Argyle Free Library

Strategic Plan

For 2019 to 2024

January 6, 2018

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Executive Summary

The world around us is changing at a very fast rate. The Argyle Free Library has developed a Five Year Strategic plan to help the library remain relevant and of value to the community. The Strategic Plan will be the cornerstone for designing programming, selecting materials, choosing new services and many other types of decisions.

The introduction explains how we collected information to develop this plan.

Then we take a brief look at the history of the Argyle Free Library which clearly shows a long succession of residents who worked very hard, sometimes with scant resources, to establish and maintain a library for Argyle.

The demographics indicate the various groups we serve.

The Mission Statement, Vision Statement and Value Statement are included so the reader can see the alignment of the statements and follow the flow of thinking and perspective that has been used in writing this plan.

The heart of the Strategic Plan is the three goals which have been targeted as important for the library to focus on. Each goal has several tasks. Each goal has been chosen to help the library work as a community hub and resource as well as to support life-long learning.

- Goal One is to raise the profile of the library.
- Goal Two is to provide the community with modern technology.
- Goal Three is to assist in building community in Argyle and nearby areas.

By adopting this plan, the Board of the Argyle Free Library is committing to follow this plan. A new plan will be written in five years which will build off the successes and failures of the plan presented here.

1   Introduction

1.1   PLANNING SUMMARY

The Library Director (LD) and Board of Trustees met with Erica Freudenberger of the Southern Adirondack Library System (SALS) to review *The New Planning for Results* long-range planning model. A strategic planning committee was formed consisting of the Library Director, representatives of the Board, and Friends of the Library. The first step was to identify community needs and desires, which could then be prioritized into service goals and objectives for the Argyle Free Library over the next three to five years. A series of ASK exercises was performed and summarized to begin the process of learning what kind of community people wanted and what might need to happen to bring us closer to that model. The ASK exercises were developed by the Harwood Institute for Public Innovation for the American Library Association.

On April 26, 2018 a town-wide community meeting was held at the Argyle Firehouse. The meeting was advertised in local papers and on social media. Board members identified key stakeholders in the community and contacted them directly to encourage attendance. Twenty-four people gathered for the meeting. Erica led us through the exercise as a group and contact information was collected. Erica then summarized the findings and provided the summary to committee members.

The strategic planning committee met again with Erica to discuss the ideas that came out of the process described above and brainstorm goals and measures for the plan. With three goals identified, Erica began to populate the strategic plan template, forwarding it to committee members for further input. The new Library Director, Adah DeRosier, was incorporated into the process and through a series of meetings, a workable format was chosen and population of the Strategic Plan continued to develop.

Upon completion, the draft plan was shared with the Board of Trustees, library staff, and Erica Freudenberger for input, posted on Front Porch Forum, then sent by email to the community group that participated in the town wide meeting, as well as the village and town boards. Hard copies were made available at the library and town hall. The Plan was revised accordingly after all comments were reviewed.

1.2   HISTORY OF ARGYLE FREE LIBRARY

The history of a public library in Argyle began in the early 19th century. It was an idea that took hold in the hearts of a number of Argyle residents. People who loved to read and valued the printed word joined efforts to bring the pleasure of reading to their community.

Recorded certificates of incorporation for the purpose of creating public libraries indicate that in 1805 the intention existed to establish an Argyle Library at the home of Pelag Bragg. The home also served as a tavern, and stood at the corner of Main and Sheridan Streets, the present location of Stewart's.

In 1823, a certificate of incorporation was issued to the Argyle Social Library to be housed at the home of Joseph Rouse. Historic records list Rouse's home as an inn. It was located on the site of the former IGA store and parking lot.

At the turn of the 20th century, several reading circles were active in the town of Argyle. Books for one of these reading circles were kept at the home of Dr. Stillman on East Street in Argyle Village (the large house next to the former Grange Hall). Books were borrowed and returned informally. Other reading groups in the town operated in a similar manner.

By 1920, it became clear that the interest in reading could be better satisfied by establishing a library. The members of the Village Improvement Association were instrumental in this process, and the book collections of the reading groups became the basis for the library's holdings.

The office of the late Dr. Sill became the first home of the Argyle Free Library. The provisional charter issued at that time became a permanent charter in 1974.

