

CLAVERACK FREE LIBRARY

STRATEGIC PLAN SYNOPSIS

2015-2017

Connecting Within Our Community And
To The World

NOVEMBER 29, 2015

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Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Introduction | 3 |
| Committee members..... | 3 |
| Guiding Principles | 3 |
| Demographics | 5 |
| Mission Statement | 5 |
| Vision Statement..... | 5 |
| SWOT (Strength, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats) | |
| Analysis | 6 |
| Approach To Action Plan | 7 |
| Strength..... | 7 |
| Weakness | 8 |
| Opportunity..... | 13 |
| Threats | 16 |
| Prioritized Goals..... | 20 |
| Measuring Success..... | 21 |
| Closing | 21 |
| Appendix | 22 |

INTRODUCTION

We are pleased to present the Claverack Free Library Strategic Plan, 2015 - 2017. This is an updated version of the one submitted to the Board at the July 14, 2015 Board of Trustees meeting and subsequent August 19, 2015 meeting to discuss the proposed plan. Suggestions from that meeting, in addition to originally suggested changes implemented since that time, have been reflected in this document. The original plan submitted to the Board at the July 14, 2015 Board of Trustees meeting is available upon request. Due to inclusion of additional information, the original plan is a large file and requires the requester to utilize their USB memory stick (Flash Drive) in the copying of the document.

The Claverack Free Library Strategic Plan defines our uniqueness and identifies how the library will remain viable in the foreseeable future. Strategic plans are generally long-term and directional. Such plans contrast with operational plans that are short-term and tactical. Strategies are built on a thoughtful assessment of what the future of an organization will look like – which of various visions is best suited to its mission and the realities it will face. Articulation of the Claverack Free Library’s general direction and positioning is also accomplished by this strategy.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Maryanne Lee, Chairperson
Thea Schoep
Michael Sullivan
Mario Verna
Mary Elizabeth Vincent
Marion Vosburgh

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

We have defined a set of guiding principles: READ ▪ DISCOVER ▪ LEARN ▪ MEET ▪ CONNECT.

READ

Most people identify libraries with reading, and rightfully so. Our participation with the Mid-Hudson Library System provides our patrons access to more books than ever before. Additionally, a large selection of audio books, DVDs, and e-Books are also available to our community. Our broad goals include becoming our community's favorite place from which to borrow books, DVDs, and music.

DISCOVER

As with all libraries today, the Claverack Free Library offers technologies that provide connection to much more than printed material. Our computers, which provide access to material the world over, are in constant use. Discovery of endless subject matter is available at the Claverack Free Library. The Claverack Free Library is a source of free public access to computers and the Internet for many in our rural community for whom this is otherwise unavailable.

LEARN

The Claverack Free Library is a vital educational institution in our community for all ages, infancy through adulthood. Promoting learning for all ages is our business. Our children's programs introduce children to the world of books, reading and learning. The number of adult programs has increased in the recent past and is varied.

MEET

As a physical community presence, the Claverack Free Library has been a staple of the community's need to meet for social gatherings. It has been understood for some time now that a larger library space is needed to meet today's changing demand. Plans are in place and work has begun to move the library to a much larger building. The new library building will provide needed space to meet in a safe, neutral, and flexible environment. For example, teenagers and young adults will be able to meet in a comfortable place to do homework and find information for class assignments, as well as for social contact and group activities. Additionally, consideration is being given to offer teen programs that enhance the library experience by, for example, offering poetry slams and musical performances, anime clubs, homework help, classes on SAT preparation and financial aid, media creation facilities, and gaming nights. The Claverack Free Library's focus on children will be enhanced. Story time and other events designed to educate, inform, and entertain children are extremely popular and highly valued. We recognize how these children's programs provide the opportunity for children to play together, enabling them to develop social skills from an early age. A separate space for children in the new library building will be provided where they are accepted and treated as worthy individuals. For adults, the new library building will provide meeting places for small or large groups.

CONNECT

Libraries today also act as cultural centers, gathering places for discussions, etc. When the larger library building opens, we will be able to provide expanded and a diverse range of community activities that will engage and connect members of the community. Furthermore, the new library building will cement the library's role as a unique symbol of the extent of a community's commitment to the informational, educational, and cultural values it represents. This unique function, for which alternatives are difficult to find, will also help the community to connect.

DEMOGRAPHICS

The Claverack Free Library is chartered to serve the inhabitants of the Town of Claverack, excluding the incorporated Village of Philmont, which has its own library. In addition, the Town of Taghkanic is served through customary practice.

MISSION STATEMENT

A Mission Statement clarifies the purpose and primary, measurable objectives of the organization. It is suggested the mission statement be changed to reflect our newly defined guiding principles: READ ▪ DISCOVER ▪ LEARN ▪ MEET ▪ CONNECT.

