

BRANCH DISTRICT LIBRARY SYSTEM
SPECIAL BOARD MEETING
3RD FLOOR MEETING ROOM
MAY 1, 1955 1995

MINUTES

PRESENT: Marilyn Ashdown, Jeanne Berg, Carol Brown, Mary Hutchins, Tim Miller, Richard Sharland and Jeanne Unterkircher.

ABSENT: Martha Hamp.

ALSO

PRESENT: William F. Grimshaw from The Strategic Management Institute, Kalamazoo, MI.

Purpose of Special Meeting: To begin the process of Strategic Planning.

President Sharland called the meeting to order at 4:07 p.m. and turned the meeting over to Mr. Grimshaw.

Grimshaw: Suggested the Agenda titled "Planning To Plan" for the Board to consider what they have in mind according to the future. Each member will voice a viewpoint which will give a picture. An effort will then be made to prioritize the issues and get it started. He will share how to deal with those issues and what is involved. Some planning models will be reviewed.

I. Construct the frame:

- A. Self introduction of participants.
 - 1. Specified issues to be considered in the strategy work:

Ashdown: How are we going to improve resource acquisitions to meet the needs of people? How do we improve technology so that we have communication throughout the community?

Unterkircher: Interested in the library as a whole to acquaint people with what we have to offer and make people more aware in all aspects.

Berg: Agreed with above. From the technology standpoint, what about resource material?

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- Brown: It is important for us to look at fads and trends we see. We realize the Internet is an important trend of the century. Keeping up with different kinds of books and looking at movies and videos, we can see where trends are taking us which enables us to reach out to our communities.
- Hutchins: Follows policies set by the Board and implements them. Excited about us putting our fingers on the pulse. Specifically, very concerned how the Plan Of Service will go in the future. Where are the changes?
- Miller: His students will probably make four or five career changes. They will need resources to use in preparation for future educational and recreational needs.
- Sharland: Enjoys local history collection and is interested in expanding and updating it. Good and sound revenue raising is involved.
- Berg: At the other extreme we must look at the person who needs to learn to read and at the percentage of illiteracy in the county. Quincy has a low to moderate income level. Consider the lack of opportunities.
- Brown: No one else is going to look at our small communities; we have to do it ourselves.
- Berg: Get the community involved. We should have taken a survey. We are doing it because other communities are. Know what the trends are. How well can you prepare a five year plan? Teachers aren't well prepared to teach classes, especially to hungry and abused children.

2. Prioritize the issues:

- Grimshaw: Advised the Board to be prepared to deal with findings and act on them. Say it like it is! He wrote a booklet and handed it out to each Board member to study titled "Employing Strategic Management and Planning Systems: Options For Consideration". The booklet lists five categories:
1. An overview of planning principles.
 2. A description of the system approach to planning.
 3. The role and functions of the leadership team.
 4. An overview of some planning model options.
 5. Preparation of a planning time table or schedule.

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Berg: We serve all kinds of people. We don't want to single out a particular category.

Grimshaw: Get feedback. You are in the information business and your users are everyone in the community and you have to be concerned if you are reaching everyone. Also pay a lot of attention to children because of the association with education. And not too far away there will be more senior citizens than 14-16 year olds.

Berg: Consider the library building itself. Do we need to look at that to look at needs of an elderly population?

Miller: Is it how your services are delivered?

Berg: Home delivery? Books on wheels?

Grimshaw: Remembers a book titled "Age Wave Statistics and Character Of Aging Population And Aging Process in America". Since he read it he is more aware of how aging is put down in commercials and cartoons. Advised knowing demographics in relation to your market.

Recommended "How To Read A Book" by Adler and VanDoren, published 1940. It teaches how to find the "essence" of a book.

It is an enormous challenge to learn to listen to people. It is difficult to do because we have to screen out our own biases and perceptions. Recommended reading "How To Speak and How To Listen" by Adler and "Strategic Questioning" by Ronald Hyman.

Brown: Trends in communities goes along with that. We need to talk to people and need to listen to what they are saying.

Hutchins: This troubles librarians. How do we ask the questions?

II. Basic strategic planning vs. stakeholder-involved planning.

A. Nature of each type of planning.

Grimshaw: Referred to the booklet he handed out. One aspect of getting started is having a vision and seeing that vision in action. Asked the Board to carefully read the "Principals Of Planning, Page 1.

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B. Scope of each

Berg: How often should we do strategic planning?

Grimshaw: Suggested doing it quarterly. Real strategic planning is discipline. A better word than planning is visionary. Do not take anything for granted. We think of entities rather than processes.

Referred to Page 7 in booklet regarding non-traditional model. The secret is preparing questions and staying focused. Advise panel to tell stories about the library to put people on a common ground, i.e. when they first came to the library; what they were first proud of. Tell stories of their vision of the future.

C. Structure of each

Berg: Should we have the staff involved?

Grimshaw: Yes, without a doubt. Persons here everyday are representatives of significant stakeholders.

Hutchins: There are some practical questions about when we do it and what kind of commitments we can get.

Grimshaw: The purpose of this meeting has almost been achieved. You have become oriented to what this is about and how we can shape this to what our resources are regarding people and time. Think and talk about this together.

Brown: Referring to the list of 50 people, questioned the number of people needed to get things done.

Grimshaw: This is very "do-able" but needs organization. He is confident he can help on this.

D. Process of each

Berg: Should we look at the demographics first? " Retired senior citizen" doesn't seem to fit a category.

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Grimshaw: Urged not to jump too quickly. Reluctant to lay out any options because it can be done several ways. Look at the Kalamazoo Strategic Plan which is ready-made. We can lay out a mock strategic plan with structure and process using core values, driving forces, information sources, users of information and resources, technologies, and administrative assistance. If we lay out a preliminary plan, we can have focus groups discuss it. For example, what are your values with respect to the community, etc. Put it in a survey form and tabulate answers. Get the level of approval and what they wanted to add to it.

III. Consideration of citizens or organizations willing to participate in the planning activity.

Berg: Questioned if anyone on the Board has ever done any strategic planning. She has, with Big Brothers/Big Sisters. They look at the process every year to see what direction they are going. It will be a living plan.

Grimshaw: He does a minimum of two strategic planning sessions with graduate students at WMU. There were 35 people at a "future search conference" lasting two days. It was intensive. After you examine and think of challenges, you will grasp it.

Brown: We will face our strengths and weaknesses.

Grimshaw: It is a real learning experience.

Hutchins: The staff implements the vision while keeping basic services going. Timing will be good.

Grimshaw: We need to talk about staff involvement for "vision in action". He will send three texts on strategic planning. He may get an advance copy of text on "mechanics on planning", which shows how and why questions are formed. Play it out in a case setting to get the feel of it. This is a whole new language and we need a glossary of terms. He will send a copy of a book the students loved. You want this to be a tailor made thing with your own recipe.

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Brown: We will realize the ingredients are in our own cupboard.

Grimshaw: You will do well.

ADJOURNMENT: Meeting adjourned 5:50 p.m.

Jean K. Swain

Jean K. Swain
Recording Secretary

Carol Brown

Carol Brown
Board Secretary

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