

Goodnow Library  
Board of Trustees  
Tuesday, April 11, 2006  
Goodnow Library, Small Conference Room  
7:30 p.m.

## **Minutes**

**Present:** Bob Iuliano (chair), Jill Browne, Barbara Pryor, Carolyn Anderson, Lily Gordon and Bill Talentino

**1. Call to Order and Minutes:** The meeting was called to order at 7:30. Due to the lack of a quorum in March, no meeting was held.

Financial Report: Bill expects a surplus in utilities and Contracted Services. Some significant Building Maintenance tasks remain: spring landscape work and spring cleaning of carpets and flooring.

**2. Strategic Plan:** the meeting focused on finalizing the Vision and Mission statements, and conducting a SWOT exercise as part of the Strategic Plan.

**a) Vision and Mission Statements:** the Trustees reviewed and approved the statements proposed by the Strategic Planning Committee. Barbara Pryor explained that the Committee looked at three different version of each statement. The proposals presented most accurately reflected the reason why the Library existed –its purpose, and how it fulfilled this purpose.

**b) SWOT Exercise:** as part of the process of establishing Strategic Plan goals, the trustees were asked to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the Library –factors that would contribute to or hinder the Library’s ability to fulfill its mission over the next few years. The trustees had received background material on the SWOT exercise prior to the meeting. Attached are the lists that were generated during the session.

**3. Downloadable Audiobooks:** This proposal was discussed last year and then tabled, because of the proposed vendor altered their proposal. Bill outlined the pluses and minuses of this product and the new proposal. He recommended that the library offer downloadable audiobooks to the public. Recorded Books, the largest publisher of digitized audiobooks, offered a number of MLN libraries an attractive introductory offer to subscribe to this service - a 60 percent in the annual subscription cost for two years. Audiobooks are extremely popular. The product is emerging as the new format for audiobooks. It offers a number of advantages to library users and the staff. Wellesley started a program in January and has been pleased with the response. The primary drawback to the product is that Apple is not willing to alter its stance on copyright protection of audiobooks and, as a result, iPod’s are not compatible with this product. The trustees agreed to offer this product to users. Bill will speak to the Friends about it again as well. He will ask if the Friends want to share the cost for a subscription.

**4. Adjournment:** 9:30. (C. Anderson/J. Browne)

# SWOT EXERCISE

We talked about doing a SWOT exercise for our meeting. A SWOT identifies present strengths and weaknesses of an organization and possible threats and opportunities for it. The goals of a strategic plan usually build upon an organization's strengths to address opportunities and potential threats to the organizations mission. Awareness of strengths and weaknesses help to keep goals realistic. **Please think of three (or more) strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats related to Goodnow for our meeting.**

**\*Strengths** are attributes of the organization that are helpful to the achievement of the objective.

**Weaknesses** are attributes of the organization that are harmful to the achievement of the objective.

**Opportunities** are *external* conditions that are helpful to the achievement of the objective.

**Threats** are *external* conditions that are harmful to the achievement of the objective.

The SWOTs are used as inputs to the creative generation of possible strategies, by asking and answering the following four questions many times:

1. How can we **Use** each Strength?
2. How can we **Stop** each Weakness?
3. How can we **Exploit** each Opportunity?
4. How can we **Defend** against each Threat?

(\* This section is taken from Wikipedia)

Below is my SWOT for Minuteman. I thought it might serve as a useful example. It is interesting to note the connectivity of the four categories. The flip side of a weakness is often an opportunity. The same holds true for strengths and threats. Technology can be a threat to libraries and, at the same time, provide opportunities for libraries to be more relevant.

## **Criteria for Evaluating SWOT's**

The steering Committee for MLN's Strategic Plan put together the following criteria for assessing the significance of SWOT responses. Eventually the Strategic Planning Committee will use it to identify Goodnow's most prominent responses.

1. Was this issue mentioned by many people?
2. How great an impact does the issue/need have on Goodnow?
3. How great an impact can Goodnow have on this issue?
4. Will this require development of new service goals and programs?
5. Is the issue on the agenda of other types of library organizations in the state (MLN or the MBLC) and are they better suited to fill this need?
6. What are the financial implications of addressing this issue?
7. What is the opportunity in addressing this issue?
8. What are the consequences of not addressing this issue?

## **TRUSTEES SWOT RESULTS**

### **STRENGTHS**

Library facility- attractive and well maintained

Building

Building

Building/facilities

Staff- helpful and appreciated by customers

Staff- helpful and appreciated by customers

Staff –willingness and ability to adapt and introduce changes/technology

Staff –experience and skills and commitment to personal service

Service philosophy of library –pluralistic and inclusive

Service commitment to community –administration and staff

Leadership of trustees and director

Trustees' commitment and teamwork

Library's reputation with residents and town officials

Library's reputation with public and town government

Support of town's residents

Library's role as a community center

Residents' exceptional use and interest in library resources/services

Efficiency of library –making most of resources

Friends support

Friends

Town's financial support

Support of other town departments –particularly Tech. Administrator and Town Manager

Support of town departments: highway, parks, Technology, personnel, building and

Town Manager

MLN resources/services

MLN resources/services

Collaboration with other agencies –particularly MLN

## **SWOT RESULTS**

### **WEAKNESSES**

Understaffed

Level of staffing

Staff overwhelmed by activity

Level of staffing- hours open, ability to meet service demands, and carry out other duties

Staff development

Staff's composition–reliance on part-timers

Funding

Dependence on town and state funding

Dependence on state funding for delivery and other services

Reliance on Friends' funding

Library's book/AV budget

Collections insufficient to meet demand

Unable to meet the variety of material demands

PR

Marketing/PR

Marketing- publicity about resources/services

Building maintenance as facility ages

Landscape maintenance

Delivery of shared resources

Delivery and inefficiencies in resource sharing

Ability to compete with technology, especially for young adults' interests

Technology keeping pace in terms of skills/knowledge and formats/equipment

Dependence on MLN

Emergency Plan

School/Library Coop

## **SWOT RESULTS**

### **THREATS**

Town or state budget cuts

Funding

Dependence on Friends, town and state for most funding

Funding – reliance on town

Increasing circulation and other service demands versus limited staff & resources

User demands for resources becoming more varied –harder to meet wide range of interests

Technology –cost to keep up-to-date with equipment, formats and software

Technology –competition from Google and others for users

Technology – ability of commercial vendors to offer and market/brand digital and Web resources/services may render libraries obsolete

Technology –pace of change -cost and staff training  
Pace of change- staff training  
Dependence on MLN – what if becomes unstable or too costly (fee and staff time)  
Dependence on MLN  
Disaster –fire etc

## **SWOT RESULTS**

### **OPPORTUNITIES**

Technology to expand/improve services – downloadable audio/video, wireless web access ...  
Technology as tool to support staff – self checkout (RFID), cordless phones etc.  
Technology to market/deliver resources – downloadables, group lists, museum reservations, virtual reference...  
Alternative sources of funding – Goodnow Foundation, Friends, Sudbury Foundation  
Support of town officials for increased funding  
Goodnow Foundation  
Grant opportunities  
Strategic alliances with other agencies/groups  
Collaboration  
Collaboration – MLN, Digital Commonwealth, other libraries and agencies  
Library's reputation – marketing opportunity  
Strategic planning  
Exceptional demand for library resources and services in Sudbury  
Out sources some services – some children's programming...