The current mission statement is as follows:

THE MISSION OF THE CLAVERACK FREE LIBRARY IS TO BE A VIBRANT PRESENCE IN THE COMMUNITY PROVIDING FREE ACCESS TO A WIDE RANGE OF MATERIALS FOR INFORMATION, ENJOYMENT AND LIFE LONG LEARNING, STIMULATING CHILDREN AND ADULTS TO BECOME AND REMAIN ENTHUSIASTIC READERS, AND SERVING AS A WELCOMING PLACE FOR QUIET READING, INFORMAL EXCHANGES OF IDEAS AND PROGRAMS OF CULTURAL AND INTELLECTUAL INTEREST.

The committee submits the following proposal as the library's mission statement:

THE MISSION OF THE CLAVERACK FREE LIBRARY IS TO PROVIDE RESOURCES TO THE COMMUNITY TO ENCOURAGE INDEPENDENT CRITICAL READERS, THINKERS, AND INFORMATION USERS AND TO CONNECT OUR COMMUNITY WITH EACH OTHER AND THE WORLD.

Our fresh new mission reflects these guiding principles and the goals focus on the library's role in connecting our community with one another and the world. To deliver on this promise, we rely on three great resources—our staff, our collections, and our volunteers.

Today's libraries are places where the community connects with one another and with the world. They are cultural centers, gathering places for discussions, and yes, still places where you'll find books - but also eBooks, DVDs, educational toys, and so much more.

VISION STATEMENT

Vision statements give direction for employee behavior and help provide inspiration. Core values are the principles and ideals that bind the organization together including the patrons, employees, board members, and all stakeholders. They are developed to frame an ethical context for the organization, and to many they are the “ethical standards” of the organization – the foundation for decision making within the organization.

To support our new mission statement, the following vision statement was created:

Our vision is to engage and nurture an educated, enlightened and enriched diverse community.

Additionally, the following core values were created:

Access - All information resources that are provided directly or indirectly by the library, regardless of technology, format, or methods of delivery, will be readily, equally, and equitably accessible to all library users.

Diversity - We value our nation's diversity and strive to reflect that diversity by providing a full spectrum of resources and services to the communities we serve.

Freedom – We are free and open to all. We treat everyone with respect and compassion.

Intellectual Freedom - We uphold the principles of intellectual freedom and resist all efforts to censor library resources.

Passion - We love the Library, and we love what we do.

Respect – We are guided in our relationships by trust and honesty and hold ourselves accountable to the highest personal and professional standards.

Service - We provide the highest level of service to all library users.

SWOT (STRENGTH, WEAKNESS, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS) ANALYSIS

SWOT analysis or SWOT Matrix is a structured planning method used to evaluate the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats involved in a project or in a business venture. These elements of a SWOT analysis can be carried out for a product, place, industry or person. It involves specifying the objective of the business venture or project and identifying the internal and external factors that are favorable and unfavorable to achieving that objective. The usefulness of SWOT analysis is not limited to profit-seeking organizations. SWOT analysis may be used in any decision-making situation when a desired end-state (objective) has been defined.

Strengths: Characteristics of the business or project that give it an advantage over others

Weaknesses: Characteristics that place the team at a disadvantage relative to others

Opportunities: Elements that the project could exploit to its advantage

Threats: Elements in the environment that could cause trouble for the business or project

SWOT analysis aims to identify the key internal and external factors seen as important to achieving an objective.

SWOT analysis groups key pieces of information into two main categories:

- internal factors – the strengths and weaknesses internal to the organization
- external factors – the opportunities and threats presented by the environment external to the organization

APPROACH TO ACTION PLAN

Each SWOT element, with the exception of Strength, has a proposed solution. Future revisions to the 3 Year Plan may identify the need to reclassify a Strength element as a Weakness, Opportunity, or Threat element as we evolve and situations change. At that point in time, the 3 Year Plan would identify solutions or actions to address the specific element.

STRENGTHS

The committee identified the following Strengths as a result of doing a SWOT Analysis and using data provided by the March 2014 Focus Group Report conducted by Rebekkah Aldrich, Coordinator for Library Sustainability, Mid-Hudson Library System.

S1 Available to Everyone

S2 Friendly and Courteous Staff

- Welcoming, clean, friendly and professional environment
- Main room of current library helpful in observing patrons' needs
- Library staff assist not only with reading selection, but with computer use, wireless access, faxing and printing services
- Library Director arranges for home deliveries. Home delivery is a free service available on short-term or long-term basis for library patrons who are unable to visit the library due to health or disability barriers.

S3 Inter-Library Loan through the Mid-Hudson Library System (Top strength identified by Focus Group)

- Continue to evaluate data and trends to help assess the needs of library users.

S4 Children's Programs (Top strength identified by Focus Group)

- Continue to build Children's Programs.
- Add additional support staff, volunteers as needed.
- Continue to collaborate with Philmont Library when possible.

S5 Extensive Children’s Collection

S6 Public Computer Center (Top strength identified by Focus Group)

- Continue technology support, updates, virus filtering etc.
- Support is currently provided with no charge.

S7 Positive Public Perception

- No late fees
- Extended borrowing periods

S8 Location of Library Building/Access to Outside Activities

- Being located at the crossroads of Route 9H and Route 23 is an asset (visibility, centrally located, well maintained roads, etc.)
- Benefits to continue until sale of current library building.

