

PLAINFIELD PUBLIC LIBRARIES Trustees Report for 2013

The trustees spent this past year working on several policies, including ones for interlibrary loan use, patron privacy protection, and a credit card policy to streamline purchasing and bill-paying.

We looked at findings brought back by the town's Americans with Disabilities Act compliance committee and have asked the selectboard to allow us to solicit proposals for a ramp.

On October 1st, the Philip Read Memorial Library went live with the online catalog, joining the Meriden Library in offering users the ability to look up and reserve books remotely. As the libraries have come more and more into the digital age, we are working to find ways to share between the libraries to make them more efficient – and handle increased demand. Cataloging has continued at both libraries. Suzanne Spencer was elected to the board. Mark Pensgen had decided to run for reelection this year.

The board would like to thank the library directors, aides, and volunteers who give countless hours to Plainfield's libraries.

We welcome and encourage interested residents to join us for our open meetings, which are generally held on the second Monday of each month at alternating libraries. Minutes are available for your review on the Town's website and on the libraries' new and updated websites.

Anita Brown, chair; Hillary Sundell, vice chair; Mark Pensgen, Treasurer; Nancy Liston; Suzanne Spencer, Secretary
Library.trustees@plainfieldnh.org



Max, a special guest at the reading of Sarah Gillens' book, "Bravo for Bravo" at the Philip Read Memorial Library. Photo by Nancy Norwalk

Town of Plainfield Library System Proposed Budget

	Total Budget	Total Actual	Budget
Income	2013	2013	2014
Town Appropriation	\$113,268	\$113,823	\$117,658
Trust Funds	\$3,250	\$3,300	\$2,700
Gifts/Grants	\$150	\$2,856	
Book Fines/Copier	\$50	\$536	
Book Sales	\$0	\$17	
Total Interest Income	\$10	\$27	\$10
Encumbered Funds		\$4,360	\$4,854
Misc Income	\$600	\$180	\$600
Total Income	\$121,688	\$125,098	\$125,822
Expense			
Salaries	\$69,323	\$67,915	\$70,483
Sick Pay	\$1,285	\$0	\$1,285
Total Library Materials	\$14,700	\$14,749	\$16,200
Telephone	\$1,620	\$1,736	\$1,620
Electricity	\$4,100	\$4,434	\$4,700
Fuel	\$8,900	\$9,171	\$8,980
Water/Sewer	\$800	\$499	\$800
Supplies	\$2,300	\$1,812	\$2,300
Postage	\$500	\$258	\$500
Professional Activities	\$900	\$433	\$600
Programs	\$1,000	\$2,008	\$1,000
Furniture/Equipment	\$300	\$1,318	\$1,050
Elevator	\$1,700	\$1,111	\$1,700
Maintenance	\$4,600	\$4,601	\$4,900
Automation/Cataloging	\$2,300	\$2,207	\$1,600
Computer	\$2,800	\$1,980	\$1,700
Trustee Expense	\$650	\$175	\$1,350
Misc Expense	\$200	\$47	\$200
Encumbered Funds	\$4,360	\$3,976	\$4,854
Total Expense	\$122,338	\$118,429	\$125,822
Net Ordinary Income	-	\$6,669	

Town of Plainfield Library System Proposed Budget

Other Income, Expense and Liabilities

Income/Transfers

Bldg Fund Gifts-from Friends of PRML	\$85,834	\$20,143
Transfer from Blg fund-Meriden	\$3,586	\$7,850

Expense

Building funds Expense-PRML	\$85,834	\$20,143
Building funds Expense-Meriden	\$3,586	\$7,850

Net Other Income and Expense

Less 2013 payable items (encumbered)	\$4,854	
Total Net Income	\$1,815	

Fund Balances-Year End

Philip Read Checking	\$6,450
Philip Read Fines Account	\$2,591
Meriden Checking	\$5,186
Meriden Petty Cash	\$47
Meriden Fines and Fees account	\$269
Savings	\$17,977
Vanguard Money Market	\$38,061
Vanguard Windsor Fund	\$26,917

MERIDEN LIBRARY

I am happy to report that 2013 was another year of growth for the Meriden Library. In both statistics that we track daily, patron visits and items circulated, there were increases over the previous year. 6,459 individuals visited the library and 9668 items were circulated during the year. With both newly registered and re-registered patrons the library added 120 patrons for a total of 325 patrons.

