



Shepherdstown
Public Library

145 Higbee Lane
Shepherdstown, WV 25443

www.sheplibrary.org

(304) 876-2783

Hours:

Monday - Friday: 9:00 am- 6:00 pm

Saturday: 10:00 am - 3:00 pm

The Five Year Strategic Plan for:

Shepherdstown Public Library

2019-2024

Developed on October 19, 2019

Updated March 2023

Facilitator

John Barton

Shepherdstown Public Library Board of Trustees

Sally Brasher, Jack Eggleston, Robert Keller, Terrence Kramer, Rosemary Nickerson

Library Director

Hali Taylor

Staff

Lance Dom, Rachel Heller, Addison Reese, Lee Ann Warner

Contents

Background 3

Vision..... 4

Mission..... 4

Values..... 4

Championing the Cause 5

Objectives and Priorities Over the Next Five Years (2019-2024)..... 6

People Development Plan..... 7

Management Plan..... 8

Background

The Shepherdstown Public Library (SPL) has been in existence since 1922. It was started as a volunteer organization, and in 1972 it became a state-supported library and was established under Chapter 10 of the West Virginia Code as a “quasi-governmental instrumentality” with non-profit status. The funding/governing authority is the Corporation of Shepherdstown.

A five-member board of trustees (BOT), whose 5-year terms are staggered, is appointed by the Shepherdstown Town Council to oversee SPL operations. The BOT hires a director, and the director hires the remainder of the staff. The library currently has one full-time and four part-time librarians, and a part-time director of library development. In September 2022, the library initiated a docent program to support library activities. There are 15 to 20 trained docents who provide approximately 25 hours per week of unpaid support.

SPL has been serving the literary and information needs of the Shepherdstown area for 101 years. Now, more than ever, libraries are important – they are essential to a free and open democratic society and function as the portal to free access to information for all citizens.

- They help patrons navigate the staggering sea of information;
- They are integral to our educational continuum;
- They support early literacy;
- They are champions of “lifelong learning”; and
- They play an important role as “third space” – a safe, pressure-free place to be and learn within the community.

After 15 years of continual effort by the community, the dream of planning, building, and opening a new library was achieved in July 2022- its centennial anniversary. Having outgrown its limited 2000 sf space long ago the new state-of-the art library provides much needed space for new programs, community meetings, public access computers, and parking. It is also ADA-compliant making it more accessible for special needs patrons. To complement the new facility, a beautiful outdoor area with a habitat garden and paths is underway.

The need for a spacious and inviting library is growing, consistent with the population growth within Jefferson County, which increased 25% from 2000 to 2010 and another 6% from 2010 to 2018. Libraries no longer exclusively function as book repositories. They have expanded into community venues in which patrons can get connected in every sense of the word – technologically, socially, civically, intellectually, and artistically. Libraries provide the free space people need for the opportunity to better and enrich their lives.

Although the library is named “Shepherdstown,” its broader responsibility is to serve one-third of the residents of Jefferson County. There are no map-drawn boundaries – in fact, we are one of a consortium of nine public libraries in three counties that share resources and materials through a free inter/intra-library loan service. All libraries share one card so that every patron

is able to use the full services of any of the participating libraries. Additionally, our free e-resources and databases are available to anyone with a library card. SPL currently offers Kindles available for checkout by patrons and book groups. The electronic media trend has sparked a renewed interest in libraries by those patrons who wish to “download” rather than “check out.”

Currently, children comprise our largest population of users. We offer numerous and varied programs for infants, toddlers, and school-age children. We serve daycares and preschools. We provide a summer reading program that is not only fun, but also helps children retain their reading skills over the summer vacation months. Our adult patrons primarily visit the library for access to our popular materials such as best sellers and books on CD. Patrons of all ages stop by for the free access to our guest computers, and they do so for many reasons, not the least of which is to search for jobs.

The challenges currently facing the library include adequately funding the new facility and effective short and long term budgeting. While secure and robust local operating funding is perhaps the most important priority, marketing the new space goes hand in hand with that support. Developing a robust budget and funding stream that can address current needs, anticipate future ones, and remain flexible to accommodate change is an exciting challenge that will be met with enthusiasm.