In 1927, Cora Breason Mott and Anna Breason Gilchrist donated the building in which the library is presently housed to the Library Association. This is one of the oldest buildings in the village.

During the 1950s, Mrs. Ralph McGeoch appeared on the television program "Queen for a Day" to request assistance for the Argyle Library. Her efforts resulted in a new sign, drapes, and remodeling. It was completed in 1964.

In 1958, the library became a charter member of the Southern Adirondack Library System, better known as SALS.

By the 1990s, it was clear that more space was needed at the library. Construction on a new wing started in 1994 and was finished in 1995. A dedication of this new wing was held on June 11, 1995.

Over the years, Argyle Free Library has grown from one room, heated by a wood stove and lit by a kerosene lantern, into a fully automated library with children's programs, a meeting space, and a computer area. Beyond the books on the shelves, the Argyle Free Library also has access

to the holdings of 57 libraries! In addition, patrons of Argyle Free Library have access to thousands of eBooks and Audiobooks online. In 2014, the Argyle Free Library won the SALS Library Program of the year for the Underground Railroad Program sponsored by the Friends of the Library.

Throughout its history, the Argyle Free Library's steady growth has been the result of the community's appreciation for the benefits of reading. The people of Argyle have always held a commitment to the idea that a strong community needs a vital public library. They have always demonstrated a willingness to work hard to achieve and sustain that goal.

Today, the future of libraries is not only a place to store books, but also a place to learn and connect with others. Libraries in the 21st century offer WiFi and public computers for patrons to explore all of the opportunities the Internet has to offer. Many offer makerspaces where patrons can learn new skills such as how to knit or code. To keep up with these exciting changes, Argyle Free Library is again facing a need to expand so we can continue our tradition of offering the best and most up-to-date services we can to the community. Once again, as it has in the past, it will be turning to its community for support as it seeks to grow into this new century.

Argyle Free Library's history of service to the community is its foundation. Its future is in your hands.

2   DEMOGRAPHICS

It is important to understand the members of our community, so that we can obtain materials and develop programs that are applicable to them. The numbers below were obtained from the U.S. Government's most recent census data (2010) and the Southern Adirondack Library System's (SALS) 2017 data.

- Argyle population (ZIP code of 12809): 3,528
    - Under 5 Years of Age: 174 or 4.9%
    - School Age (5-19): 678 or 19.2%
    - Adult (20-59): 1,865 or 52.8%
    - Seniors (60-85+): 811 or 23%
- Hours Open/Week: 25
- Library materials circulated in 2017: 12,052
- Interlibrary Loan, Materials Borrowed in 2017: 1,975
- Interlibrary Loan, Materials Loaned in 2017: 1.744
- Programs Held: 99 **
- Program Attendees: 670

** SALS counts the number of programs held to be the number of instances of each program. For example, the Great Books Reading Club meets once a month. Therefore, each time they meet is counted as one program. So, considering that the Knitting Group meets once a week, the TED Talks and Great Books Reading Club have a program every month, and there are multiple times the Summer Program has events, the count of 99 for our programs is approximately correct.

The major sources of the 2018 funding for the Argyle Free Library are:

Total	$76,760
Town	$11,000
Village	$ 500
School District	$59,760
Book Sale	$500
Donations (est)	$5,000

3 MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Argyle Free Library is to develop and maintain facilities, resources, and services for individuals, groups and organizations in the community it serves. This will include providing books, multimedia materials, internet access and public computers to meet the changing needs of all persons for education, personal enrichment and recreation.

4 VISION STATEMENT

The Argyle Free Library (AFL) sees opportunity for assisting and enriching our community by offering services as a community hub. These services strive to build connections, partnerships and relationships for individuals as well as groups. AFL can serve as a physical gathering place as well as a coordinator/creator for off-site events. The variety of services (books, DVDs, programs, etc.) are intended to offer broad appeal to people of all demographics, including but not limited to: young/old; singles/families; and long-term residents as well as new arrivals.

5 VALUES STATEMENT

We believe in life-long learning. And we believe that quality of life for the community and for the individuals in the community will be improved through learning, sharing, connecting and having new experiences.