S9 Community Involvement/Support of Book Sale

- Large volunteer support that assists with special events that include: bakers, donations, setup, sorters, and cleanup.
- Friends Groups to be coordinated by Library Director.

S10 Communication

- Mail Chimp
- Meetings, programs, and workshops to be announced using local newspapers, signage, and website.

S11 New Building

- Continue to avoid incurring debt in Capital Campaign.

WEAKNESS

W1 Sense of Community

- Description: There is limited awareness of the function of the library, including the variety of its holdings, free 24 hour WiFi internet access, community programs as well as the new building project. The Board of Trustees has provided little information to the community on how the library operating budget is funded. There is an absolute need to increase our outreach to the local community. The community is looking for a focus on “social and tech”; there is a desire for people to connect with others in the library space and to have easy access to technology.

- Proposed Solution: The Programming Committee needs to engage more members, meet regularly and brainstorm ideas for a variety of programs that will appeal to a broad cross section of the Claverack Free Library community, consequently increasing program attendance. From the Focus Group Report: An audit of how to get the word out about programs could be necessary as many participants seemed unaware of what is offered. The Friends of the Claverack Free Library should be re-established and work at becoming a not-for-profit (a 501-C3) entity working cooperatively with the Library Director and the Library Board of Trustees. The Friends Group will act as advocates for library services and programs and will supplement library operations with volunteer talent and fundraising to maintain and improve library services to the community and to help draw the community in to use library facilities. An effective strategy for recruiting strong and active Friends of the Library Group must be established. Also, a review of current Hours of Operation is recommended to determine the need for more consistent hours available to the public.

W2 Leadership

- Description: A new interim director began on June 1, 2015. Positive, profound and impactful changes to the library interior, library offerings and patron experience were implemented under her short interim tenure. The Board subsequently unanimously selected the interim director as Library Director, beginning November 1, 2015. The newly appointed Library Director has also implemented greater use of volunteers, created a more welcoming environment, implemented changes in a short period of time, as well as administered additional transformations.
- Proposed Solution: Continue ongoing progress to implement changes to the library structure with the intention to infuse excitement and interest in patron use of library offerings.

W3 Policies and Procedures

- Description: While policies have been created the past few years, many policies identified as essential by the Mid-Hudson Library System do not exist. There is a greater lack of procedures.
- Proposed Solution: Continue ongoing progress to develop and obtain Board approval of policies and procedures.

W4 New Building Project Impacts Focus on Current Library

- Description: A trustee's responsibilities are many, but can be summarized as "working to provide the highest quality library service possible for our community". Trustees have spent and continue to spend many hours on various aspects of the new library building. This focus on the new library building diverts attention from the trustees' primary responsibility to the existing library.

- Proposed Solution: Creation of a Friends Group and a Capital Campaign Group that are independent of the Board can provide the trustees more time to focus on management of library operations. The Capital Campaign Group can be created to accept the mission of completing the new library building in a timely manner. The Friends Group can be created to accept the mission of fundraising and programming. Each group will provide reports to the Board of Trustees' monthly meetings. The New Building Committee will continue to develop plans for the new library. The Board will still be involved with managing/signing contractual obligations and assisting, for example, at book festivals.

W5 Complete Historical Financial Accounting (income and expenses) of New Building Funding

- Description: Since the beginning of the Capital Campaign in 2008, the library has engaged two different accounting firms to audit financial statements. This level of external financial review gives a level of confidence in the library finances not often seen in a small library. The 2014 audited financial statements are posted on the library web site. An itemized, comprehensive income and expense report, by year beginning with the start of the Capital Campaign does not exist.
- Solution: An itemized, comprehensive income and expense report in a clearly understood format must be readily available for anyone requesting such information.

W6 New Building Construction Timeline

- Description: There is no formal reporting structure on planning, controlling and coordination of the new building project. There is no formal timeline of work completed and work to be completed for the new building. There is also a need for local professional expertise to guide the Board through the next phases of the new building project.
- Proposed Solution: It is recommended the building committee create a formal timeline of work completed and anticipated work to be scheduled. The timeline will be based on funding available. This will allow committee members to chart status, monitor scheduling and will help with communication. The Board of Trustees needs to study the five year history of actual vs planned annual budgets to assess the following: "Are we on track to open the new library building?" The New Building Committee should expand to once again include community members who are vital to the completion of the new library building. The Board of Trustees must be kept informed and fully engaged in the new building project.

W7 Library Data Held on Personal Computers Rather Than Library Trustees Computer

- Description: A fair number of trustees hold library related information on their personal computers. Some of the information is confidential (donor information). This situation is understandable since it provides trustees flexibility in managing library resources. This does, however, place the library in a precarious situation given the possibility of

confidential information being lost or stolen. All library data should reside on a designated library computer.

