



The Deborah Rawson Memorial Library

Long Range Plan

Extension

FY 17/18 to FY 19/20

**Adopted by the library Board of Trustee
6/15/2017**

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The Planning Process

On December 13, 2016 the staff and board members of the Deborah Rawson Memorial Library met with Jacqueline Shiner, a strategic planning consultant. After some brainstorming it was decided that until the board knows the fate of the Underhill ID School next to us, the best course of action was to extend our previous (2011-2016) long range plan. When some of the schools in Chittenden East School District unified there was a piece in the unification document that stated:

In the event that, and at such subsequent time as, the Union District determines that any of the real property, including land and building, conveyed to it by the Underhill Incorporated School District, is or are unnecessary to the continued operation of the Union District and its educational programs, the Union District shall sell the real property to the Deborah Rawson Memorial Library for the sum of One Dollar. The conveyance of any of the above school properties shall be conditioned upon the Library owning and utilizing the real property for community and public purposes for a minimum of five years. In the event the Library elects to sell the real property prior to five years of ownership, the Library shall compensate the Union District for all capital improvements and renovations completed after the formation of the Union District and before the sale to the Library. In the event the Library elects not to acquire ownership of such real property, the Union District shall, pursuant to Vermont statutes, sell the property upon such terms and conditions as established by the Union District Board of School Directors.

The unification was approved by voters in 2015. A provision stated that no school closings may take place for the following four years. Because of this possible offer of a different building for the library to occupy it makes future long range / strategic planning difficult.

Director Holly Hall and Board member Connie Gallagher agreed to update the 2011-2016 Long Range Plan to extend it to fiscal year 19/20 focusing on the goals and activities.

Deborah Rawson Memorial Library History

Throughout the history of Jericho and Underhill, libraries have been seen as an important community need, and volunteers and donors have played and continue to play a crucial and supportive role in meeting that need. Citizens of Jericho and Underhill have organized libraries almost from when the towns were first settled over three centuries ago. These libraries were housed in various places, and were sometimes just a few bookshelves in a private home. In the 1990's, there were three libraries serving the two towns: the Jericho Town Library, housed in the former Jericho Academy in Jericho Center for the past hundred years; the Delaporte Library, once located in a building purchased by Helen DeLaPorte in 1917 that is now the Underhill Center post office, but moved in 1964 to the town hall when the building was leased to the postal service; and the Waters Library in the Flats, started in 1924 by the Mansfield Woman's Club which, starting in 1933, was housed in a new building that was dedicated to Augustus Waters, a general store clerk who donated \$2,000 for its construction. The Waters Library was the only one that received financial support from both towns.

By the late 1980's, an expanded population led to the consensus that the existing library services for Jericho and Underhill were inadequate. Space for library collections, services, and the public was limited at all three libraries, none had room to expand, and none were handicapped accessible or easily made. The Waters Library trustees began looking at the possibility of building a new library, and began to raise money. By 1994, with what they had raised and with the impetus of Dr. Burnett Rawson's generous offer of a donation in memory of his daughter, the select boards of the two towns were encouraged to support this effort. The Waters Library trustees then decided on a plan for a new building to be built in Jericho East, near the border of the two towns. However, they hit a road block when it was learned that joint bonding by the two towns to support such a project was not legal. The idea of forming a joint municipal district that would have such bonding authority was proposed. The towns appointed a committee to study the idea, and the committee soon recommended that the joint municipal district be put to a vote. On January 24, 1995 a large majority of Jericho and Underhill voters approved the creation of the Jericho Underhill Community Library District. The name was later changed to the Jericho Underhill Library District (JULD). JULD is Vermont's first and only joint municipal district formed to provide library services to its member towns.