6 GOALS

6.1 Goal 1: Raise the Profile of the Library

6.1.1 Meaning of Goal 1

he library will play a more visible role in the community, becoming a hub for community interaction. The library will participate in planning and hosting community events. People of all ages will be drawn to the library because it's a welcoming and fun place to visit; a place that provides unique and engaging programs and resources.

The library will achieve this goal by increasing program attendance, increasing circulation of materials, and maximizing the use of the library and its resources.

6.1.2 How to Achieve Goal 1: Raise the Profile of the Library

The following sections provide details on the tasks required to achieve our goal of raising the profile of the library. It also describes a means to measure whether each task was successfully completed.

6.1.2.1 Goal 1, Task 1: Increase Program Attendance

One task to raise the profile of the library is to increase attendance at library programs. The Library Director will be the lead for this task. The following table details the specific objectives and steps needed to accomplish this task.

Objective	Measurement /Evaluation	Action Steps	Resources Needed
AFL is more visible in the community and outside of it. AFL becomes a hub for community interaction, planning and hosting unique and engaging programs and events.	Track program attendance: - Pre-registration for larger events - Digital Patron counter - Sign-in sheets at each program. Accurately report program attendance in the Annual Report.	Use program management forms before program promotion to ensure well-thought out and organized programs. Plan appropriate number of low-cost or no-cost programs, inside and outside the library. Create a monthly e-newsletter template & begin collecting patron email addresses. Increase use of social media, Front Porch Forum, newspapers, and in-library advertising.	Include programs in the budget each year. Volunteers for help putting on different library programs. Building Use Policy refurbishment with board of directors. Allow LD time to create a template and maintain the newsletter each month.

Objective	Measurement /Evaluation	Action Steps	Resources Needed
AFL is a welcoming, accepting, and fun place to visit, drawing people of all ages.		The LD will track the time required for writing the newsletter, advertising library events, etc. Create a list of local newspaper contacts for press releases. Maintain AFL website to keep it current. Get out into the community and see what types of events people are interested in attending.	

6.1.2.2 Goal 1, Task 2: Increase Circulation of Materials

Another task to raise the profile of the library is to increase the circulation of materials through development of our collection of books, e-books, DVDs, maker kits, etc. The Library Director will be the lead for this task. The following table details the specific objectives and steps needed to accomplish this task.

Objective	Measurement /Evaluation	Action Steps	Resources Needed
Provide the community with a well-organized and current collection of materials. Provide the community with training in regards to using e-books so that we have e-circulation numbers as well as physical.	Use circulation reports from SALS to record statistics to measure changes monthly. Compare Annual Report statistics on a year-to-year basis.	Continue weeding the collection by pulling out of circulation any items that have not been used in 5 years. Develop a plan for regular research of new materials and available grants. Create eye-catching displays. Create a wishlist for patron material donations.	Budget an appropriate dollar amount to add new items to the collection. Build in to the clerks' schedules, time to train on how to quickly and efficiently add items into the system. LD, Board members,

Objective	Measurement /Evaluation	Action Steps	Resources Needed
Provide the community with materials that are of higher interest.		Collect patron suggestions for new materials. Develop a plan for Incentivized Check-outs and Reader Advisories. Make strategic changes to library layout to increase circulation.	volunteers, and FOL

6.1.2.3 Goal 1, Task 3: Determine if Library Hours Should be Changed

The third and last task to raise the profile of the library is to maximize the use of the library and its resources by determining if it would benefit the community to modify the days and/or hours the library is open. The Library Director will be the lead for this task. The following table details the specific objectives and steps needed to accomplish it.

Objective	Measurement /Evaluation	Action Steps	Resources Needed
Maximize use of AFL and all its resources based on needs of community	The patron counter will help us determine busiest and slowest days/times. Staff of AFL can also attest to which days/times are busiest and slowest	Over the next year, staff will track library usage and program attendance using a patron counter and the spreadsheet. Restructure hours and programming based on most viable days and time frames at AFL. Poll patrons on preferred days and hours. LD will use program attendance to improve programming for the following year.	Patron counter Spreadsheet to track patron attendance Time for LD to track program attendance and plan programs

6.2 Goal 2: Provide 21st Century Technology to the Community

6.2.1 Meaning of Goal 2

Because the library is a resource for technology as well as books, videos and other materials, the library staff must provide state-of-the-art computers and other current technical tools, and be able to assist patrons with their use. The following is a list of tasks to be accomplished in order to ensure that AFL is providing 21st century technology and support to the community:

- Train staff to use SALS tools to maintain library inventory
- Train staff to support public access to technology
- Provide technology training for patrons – both one-to-one and classes, as appropriate
- Work with school district to create Teen Tech volunteers to assist with technical projects and provide technical training to patrons
- Consider what emerging technology to purchase

6.2.2 How to Achieve Goal 2: Provide 21st Century Technology

The following sections provide the details on the tasks required to achieve our goal of providing 21st Century Technology to the community. It also describes a means to measure whether each task was successfully completed.