- Proposed Solution: Copy or move all library data to the library staff computer, and backup to the external hard drive. In order to continue to provide flexibility to trustees working outside the library, secure connectivity to the data via DropBox or installation of a Network Attached Storage (NAS) device can provide flexibility while ensuring all up to date information is securely housed on library property.

W8 Lack of Space

- Description: The Claverack Free Library is the third smallest sized library building, of the eleven library buildings in Columbia County. It is important to recognize that other libraries in the Mid-Hudson Library System have community rooms and staff offices. Recent interior cleaning effort has resulted in a semblance of more space. The need for additional space remains. There is a need for a larger work/reading area, larger space dedicated to computer use and more shelf space. There is currently limited space for programs and community gatherings and no area to show movies. There is also limited “work area” space and no separate office space for the Library Director.
- Proposed solution: Efforts to weed books, very successful to date, remain a crucial imperative. Proper labeling and cataloging of books will affect book displays, which may also help generate a sense of a larger library space. As for the new building, the Board should consider flexible space use as a key component of its interior design. Creating a community of patrons congregating and interacting requires relevant, useful, and flexible spaces.

W9 Holdings: Number and Condition of Books, Reference Resources, Periodicals and Media Material

- Description: Although the third smallest in size, per an assessment prior to announcing an interim director in 2015, the Claverack Free Library had more holdings than four larger libraries in the county. Additionally, library holdings between 2009 and 2013 increased from 25,008 to 29,949; an increase of 20%, while circulation between 2009 and 2013 dropped from 34,094 to 28,879; a decrease of 15.3%.
- Proposed solution: The Library Director is encouraged to continue weeding and to manage display of library material to meet the needs of patrons as well as provide a dynamic space for patron use. The Library Director will provide an annual report highlighting holdings, circulation, changes in holdings due to reclassification and trends. Furthermore, it is suggested that the Finance Committee and Library Director review the budgeted amount for new library offerings. As technology advances and the library exploits these technological advances, continued monitoring and tweaking of monetary allocation from physical books must occur to ensure the proper balance of community expectations between physical and virtual media is maintained.

W10 Technology Limitations of Staff

- Description: Patrons seek access to computers to access the internet, as well as seeking technology assistance (iPad, tablets, etc.) from library staff. Furthermore, communications have evolved to a point where emails are the main form of correspondence. Appropriate training in existing and new technologies needs to be taken by staff and volunteers in order to provide appropriate up-to-date technical support to library patrons.
- Proposed Solution: The Library Director and library staff should continue to improve their technology awareness so that the library can move in a direction to offer additional technology services that will differentiate The Claverack Free Library from other libraries in Columbia County. To this end, the Board should consider planning to expand the Claverack Free Library from its traditional collection library to a creation library. As a creation library, its role is extended to become a place where media conveying information, knowledge, art, and entertainment are created using the library's specialized equipment and facilities. Its users are well positioned to build on the rich base of material readily available at the library.

W11 Lack of Photographic Inventory and Storage of Historical Literature, Documents

- Description: The Library has a significant historical inventory. A complete inventory list, including photographs of all items is nonexistent.
- Proposed Solution: Create an inventory list with a photo of each item on the list. It is suggested that work begin on obtaining a grant from NYS to house historical literature and documents on site.

W12 Historical Importance of Current Library Building

- Description: There is a lack of awareness and understanding of the significance of the historical nature of the current library building. In 1998 the library building was listed on the National Register of Historical Places.
- Proposed Solution: Continue to properly maintain the current building not only for historical purposes, but to generate a fair market value when sold to fund the completion of the new library building.

W13 Board of Trustees Decision Making Process

- Description: Good progress has been made to provide Board members with committee reports 1 week prior to the Board meeting. The goal should be to provide Board members with all required reading a minimum of one week, more time if needed, before the Board meeting and complete all review of material prior to the meeting such that the only action in the meeting is a vote on the proposal, if a vote is needed. Trustees also need to avail themselves of MHLS newsletters which may provide information that may influence decisions.

- Proposed Solution: Each trustee should become actively engaged with two committees of the Board of Trustees. Trustees should avail themselves of at least two workshops per year offered to Boards of Trustees by the Mid-Hudson Library Staff. It may be helpful for a committee to attend as a group. There should be the creation of a new agenda item at the monthly Board of Trustees meeting highlighting news from the weekly newsletters of Mid-Hudson Library System. Each trustee should be receiving and reading the weekly Mid-Hudson Library newsletters.

Responsibilities and expectations of Board members must be spelled out. It is recommended the Nominating Committee create a package containing this information to be supplied to each potential Board member. Included in the package, but not limited to, are expectations to become active in a minimum of 2 committees, importance of volunteering for the spring and fall book sale, understanding this a working Board and as such requires many hours of volunteer efforts, accept responsibility for the financial state of the current library and the new library building, etc. It is highly suggested no new trustee be given officer's responsibility in the first year. Additionally, the Nominating Committee should review the need for 12 Board members.

