Planning for the 5 year Plan of Service

Buffalo & Erie County Public Library

Results of Three Community Input Sessions
Two Staff Sessions and
Two Trustee Sessions
2016

Frank E. Merriweather, Jr. Library – Community Input Session
Date: March 10, 2016   **Time: 6:30 p.m.**

Session moderated by Joy Testa Cinquino

Attendees: 3 women, 8 men including five high school students between ages 11-16

1. **What does the library mean to you?**

    - A place for weekly meetings – both attending and holding
    - A way to find out what's going on in the **community**
    - Knowledge / information
    - Research for business
    - The library is a **refuge**. No matter what else is going on, the library is always there.
    - Wealth of information

2. **What are the most important services the library offers?**

    - Meeting room usage
    - Resources
    - Job Club (both at CEN & MRW)
    - Literacy
    - Continue to provide info about the community
    - Computer usage

3. **What would you like to see the library offer in the next five years?**

    - Chess club

- Regularly scheduled computer training
- More books
- Media Room materials
- Books for all ages & reading levels
- More computers
- A park or outdoor space for reading
- Have more open hours / time for research
- Important to have time *when students can come in*, ie. Weekends, nights, etc. so kids can come in and use computers to do their homework if they don't have access at home, particularly in Buffalo. Have enough computers & WiFi.

4. Other comments

- One visitor said they didn't know they could download books, etc.
- One would like to learn more about databases.
- When asked "How important is the library to you?," six people said "Very Important" and five said "Important."

Hamburg Public Library – Community Input Session
Date: March 11, 2016

Session moderated by Joy Testa Cinquino

Time: 11:30 a.m.

Attendees: 8 women including Legislator Lynn Dixon, 2 men

1. What library do you use most often?

- Various
- Hamburg
- Orchard Park
- Amherst libraries
- Cazenovia Neighborhood Library (not part of B&ECPL)

2. What is the value of the library to you?

- Brings the community together and offers many resources
- Free Books, DVD's & Programs
- A safe place for youth
- Place to socialize, meet friends, etc.
- Download Books
- Read new Books without having to purchase them
- Purchase material at Book Sales
- Search for musical scores, new novels & science fiction
- Use of meeting rooms
- Free Exhibits (Art Shows, etc.)

3. Where would you like to see the library in the next 5 years?

- Enjoy self-checks outs, but would like to see them standardized throughout system
- The B&ECPL needs to work with the community and specifically the Cazenovia Neighborhood Library. The B&ECPL should not take credit for the Caz Library since we closed it down.
- Would like automatic check-in inside the library (Audubon is outside)
- More computer training
- Update website (too cluttered)
- Easier access to website for Mac computers & Kindles (e.g. hard to renew a book)
- A more robust catalog search (e.g. search for an author of a symphony is difficult)
- Make our catalog search similar to Amazon (in order to compete with them)
- Improve on libraries in low-income areas. Bigger libraries are in affluent areas, where tax dollars pay for them.
- Bookmobile to areas with low-income housing & locations where there is no access to a library
- Provide programs that appeal to all ages
- Provide programs that will bring non-library users into the library (e.g. an exhibit of artwork created by students that will bring their parents into the library)
- Expansion of library services to Senior Facilities (computer classes, new materials)
- Friends Groups should be more resourceful
- Market to attract more library users – TV spots, PSA radio announcements (can be funded by a Foundation)
- Encourage preschool children to read and the importance of libraries
- Expansion of library services to inner-city locations (continuing education)
- Collaborate with collections of other organizations (e.g. Albright-Knox, etc.)
- Share funding and equipment with independent libraries (e.g. Cazenovia)
- Work with school districts to encourage students to get library cards

Kenmore Branch Library – Community Input Session
Date: March 15, 2016   **Time: 7:00 p.m.**
Session moderated by Joy Testa Cinquino

Attendees: 5 men, 5 women including Maryann from Legislator Savage's office

1. What are the best things about the library?
- Books – especially downloadable books & audiobooks
- Diversification – not just books but also CDs, online audiobooks, computer classes
    - Wish for more intermediate classes (not just beginners) @ KNM
- Resources for people just coming to Buffalo
- Programs for kids, especially on weekends.
- Literally Speaking book club @ CEN
- Book Club in a Bag
- OverDrive

2. What should the library do?
- Be a sanctuary from noise – needs to be a good place for kids to study, etc. No cell phones, inappropriate uses of the bathrooms. Concerned about the lack of clean bathrooms, librarians conversing @ desk, computers used for things other than learning

- Chess – should promote it more
- More author talks @ CEN, possibly connecting w/ Just Buffalo Literacy Center
- Give people a venue to think & concentrate
- Do more for refugees & immigrants
- Open the second floor @ CEN
- Libraries should be open on holidays
- More Sunday hours
- More literacy programs for all ages
- More computer classes, especially intermediate @ KNM
- Library should promote itself on TV (commercials), on buses
- Outreach at bookstores, malls, rehab centers, hospitals

