Introduction

The New Berlin Library’s strategic plan is an important tool that helps the library and its stakeholders move together in the same direction, with the aim of providing a library that meets community needs. Our library belongs to the people of New Berlin, and we are dedicated to providing a place where all citizens are welcome, and where it is our hope that all can find something to engage the intellect and imagination. The plan is ideally a living blueprint that should change as we evolve.

The process of creating a new strategic plan was fueled by three different mechanisms. We did a community survey, a staff survey, and used an existing library committee to determine where our greatest strengths and weaknesses lie.

**Community Survey:** In the spring of 2018 we created and distributed a survey in an attempt to gauge interest in the library and determine whether we were missing opportunities with underserved parts of our community. We received almost 1,000 responses, which revealed 96% overall satisfaction with the library. Efforts were made to reach people outside of the physical space of the library as well as within. We were greatly appreciative of the people who took the time and effort to fill out the survey and provide suggestions for improved services.

**Staff Survey:** In addition to the public survey the Board of Trustees distributed a survey to library staff as part of the library director’s annual evaluation. Since the board does not usually get the opportunity to see the director interact with staff the survey was a way to determine staff satisfaction on several levels. These included whether they thought they received an adequate amount of support in their job, opportunities for input in professional matters, opportunity to grow professionally, solving of issues that arise, and whether they feel they are part of a team. Again, satisfaction was high, which is gratifying, but we still look to improve communication and working environment for staff.

**Marketing Committee:** The library staff marketing committee had a meeting where we used SWOT analysis (Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threats) to identify what issues both under our control and out of our control, and how we might use those to further our goals.

This plan offers three goals: Library Services Exceeding Community Expectations, Offer Staff Opportunities for Professional Growth, and Maintain and Improve the Efficiency of the Physical Plan. Under each area I have identified a few quantifiable activities to be used to achieve those goals, as well as a time frame expected to undertake each goal, and budget implications, with dollar amounts when possible.
Strategic Plan 2019-2021

Vision Statement

The New Berlin Public Library Board of Trustees envisions a future in which the Library’s collection, programs, and leadership helps insure the following:

--That every New Berlin resident has the opportunity to enjoy an intellectually and culturally rich life.

--That every New Berlin resident experiences the pleasure of reading and the joy of learning.

--That those needing assistance and information can find it with ease.

Mission Statement

The mission of the New Berlin Public Library is to promote the development of independent, self-confident, and literate citizens through the provision of open access to cultural, intellectual, and informational resources.
Goals

1. Offer Library Services Exceeding Community Expectations

The New Berlin Public Library will always offer the traditional services and programming we have become known for. A rich collection of books and media form the core of our organization. Our story times for our youngest patrons, Summer Reading incentives for all ages, book clubs, Friday movies, and other great programs bring people back again and again. Our staff is constantly thinking up new ways to engage our citizens, both in the library and out in the community.

A. Organize a MakerSpace/Digital Learning Center

- A MakerSpace committee has been formed recently to explore ideas for a MakerSpace and possible Digital Learning center. The group is in the process of studying materials, technology, storage, costs, and location, as well as envisioning how the space will be used. There is a tentative plan to use the current Fireplace Room as a designated space for the program.

Budget: Approximately $8,000. Funding will come from a combination of sources, including the regular library budget, Friends of the Library donations, and donated items. This includes some remodeling of the existing space such as the addition of window treatments, shelves, cabinets, and a lockable portable cart for electronics.

Time frame: 1-2 years to get the program started.

B. City Center/Community Presence

- To increase the library’s visibility in the City Center, we plan to have a semi-regular table at the New Berlin Farmer’s Market during the summer season. While we were conducting the community survey there in 2018 we had a table at the market for a couple of Saturdays in June, and received several good responses from that activity.

Budget: Staff time and regular library budget.

Time Frame: Duration of plan and beyond.
C. Service Learning Opportunities for Local High School Students

- In 2018 a small group of staff and the president of the Friends of the Library met to discuss the possibility of hosting Service Learning Opportunities for local high school students. This is a program that affords high school students within our service area the opportunity to be exposed to different careers and work environments through hands-on experience with local employers. Students would volunteer time at the library in exchange for valuable experience. For instance, a student in a marketing class could assist us with our or the Friends of the Library’s marketing plans. Students interested in library careers could also gain experience through this plan.

  Budget: Regular library budget

  Time Frame: 2019 and beyond.

D. Outreach and partnership with schools and community groups

- Beyond Service Learning Opportunities, we wish to continue our outreach and partnership with all schools within our service area, and build and maintain relationships with personnel. Our youth librarians perform school visits ahead of the Summer Reading Program and on demand. They also do story times at local preschools on occasion.

  We also wish to continue and expand our outreach and partnerships with community groups such as the New Berlin Senior Center and the ElderCare Focus Group.

  Budget: Regular library budget. Some Friends of the Library donation funds may be used for special programs.

  Time Frame: 2019 and beyond.

2. Offer Staff Opportunities for Professional Growth

A. Promote a strong staff to make the library a “destination” workplace.
Over the years we have attracted a great group of people to work at the New Berlin Public Library, and our aim is to keep them here. More than three-quarters of our staff is part time, but we have added two full time positions in the past five years in an effort not only to serve the public better but to retain talented staff. We may increase that number in the future, but even though we can’t offer full time positions to all, we can offer training opportunities that keep people interested and engaged in the workings of the twenty-first century public library.