The new JULD board first met on April 6, 1995, and soon decided that the previous building and site decision by the Waters trustees should be re-opened for additional community input. The community response was great. The Waters trustees soon transferred to the JULD the \$16,000 of donations they had received earlier, and the JULD board built on this beginning by conducting an impressive fundraising effort. The substantial donation promised by Dr. and Mrs. Burnett Rawson in memory of their daughter, Deborah, was now made available. From the Rawsons' very personal donation the new library became the Deborah Rawson Memorial Library (DRML). Another significant donation was made by the Trask family, for whom the children's library section in the DRML is dedicated. Total donations received through the board's efforts, including material and labor for building the DRML, along with the proceeds from the sale of the Waters Library, accounted for almost two thirds the cost of the DRML. Only the cost of the \$200,000 construction bond, approved handily by the voters on January 22, 1997, was paid by tax receipts. Most of the remaining cash donations came from Jericho and Underhill residents.

Besides fundraising, the JULD board also had to develop plans for the new building and decide on a location for it. The cooperation of the Waters trustees throughout is shown by the fact that the Waters library merged into the JULD on July 1, 1997, allowing the JULD board to find a buyer for the Waters Library and close the sale within a month of the January 24, 1998 opening of the DRML. The Delaporte Library also merged with the new library district shortly after the Deborah Rawson Memorial Library was dedicated on January 24, 1998, and transferred their assets to the JULD with the stipulation that all transferred funds should be used as an endowment, the income on which was to continue their tradition of providing holiday programs for community children. The Jericho Town Library, with whom the DRML library has a collaborative working relationship, remains open in Jericho Center. The JULD board chose a Montpelier architect to develop plans for the new building, given the specifications the

board had developed after much community input and a budget that was based on an aggressive fundraising goal.

From the New Building to Now

The 5,000 square foot DRML was the result, and it has been well received by the public. The central, bright, airy “great room” provides separate areas for quiet reading activity or a program gathering space. The front of the building houses the adult collection. The library’s six public computers are in a small area in between. There is a separate children’s library room with a corner nook for story hours and other youth programming. A very small office is shared by the library director, several staff members, and volunteers. A restroom, a separate program/meeting room, a small storage room, a boiler room, and a vestibule complete the interior space. The space is being utilized to its utmost capacity, and in the last year, DRML had to rent storage space. Despite the great job done by the early JULD board to get a lot of value for the available construction funds, we are now faced with space and operational issues that will need to be addressed. Things like the need for additional electrical outlets for people with laptop computers were not foreseen at the time the building was planned.

Since the Deborah Rawson Memorial Library opened twelve years ago, it has become an active and welcoming place. The library sits on land close to two public schools: a middle school and an elementary school. This location serves as a bridge for public education and public library use.

In its opening year DRML was open 34 hours a week, and paid staff worked 78 hours a week. In 2008-09, this had increased to 39 open hours and 133 hours worked by staff a week. Sunday afternoon hours, started the first year, are popular and see high use in fall, winter and spring. Library income from taxes started at \$89,941 in 1997-98, and was \$213,257 in 2008-09. Public donations and volunteer time continue to demonstrate the value residents place in the library. The collection has increased from 13,090 books, 604 AV materials (Audiotapes & Videotapes) and 52 magazine subscriptions to 21,683 books, 3,589 AV materials (now including DVDs as well) and 77 magazine subscriptions, plus subscription access to a number of electronic databases and information resources. Starting with five computers (one for the public catalog, one Internet, two for book circulation and one in the office), DRML has since added a server, a second public catalog, eight more Internet computers for public use (including three laptops), three more office computers, and a children’s computer used for both the catalog and games. Lastly the circulation of materials has increased from 29,863 in the library’s first year to 60,219 in 2008-09.

Programs and events held at the library are diverse and plentiful. Past programs included a public forum on Civil Unions, Tai Chi classes, meetings with legislators and other public officials, a foot care clinic, quilting programs, family game nights, regular adult and young adult reading groups as well as art, music, storytelling and theatre programs. Community use of the program/meeting room, which is also available when the library is closed, offers many possibilities for gatherings and meetings.