Vision

The vision of the Shepherdstown Public Library is to incubate, nurture and inspire the minds and hearts of people to make this a better world for themselves and others. It embraces literacy and self-realization as tools to attaining satisfaction in life.

Mission

The Mission of the Shepherdstown Library is to provide a comfortable, welcoming space where the community will have access to trusted and freely accessible technology, programs, and resources to make informed community, civic, and personal decisions. It will foster early literacy and inspire life-long learning for all ages.

Values

Accountability: The library is committed to serving the community through which it is supported. The board and staff are accountable to the population they serve.

Customer Service: The library staff is committed to providing the best customer service possible. This includes creating a genuinely welcoming and inclusive atmosphere and using all resources possible to provide the requested information in a timely manner.

Community: Our library is of the community and for the community. It exists to serve the needs and desires of the residents and takes into account the inevitable changes that will occur in population size and demographics.

Integrity: Libraries are legally and professionally held to certain standards of respect and laws regarding privacy. Our staff and volunteers are required to follow these standards and laws for the safety and comfort of our patrons.

Professionalism: Our director is required to have a Master of Library and Information Science degree. The balance of our core personnel group possesses many years of experience and a thorough familiarity with most aspects of librarianship. We strive to be professional in all of our interactions and transactions with the public and within the organization.

Diversity: The library encourages and supports diversity of every kind. It provides materials on almost any topic and encourages exploration of the many and varied of ways of being and of living a fulfilled life.

Empowerment: One of the main reasons for a library's existence is to provide the tools for self-empowerment. The most critical of these is literacy, the cornerstone upon which success and satisfaction in life are built. Throughout one's life, the library can provide the keys to furthering one's growth, whether it is intellectual, spiritual, civic, educational, recreational, or artistic.

Partnership: The library is a partner within the community – we work with all different groups to support their visions and missions (with certain legal exceptions), thereby enhancing quality of life for all.

Championing the Cause

As we continually strive to improve the services we provide to our community, we are mindful of the citizens we serve and how best to communicate the important role of the library in the everyday lives of our primary patron groups – children, teens, and adults – as well as community leadership and philanthropic resources. Necessarily, the format and level of communication will vary among these groups.

For our existing patrons, our driving focus is and always will be to improve our services. To do this, we must continually evaluate our patron audience to determine who they are and what they need. This can be accomplished through frequent patron surveys, organized workshops and networking events, and feedback to monthly newsletters and announcements. Perception is key – our patrons must know that we are working for them and will adapt with the times and user needs in order to constantly and consistently improve our level of service.

Routine communication with community leadership is vital, particularly state senators, delegates, and local county and town officials. Currently, West Virginia ranks 7th in the nation in per capita state funding for libraries; however, when combined with local funding, our

national ranking drops to 47th. The BOT and library director will play a significant role in increasing communication with local and state leadership to advocate the importance of libraries in stimulating vibrant communities, as well as the great need for increased library funding for the ultimate betterment of our state's citizenry. Communication can be accomplished through frequent letter writing, emails, and phone calls, as well as special celebratory events.

Over the next five years, we plan to strengthen our relationship with Friends of the Shepherdstown Library (FOSL). Historically, they have played a vital role in funding many of our beloved children's programs and other specific critical expenditures as needed through their annual fundraising events. We envision a relationship that exceeds financial support and grows into a partnership – a combined and mutually beneficial championship of effort within the community.

Our collaboration with the three other state-funded (and one private) libraries located in Jefferson County has allowed us to present a 'united front' in support of library services. Working together, we present a stronger force with the potential to secure increased revenue through the Jefferson County Board of Education, the County Commission and the municipalities and to pool our resources in order to maximize the use of the funds.

With the construction of a new facility, it is now more important than ever to locate and cultivate philanthropic resources. The library will establish an Annual Fund Committee comprised of community stakeholders that will be dedicated to raising funds through diverse means and from various sources to ensure the ongoing financial strength of the library at both locations. The committee, when formed, will adopt a marketing and communication strategy appropriate to our audience, both current and future.