OPPORTUNITY

O1 Library Director

- Description: The new Library Director must, in addition to demonstrating knowledge of library materials and resources, demonstrate the following skills: Think analytically and develop new or revised systems, procedures, and work flow; Exercise initiative and independent judgment; Demonstrate knowledge of computers, the internet, and commercially available library software; Prepare comprehensive reports and present ideas clearly and concisely in written and oral form; Ability to make administrative decisions, interpret policies, and supervise staff; Motivate, establish and maintain effective working relationships with associates, supervisors, volunteers, other community agencies and the public.
- Proposed Solution: Support and manage continued education, workshops and training programs that will provide staff additional resources to help meet the changing needs of patrons and library offerings. Consider implementing services such as free notary services, resume help, job search assistance, etc. to transform the library into an information clearing house. Add additional computers, monitors printers, etc. when possible. Track monthly holding activity to develop trends and perform analysis of these trends to be used to manage library holdings. Expand collaboration with other libraries to offer a variety of programs that will appeal to a broad cross-section of the community.

O2 Chapter 414 Funding for 2015

- Description: The Library campaign to increase income from the Town of Claverack by \$10,000 via a 414 referendum was successful! The 768 votes (69%) in favor of increasing funding for the library in 2016 vs the 350 votes (31%) opposed demonstrate strong public support for the Library.
- Proposed Solution: The Claverack Free Library Board of Trustees must continue to pursue a successful 414 campaign every other year, at a minimum, to offset anticipated increases in the cost to successfully manage the Library. The next 414 campaign should be planned for November 2017.

O3 Friends of the Claverack Free Library

- Description: A Friends Group provides a way to build relationships within the community and lend needed support for programs and activities of the library. Presently, the Claverack Free Library relies on a few patrons and Board of Trustees members to manage all activities.
- Proposed Solution: Establish a new Friends Group that will work together with the Library Director to decide what is needed most. The Friends Group should have a clear sense of purpose unique and separate from the Board of Trustees. The Library Director needs to maintain awareness with the group and report to the Board of Trustees to ensure Friends are working within the guidelines set. Determine Friends' mission: Fundraising, library promotion, budget increase, creation of strong volunteers, establish By-Laws, officers and a 501(c) 3 status.

O4 Community Outreach

- Description: Improve the method of community outreach to grow attendance at library programs and functions.
- Proposed Solution: Develop a more informative/interactive website, high-speed internet connection which will allow the community to stay connected and the library to stay relevant, as cited in the Focus Group Report; expanded use of Mail Chimp as a part of our marketing plan and develop and design a brochure and bookmark. Showcase the historic hamlet and the library's place in its history. The Focus Group Report listed one of the top things people value and respect is our local history.

Flyers should continue to be created for programs and placed in local businesses such as Hannaford, Subway, Post Office, X-Mart, etc. Effective and frequent use of signage on Route 9H and Route 23 should be employed.

O5 New Building in Process

- Description: Space limitation of the current library was a major reason for seeking a larger library space. Based on the Focus Group Report, “*What Could Be Better*” additional space was listed. Considerable work has been completed on repurposing the former A. B. Shaw Firehouse. Not only has community feedback on work completed been positive, but the community has voiced a positive attitude towards the repurposing effort and is eagerly awaiting its opening as the new library. The new building space will increase possibilities of increased library offerings. Consideration should be given not only how to attract more patrons to the new library building, but also how to have them extend their stay.
- Proposed Solution: Developing the first floor of the new library will make available room for community programs; cultural programs; more meetings of interest groups-poetry, children, etc.; classes, seminars and film series. This will continue to create value and actively serve the people in our community. To change the view of the new library building from a ‘place to visit’ to a ‘place to stay’, consider space for providing additional services such as a café to serve drinks; create a space for music (e.g. piano, cello, etc.) to be played by patrons; a gaming room (e.g. part of teen space); exhibition space in the community room; space for quiet study and work; space for ‘homework helpers’; space for ‘technology helpers’; etc.

Within a short distance of one of the busiest intersections in the county, opportunities exist for the library to entice visitors as a clearing house of local information. Partnership with and space for publications from the Town of Claverack, Columbia County Chamber of Commerce, Columbia County Tourism, tourism information of surrounding counties with a focus on the Capital District, etc. should be pursued. Not only will these entities benefit, we will have additional opportunities to increase visits to our library. See T10 for further “space sharing” suggestion.

O6 Three-Year Planning Strategic Planning Committee

- Description: An annual review of the strategic plan will be an appropriate means of determining whether goals and objectives are being met and ensuring the ongoing relevance of the plan.
- Proposed Solution: The Three-Year Strategic Planning Committee will report annually to the Board of Trustees on the implementation of the proposed solutions. In addition, the committee will review and revise the three- year plan each year, in August, to ensure that the plan is forward-looking and that it responds to new developments and makes the appropriate changes as needed.

