

## **BACKGROUND**

Red Hook Public Library is chartered to the Village of Red Hook and has been serving the community since 1898. Though chartered to a Village of less than 2,000, in reality it serves the town and school district, a population of approximately 12,000. In 1935 it moved to its current location in an historic octagonal building. In 2010 the Board considered moving into a larger space to accommodate growing space demands. However it was thought then, as now, that the Library must remain in the center of the Village. In this location, it is accessible to walkers, the bus route, and in close proximity to the public schools. It also contributes to the local economy and vibrancy of the Village.

To better address the needs of the community, the RHPL Board of Trustees initiated a construction project in 2011 which added public restrooms and ADA access to all 3 levels of the Library. In 2016, an additional renovation project was completed on the top floor which allows for more programming space. The library is busy for its size. In 2019, the library was visited 86,000 times and 12,000 people attended 700 programs both in and outside of the library building.

The Library achieved its first independent funding in 2011 with the successful passage of a Chapter 414 resolution. Since then, the Library has sought and passed several Section 259 propositions in the Red Hook Central School District. The budget, as of 2020, is 92% supported by local taxpayer funds with the remaining 8% coming from Library charges, donations, fundraising, and grants.

## **RHPL VALUES**

As a shared community institution, the Library seeks to:

- serve the **public good**.
- foster **lifelong development** of mind and imagination.
- empower individuals through equitable **access** to resources and opportunities.
- encourage and engage in **collaboration** between individuals and groups.
- promote **respect** for people, intellectual freedom, and privacy, and
- respond to the community's needs through **growth and innovation**.

## **RHPL MISSION**

The mission of Red Hook Public Library is to serve the community.

## **RHPL VISION**

Red Hook Public Library will contribute to a community that welcomes diversity of thought and culture, fosters communication and understanding, values learning and growth, and provides constructive opportunities for all.

## **PLANNING ENVIRONMENT**

At the time this plan is being written, the country is in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Library has responded by adding services such as curbside delivery and remote tech help, while keeping its doors safely open as state regulations allow. The pandemic and school closings have highlighted many inequities that the Library had begun to address in the past two years. Faced with this emergency, the Library is redoubling these efforts.

The pandemic has also caused economic hardship and instability. Many people are fearful for their futures. Concurrently, given recent racially charged incidents, and an extremely polarized political climate, the country and the local community are deeply divided. Tensions are high and communication is difficult.

## **PLANNING PROCEDURE**

Data used in creating this plan was gathered in several ways.

- An online survey
- A written survey
- Community conversations
- Individual and group conversations
- Discussions with RHPL staff

Conversations centered on two questions:

- What kind of community would you like Red Hook to be?
- What do we need to do to get there?

Several recurring themes were highlighted by both the surveys and the conversations. Those included:

- Equitable digital access and desire for more digital services;
- Desire for Red Hook to be a more diverse community, and more welcoming of diversity;
- Concern about intolerance and political polarization;
- A lack of affordable housing and the presence of economic disparity;
- A need for services, including transportation, for seniors; and,

- Need for better communication in Red Hook, especially for new residents.

The Long Range Planning Committee met on several occasions to discuss the data and form goals and objectives to address those needs and aspirations. These goals are divided into 8 facets that we consider crucial for holistic librarianship:

- Facilities
- Staff
- Policies
- Community Relationships
- Services
- Collection
- Programming
- Budget

## **LONG RANGE PLAN GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

### **FACILITIES - physical building and grounds**

**Goal #1:** A comprehensive Facilities Plan is maintained, reviewed, and ready to be used.

Objective 1: The Facilities Plan will be updated at least once a year by the Director and approved by the Board.

Objective 2: The Facilities Plan will include all aspects of the building with a short term focus on the roof and the facade; major equipment such as HVAC, elevator, and furnace; parking; and lighting.

### **STAFF, VOLUNTEERS AND BOARD**

**Goal #1:** Attract and retain a diverse, talented, and dedicated staff.

Objective 1: The Library will provide living wages, defined as at least \$15/hour, for paid adult staff. *Timeline: 2-5 years.*

*Action:* Seek tax funding that allows the Library to continue to bring wages up while also addressing increasing cost of living.

*Action:* Move towards providing reasonable benefits for both full and part-time staff.

Objective 2: Library staff will continue to represent a diversity of backgrounds and life experiences. *Timeline: present to ongoing*

*Action:* Continue to consider candidates from a broad variety of backgrounds and life experiences.

*Action:* Seek county funding to institute a vocational program for an adult with intellectual and/or cognitive disabilities.

*Action:* Advertise openings in a wider variety of platforms.

**Goal #2:** Attract and retain a diverse, talented and dedicated Board.

Objective 1: Review, and re-approve By-laws of the Board of Trustees. *Timeline: 2021*

*Action:* Board Development Committee will review and make recommendations regarding Trustee recruitment, responsibilities, and education

**Goal #3:** Provide resources staff need to do their jobs in ways that most benefit their individual developments and patron service.

