

M. N. Spear Memorial Library

Long Range Plan *2012-2016*

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Community Profile

Shutesbury is a small rural town in Franklin County. It was established as Roadtown in 1735 and incorporated as Shutesbury in 1761, named for Governor Samuel Shute. In 2011, Shutesbury will celebrate its 250th anniversary.

Situated in the Five College area, Shutesbury is a neighbor to Amherst, Hampshire, Smith, and Mt. Holyoke colleges as well as the University of Massachusetts. These academic institutions have drawn a culturally diverse population to Shutesbury. Residents range from professors, college staff, graduate and undergraduate students to teachers, farmers, contractors, artists, gardeners, and professionals in the area of medicine, law, and telecommunications.

Shutesbury has a population of approximately 1,800 and a total area of 27 square miles. Much of the town is undeveloped and is home to bear, moose, and other wildlife.

In the later half of the 1900's the town's population increased dramatically. It grew from 489 in 1970 to 1,800 in 2,000 with a growth rate of more than 300 percent. In 2004 the town undertook an extensive survey and put together a comprehensive Master Plan to help manage its growth and maintain its character as the small New England community that has attracted so many new residents.

Some of the key issues cited in the plan are preservation of natural resources and open space, community facilities and services, economic development, low-income housing, transportation, historic preservation, and zoning. In 2008, the Town adopted new zoning regulations that address the key issue of preserving natural resources and open space.

The Town is governed by an Open Town Meeting. Our chief elected officials are a three member Select Board. The town employs a full time Town Administrator who manages town business on a day-to-day basis, under the direction of the Select Board.

Currently, 146 children attend Shutesbury Elementary School, in grades preK through sixth. Upon graduation, public school children attend middle and high school at the regional schools located in Amherst.

Three years ago the Select Board initiated the development of a weekly outdoor market from May until October. The market is located in a large field behind Town Hall and features vendors selling local produce and crafts, and opportunities for local groups such as the Friends of the M.N. Spear Memorial Library to have book and bake sales. Other than this seasonal market, there are no public businesses located in Shutesbury. Residents must travel to neighboring communities for the most basic commodities.

Library Profile

In 2010 the M.N. Spear Memorial Library is a vibrant cultural center and community commons. We continue to have one of the smallest library facilities in the state. In fact, out of 371 libraries in the state, only 12 are smaller than our 900 square feet. We are, however, one of the busiest libraries for towns in our population group. In fiscal year 2009, our circulation was 8th highest in the state for towns in our population group (less than 2,000).

Use of the library has increased in recent years due to several factors: the downturn in the economy, the increase in programming, and the many benefits of network membership now available to our patrons.

In March of 2009, we became C/W MARS mininet members. Our circulation was on the rise before we joined the network, with an 11.37% increase between FY2008 and FY2009. In FY2010, our first full year as network members, circulation increased by an additional 19.45%. Our patrons enjoy the convenience of searching the online catalog, placing holds for items, and picking up requests here in Shutesbury. Previously, Shutesbury residents with C/W MARS cards from participating towns were forced to pick up their holds in neighboring communities. Our increase in circulation is coupled with an increase in visits to the library. Visitors to the library increased 14.68 % from FY2008 to FY2009 and another 7.85 % from FY2009 to FY 2010. On one recent Sunday, there were eleven cars in our six-car parking lot.

C/W MARS membership has created a dramatic increase in interlibrary loan traffic, both in number of loans received and number of items loaned out to patrons of other libraries.

In FY2010 our patrons received 3,648 interlibrary loans, compared to 1,144 in FY2009 (we began circulating with C/W MARS in March of 2009) and 461 in FY2008. In FY2010 we sent out 6,407 items to other libraries. In FY2008 we received about nine items each week. We used a half sized delivery bin that fit under a display rack. Currently we receive deliveries three times each week. We often receive three full bins and have between two and four full outgoing bins on each of our delivery days. Finding space to store the bins in our tiny, one-room library has been as much of a challenge as managing the increased workload.

The library is currently open 23 hours per week, year round. This is more than double the number of hours the state requires for towns our size. Our hours are Monday and Wednesday, 11-1pm and 3-6 pm; Tuesday and Thursday, 3- 7:30 pm; Saturday, 10- noon and Sunday, 3:30 – 5:30. While we have offered these same hours for the past three years, Shutesbury residents complain that it is "hard to remember when the library is open." We will work to increase awareness of our current hours. Shutesbury residents are using the library more than ever and have been clamoring for more hours. In recent surveys, residents have asked for more evening and weekend hours. The Trustees will work to increase the budget to accommodate more hours and we will work to create a more uniform schedule that will be easier to remember.