THREATS

T1 Public Misunderstanding of Library Finances

- Full Description: The Board of Trustees has not effectively communicated the state of library costs and funding. This applies to both operating and new building finances. This results in our patrons, Claverack taxpayers and the Board of Trustees not understanding how much of their taxes go to support the library, nor how much we depend on outside sources/events to generate enough income to pay for library operating expenses. The public also may not be aware of how construction of the new library building is funded.
- Proposed solution: The 2014 Fall Newsletter was a good first step in communicating how much our operating costs are offset by local taxes. Specific dollar amounts need to be communicated, as is done by many other local libraries. The library web site should have a copy of the annual Income &Expense report available for download. To take it one step further, the library web site should have monthly financial reports available for download. A sign on the lawn should be put up to inform the public of Board meetings, which is another avenue for the community to better understand the current state of library finances.

T2 Lack of Parking

- Full Description: During the time the adjacent school building was being used as the County Court House, our patrons could not utilize parking space on school property for which the library did not have a right of way. The library does not own the driveway and part of parking lot between the school and the new building, but does have a right of way to this area. The buyer of the school building is an unknown and we have no way of knowing how much flexibility the new owner may provide the library.
- Proposed solution: Once the sale of the school building is complete, the library should introduce itself to the new owner(s) and gauge how much interest exists to accommodate library needs. We should extend a hand of 'partnership' and pursue a relationship that is mutually beneficial. It could turn out the new owner may desire parking spaces closer to Rt. 23 instead of in the rear of their building.

T3 Current Library Financial Constraints

- Full Description: The operating budget for 2015 is \$108,415. As of October 2015, income was 83% of the yearly projected amount, while expenses were 74% of the yearly projected amount. It was understood at the time the budget was approved in 2014 there may be challenges in generating the income required to pay 2015 anticipated

expenses.

- Proposed solution: Additional income from the Town of Claverack, over an extended period of time, is a necessity. The Board's successful 414 campaign in 2015 for additional income, to be realized in 2016, was successful. The Board needs to plan a 414 campaign every other year.

T4 Lack of Local Business as a Support System

- Full Description: Many have a vision of/for a vibrant 'Claverack Hamlet', with the new library as an anchor demonstrating town vitality. The truth is businesses that help make the hamlet a lively part of a town's identity are lacking.
- Proposed solution: Engage with the town representative to invest energy to make what is now basically a crossroad at the Rte. 9H/ Rte. 23 intersection an inviting space for businesses to successfully operate and for people to interact. Board members are encouraged to monitor projects that are proposed for the town of Claverack, not just the hamlet, and attend Town Zoning Board meeting and speak on behalf of businesses as a private citizen interested in moving into any part of the town, particularly in the 'hamlet'.

T5 Declining Population

- Full Description: The population of Claverack is on the decline. Housing units, however, are increasing. A reason could be an influx of second homeowners. The Claverack population is also getting older. While the number of children under the age of 16 has risen slightly, the population aged between 16 and 45 has decreased.
- Proposed solution: There is nothing the library can do to address a declining and aging population. The Library Director, however, needs to understand this trend and create/advertise services that meet this changing population dynamics. For example, an increase in elderly population implies an increase in health issues. Consideration, therefore, should be given to delivering books to elderly residents in ill health, those who are disabled, those in health care facilities/nursing homes, etc.

The Library Director should also keep in mind that the library services the residents of Hudson, Ghent, Taghkanic and elsewhere, for which we do not have demographic information.

T6 eBooks (Amazon Kindle, Samsung Galaxy, Barnes & Noble Nook, Google Nexus, Apple iPad)

- Full Description: Use of electronic forms of media is rising. There are many types of electronic devices that allow people/patrons to read books. Use of these electronic devices is increasing. Unfortunately, borrowing eBooks from the library is from a category called 'overdrive', which is not counted in circulation.
- Proposed solution: Contact MHLS to request the tracking system be updated to provide for the tracking of eBooks and count it as part of the library's circulation numbers. Encourage and assist the loading of eBooks at the library.

T7 Book Festival in Jeopardy Without Use of Current Library Lawn

- Full Description: The Rte. 9H/Rte. 23 corner lot owned by the library is a treasure. It provides visibility of the library, library signage, children on the lawn during library programs, and the book festival to motorists in a major intersection of Columbia County. The annual Spring and Fall book festivals are highlighted here because of the resulting substantial income generated to offset operating library expenses.
- Proposed solution: Sale of the current library is paramount in order to complete construction of the new library building. During sale of the library building, discussion must occur to include an easement for, at a minimum, use of the lawn for our book sale.

T8 Condition of Current Building and Resale Value

- Full Description: The current building, a historically important building, requires constant attention to ensure a safe and healthy environment exists for all who enter the library. The sale of the current library building will generate income to offset the cost of completing the new building construction. In order to generate a reasonable sale price, the existing building needs to be well maintained.
- Proposed solution: Every effort must be made to ensure the current library building remain a safe and healthy environment.

T9 Financing of New Building Construction

- Full Description: Generating financing of the new building construction has been a long and arduous task. Continued focus on funding the library as planned will require many more years of hard work before the new library building is completed.