We continue the work of digitally cataloging all holdings of the Meriden Library. At year end 8591 items have been entered into the database. That number includes 307 new items that we added to our collection. 768 worn, under circulated or outdated items were withdrawn. I expect that all of the estimated 10,000 books, videos, audiobooks and equipment that we own will be cataloged in 2014. Although this is slow and detailed work I am confident that when the process is complete we will be offering our patrons an organized collection that is up-to-date and appropriate for a small public library.

In addition to the materials on our shelves our patrons also have access to 7,206 audiobooks and 6,606 e-books through our paid membership to the New Hampshire Downloadable Consortium. This year 714 e-books and audiobooks were downloaded. That is a more than 60% increase over last year. More and more people are using

electronic devices and we are happy to be able to provide them with a source for free books.

An improvement that was made to the physical space of the library was the installation of a circulation desk. Space was reconfigured and bookshelves moved to allow for the new desk and a computer station for our patrons. It has made an enormous improvement in the working space for staff and for the comfort of our patrons who use our public access computers.

The Meriden Library hosts on-going programs for both adults and children. Books groups and the Genealogy club meet monthly. During the winter months, "Game Time" is held for adults to gather with friends and neighbors for various board games. We hold a weekly story time for young children, evening crafts programs for families and after-school and vacation programs for school aged children.

Special programs and speaker presentations are offered throughout the year. In April, together with the Philip Read Memorial Library and the Meriden Bird Club, we sponsored the program, Discovering New England Stone Walls presented by Kevin Gardner. It was a wonderful collaboration with more than 90 attendees.

We had a very fun and busy summer with many children participating in the "Dig Into Reading" summer program. We held a kickoff event in late June that, thanks to the great Town of Plainfield's road crew, included a visit from the town's front end loader. Singer and song writer, Steve Blunt, performed an outside concert on our lawn in July. We also held story times with guest readers, Jeff Robbins and "Mr. Woody" and evening programs for families.

The Friends of the Meriden Library contributed time, energy and resources in their goal to make the Meriden Library a vital part of the village. Their annual plant sale raises funds to support the mission of the library. The Friends sponsored several programs that brought people of all ages together, "Warm Your Winter With Soup and Good Books", "Cool Your Summer With Ice Cream and Good Books" and a New Hampshire Humanities Council program, "Mary Todd Lincoln: An Unconventional Woman". I am very grateful to the group for their support.

Terri Crane joined our staff in January as Library Assistant. She and Lori Estey provide all levels of library service to our patrons and often rise to the challenge of filling the many other needs that occur in a small library.

Volunteers provided 215 hours of service this year. The great accomplishment of cataloging our collection is being fulfilled by three very dedicated volunteers; Barbara Wendt, Jeanne Thompson and Fawn Goodrow. Lee Abrahamson has helped with many projects and so many others came forward at the call for help when we needed it this summer. Huge thanks to all of you!

I also want to acknowledge the many hours that are devoted by the Trustees of the Town of Plainfield Libraries. Anita Brown, Nancy Liston, Mark Pensgen, Suzanne Spencer and Hillary Sundell provide the leadership and governance that continues to improve our libraries.

Meriden Library Growth Indicators

	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2013</u>
Patron Visits	5751	5787	6459
Items Circulated	7763	8046	9668
Number of Programs	87	74	85
Program Attendance	863	748	1224

Respectfully submitted,
Mary S. King, Director Meriden Library



Young readers getting ready to "Dig Into Reading" at the Meriden Library.
photo credit M. King

FINAL REPORT MERIDEN LIBRARY ADA STUDY COMMITTEE June 25, 2013

(Summary)

Committee Charge, Members, Activities

The Committee's charge (full text attached) was to examine the need for ADA compliance at the Meriden Library; seek any funds needed for the Committee's study in time for action at the Town Meeting in March, 2013; figure out a range of ADA-compliance options and their pros, cons, and costs; and complete this by December 31, 2013.

