill, born in Yarmouth in 1832, attended North Yarmouth Academy and Bowdoin College. In the 1850's, he entered the book business in Boston. It was his long, cherished purpose to provide Yarmouth with a public library worthy of the town and its history. Following the turn of the century, plans were made for a new town library to be built in Brick-Yard Hollow on land donated to the town by S.D. Warren and John Coombs.

The building was dedicated in 1905 as a memorial to Joseph Merrill's parents. Many books from the earlier Hillside Library were included in the original Merrill Memorial Library collection, along with Joseph Merrill's personal collection. The architect for the building was A.W. Longfellow, nephew of the poet, and senior architect for the Boston and Philadelphia firms that designed some of the larger Carnegie library projects.

In 1988, a wing was added to the rear of the original building. During the 1990's, a landscape plan for the area surrounding the new entrance was created. An interior renovation and addition of a new covered entryway was completed in 2014, funded in equal parts by private donations and a local bond.

Supported by the Town of Yarmouth and the Joseph E. Merrill Fund, the Library is a free community resource. The management of the building and grounds remains in the hands of the citizen Board of Trustees, while the operational costs are provided by the municipality.




MERRILL MEMORIAL LIBRARY

Background

In the Fall of 2022, Merrill Memorial Library Trustees and Staff began the process of developing a new Strategic Plan for the Library. We engaged the services of a consultant to help in the organization of information that was gathered through public surveys and focused meetings with community members and staff. Through that process we have developed four goals that will guide us over the coming years.



VISION



Merrill Memorial Library will continue to serve Yarmouth, welcoming all in the pursuit of knowledge, understanding, inspiration and connection. We will be a responsible steward of our historic home and a forward thinking organization, responsive to the current needs of our community and any opportunities or challenges on the horizon.

MISSION

To provide everyone in our community a welcoming atmosphere of educational, cultural and recreational resources for lifelong learning, personal growth and enjoyment.

GOAL 1

Heighten awareness of the library's diverse offerings across the community, and increase outreach, partnerships and programs

- Add a dynamic calendar to our website.
- Add a feedback feature to the website.
- Complement programs and services being offered by the schools.
- Coordinate outreach programs with other Town departments/community organizations.
- Investigate ways to reach patrons who have difficulty coming to the library.

Target Group: Yarmouth residents, homebound, new community members, local organizations

Measures: Circulation statistics, community feedback, website hits.

GOAL 2

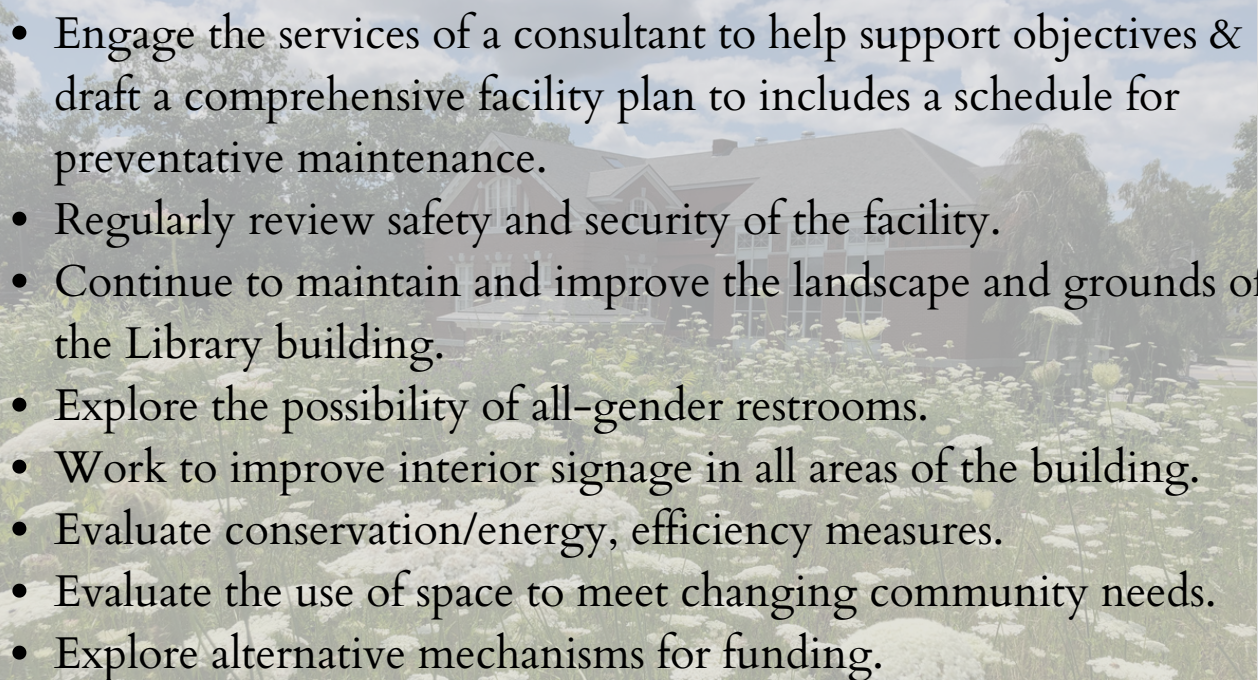
Develop practices to attract, retain and engage employees