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3. How can we get more library card holders?
- Erie County Fair - Bookmobile
- Taste of Buffalo – Bookmobile
- Have a library presence at major events in the community
- Reach out to prior library card holders who have fines

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4. If you could change one thing about the library, what would it be?
- Kenmore library is too dark
- Designate one library as the "quiet" library for study, etc.
- Stepping stools available for public use – shelves too tall to reach top for shorter patrons
- More downloadable books on OverDrive
- Kiosks in subway stations
- Push the library more in schools – send Bookmobile & Reada mascot to schools in May & June to push libraries in summer & summer reading
- More programs for kids
- OverDrive usability, it is challenging. Needs to be easier

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5. Suggestions/etc.
- More open hours/accessibility even during summer (ie. Sundays)
- More advocacy on behalf of library – done by public as well as staff

<div align="right">**Time: 4:00 p.m.**</div>

Session moderated by Joy Testa Cinquino

Attendees: 9 System Board Members

What should the Library be?
- Public meeting space
- Wi-Fi – cutting edge (Li-Fi)
- Access to a staff person for individual research to find what you're looking for
- Research experts – how to find things
  - Online
  - In print
- Credible sources
- Librarians – trained
- Public Forum- Library should be discussions of public merit
- Person/persons who can assist people with various languages (multi-lingual staff)
- Literacy programs – ESL
- Cutting edge technology
- Library education – what's in the library, reintroducing the library proper (physical library
- Catalog – related topic
- Lending more than books – i.e. tools, seeds, personal services
- Local experts in – genealogy
- Marketing – share what we have (Did you know?)
- Encyclopedia's on shelves
- Space for study group – i.e. teachers/mentors, app reservations (think open table)
- Youth/teens: Wi-Fi – ability to print out materials simply
- Popular music collections
- Emphasize reading importance
- Parents – educate needs of young children
- Place where parents can identify if children are on drugs – PSA's
- Ability to access school parent portals
- Writing programs
- Connecting the resources
- Small group programming (coaching)
- Solidify connection with Youth Bureaus, Schools and Library
- Parents – challenges – accessibility of buildings
- Sitters for parents with children who are attending a program
- Volunteer opportunities
- Unemployed: Underemployed
  - Resume classes
  - Reading skills
  - How to get a job
  - Database searches
- Library offers access to YouTube for skills development
- Career development

Business Community

- Depend on resources available
- Collaborate with agencies
- Library as a connector
- Referral for new/potential businesses

Immigrant populations

- Connections to business community – resource service
- Adult services

Schools

- Key role – extension of classroom
- Collaboration – stay on top – common core
- students to get library cards

What is the library worth to you? $5.59/per year ROI

- Most important: ease of use
- Borrow – return all libraries
- Available to anyone 24/7 – 365 days
- Buildings are important
- Browsing is important

What do we need to fix – how do we get those who do not use us?

- PSA's
- Website is busy – needs to be simplified
- Educate the public about resources
- Offer ability to personalize page (website)
- Special events – push out several times a day on social media

Brand:
- Keeper of knowledge hub for community
- Libraries are "community centers"
- Look at new buildings
- Larger meeting rooms
- Make buildings more modern

Find out why folks are attracted to a Barnes & Noble and not a library.

Directors/Managers Meeting @ Central Library
Date: March 9, 2016

Time: 10:00 a.m.

Session moderated by Joy Testa Cinquino

Approximately 40 attendees

Attendees, comprised of managers, directors and administrators from the Library System, were divided into four different teams and were given 3 – 4 questions to discuss. After thirty minutes in their breakout sessions, all of the groups gathered together and presented their responses to the group.

Group #3 the "DEWEY DECIMALS"
Question; What would like to see the library system focus on ??? in the next 5 years..
1. Advertising – get the word out. Marketing – public
2. Improved facilities
3. 3A. expand programming
   3B. staff development
4. improve collections
5. outreach
6. computer literacy
7. partnerships
8. exhibits in libraries (schools art)

2. What services do you see the libraries providing in the next five years:
Provide services to…
- Immigrants
- Computer training
- Senior
- Bookmobile
- Youth

3. If money were no object, the Library System should…
- Improve library buildings
- A librarian in the building
- Build a new library every 5 years in Erie County
- Replace 20% of the collection
- Additional hours

4a. What is the Library Brand?
- Free, open, for everyone

4b. What are we most identifiable as? Books & computers
Should be identified as? Community centers
5. As employees, what tools do you need to provide #1 Customer Service to patrons in the next 5 years?