Committee members were Brad Atwater, Judy Hallam, Bob Kline, Amy Lappin, and Rod Wendt (Chair).

In our 6 months of work, we had 6 meetings. Minutes of each are included with this Final Report. Our work included the following:

1. *Seeking a clear understanding of the legal landscape*, what Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act REQUIRES the Town of Plainfield to do with respect to accessibility to public facilities generally, and the Meriden Library specifically. This involved significant contact with the Governor’s Council on Disabilities, as well as the Disabilities Rights Center, and in the end did NOT produce a “black & white” legal framework but rather one of “gray”.
2. *Developing an assessment of where Meriden Library stands* in terms of meeting the ADA requirements for full access to all services and programs. We do not meet the standard.
3. *Developing very rough cost estimates of 4 directions* toward ADA compliance, ranging from small (a ramp) to very big (a new building), so that we understood the broad parameters of these directions before investing significant time in any of them. This was done at no charge by John Brown of Estes & Gallup, and quickly showed us that some directions made no sense, while others might be pursued.
4. *Discerning the best way forward for the Town of Plainfield in a “gray” legal setting with some significant costs for full ADA compliance.*

Conclusions

1. **Full ADA access to the Meriden Library requires all patrons being able to access all offerings of the library, either by physical access (“I can get to it myself”) or staff access (“staff can get to it for me”). This includes all media (books, tapes, etc.) and programs (meetings, etc.)** Meriden Library falls far short on “I can get to it myself” physical access. The upper floor can only be reached by climbing the outside front entry stairs. Once inside, the lower floor requires descent down a steep, twisting staircase. The bathroom is not large enough for a wheelchair. The Meriden Library does the best it can on “staff can get to it for me” access, with very willing staff that delivers books to homes or to cars waiting outside. Programs are also, whenever possible, offered in physically accessible spaces so that all might participate.
2. **The legal landscape for how we get to full ADA physical access compliance for Meriden Library, and the risks along the way, is gray rather than black & white.** We received two legal/expert opinions that said different things. The more conservative said the moment we do ANYTHING to the Meriden Library, inside or outside, we are committing ourselves to do EVERYTHING to make it fully accessible – access to both floors and an ADA-accessible bathroom. The more flexible said we can add a ramp on the outside to provide access to the upper level WITHOUT triggering the requirement for complete access to everything, BUT the moment we begin interior alterations those requirements WOULD be triggered. However, we see a safety route here -- if we do “partial compliance” now, but are also planning in earnest for “full compliance” in the future, that provides significant legal defense against not being in full compliance with our first step.

Importantly, there are no “ADA Police” who come swooping down on unsuspecting Towns in violation. Rather, someone has to lodge a complaint that Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act is not being adhered to, and then an investigation is undertaken.

3. **Having a fully ADA-accessible library (Philip Read Memorial Library, PRML) on the other side of the Town of Plainfield is either helpful or limiting, and the legal opinions differ on which it is.** The more conservative legal opinion said that if Meriden is open hours that PRML is not, then patrons without disabilities have more access (PRML hours + Meriden hours) than those with disabilities (PRML hours only), which is a problem. And, if programs offered in inaccessible Meriden are not identical to those offered in accessible PRML, that is another problem. The more flexible legal opinion said that having a fully accessible library across town significantly reduces the pressure to make Meriden Library ADA-accessible in general.
4. **Full ADA accessibility for the Meriden Library will be costly to achieve in any way that makes sense.** The options considered are detailed under “Findings” below. The only reasonable ways to achieve full access are either to add on the back of the existing library with full access features including an elevator (a \$400,000 to \$500,000 project), or build a new fully-accessible library facility somewhere else in Meriden (a \$800,000 to \$1,250,000 project). Lesser projects (like adding an access ramp and inside elevator to the current building, \$250,000) have flaws that make them undesirable.

