

Goffstown Public Library

Strategic Plan, 2022 - 2025



Celebrating community, literacy, and lifelong learning

Rationale / Process

Though the Library Board of Trustees have engaged in informal goal-setting and strategic planning activities over the past several years, the lack of a written strategic plan was a concern, particularly in light of a potential expansion project. In July 2021, the Board appointed an ad-hoc strategic planning committee. The committee's charge was to create a draft plan to present to the board. The ad-hoc committee began meeting in August 2021 to plan and gather data. Anticipated public listening sessions were discussed but due to ongoing COVID concerns, not scheduled. Feedback from a 2018 community survey was considered.

In November 2021, members of the Board participated in a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis. A second SWOT analysis was conducted with the library staff in January 2022. From these, five broad goals were determined from the results and presented to the Board for approval. After consulting the 2017 community survey, the strategic planning committee refined the broad goals to be more focused and measurable.

Both the Library Board of Trustees and the library staff have a role to play in working towards these goals. An annual assessment of progress will be conducted and updates provided on the library website.

Community Profile

Goffstown is situated on 37.5 square miles of land in Hillsborough County. Bisected by the Piscataquog River, the lushly forested area was originally home to the Pennacook people before being settled by English colonists. It has grown to be the 14th largest town in New Hampshire, with a population of 18,577 (2010-2020 Census Totals for Cities and Towns)

The town takes its name from Colonel John Goffe, a colonial-era settler, soldier, and civic leader. Though the town originated as a farming community, its natural resources and proximity to the river spurred the development of industry. Goffstown remains home to a wide array of businesses and civic organizations. The town boasts outdoor attractions such as Mount Uncanoonuc, Glen Lake, Namaske Lake, and the Piscataquog River. Popular recreational sites for residents include Barnard Park, Roy Park, and the Goffstown Rail Trail.

There are three distinct sections of Goffstown: Grasmere, named after the home of English poets William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, is the original town center. The Village, the current town center, is home to the library and town offices, and the site of annual events like Old Home Day, the Pumpkin Regatta, and Friday Night Under the Lights. Pinardville, adjacent to West Manchester and named after Edmond Pinard, a French-Canadian grocer who developed the area, is home to St. Anselm College, a private, Benedictine liberal arts institution and 3rd oldest Catholic college in New England.

About the Goffstown Public Library

Goffstown Public Library Mission Statement

The Goffstown Public Library will serve as a primary resource for community information needs. It will provide a comfortable place for citizens to access quality materials and programs, enhance cultural awareness and to explore issues of local, national and global interest.

Goffstown Public Library Vision Statement

The Goffstown Public Library is a cornerstone of the community, positively transforming lives by providing an inclusive, welcoming space where literacy, cultural enrichment, and lifelong learning are celebrated.

Goffstown Public Library History

The first public library in Goffstown, the Rogers Free Public Library, dates back to 1888. The 150-book collection, donated by Lucy Rogers, was housed in the old town hall (no longer standing) until 1907, when construction began on land donated by Frank Parker. Fitchburg (MA) architect Henry Francis designed the classical revival style building. The building, site of the existing library, was completed and dedicated in 1909. It was briefly known as the Goffstown Memorial Library; the north room still contains two large marble tablets bearing the names of Goffstown men who served in past wars. In 1910, the name was changed officially to the Goffstown Public Library. In 1995 the building was added to the National Register of Historic Places.

At the time of construction, the population of Goffstown was roughly 2,500 people. The Library now serves a community of 18,577 people (as of 2020 census). Residents or people who attend school or work in Goffstown are eligible for a free library card; visitors who want on-site reading, computer / wi-fi access, or staff assistance are welcomed. As the town has grown, the Library has increased hours and services to keep pace with residents' needs. The Library offers programming and services aimed at a variety of ages. Cardholders can access workshops, activities, reading programs, and museum passes as well as borrow print and digital materials. The Library maintains subscriptions to genealogy, educational, and recreational sites, offers wi-fi and computer access. Through the GMILCS consortium, cardholders can access resources from libraries in Amherst, Bedford, Derry, Goffstown, Hudson, Hooksett, Manchester, Merrimack, Milford, Salem, Windham, and New England College.

The Library also provides information and connections to community events such as Candidates' Night, Toys for Tots, and Grow a Row. The Library was recognized in 2019 by the NHLTA (NH Library Trustees Association) as their library of the year. To help support its expanding programming and services, the Library partners with community and civic organizations such as the Friends of the Goffstown Public Library, St. Anselm College, the Goffstown Parks and Recreation Department, the Goffstown Police Department and Department of Public Works, the Goffstown Lions Club, the Main Street Program, the Goffstown Network Food Pantry, and the Goffstown Historical Society.