Objective 1: Staff will receive training about using new technology. *Timeline: 1 year to ongoing*

*Action:* Seek training via MHLS, SENYLRC, NYLA, and other relevant professional organizations.

*Action:* Obtain, and train staff to use, new platforms to deliver tech support to patrons in more efficient and effective ways.

Objective 2: Consider tech skills among important priorities in new hiring. *Timeline: immediate*

Objective 3: Staff and board will receive support and training that fosters their empathy and understanding of issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion. *Timeline: 1 year, ongoing*

*Action:* Find and schedule at least one training per year.

Objective 4: Staff members receive opportunities to grow and develop in their jobs. *Timeline: Immediate and ongoing*

*Action:* Discuss individual staff members' needs and goals with them at least once a year.

*Action:* Look for learning opportunities via conferences, workshops, and webinars.

**Goal #4:** The Library will be prepared to handle unexpected crises. *Timeline: ongoing*

Objective 1: Staff will attend Narcan training when offered by local health departments.

Objective 2: Staff will attend AED training every two years.

Objective 3: Staff will be provided with an easy-to-use list of local crisis resources and trained in how to use it to help patrons find the help they need. *Timeline: 2021*

**Goal #5:** Administer a volunteer program that provides opportunities for the following: seniors to share their life experience and expertise while keeping socially active and connected; young people in or entering the workforce to gain skills, experience, and confidence; and ways for everyone to contribute by sharing their passions and knowledge with others.

Objective 1: A Volunteer Handbook will be created that outlines the volunteer program and provides a job description. *Timeline: 1 year*

Objective 2: A system is in place to recognize dedicated and accomplished volunteers will be developed. *Timeline: 1 year*

Objective 3: Volunteers will be given opportunities to grow in their positions. *Timeline: 1-2 years*

**Goal #6:** At least one trained staff member acts as a liaison with senior and elderly patrons.

Objective 1: A position or part of a position includes and describes work as a senior liaison. *Timeline: 1 year*

Objective 2: The senior liaison receives specialized training in order to maximize the benefits of the Library's service to older patrons. They will share what they learn with staff at large. *Timeline: 1-2 years*

**Goal #7:** Develop staff as community liaisons to different community institutions (i.e. town, village, EDC, public schools, Bard College, Rotary, Red Hook Commons.)

Objective 1: Staff members assigned as liaisons regularly attend relevant community meetings, exchange correspondence, and work with representatives of different community institutions.

*Timeline: Immediate, ongoing*

## **POLICIES**

**Goal #1:** Policies will be reviewed and updated no less than every 3 years. *Timeline: 1-5 years*

Objective 1: Develop a routine whereby policies are reviewed and updated. *Timeline: 2 years*

*Action:* Create a master document of policies, their locations, and dates last updated.

**Goal #2:** Major Library policies will be easily accessible in English and Spanish.

Objective 1: Key policies are translated into Spanish. *Timeline: 2 years*

Objective 2: All external policies are organized and easily accessible online. *Timeline: 1 years*

**Goal #3:** Board of Trustees By-Laws are updated at least every five years as required by New York State.

Objective 1: Review By-Laws, and rewrite if necessary. *Timeline: 2021*

## **COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS - between the Library and other institutions, and between the Library and patrons and non-patrons**

**Goal #1:** Continue developing relationships with other community stakeholders, allowing for more complex, meaningful, and effective projects that better the lives of the citizens of Red Hook and of the Red Hook Central School District.

Objective 1: RHPL continues to convene and participate in local discussions related to economic and digital equity; housing; ethnic and cultural diversity; services for seniors; a safe, walkable downtown; and enriching activities for all ages. *Timeline: immediate - 5 years*

*Action:* Staff participates in local groups such as Red Hook Together and the District Level Team.

*Action:* Staff continues to gather and share information from the community regarding residents' needs and aspirations.

*Action:* Collaborate with other institutions to foster a welcoming and vibrant community for all.

*Action:* Collaborate with Historic Red Hook and other institutions to highlight our history.

*Action:* Collaborate with Bard College, Historic Red Hook, Red Hook Community Center, Red Hook Commons, Red Hook Senior Services Committee, and other groups to

expand and improve senior services in Red Hook.

*Action:* Develop a relationship with PANDA-TV to advertise resources, programs, and services for seniors to increase awareness of senior services in Red Hook.

*Action:* Maintain relationships with local newspapers and digital news outlets to communicate Library services and relevant community services to the community.

*Action:* Work with local community activist groups to promote civic engagement and community improvement efforts.