Recommendations

1. **On balance, we believe the best approach to improving Meriden Library access by people with disabilities -- while balancing reasonable legal risk and reasonable fiscal responsibility -- is to put up a simple ramp providing simple access to the upper level NOW, while studying full-access solutions in a broader, town-wide, multipurpose usage context.** There was a strong desire on the Committee to be able to do SOMETHING to improve access for patrons in the short term, even if it stopped short of full ADA compliance. This was underscored by the realization that FULL compliance solutions were very costly, and would take a long time to realize – if ever. This was further complicated by the sense that any major Town construction of new or renovated buildings should consider ALL the needs of the Town, not just the needs of the Meriden Library. We believe building something that could be used by a variety of Town people for a variety of purposes makes more sense than a library-specific construction project, especially when the price tag is in the \$400,000 to \$1,250,000 range.
2. **The “simple ramp” portion of our recommendation will provide only partial access (in a legal ADA context), but will make access easier for many people and increase the use of the Meriden Library while we figure out a broader, longer-term solution.** For the person in a wheelchair, a simple ramp would allow them to get inside the library, talk to the library staff, request books or other media, and participate in community meetings IF they were on the upper level. Importantly, others who do not have a “disability” but find it difficult to access the library via the front steps (especially seniors with canes or walkers) would also benefit from a simple ramp access.
3. **The “simple ramp” could become a Plainfield community project, and we believe be done within the existing reserves in the Town’s ADA Access fund.** While the Committee received estimates for a permanent institutional grade concrete

ramp with significant alterations to the front access to the library (\$40,000 to \$50,000), we did not ask for estimates for a simpler, shorter-life ramp that could serve until a broader, more comprehensive solution could be determined. However, we believe that a simpler ramp, if designed by people within the Town of Plainfield community, and constructed with volunteer help, could easily be done within the \$26,500 currently in the Town's ADA Access Fund. At Town Meeting in March 2013, a woman urged the Town to consider a volunteer project to build such a ramp. Design and materials specifications would require further work, but we urge the Town to use local (ideally volunteer) design talent and consider both pressure-treated wood and synthetic materials (such as Trex or Azek) for the ramp.

4. **The “study full access solutions” portion of our recommendation should involve a broader, more comprehensive analysis of the Town’s facility needs, because we believe that major expenditures on new construction or renovation best serve the community when they look at ALL the community needs, not just the needs of one entity (the Meriden Library).** Having multiple functions in a single space could be more efficient all the way around, as common needs (restrooms, meeting space, etc.) could be shared and it is fewer buildings to maintain. While we clearly have not studied Town needs (beyond the Meriden Library accessibility needs), the following have come up in conversations over the months:
 - a. The Meriden Town Offices need energy efficient upgrades – maybe a new space would work better.
 - b. The Police Station is quite small and quirky, maybe another space would work better.
 - c. The Post Office wants to move away from Main Street, Meriden. Maybe they could be a tenant.
 - d. Seniors like a place to meet. A Senior Center would be wonderful.
 - e. A central place to deliver social services – like community nursing – would be great.
 - f. Community meeting space is limited. Currently we use the Plainfield School or churches for larger community meetings.
 - g. And, of course, the desire to make the Meriden Library fully ADA-accessible.
5. **Studying the broader Town facility needs should involve a broader committee and have a broader charge than the committee assembled to investigate the ADA accessibility needs of the Meriden Library.** The charge should involve looking at the total Town facility needs, including Town offices, Plainfield School, the needs of seniors, the needs for access to social services, and possibly others. The committee chosen should reflect the breadth of the needs being considered. Some members of the Meriden Library ADA Accessibility Committee might be willing to serve on such a broader committee, although each would have to be approached.

Respectfully submitted,

Rod Wendt, Chair



PHILIP READ MEMORIAL LIBRARY

Calendar Year 2013

Your community center, the Philip Read Memorial Library, is brimming with activity and resources for everyone. The library has a great collection of materials for patrons to check out or use in the building—books, movies, audio, computers, downloadable e-book and audios, magazines, museum passes, access to Ancestry.com and Heritage Quest, genealogy and special collection material. In 2013, items checked out of the library totaled 12,214; computer users numbered 1,112; and 3,931 searches were performed on Ancestry. There were 7,943 patron visits during the year. Researchers from across the country continue to use our extensive special collections of genealogy, Maxfield Parrish and Cornish Colony material.