- Need more staff
- Better attitudes

6. What is/are the best things about the library system?
- Access
- Free
- Good collections
- Fun & lively place

#1 "ROCKING RED READERS"
1. If money were no object, the Library System should…
- Build new buildings
- Hire more staff
- Constantly improve technology
- Floating library in waters
- Create commercials
- Loan out non-library related materials (tools, tech, etc.)
- Provide unlimited eBooks
- Have a bigger digital presence in the Library
- Library delivery service
- Presence in malls

2a. What is the Library brand? Books, free, information delivery service, community meeting place
2b. What are we most identifiable as? Place of books, storytime, computer use, best-kept secret
Should be identified as? Progressive, free, cutting edge, the place with the answers, the "third place"

3. What services do you see the Libraries providing in the next 5 years…
- Programming
- Outreach
- Tech training
- Be the link the community
- Human Library
- **Teens:** dedicated homework program, dedicated hangout space
- **Underemployed:** 1-on-1 assistance for job training/employment, outreach to more community-based programs (maybe in house)
- **Seniors:** in-house services, home delivery
- **Immigrant pop.**: support for staff to learn languages & cultural awareness (staff training), translators
- **Business community:** job fair – provide potential employees; tests, services to support small business

4. As employees, what tools do you need to provide #1 Customer Service to patrons in the next 5 years?
- Training
- Technology

- Time to plan & develop
- More staff
- Ongoing community input
- Easier means to communicate between staff (internally)

5. What is/are the best things about the library syste,?
    1. The people
    2. Free
    3. The number of locations
    4. Shared services

6. Your team would like to see the library system focus on ?? in the next 5 years…
- Technology infrastructure
- More than just a book warehouse
- Download books in the library
- Training – to better meet the community needs

Group #2 called "FIFTY SHADES OF RED"
1. As employees, what tools do you need to provide #1 Customer Service to patrons in the next 5 years?
- Technology training
- A+ customer service training
- Service knowledge
- Current/updated technology

2. What is/are the best things about the library system?
- Staff!
- Interconnectivity between libraries
- Programming
- Outreach in the community
- Modes of access to all groups
- Various uses of the building
- Collections

3. If money were no object, the Library System should….
- Building modernization
- Training to improve the knowledge of employees to conduct more programming; technology

4. Your team would like to see the library system focus on ??? in the next 5 years…
- Staff! In terms of needs
- More browsing collections
- Community interaction with catalog

5. What is the library brand? Information access in all forms
6. What services do you see the Libraries providing in the next 5 years…
- Seniors

- Unemployed/underemployed
- Immigrant populations

Group #4 called "TEAM CHECK-IN"
1. What services do you see the Libraries providing in the next 5 years to…
- **CR:** in-house programs – offsite programs, schools, clubs, MakerSpaces (mobile?) – play spaces
- **Adult:** iPad classes, career/business centers, digital magazines
- **Seniors:** direct mail delivery to agencies/partner, meals on wheels for delivery; programs for retirement, storyCorp programs, partner with active sr. groups for in-house tours, scam prevention, notary service
- **Teens:** gaming, YouTube
- **Immigrants:** translation tool for Cat – more books in language of patrons; citizenship info; more programs for preschool & families of immigrants
- **Economic/Job/Business:** more off-site outreach, embedded libraries

Library System Staff Forum @ Orchard Park Public Library
Date: April 6, 2016

Time: 10:00 a.m.

Session moderated by Joy Testa Cinquino

Attendees: Ten staff members representing Orchard Park, East Aurora, Amherst and Central Libraries

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Which of these options is the most important service the Library offers?
- Attending free events & programs (x2)
- Borrowing items (x5)
- Using public computers
- Borrowing from one library & returning to another 1x

If money was no concern, what should the Library do that we haven't to meet the needs of the community?
- More outreach / networking
- Expand technology training
- Anything that brings people in through the door
- Outreach & reaching underserved populations
- Need staff to make sure people get the right help at the right time
- Improved marketing & promotions

Session moderated by Joy Testa Cinquino   **Time: 11:00 a.m.**

Attendees: Approximately twenty contract library trustees and library directors representing Eden, Elma, Clarence, Grand Island, Newstead, Cheektowaga, Orchard Park and West Seneca. There was also a System Trustee attending. *(List of library attendees is incomplete)*

What would you like to see the Library focus on in the next five years?
- Adding more foreign language material.
- E-book training: more sessions and more advertising
- Outreach – especially for elderly
- Digital library needs some help (such as newspapers)
- More copies of the most popular books, waiting lists too long
- Make it easier for people to get to Central – free parking?
- Make technology more available
- eBooks
- Work with community groups

What's the best thing about the library system?
- Accessibility
- Free
- Allows people to come in and work with children
- Downloading music and eBooks
- Workshops
- Outreach

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As of 4/11/2016