6.2.2.1 Goal 2, Task 1: Train Staff to use SALS tools to Maintain Library Inventory

Ensure the AFL staff are fluent in the use of all tools that SALS provides to maintain the library inventory. The Library Director will be the lead for this task. The following table details the specific objectives and steps needed to accomplish this task.

Objective	Measurement /Evaluation	Action Steps	Resources Needed
All staff members are able to use the SALS tools (Polaris) to add and remove materials to and from the AFL catalog	Each staff member successfully performs the tasks in the training plan.	LD to evaluate each staff member to determine what knowledge gaps exist for each person. LD to prepare a training plan for each staff member, detailing what tasks need to be learned or improved, how the training is to be done, and a reasonable timeline for each task.	Time for LD to evaluate staff members and develop a training plan. Trainers (LD, volunteers, SALS staff) to train each staff member Paid time for staff to train on required tasks.

6.2.2.2   Goal 2, Task 2: Train Staff to Support Public Access to Technology

Ensure the AFL staff are capable of assisting patrons in the basic use of computers and other technology. The Library Director will be the lead for this task. The following table details the specific objectives and steps needed to accomplish this task.

Objective	Measurement /Evaluation	Action Steps	Resources Needed
Ensure that staff is able to provide basic computer support	Each staff member successfully performs the tasks in the training plan.	Define support expected from library staff vs tech trainers For each staff member, determine knowledge gaps Develop training plan for each staff member	Time for LD to evaluate staff members and develop a training plan. Can be a combination of self-paced computer training supplemented with personal training. Trainers (LD, volunteers) to train staff members on required tasks. Paid time for staff to train on required tasks.

6.2.2.3   Goal 2, Task 3: Provide Technology Training for Patrons

The library staff will be able to train patrons in the use of computers, smartphones, applications and other technology to provide them the skills needed for either personal or professional tasks. The Library Director will be the lead for this task. The following table details the specific objectives and steps needed to accomplish this task.

Objective	Measurement /Evaluation	Action Steps	Resources Needed
Provide technology training support that may not be available to patrons elsewhere	For each calendar year, note number of classes, topics, number of students, number of volunteer tutors	Staff to maintain a Technology Logbook of what computer or technology questions patrons ask about Staff to periodically (one week per month) ask patrons what they would like to learn more about and add responses to the Technology Logbook – provide a list of topics to choose from in case they want suggestions	Staff to maintain a technology log of technology areas of interest and interested patrons. Volunteers to lead classes or do one-on-one training. Computers available for training (may need

Objective	Measurement /Evaluation	Action Steps	Resources Needed
		Determine whether a class or one-on-one training is appropriate for each topic Find volunteers for topics of interest. Determine if high school students are available for volunteering. Schedule classes or one-on-one sessions.	to do outside normal library hours).

6.2.2.4 Goal 2, Task 4: Teen Tech Volunteers

AFL has some projects that require computer skills, but lacks the staff to work on those projects. The Argyle Central High School is likely to have several students with the required skills, so AFL needs to reach out to the school to take advantage of those resources. The Library Director will be the lead for this task. The following table details the specific objectives and steps needed to accomplish this task.