A major achievement in 2013 was “going live” with the automated catalog and circulation system, as part of the Howe Library Consortium. Volunteers are entering every item in the library collection into the computerized system. As of December 31, 13,543 items have been bar-coded and entered. These dedicated volunteers have logged 618 hours achieving this. Even though the collection is not fully automated, we started using the system in October. Approximately half of our holdings are being electronically checked out. Patrons may access the catalog from home to see the collection of both the Philip Read Memorial Library and the Meriden Library. The community owes a lot to these dedicated volunteers.

The Philip Read Memorial Library is very fortunate to have many other volunteers who are helping with story hour and programs, filing, computer upkeep, snow shoveling, helping at the circulation desk, processing items and other tasks. The total number of volunteer hours in 2013 was 1,124. Our volunteers contribute greatly to the library’s successful operation.

Activities were many. The summer reading program theme was “Dig into Reading,” and we held programs on plants, the Plainfield Puffer (the library’s champion racing worm), multi-media story hours, and “Critters ‘n Creatures,” a live animal presentation. Other programs were monthly story hours and book discussions, movies, Saturday morning board and card games, a performance by the Momentum Theater, Medicare informative sessions, and International Game Day. For the tenth year, the library co-sponsored the summer children’s theater performances by the Papermill Theater. This series was voted the Best Children’s Theater in the Upper Valley. A total of 369 people attended the eight plays at the town hall. We were pleased to collaborate on programs with the Meriden Bird Club and Meriden Library (*Discovering New England Stonewalls*) and the Cornish and Plainfield Schools and the Cornish and Meriden Libraries (*Live Free & Eat Pie*).

This year five Plainfield residents/natives published books and presented readings at the library: Sarah Gillens (*Bravo for Bravo*); Mari Serebrov (*Mama Namibia*); Jim Schubert (*The Maya and the Moor*); Helen Taylor Davidson (*Prelude: a Novel and the 1854 Diary of Adeline Elizabeth Hoe*); and Viola Sawyer Lunderville (*A Not-So-Small Time Town-Growing Up in Plainfield, NH*). These books are available for sale or borrowing.

The Friends of the Philip Read Memorial Library continue to support the library by helping with projects, such as the 4th of July parade float (jointly with the Meriden Friends), cleaning up Rt. 12A as members of the New Hampshire Adopt a Highway Program, and raising funds to finish the downstairs of the library addition. The Friends have been raising these funds for the past nine years and have made great progress. The walls, ceilings, and lights are up and painting is being done. The Friends still must raise funds for the flooring and bookcases. A finished meeting room will be very welcome for the eight local organizations who meet regularly here, as well as a larger space for programming. As promised, no tax dollars are being used. Contributions are very welcome at any time.

I was fortunate to receive grants for a new copier from the James Tasker Covered Bridges Fund, for programs from the Claremont Savings Bank and a consortium of the State Library, and \$1200 of children's books from the Libri Foundation (with matching funds from the Friends).

Unique this year was that interior scenes were filmed in the library for a movie that Meriden native Will Sheff, of the Okkervil River Band, is producing (they needed a card catalog) and my participation in World Book Night. I volunteered to be a book giver for this worldwide program, along with volunteers from 6,000 towns across the country, handing out free books to town residents on the same night in April. The object of the program is to promote reading. For professional development I attended meetings of the Librarians of the Upper Valley, the annual CLiF Conference and took webinars on core collections and weeding.

Thank you to all the volunteers, patrons, staff, and trustees, who make the library a wonderful, vibrant community center. It is a fantastic place to interact, receive and provide help and information, and to enjoy our many resources. The staff and I delight in helping our patrons with whatever their needs are. The Philip Read Memorial Library is a great place to visit and work.

Nancy Norwalk, Library Director



Children unpacking the new books from the Libri Foundation grant at the Philip Read Memorial Library. Photo by Nancy Norwalk.