**Objective 2:** The Library will seek to provide library services to non-traditional Library users whether they use the Library in person or not. *Timeline: Immediate, ongoing*

*Action:* Bring services out into the community.

*Action:* Serve non-Library users through outside-the-Library efforts such as free digital access spots, remote materials distribution, contributing to others' programs such as the rec park summer camp, and advocating for underserved people.

**Objective 3:** Work together with other institutions so as to not duplicate services and thereby conserve local resources; amplify existing services offered in the community. *Timeline: Immediate and ongoing*

*Action:* Collaborate with local institutions to develop, and continually update a comprehensive community resources document.

*Action:* Staff provides referrals to local programs and services provided by other institutions.

## **SERVICES (i.e. homebound delivery, translations, tech help, teen room, children's garden, public computers)**

**Goal #1:** Work to bridge the digital divide in RHCS D

*Timeline:* 1-4 years

**Objective 1:** The Library will invest in remote tech help software to help patrons with issues on their home computers, laptops, and devices. *Timeline: 6 months*

**Objective 2:** The Library will organize and implement a long-term laptop/hotspot loans program. *Timeline: 1 year*

**Objective 3:** The Library will continue to convene and facilitate collaboration between various community stakeholders to expand internet options for residents of the village, town, and school district. *Timeline: Immediate, ongoing*

*Action:* Expand WiFi emanating from RHPL into the surrounding village.

*Action:* Create similar access points throughout the RHCS D, prioritizing areas of low income or inadequate service

**Objective 4:** The Library's in-house technology for patrons and staff is up to date. *Timeline: 1-5 years*

*Action:* Maintain public computers no older than 3 years.

*Action:* Update staff computers.

## **COLLECTION**

**Goal #1:** RHPL's collections will reflect the character, needs, and aspirations of the Red Hook community.

Objective 1: Invest in digital materials (streaming movies, ebooks and downloadable audio books on demand) as possible. *Timeline: 2 years*

*Action:* Explore costs, benefits, and barriers to various streaming services.

*Action:* Study the feasibility of diverting collection money from print materials to digital

Objective 2: Prioritize technology *Timeline: 3-5 years*

*Action:* Further develop and maintain a circulating collection of computers, hotspots, and other tech devices.

Objective 3: The collection will be audited routinely to ensure that patrons see themselves reflected on the shelves, as well as people and life experiences outside of their own. *Timeline: ongoing*

Objective 4: There will be a guide for finding Spanish materials in catalog, translated and posted online and by OPAC. *Timeline: 1 year*

Objective 5: The Spanish language collection will continue to grow. *Timeline: ongoing*

Objective 6: The Library invests in more experiential opportunities by providing items such as museum passes and hiking kits. *Timeline: Immediate and ongoing*

## **PROGRAMS**

**Goal #1:** Provide programs that inspire, engage, educate, and connect.

Objective 1: The Library will provide programming that contributes to empathy, civil discourse, and improved relationships in the community. *Timeline: Immediate and ongoing*

Objective 2: The Library will provide programming that increases understanding and appreciation of our diverse community. *Timeline: Immediate and ongoing*

Objective 3: The Library will provide learning opportunities for all ages and abilities. *Timeline: Immediate and ongoing*

Objective 4: The Library will provide multi-generational programming. *Timeline: Immediate and ongoing*



Objective 5: The Library will continue to provide bilingual programming.

Objective 6: The Library will provide multicultural programming.

## **BUDGET**

**Goal #1:** Sustainable funding that will allow for the restoration and upkeep of RHPL's historic building.

Objective 1: Seek sustained funding via 259 and/or chapter 414.

Objective 2: Use targeted fundraising for large projects.

Objective 3: Establish an ongoing fundraising program.

Objective 4: Seek large grants that will contribute to large building projects.

**Goal #2:** Secure sustainable tax funding to attract and retain dedicated staff by offering living wages, pertinent training, and competitive benefits.

Objective 1: Pursue tax funding that supports maintenance and growth of the Library via more competitive wages and training opportunities.

Objective 2: Seek extended-term grant funding that supports the contracting of specialized staff.

**Goal #3:** The digital divide in Red Hook becomes less impactful.

Objective 1: The Library's digital access efforts will move from grant-funded towards being a regular part of the budget. *Timeline: 2-5 years*

*Action:* Include 1G broadband service in the Library budget by 2022.

*Action:* Divert some collection money towards purchasing digital materials to lend by 2023.

**Goal #4:** The Library provides a greater selection of digital materials.

Objective 1: Analyze collection use and consider shifting some money away from print and towards digital. *Timeline: 1-3 years.*

## **CONCLUSION**

The Long Range Planning Committee of the RHPL Board of Trustees would like to thank all the members of the community who gave their time and effort towards the creation of this plan.

This Plan is revised every 5 years. We welcome feedback on its content and implementation. Input and suggestions from community residents are always welcome.