Only one thing has not kept pace with the growth of the town or the services offered by the Library: the building's physical footprint. The Library collection was originally contained on one floor. As the collection, staff, and services have expanded, storage space was transformed to accommodate the need. The unfinished basement level was renovated to house the children's collection and provide space for children's programming. An extension was added in 1997 to make room for an elevator, emergency stairwell, and circulation desk. Attic space was appropriated for reading and computer space, a meeting room, and staff work space. These moves have not adequately addressed the need for expanded space. There is still only one public restroom, and all staff continue work in public areas of the building.

In 2009, land adjacent to the Library was purchased; The Library Board of Trustees has proposed a renovation / expansion of the building to provide much needed spaces for teens and adults, more area for programming, a community meeting room with a 100-person capacity, and dedicated safe space for children's programming. The Trustees worked closely with the architects to ensure the design met current needs and could handle future need; the proposed addition would add space and modern amenities while honoring the aesthetics of the historic original building.

Goffstown Public Library Staff and Trustees

Staff

Library Director: Dianne Hathaway

Youth Services:

- Patti Penick, Head of Youth Services
- Stacey Desrosiers, Teen Services Librarian
- Corey Sisson, Library Assistant

Adult Services:

- Elizabeth Weilbacher, Head of Adult Services and Outreach
- Liz Erickson, Adult Services Librarian
- Tammy Gross, Social Media and Web Services
- Rob Pondelli, Technical Services Librarian

Circulation:

- Cyndi Burnham, Supervisor
- Audrey Staley
- Carrie Laurendeau

Library Board of Trustees

- A list of current trustees is available at this link:
<https://www.goffstownlibrary.com/about/trustees/>

Ad Hoc Strategic Planning Committee

- Diane Hebert, Chairperson (2019 – 2022, 2022 – 2025)
- Kathleen Holt (2019 – 2022)
- Margaret “Happy” Beale (2022 – 2025)

Strategic Goals, 2022 - 2025

The Library Board of Trustees has adopted five strategic goals for 2022 – 2025 to further support the mission and vision of the Goffstown Public Library.

Goal 1: Ensure the Goffstown Public Library provides staff and visitors with a functional and welcoming space

Board Goal: Secure funding for the proposed library expansion through both public and private sources. Ensure optimal functionality of current space.

Library Staff Goal: The library staff will provide quality customer service and a welcoming, comfortable, and pleasing environment.

Goal 2: Increase community awareness and support through enhanced outreach and partnership development

Board Goal: The Library Board of Trustees will expand outreach to the community, building additional partnerships/connections with area organizations, businesses, and groups.

Library Staff Goal: The library staff will endeavor to collaborate with organizations and groups throughout the community for space needs and joint events.

Goal 3: Attract, develop, and retain skilled staff in order to meet the library’s mission and vision

Board Goal: The Library Board of Trustees will ensure that the Goffstown Public Library is consistently staffed with highly qualified people, focused on the needs and wants of the various communities it serves.

Library Staff Goal: The Library Director will recommend a competitive wage matrix, maintain current and timely job descriptions, and provide appropriate and regular staff training opportunities.

Goal 4: Recruit, develop, and retain an effective and engaged Board of Trustees

Board Goal: The Library Board of Trustees will work to recruit, train and maintain diverse representatives of the community to ensure that we serve as effective ambassadors and have varied areas of expertise to support the mission and vision of the library.

Goal 5: Develop and implement a plan for financial growth and sustainability

Board Goal: The Library Board of Trustees will expand efforts to secure the financial support and resources the Goffstown Public Library needs to fully meet its mission and vision.

Library Staff Goal: The Library Director will advise the Library Board of Trustees about needs and requirements to ensure adequate funding.

Next Steps

Implementation of this strategic plan will be the work of both the Library Board of Trustees and the Goffstown Public Library staff. Annual sub-goals and metrics for measuring progress will be identified by each of the board's sub-committees: Administrative & Finance, Building & Facilities, and Human Resources. An annual summary of progress will be published on the library website. Library staff will determine their own sub-goals, timelines, and assessment measures.

The Goffstown Public Library Board of Trustees have a commitment to a robust and ongoing strategic planning process. It is our hope that this plan guides our efforts over the next three years to help the Goffstown Public Library realize its vision of being an essential part of our community.