Objective	Measurement /Evaluation	Action Steps	Resources Needed
Catch up on backlog of projects	Number of projects that teen volunteers have supported each year Number of teen volunteers Volunteer hours worked	Identify projects that teen volunteers could lead or support Coordinate with school to identify potential volunteers Meet with potential volunteers to explain projects and match volunteers to projects Work with the teen volunteers to define a plan (objectives, resources, tasks, timeline) for each project. Support/supervise the volunteers throughout the execution of the project. End of project recognition (party, college/job recommendations, etc.	Board of Trustees and LD to identify and prioritize projects LD to coordinate with school to identify potential volunteers LD or Board volunteers to supervise projects Time on library computers, as needed

6.2.2.5 Goal 2, Task 5: Identify Emerging Technologies to Purchase

AFL staff will monitor emerging technology, and determine when and what new technology is appropriate to purchase, to ensure that we provide relevant tools and services to the community. The Library Director will be the lead for this task. The following table details the specific objectives and steps needed to accomplish this task.

Objective	Measurement /Evaluation	Action Steps	Resources Needed
Determine if other technology should be provided to patrons (e.g., tablets, e-book readers, USB drives, etc.)	Annual verbal report to Board of Trustees in October	Monitor new technology trends to determine if any are appropriate for library Note any requests by patrons in Technology Logbook	All staff and trustees to monitor technology and give inputs to LD Staff to note patron requests and pass on to LD LD to estimate costs of desired technology, and where to place it in the library Board to evaluate & determine whether to include in next year's budget

6.3 Goal 3: Embrace Collaboration to Build Community

6.3.1 Meaning of Goal 3

In order to ensure that the library is meeting the needs of other service and social organizations in Argyle, the Library Director will meet with community leaders regularly. The goal will be to have at least one meeting with one or more representatives each month.

Additionally, as we met with leaders from other Argyle organizations in the development of this plan, we found that many shared a common concern about the difficulty of finding volunteers from the community to assist with ongoing activities and one-time-only projects. There was discussion of the barriers involved in reaching out to town residents who might be willing to volunteer if they were made aware of needs. Because the library is available to all residents, is professionally staffed, and has up-to-date technology resources, it is in a unique position to be able to reach out to the community and match the volunteer needs of organizations with residents willing to help meet those needs. Therefore, the library will create and maintain a Volunteer Bureau.

6.3.2   How to Achieve Goal 3

The following sections provide details on the tasks required to achieve our goal of embracing collaboration to build community. It also describes a means to measure whether each task was successfully completed.

6.3.2.1   Goal3, Task 1: Create a Volunteer Bureau

The first task to achieve the goal of Collaboration to Build Community is to create a community-wide volunteer bureau. The Library Director will be the lead for this task. The following table details the specific objectives and steps needed to accomplish this task.

Objective	Measurement /Evaluation	Action Steps	Resources Needed
AFL becomes a hub for community interaction, builds partnerships – individuals and groups, old and young, singles and families, long-term residents and new residents	Number of community groups contacted. Number of volunteers registered. Numbers of volunteer requests made/matched Evaluation of staff time needed to maintain bureau.	Develop and maintain a list of volunteers; include contact information and areas of expertise 1. Attend meetings of community groups to explain concept. Ask members to sign-up as potential volunteers. 2. Advertise for additional community volunteers through various media-FPF, posters, fliers, local press. 3. Invite community groups to request volunteers—either for one-time events or on-going needs. 4. Match volunteers to community groups' needs.	LD time Computer database technology Teen volunteers Staff training Staff time to match volunteers to projects Tracking of staff time required to maintain bureau

6.3.2.2   Goal 3, Task 2: Meet with Community Stakeholders

The other task to achieve the goal of Collaboration to Build Community is to meet with community stakeholders to ensure AFL has an accurate understanding of their needs. The Library Director will be the lead for this task. The following table details the specific objectives and steps needed to accomplish this task.

Objective	Measurement /Evaluation	Action Steps	Resources Needed
Ongoing assessment of needs of the community. Build ties/improve communication with community leaders.	Monthly report by LD to Trustees. Program development and/or resource purchases reflecting community needs.	Establish a schedule for meeting with key community stakeholders (school, youth organizations, fire department, local business, town/village government, senior citizens, Washington Center, 4H Extension, etc.) 1. Contact leaders of community groups and other stakeholders, by phone or email, to attend initial meeting. 2. Establish schedule for future meetings. Consider reaching out to the Hartford community and/or school (no local library). 1. Meet with school superintendent and other community leaders to assess interest in collaboration.	LD time

7   List of Acronyms

ACS   Argyle Central School

AFL   Argyle Free Library

LD   Library Director

SALS   Southern Adirondack Library System