We can offer training and education several ways. The Bridges Library System offers many workshops throughout the year that are free of charge to system members, and some are even held at New Berlin, given our central location. There is a wealth of online courses and training available as well, often for a minimal fee. Although we don’t have an unlimited training and conference budget we do have money set aside for both, and it is there for our use.

In addition to outside training, staff have developed and participated in our very own Library Learning sessions, where staff members from all departments share their expertise with other staff. Topics so far have included book repair, interlibrary loan, the LEAP Polaris web app, library budget highlights, and Overdrive/Libby ebooks, to name just a few. Possible future topics could involve bringing in someone from the Friends of the Library to explain their role in library funding, Library Servers and Hardware, Behind the Scenes: Processing, and Excel and Word Basics. We currently offer two Library Learning Sessions per month, each repeated a few times to reach as many people as possible.

In addition to all of the above, for the past several years we have offered an internship to individuals who are currently in a master’s program for Library and Information Science. This is a 15-hour per week paid staff position. The intern works in both adult and youth services, and learns all aspects of librarianship, including cataloging, reference work, and programming. It has been a particularly rewarding endeavor, both for the library and the interns.

Budget: Library budget, staff time.

Time Frame: Duration of plan.

B. Perform yearly evaluations and “check-ins” for all staff. All departments to meet several times a year to discuss ongoing concerns. Make staff survey a yearly event to coincide with the director’s evaluation.

- As a city department, we are required to perform formal and informal evaluations on a regular basis, generally twice a year. We do a formal evaluation in spring, and follow it up with an informal conversation with all staff late in the year.
Last year the Library Board conducted a staff survey to assist with the library director’s annual evaluation. It proved a successful tool for gauging staff satisfaction.

Budget: Staff time

Time Frame: Duration of plan

3. Maintain and Improve the Efficiency of the Physical Plant

A. Replace carpeting in areas not done in 2017 and 2018, which will require a Capital Improvement request

- In 2017 and 2018 we were able to replace carpeting in the Administrative Office area, Community Room, Friends Gift Shop, Heritage Room, and the hallway outside the Community Room, Gift Shop, and Heritage Room. These were funded by the city’s Equipment Replacement Fund, which the mayor has offered as an addition to departmental budgets for capital-type improvements that cost less than $50,000. Much of the remaining portion of the building is covered with heavy shelving that needs special equipment to be moved off the floor while the carpet is being replaced, which puts the cost of the project well above the $50,000 limit. I am planning to work with the finance department to prepare a CIP request to carpet the remaining portion of the building, to be included in the library’s 2020 budget.

Budget: Approximately $205,000 per proposal received in 2018.


B. Plan for future space needs within the existing building.

- While adding on to our building or doing any major remodeling other than carpet replacement is most likely out of the question for the foreseeable future, we need to find ways to use the space we have more efficiently while keeping within ADA requirements and general safety. We often find ourselves faced with the prospect of storing or discarding items better left on the shelf, particularly on the first floor in the fiction area and in the Youth Services department. Library supervisors (Director, Deputy
Director, Adult and Youth Services Heads, and Circulation Supervisor) will meet to discuss ideas for better use of existing space.

Budget: Library budget and possible Mayor’s Equipment Replacement Fund monies and Friends of the Library donation funds for shelving.

Time Frame: 2019 and ongoing.

C. Investigate re-design of 2nd floor reference desk area.

- The adult reference desk on the 2nd floor isn’t easily visible when people exit the stairs or elevator, and while we need a librarian on duty at all times, modern reference work doesn’t necessarily require the type of large desk we currently have. One idea for a re-design is a kiosk closer to the stairs. This would free up more space in the current reference area, where the collection has already been greatly reduced due to the availability of reference materials online. Purchase of additional equipment or desks could possibly be funded by the mayor’s equipment fund if that is offered in the future.

Budget: Library budget, Mayor’s Equipment Replacement Fund, Friends of the Library donation funds.

Time frame: 2020 and beyond.

D. Plan for replacement of the sorting machine, self-checkout machines, security gates, and peripherals.

- The current sorting machine, self-checkout machines, and security gates, provided by Bibliotheca (formerly from 3M) were purchased in 2013, with capital improvement funds, eight years after the original equipment was purchased for the new building in 2005. 2019 will bring us into year six of that replacement equipment, and while it is all working well now, we need to plan for its eventual replacement. Since the initial replacement in 2013 cost upwards of $200,000 we will most likely need to use capital funds again to replace the current equipment. I will contact Bibliotheca at some point over the next couple of years to determine exactly how much replacement will cost. The cost may be able to be spread out over a few years, since all components may not need to be replaced at the same time.

Budget: $200,000+.

Time Frame: Contact Bibliotheca in 2020 to determine needs and costs.
Implementation and Assessment

The library director will meet with appropriate staff and other personnel to devise a plan of action for each goal.

Each year for the duration of the Strategic Plan, representatives from the library staff and library board will meet to assess the progress that has been made towards achieving each goal. Adjustments will be made based on issues that may arise during the process.

Barbara Draeger
Library Director
April 15, 2019