- Proposed solution: Great strides have been made to fund construction to date without incurring debt. To help lighten the load of this continuing formidable task, it is suggested the New Building Committee recommend a staged opening of the new library building. For example, after the interior infrastructure (e.g. electric, heating/cooling, plumbing, etc.) is completed, as well as the parking lot, open the main library space. This will not only bring people into the new space, but will demonstrate to all in the community/drivers passing by that the new library is open. Additional programs can be delivered. This will generate interest in the community and surrounding areas. People may be more apt to donate to complete the library space.

T10 Operating Cost of the New Library Building

- Full Description: The operating budget for 2015 is \$108,415. Approval of this budget included discussion of it being a 'tight budget'. How will we be able to generate the necessary income to operate a library 4 times the size of the current library?
- Proposed solution: Raising funds to offset, for example, an assumed (best guess) projected \$200,000 operating budget will require a creative, realistic and plausible approach. Assuming increase tax revenue will fill in the income gap is not advisable. It is recommended the New Building Committee develop a new library budget, one that differentiates the cost of maintaining the building vs the cost of staff/labor.

The Board should consider the following options:

- Enlisting businesses to rent space in the new library building. This may result in loss of the children's room and community space, assuming the main library space is retained for that purpose.
- Partner with the town to develop the new library space. For example, have the town assume the community space to become the new town community space, or the new town court, or dual use of both purposes. In addition, have the town or county use the children's room space.
- Creative options that generate substantial recurring annual income are necessary in order to move into a larger library space.

T11 Lack of Construction Plan

- Full Description: There is a general lack of direction re: the completion of the new library building. The Board does not have a clear understanding of what work begins after completion of the elevator phase, nor any of the associated costs. There is no best guess as to when the current library can be moved into the new library building. This makes it

difficult for the Board to effectively communicate to the community what the next steps are, or to answer the often asked question: ‘When will the new library open?’.

- Proposed solution: As mentioned above, a phased approach is encouraged – the New Building Committee should develop a prioritized approach: children’s room 1st to be completed? Community room 1st to be completed? Library space 1st to be completed? Plans for such development should be created and shared with the Board for their consideration and approval.

A suggested approach to be considered is

- (1) Perform complete building asbestos abatement
- (2) Perform Route 9H frontage remediation
- (3) Complete interior infrastructure (heating, cooling, electrical, etc.) for the main library space
- (4) Complete parking lot work, including a new septic system
- (5) Complete the main library space
- (6) Complete interior infrastructure to open the children’s room
- (7) Complete interior infrastructure to open the teen space, the historical room and the meeting room
- (8) Complete interior infrastructure to open the community room

The New Building Committee should also consider renting out space until such time a tenant is no longer needed to independently fund the operation of the new building.

PRIORITIZED GOALS

Over the next three years we will work with the community and school districts to promote collaboration. Nothing is more important to The Claverack Free Library’s future success than ensuring that it remains fully accessible, adaptable, viable and ultimately an enriching presence in the communities it serves.

The three-year strategic planning process identified 9 goals that the organization will pursue:

- Support the new Library Director in her efforts to implement change to better serve our patrons.
- Develop strong programming and outreach efforts to promote community engagement.
- Work toward broadening the library to become a destination for parents with young children.
- Trustees, Director and staff shall collaborate efforts to make more efficient use of space and design plan in the current building.

- Seek additional funding from grants, as well as pursue successful 414 campaigns every other year.
- Concentrate efforts as funding permits on getting new building space completed. Explore the best use of the lower level and how best to serve the local community.
- Perform an annual review of the strategic plan and continued evaluation.
- Deliver an itemized, comprehensive income and expense report, by year beginning with the start of the Capital Campaign.
- Maintain the current library building.

MEASURING SUCCESS

Success in implementation of recommendations of this plan will be measured by seeing a printed copy of it a year after Board approval. If the pages are in pristine condition, then the effort that created the plan was obviously not successful in motivating action. However, if this document is dog-eared, marked up, added to, pages tagged, and otherwise well-used, then the effort was super successful because a 'process' was indeed born and the need for ongoing action was instilled. If this strategic plan is one that has become a working document, which is what planning is all about, then we can claim success.

CLOSING

Libraries and librarians have a role to play in harnessing technological advances and the proliferation of information, creating from them a portal—both digital and physical—through which users can enter and find their way to accessible, credible, and vital information to enhance personal growth.

We strongly believe implementing proposed solutions will advance community involvement, participation and interest in the future vitality of the Claverack Free Library. The Library Director, Staff and Board of Trustees must work in earnest to ensure the Claverack Free Library remains a relevant destination in the community, providing resources to encourage independent critical readers and thinkers to connect our community with one another and the world.