The first public Library in Shutesbury was established in 1811 and housed in a jelly cabinet. It was formed by at least 40 "proprietors" who were "desirous to encourage the establishment of a Library in this Town by the name of Social Library."

On April 2, 1884, the Town voted to accept the law necessary to secure a "Free Library" and elected three Library Trustees. Twenty-five dollars was appropriated for the Library, which was opened in the Town House and maintained there until the present building was erected in 1903. This structure, the M. N. Spear Memorial Building, was made possible through a bequest of \$1,500 by Mirick N. Spear of Amherst, with William H. Hemenway contributing a sum for the shelving. In 1934, the Library received an endowment for its maintenance in the form of 45 shares of American Telephone and Telegraph stock, willed by William N. Spear of Springfield, a son of Mirick.

Located in the center of town on the edge of the Common, the Library is a quaint, one-room cottage-style building with a slate roof, diamond-paned windows, a wainscoted interior, and oak floors and ceiling. The building is charming, but tiny. In 2008 a handicapped accessibility ramp and toilet room with a composting toilet were added to the rear of the building. At the same time, the parking area was enlarged from two parking spaces to the current six. The building still lacks access to water, and while someone who uses a wheelchair could now get into the building, the interior of our building would be very challenging to navigate.

The Trustees of the library have been exploring the possibility of expanding the library since 1995. In 2007 the Town was awarded a Planning and Design Grant from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners. A Library Facilities Needs Assessment Committee was formed with a charge to perform an assessment of the current library and the library needs of the community. The committee conducted an extensive survey of Shutesbury residents and held a series of public forums. Through these efforts it was determined that a Library facility of 5,500 square feet would meet the needs of our community for the next twenty years. In June of 2009, an Owner's Project Manager was hired to help with the selection of an architect. In October of 2009 an architect was selected. Throughout the following winter and spring, a site for a new library was chosen, and a schematic design was completed.

At Annual Town Meeting on Saturday, May 1, 2010, a Warrant Article was presented that asked for approval of the new library project and permission to pursue a Library Construction Grant from the MBLC. The vote was 163 in favor, 20 against. The Article passed with 89 percent of the vote.

The Library is governed by a six-member Board of Trustees and operated by a part-time Director who is paid to work 30 hours per week. In 2006 an 11-hour-per-week Library Assistant position was added. The addition of this position makes it possible for the Director to spend more time on administrative duties and programming. There is also another four-hour position held by the Weekend Circulation Clerk and funding for staff to cover the Director's vacation and sick time.

There is a growing volunteer work force, with a volunteer presence during almost all open library hours. In FY2010, 14 volunteers contributed over 1,000 hours of service to the library. Even with this increase in staffing and volunteer help, there is a constant backlog of shelving and processing. The staff work area is very small and there is barely room for one staff person and one volunteer. We are unable to accommodate more volunteers in our current facility.

The current Library collection includes some 8,265 books; 593 audio books; 2,131 videos and DVDs, and 34 magazine subscriptions for children and adults. We also have some special items such as museum passes and two Kill-A-Watt devices that are used to measure the electricity used by home appliances. Until a year ago, we supplemented our collection with items from the regional book mobile. Unfortunately, this service is no longer available due to budget cuts and we have been exploring ways to supplement our collection.

Our collection is constrained by space. We add 20 to 30 items per week, but must also weed an equal amount annually. While it seems that we have used every possible inch of floor space, we were able to add one new shelf unit in 2009, enabling us to increase our children's audio and non-fiction collections. Because circulation of VHS tapes has continued to decrease as people move to other technologies, we have been thinning VHS tapes. This has created room for more DVDs, which continue to be popular. Most recently we were able to create a new Young Adult Manga section, where there were once VHS tapes. This new Manga section highlights our small but growing collection and has been enthusiastically received by both teens and tweens.

We have two public access computers with high-speed 24/7 wireless Internet access—something that is not available to many Shutesbury residents who rely largely on dial-up Internet connections. It has proved a popular service, with patrons sitting outside the building when we are closed using their laptop computers at the picnic table or in their cars in the parking lot.

The Director, staff, and volunteers work hard to promote the services and programs that the library offers. We maintain a website and a Facebook page. We also include flyers and newsletters in quarterly town-wide mailings and the weekly elementary school newsletter. A marquee on the library lawn promotes our latest events.