- Identify and support professional development and networking opportunities for Library staff.
- Ensure that staff work environment is comfortable and well configured.
- Gather feedback, through surveys circulated every 3 years, or based on other available data, regarding salary and benefits offered by peer libraries.
- Identify opportunities for Trustees and members of the public to show appreciation for staff.
- Present to the Town Council every year describing library accomplishments and challenges.

Target Group: New employees, current staff
Measures: Staff feedback, yearly reviews

GOAL 3

Maintain the Library's historic property to ensure safety, accessibility and sustainability and create a plan for the preservation of the building

- 
- Engage the services of a consultant to help support objectives & draft a comprehensive facility plan to includes a schedule for preventative maintenance.
 - Regularly review safety and security of the facility.
 - Continue to maintain and improve the landscape and grounds of the Library building.
 - Explore the possibility of all-gender restrooms.
 - Work to improve interior signage in all areas of the building.
 - Evaluate conservation/energy, efficiency measures.
 - Evaluate the use of space to meet changing community needs.
 - Explore alternative mechanisms for funding.

Target Group: Trustees, staff, community
Measures: Community feedback

GOAL 4

Provide a rich array of resources reflecting the diverse needs, perspectives and interests of the community

- Audit the collection to ensure diversity of content, perspectives/voices and formats.
- Audit program offerings to ensure relevance to the community needs.
- Measure the impact on our interactions on the community.
- Develop programming and book displays based on sustainability practices.
- Offer a diversity of technology resources based on patrons' uses and needs.

Target Group: Community, staff
Measures: Community feedback

Director's Summary

Thank you for reading our Strategic Plan. It has been my pleasure to be a part of the process to bring this plan to fruition. Although I hear regularly from the community regarding all aspects of Library operations and programming, this exercise has galvanized community input into the areas where we can focus our resources going forward.

The four goals identified in the plan represent areas where we can make deliberate strides for the organization. And while each goal is specific, there is leeway here for the Library Staff and Trustees to put a variety of resources toward them, and remain nimble over the course of the next five years while doing so.

Our daily operations are primarily (95%) funded with municipal dollars and I will continue to advocate for a budget that ensures Merrill Memorial Library delivers what the Yarmouth community expects from us. We receive additional funding from the Library Trustees' Endowment, and these funds are used to support programs for all ages.

I will continue to attract and retain quality, professional staff that value customer service above all else. The Librarians are not only the face of the organization, but also the heart and soul. It is imperative that they are high performing and empathetic employees.

We will provide ongoing scrutiny to our print collections, our online offerings and our programming to ensure that we are not simply providing things that are popular for the majority. We will look to provide resources that are accurate, that reflect the community at large and are accessible to all. We will continue to be responsive to issues of disability or language barriers and minority cultural grounding.

With the support of the Library Trustees, we will continue to care for the lovely facility and grounds that we are fortunate to occupy.

We will continue to reach out to the community every way possible, so that citizens are aware of our services and strive to make those services easily available to all

Respectfully,

Heidi Grimm
Library Director
October 2023



STAFF

Heidi Grimm, Director

Judy Clark, Assistant Director & Circulation Manager

Ivy Hope Burns, Youth & Teen Services

Michael Carnes, Technology & Media

Andi Jackson-Darling, Systems/Technical Services

Courtney Kleftis, Adult Services

Paiten Price, Children's Services

Ben Phinney, Circulation & Publicity



TRUSTEES

Joan Dollarhite- President

Michael Shay- Treasurer

Nat Bessey

Emily Birchby

David Kitchen

Tim Kittredge

Betsey Reinsborough

Tom Reinsborough- Sexton

Stephanie Small

Andrew Tonks

David Craig, Town Council Liaison





MERRILL MEMORIAL LIBRARY