APPENDIX

Pursuant to “T3 Current Library Financial Constraints”

The purpose of the below table is to highlight the need for an ongoing 414 campaign. It is for illustrative purposes and does not reflect actual budgets beyond 2015. The below table illustrates a few examples of increasing income from the Town of Claverack to offset anticipated operating budget increases. The example assumes an annual 3% budget increase. The rightmost two columns display income increase every two years from the Town of Claverack based on a 5%, 10% and 20% increase in taxes earmarked for the library. The ‘Town Tax Income as % of Library Budget’ is an indicator illustrating whether income from the Town is offsetting increases in operating expenses. For 2016, income from the Town represents 51% of the library budget. A 5% increase in Town taxes show the town contribution drop to 50% in 2020. The Board must work to hinder this type of regression. A 20% increase in Town taxes show the town contribution increase to 65% in 2020. This may be an extreme example, however, it illustrates the need to generate income from the Town to not only maintain a fair level of funding from the Town but to also establish a funding stream that will be required once the new library building opens.

| Year | Annual Library Budget | Annual Town Tax Income | Assumed Library Budget at 3% Annual Increase | Next Year Library Budget | Town Tax Income as % of Library Budget | Annual Percentage Tax Increase | Annual Tax Increase (realized in following year) |
|------|-----------------------|------------------------|--|--------------------------|--|--------------------------------|--|
| 2015 | \$108,000 | \$48,500 | \$3,240 | \$111,240 | 43.60% | 20% | \$10,000 |
| 2016 | \$111,240 | \$58,500 | \$3,337 | \$114,577 | 51.06% | N/A | N/A |
| 2017 | \$114,577 | \$58,500 | \$3,437 | \$118,015 | 49.57% | 5% | \$2,925 |
| 2018 | \$118,015 | \$61,425 | \$3,540 | \$121,555 | 50.53% | N/A | N/A |
| 2019 | \$121,555 | \$61,425 | \$3,647 | \$125,202 | 49.06% | 5% | \$3,071 |
| 2020 | \$125,202 | \$64,496 | \$3,756 | \$128,958 | 50.01% | N/A | N/A |
| 2015 | \$108,000 | \$48,500 | \$3,240 | \$111,240 | 43.60% | 20% | \$10,000 |
| 2016 | \$111,240 | \$58,500 | \$3,337 | \$114,577 | 51.06% | N/A | N/A |
| 2017 | \$114,577 | \$58,500 | \$3,437 | \$118,015 | 49.57% | 10% | \$5,850 |
| 2018 | \$118,015 | \$64,350 | \$3,540 | \$121,555 | 52.94% | N/A | N/A |
| 2019 | \$121,555 | \$64,350 | \$3,647 | \$125,202 | 51.40% | 10% | \$6,435 |
| 2020 | \$125,202 | \$70,785 | \$3,756 | \$128,958 | 54.89% | N/A | N/A |
| 2015 | \$108,000 | \$48,500 | \$3,240 | \$111,240 | 43.60% | 20% | \$10,000 |
| 2016 | \$111,240 | \$58,500 | \$3,337 | \$114,577 | 51.06% | N/A | N/A |

| | | | | | | | |
|------|-----------|----------|---------|-----------|--------|-----|----------|
| 2017 | \$114,577 | \$58,500 | \$3,437 | \$118,015 | 49.57% | 20% | \$11,700 |
| 2018 | \$118,015 | \$70,200 | \$3,540 | \$121,555 | 57.75% | N/A | N/A |
| 2019 | \$121,555 | \$70,200 | \$3,647 | \$125,202 | 56.07% | 20% | \$14,040 |
| 2020 | \$125,202 | \$84,240 | \$3,756 | \$128,958 | 65.32% | N/A | N/A |

Pursuant to “T7 Book Festival in Jeopardy Without Use of Current Library Lawn”

If the buyer of the current library building does not want to provide an easement, the board needs to be ready to utilize alternative locations for the book festival. For example, use of the downstairs space in the new library building, use of the school back lot (after permission by the new owner is obtained), use of the new firehouse lawn, etc., etc. Investigate and consider, if feasible and profitable, a year-long book sale. The children’s room in the new library building may be a good location for such a sale, up until such time the children’s room construction begins.

Pursuant to “T9 Financing of New Building Construction”

The total capital campaign income at the end of 2014 was \$1,253,522. Recall the Board unanimously voted to redeem \$100,000 from the DOTY fund, rendering income from outside sources to \$1,153,522.

Therefore, the bulk of income for completing work on the new building has been and will continue to be from special events and grant sources. The below table illustrates a number of financial assumptions and timeline for fund raising to complete construction of the new library building.

| Total Revenue Needed to Complete Construction | Annual Cap Camp Income | Years Required to Achieve Total Revenue Goal |
|---|------------------------|--|
| \$1,000,000 | \$100,000 | 10 |
| \$1,250,000 | \$100,000 | 12.5 |
| \$1,500,000 | \$100,000 | 15 |
| | | |
| \$1,000,000 | \$150,000 | 6.67 |
| \$1,250,000 | \$150,000 | 8.33 |
| \$1,500,000 | \$150,000 | 10 |
| | | |
| \$1,000,000 | \$200,000 | 5 |
| \$1,250,000 | \$200,000 | 6.25 |
| \$1,500,000 | \$200,000 | 7.5 |

Note there is no assumption of inflation assumed to increase the cost of construction. Undoubtedly costs will be greater than what we currently assume.