The population of Shutesbury for 2010 is 1,800. There are 1,015 Shutesbury residents (approximately 56 percent of the population) registered to use the Library.

Total circulation for Fiscal Year 2008 was 20,707.

Total circulation for Fiscal Year 2009 was 23,711.

Total circulation for Fiscal Year 2010 was 26,679.

Mission Statement

The M. N. Spear Memorial Library strives to provide Shutesbury residents of all ages with materials and programs to meet their education, entertainment and information needs in an environment that fosters community. We aim to be a place where past and future are joined, not only in our collection of local historical information and current technological resources, but also by bringing together community members young and old to share and learn from one another. We endeavor to help all our patrons make the most of the current technologies that can provide vital information services, as well as entertainment and cultural enrichment.

Vision Statement

In 2006 when the Library Director and Board of Trustees were developing a long-range plan, the main obstacle preventing the library from providing the collections, services, and programs that Shutesbury residents wanted from their local library was the size of the current building. In surveys done in 2004, 2006, 2007, and 2010, Shutesbury residents repeatedly indicated a desire for more books, more programs, more hours, and more services.

As we develop this long-range plan, much has stayed the same. We must still cull one item for every item we add. With such limited space, items must *earn their shelf space*. If an item doesn't circulate, it can't stay. Limited circulation doesn't translate to unnecessary materials, however. For example, middle and high school students occasionally come looking for assigned reading, only to find that we have a very limited selection of classics. Or, a patron may discover an author by reading a new book and be disappointed to learn that previous books by the same author had to be weeded to make room for the new.

It is our library's goal and responsibility to stay current in its collections, but we are slow to add new types of materials due to the lack of space. For example, we have discussed adding a third desktop public computer but have not been able to make the space.

Our patrons want room to sit and read, to visit with neighbors, to study and do research. They want room to browse. They want room to sit and read to their children.

In 2006 we said "And these are just the basic needs. Residents envision a Library where they can go for cultural enrichment—to view art, to listen to speakers, to share poetry and literature, and to watch films. They want a cafe where they can meet their neighbors and talk about their favorite new book, or discuss the issues of the day. They want a dance space, a yoga space, a place to share ideas." All of this is still true.

In response to our community's needs, we have made many changes and improvements over the past five years. We joined C/W MARS to increase the variety of materials available to our patrons and improve access to interlibrary loan. We redesigned the entire floor plan of our one room library, creating a few extra feet of shelf space and a seating area. We also added portable shelving that can be rolled away to make room for small programs such as our weekly story hour. We added a handicapped accessibility ramp and a composting toilet. We have developed a website with links to databases offered by our network and to the state library system.

With hopes of expanding our community of library users and library supporters, we have added a variety of programming, mostly in borrowed spaces at Town Hall and the Elementary School. With support from the Friends of the Library and the Shutesbury Cultural Council, we offer a weekly story hour, monthly movie night, community-wide reads, art and craft workshops, author visits, and a variety of family programming.

In fiscal year 2010 we offered 88 programs with almost 1,400 attendees.

We are also in the process of applying for a library construction grant from the MBLC.

Our vision, then, is to provide a space that is big enough to do all of this and more. We will build a new library for the Shutesbury community that is approximately 5,500 square feet. In this new building we will develop new collections, offer a greater variety and depth of programming, and we will welcome the community to make themselves at home. In the meantime, we will continue to strive to make the most of the space we have.

Goals and Objectives

Goal 1

The Town of Shutesbury will have a Library with space and facilities to accommodate growing collections, programming, and services. This facility will meet the public's needs for the next 20 years and beyond.

Objectives:

1. The Board of Trustees will apply for a Library Construction Grant from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners.
2. The Trustees will seek matching funds and final approval of the project from Town Meeting.
3. A Library Building Committee will be formed.
4. An Owner's Project Manager and Architectural Firm will be chosen.
5. A New Shutesbury Library will be designed, based on the specifications outlined in our Library Building Program and the schematics created during the pre-design phase.
6. A contractor will be hired.
7. A new Library will be constructed.
8. Plans for moving to the new facility with minimal interruption in service will be created.
9. Capital fundraising efforts will continue.

Goal 2

Library services will be available during hours that are convenient for all residents of Shutesbury.

Objectives:

1. Evaluate current hours in relation to usage and public requests.
2. Advocate for an increase in town appropriation to accommodate increased hours.
3. Investigate other sources of funding for increased hours.
4. Add more hours if funding becomes available.
5. Bring hours into alignment to make them easier for patrons to remember.
6. Create publicity plan to increase public awareness of hours.