Goals and Objectives for the Next Two Years (2023-2024)

Goal 1: Enhance utilization of Shepherdstown Library

- **Objective 1:** Provide community space for meetings, classes, lectures, films, art displays and music and establish the library as an advocate and meeting area for local arts, cultural and business groups
- **Objective 2:** Develop plan to maintain physical spaces
- **Objective 3:** Develop a plan to improve multi-modal accessibility to the Library
- **Objective 4:** Increase number of users

Goal 2: Provide programs and services that respond to the needs of the community.

- **Objective 1:** Identify and prioritize ongoing programs and services and opportunities for new ones by conducting formal and informal questioning, needs assessments and focus groups
- **Objective 2:** Provide a diverse core collection by expanding range of media, languages, and materials for special needs patrons

- **Objective 3:** Develop a communication plan and materials targeted at patrons and potential users to increase awareness of library services and resources
- **Objective 4:** Collaborate with city to retain a presence in the “Market House,” possibly in conjunction with the Visitor’s Center

Goal 3: Enhance library services using modern technology and increase digital literacy in the community.

- **Objective 1:** Support digital literacy by identifying community needs and providing targeted training.
- **Objective 2:** Partner with technology initiatives and programming and pursue grants and funding that will allow acquisition of technology relevant to the community’s needs
- **Objective 3:** Fully train staff to use, operate and teach acquired technology in the new facility

Goal 4: Develop strategic partnerships to expand visibility in the community:

- **Objective 1: Cultivate collaborative** partners, both traditional and non-traditional, corporate, and private, non-profit and for profit, including educational institutions, churches, civic clubs, etc.
- **Objective 2:** Plan out a yearly calendar of activities to achieve collaboration and avoid overlap with other events in the community

Goal 5: Secure sustainable, predictable, and adequate funding for library services and operations.

- **Objective 1:** Develop a financial plan to manage and grow SPL financial resources
- **Objective 2:** Define relationships among fund-raising organizations affiliated with SPL, such as FOSL (EIN: 55- 0747131) and SPL Foundation (EIN: 61-1741255)
- **Objective 3:** Develop and improve promotional activities and materials that increase donations and income to SPL
- **Objective 4:** Increase funding to SPL from local businesses and non-profits
- **Objective 5:** Expand communication with government agencies and representatives to increase public agency funding for SPL, following all rules and regulations bearing on such communications
- **Objective 6:** Identify and apply for grants to provide funding for SPL, for example with targeted funding for collection development or staff training
- **Objective 7:** Develop a reserve fund

People Development Plan: Maximizing the Potential of Staff, Board and Volunteers

Each year, the library dedicates approximately \$3,000 in its budget for staff development. Over the next two years, we anticipate these dollars will be allocated to training in areas of greatest need. Our Board President will attend state-sponsored events and conferences and other

workshops as necessary to ensure the library continues to operate in a position of financial strength and maintains its established reputation as an essential and thriving community resource. The Library Director will attend conferences, meetings, and workshops designed to ensure our library is conforming to the latest standards and state mandates for optimum library operations. Continuing education of the Library Director is vital to developing and maintaining necessary leadership skills and providing exciting and successful library services. It is also a requirement of the West Virginia Library Commission. The Children's Youth Director will attend courses and workshops to stay current with trends in children's literature and programming and develop outreach programs in partnership with community schools, centers, and businesses. The Director of Library Development will attend seminars and workshops and engage in discussions with other fundraising professionals to advance our marketing and fundraising skills and efforts, to include grant writing and planning successful fundraising events. Our librarian assistants will attend those meetings that will enhance the skills of our core team and strengthen the ongoing interaction with our patrons.

Management Plan

The ultimate success of our development plan will depend upon constant review of our goals and objectives and measureable results. Our plan will be managed by our Library Director and reviewed quarterly and updated as needed by our Board of Trustees to identify areas of success and prioritize any necessary changes.