In the fall of 2012 the board of trustee voted to move forward with an expansion plan. Meetings were held, architects interviewed and Black River Design was chosen to develop a new expansion for the library. Monthly meetings became weekly meetings as the board and the staff fine-tuned a draft design. Fundraising events were held to cover the cost of the preliminary plans. Community input was gathered and in April of 2013 a bond vote was held to receive approval from the taxpayers of Jericho and Underhill. The bond did not pass and the board decided that rather than try again right away they would

wait and reflect on the previous attempt. The library does have the plan if in the future another library expansion is sought.

Mission Statement: The Deborah Rawson Memorial Library provides community access to information, ideas and enriching experiences.

Vision Statement: Growing together as a community: a place to learn, to share, to create.

Service Responses, Goals and Activities

Building Community– To foster a sense of community, the library will be a place attracting users of all ages, both readers and nonreaders, with varied interests. More patrons will gather in a friendly atmosphere for formal and informal meetings, and programming in a comfortable space that encourages dialogue and connections.

Goal 1: The library will continue its interaction with business and community organizations to offer programs and services to residents of Jericho and Underhill.

Activity: Continue to implement strong collaboration with local schools.

Activity: Promote lectures and other life-long learning opportunities with community organizations that address critical issues in the community, state, region, or world.

Goal 2: More community members will use the library.

Activity: In FY 2017-18 conduct a survey to identify change in hours of operation which will most benefit users. In FY 2018-19 implement these changes.

Activity: Sponsor at least three educational book discussions or speaker programs per year.

Activity: Continue the annual Deborah Rawson Lecture on the subject of the environment.

Measure: The number of persons attending programs will increase by 2% per year, with baseline being FY 2016-17.

Goal 3: Outreach in the form of publicity and out-of-library activities will continue to happen in the community. This will occur in person, print or with improved use of digital communication.

Activity: Continue library publicity via the *Mountain Gazette*, school newsletters, flyers and web pages, online postings on frontporchforum.com, as well as DRML's email list and Facebook page.

Activity: Make a paper copy of library activities available to senior groups each month.

Activity: The director will keep abreast of social networking activities for the library as they evolve and will implement appropriate services.

Goal 4: Plan to increase staff hours so as to better meet the library mission.

Activity: Increase the budget to support more staff hours once an hours survey is completed in FY 17-18.

Collections– Patrons will have a diverse inventory of current materials available in a variety of formats. This collection will reflect patrons' current and ever-changing reading, listening, viewing and electronic needs.

Goal 1: Patrons of all ages will find books, magazines, digital media and online materials in the collection.

Activity: Continue to implement thoughtful collection development based on information acquired through analysis of current collections.

Activity: By FY 2018-19 complete a collection survey for patrons to indicate interest in various areas of the collection.

Activity: DRML staff will continue to create prominent displays with items of current or seasonal interest.

Activity: The director will remain current with alternative methods of collection development.

Measure: Circulation will increase at least by 5% from FY2016-17 through FY 2018-19.

Goal 2: Library users will have available knowledgeable staff and online and print resources to answer questions on a wide array of topics and research interests. Users will also have access to information on critical issues that affect their lives.

Activity: Continue to provide training opportunities to staff in house or through workshops to enhance knowledge of both the print and electronic collections.

Measure: 75% of staff will attend at least one professional development activity each year.

Goal 3: Library patrons will be aware of online library materials and how to access them.

Activity: Continue to participate in The Vermont Online Library databases, Mango, Listen Up Vermont, Wilson Web, Heritage Quest and remain current regarding other databases of interest to users as they become available.

Activity: Increase awareness of DRML's electronic resources through print media such as newspaper article in the *Mountain Gazette*, Town Reports, online postings on frontporchforum.com, and/or DRML's email list.

Activity: Offer an annual workshop on DRML's electronic databases.

Measure: Increase the use of databases and digital downloads between FY 2016-17 and FY 2019-20, as shown in statistical reports.

Activity: Ongoing monitoring of the DRML website to facilitate ease of use.

Space – The DRML Library Board will stay informed as to the possibility of purchasing the Underhill ID School.

Activity: A board member will be a contact person with the Mt. Mansfield Unified School District. The board member will monitor the MMUSD board meetings to stay informed of any decision the MMUSD makes regarding the Underhill ID School.