Goal 3

Every Demographic Group will be served by the library

Objectives

1. Assess demographics of library users and evaluate collection and services to determine areas for improvement.
2. In response to feedback gathered in a recent survey, evaluate Young Adult collection.
3. Invite teens to join a Young Adult advisory board.
4. Find ways to address needs for an increased teen collection and services until more space becomes available.
5. Create publicity about the current YA collection and the online resources through C/W MARS that will appeal to teens.
6. Identify other demographic groups that are underserved and develop plans to address their needs.

Goal 4

The Public will have access to library materials and information to meet their recreational, educational, and cultural needs.

Objectives:

1. Provide a strong selection of popular materials (books, audios, videos, periodicals).
2. Identify areas of the collection that need improvement
3. Coordinate with local schools to ensure required materials are accessible through the library.
4. Provide excellent public service that encourages patrons to ask for assistance and information whenever needed.

Goal 5

All Patrons will have access to collections and services offered through C/W MARS membership

Objectives

1. Train all staff members on using the online resources available through C/W MARS.
2. Publicize materials and services available through C/W MARS.
3. Offer training and support to patrons who want to use the C/W MARS online features including holds, renewals, and the Massachusetts Virtual Catalog.
4. Publicize online databases provided by our network and the MBLC.
5. Provide training and support to patrons on using online databases.
6. Offer patrons training and support to use the Digital Catalog offered through C/W MARS.
7. Investigate adding an electronic reader, such as a Sony reader or Nook to our collection to enhance access to the digital catalog for our patrons.

Goal 6

Everyone will know what their library has to offer

Objectives

1. A website will be maintained that includes information about programs, services, hours, links to C/W MARS, databases and other appropriate materials.
2. New technologies and online resources, such as social networking sites, will be used to communicate with the public.
3. Library news will be shared through free town resources such as town-wide mailings and school newsletters.
4. A marquee on the library lawn will be updated regularly.
5. Press releases will be sent regularly to local media about library happenings.

Goal 7

The Library will have policies and procedures in place to ensure a well-organized and consistently operated library.

Objectives

1. Evaluate current policies and procedures for effectiveness and relevance.
2. Determine areas where policies are lacking and make a plan to update and create new policies.
3. Create Policies for facilities that will be available in the new library, such as a community meeting room use policy.

Action Plan Fiscal Year 2012

1. Actions related to the construction of a new Shutesbury Library

- The Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners will announce Construction Grant awards in July 2011. The Trustees hope to be on the list of libraries that will be awarded a grant.
- The Trustees will seek final approval of the project and permission to borrow funds to match the MBLC grant from a Special Town Meeting in late summer or fall, 2011.
- A Building Committee will be formed.
- An Owner's Project Manager and Architect/Designer will be hired.
- Capital fundraising will continue.
- The design phase of the project will begin.

2. Actions related to improving and expanding public service in our current facility and preparing for a move to a larger facility.

- In preparation for best use of the Young Adult room in the new library, a YA focus group will be formed.
- Conduct comprehensive review of library policies.
- Create a schedule for updating existing policies and adding new policies.
- Identify policies that are missing and needed.
- Advocate for an increase in Town appropriation in order to add more public service hours.
- Conduct comprehensive review of the collection with goal of eliminating items/formats that will not be moved to the new library.
- In Celebration of the Town's 250th anniversary, Shutesbury's 2011 Summer Reading Program theme will honor Shutesbury history.
- Library staff will participate in ongoing continuing education opportunities offered through the Massachusetts Library System.
- The Director will work with a volunteer to change the format of the Library website to a blog that is easier to update and can have interactive features.
- In an effort to increase public awareness about public service hours, a publicity plan will be created. Book marks listing the library's hours will be distributed to patrons when they visit the library, and periodically, the hours will be listed on the marquee, and publicity efforts will increase as new hours are added.
- Trainings will be offered for patrons wishing to learn how to use C/W MARS features such as the online catalog or digital catalog. These trainings will be publicized.

3. Actions related to maintaining the quality of service developed during the past three years.

- The Director will apply for grants from the Local Cultural Council to provide two family programs, a young adult program and an adult program.
- The Director will work with the Friends of the Library to provide additional programming.
- The staff will strive to maintain a pleasant browsing atmosphere. The collection will be well organized and shelved neatly.
- The Director and staff will strive to keep the collection current and fresh by adding new materials on a timely basis and weeding effectively.
- The Director and staff will strive to maintain a welcoming atmosphere.

Methodology

In 2007 the Town was awarded a Planning and Design Grant from the MBLC. A Library Facilities Needs Assessment Committee (LFNAC) was formed with the following charge:

- To evaluate the town's current library facility and services.
- To survey the community, determining both satisfaction levels with the current library and unmet needs.
- To create a library building program that describes a library facility that will meet the needs of the Shutesbury community for the next 20 years.
- To hire an Owner's Project Manager and an architect to help design an expanded library facility, based on the specifications provided in the building program.
- To prepare a library construction grant application to be submitted to the MBLC by January 2011.

LFNAC conducted an extensive town-wide survey in the fall of 2007. In the spring of 2008, a series of public forums was held to discuss the possibility of building a new library. The committee also held a series of forums in the winter of 2009 and spring of 2010 to discuss site selection, the schematic design, and cost estimates for the new library. LFNAC presented the plan for the new library at Annual Town Meeting on May 1, 2010. The results of the LFNAC survey, community forums and town meeting were all used to help inform this long range plan.

Members of LFNAC and the Library Director have met frequently with Rosemary Waltos, MBLC Library Building Consultant, to discuss the building program, schematic design and construction grant process.

In July 2010 the Library Director prepared a survey about the current library's services. That survey was mailed to every household in Shutesbury, was available at all Library programs and at the Library, and was available online. There were 80 responses. Questions about the quality of service, collections, programming, hours, and communications were included. The survey, and compiled results, is attached.

The Library Director and Library Trustees met with Mary King, advisor from the Massachusetts Library System. Mary explained best practices for developing a long range plan and the required elements of a quality plan. The Library Director and Trustees held long range planning meetings outside of their regular monthly meetings to review the survey results and to develop a new long range plan. Part-time Library staff and the Town Administrator were invited to read and provide feedback on drafts of the long range plan.

Survey results

Simply put, Shutesbury residents are eager for a new, larger library. In each of the surveys conducted, residents expressed an interest in expanded collections, programs, and services. They want space to sit and read, work online, and visit with neighbors.

The Board of Library Trustees has made addressing this need a priority and is in the process of applying for a library construction grant from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners. The Trustees are also involved in helping to launch a Capital Campaign for the new building project. In Fiscal Year 2012, the Trustees hope to officially accept a library construction grant from the MBLC and enter the design phase for a new library construction project. The MBLC plans to announce grant awards in July 2011. If awarded a grant, the Trustees will ask a special town meeting in fall 2011 to approve acceptance of the grant and to provide matching funds.

Our community's discussion about the need for a new library has been ongoing and far reaching. Much effort has been placed on this goal. At best, however, the earliest we could expect to construct and move to a new building would be at least two years from now. In the mean time, we strive to provide the best possible service with our current facility. Our most recent survey focused on the current services and collection. The results confirmed many of the expectations we had about what residents want from the library, but also provided some surprises.

The survey results suggested that some residents are not aware of the types of collections and programming we currently offer. Other responses made it clear that our hours are hard for people to remember. We plan to expand community outreach so that residents will be aware of our hours and the wealth of materials and programming currently available.

When asked how we could improve our services, residents responded with two overwhelming sentiments--build a larger building and add more hours. In the short term we can work to increase the number of hours that we are open in response to this demand. In the long term, we strive to supply the larger building as well.

We asked residents to rate a variety of services with letter grades and to provide an explanation for grades below a C. Most of the explanations referred to space. While we can't immediately address the space issue, we can work to increase awareness of the materials available through C/W MARS. We can also review materials selection practices, circulation statistics, and holds, and subsequently make appropriate adjustments.

Fifty-six percent of survey respondents are comfortable with C/W MARS features, such as placing online holds and renewals. In other words, there are still many residents who are not comfortable with this valuable new resource. We can work to increase awareness and proficiency with all of the features of C/W MARS, including using the online catalog and the digital catalog.

With increased use of the library, and planning for a new library, the next few years will be a challenging and rewarding time for our community and our library. The community feedback, and analysis of that feedback, will help us plan as we strive to provide the best possible library service as we move forward with design, construction, and occupancy of a new library in the next few years.

TRUSTEE APPROVAL

This plan is submitted with the unanimous approval of the Board of Trustees of the M. N. Spear Memorial Library, September 14, 2010.

Karen Traub, Chair

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