



## ***2019 Annual Report***

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### **BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES**

**Chair: Kathy Keohane**

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### **Library Highlights**

- Collection Usage now **10<sup>th</sup>** in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, with 648,000 items circulated – highest in the history of the Library
- Over 950 children, teens and adults participated in one of the most successful and impactful summer reading programs ever – community participation doubled from 2018
- 164% increase in utilization of e materials. Downloads of ebooks, audiobooks, movies, music and other e-materials went from 42,604 to 112,597
- Part of that increase was the ever-popular Hoopla, a source of streaming and downloadable content, saw an increase of 8% from 9,114 views/downloads in 2018 to 9,845 this year
- 18,084 children, teens, and adults attended 941 concerts, story times, book clubs, hands-on workshops, meetings and other library programs a 2% increase from last year
- Reference Librarians answered 29,754 reference questions from patrons. This is an essential function of a public library, to help users find information, and answers to their questions. To see encouraging numbers like this help us to know we are doing our job with this bedrock responsibility of our Reference team
- 1,415 individuals signed up for library cards, bringing the number of cardholders to 16,976 - greater than **64%** of our residents!
- Completed a pilot of “Access 4 Every Student”, a 5<sup>th</sup> grade Library card initiative. Hundreds of 5<sup>th</sup> graders received their first library card. Program in partnership with The Chenery Middle School is adopted and 2<sup>nd</sup> year effort underway. Library card initiative expanded to Kindergarten families
- Completed a much-needed refresh of the Teen Room. New paint, carpet and the addition of comfortable seating helped create a newer and welcoming environment for Belmont teenagers
- Museum passes funded by the Friends of the Belmont Public Library provided 2,531 free or discounted visits to area museums for families and individuals (a 2% increase)
- Library Building Committee completed Schematic Design phase for the Library Project. Belmont Library Foundation now driving fundraising efforts
- This year over 52 individuals contributed over 3500 volunteer hours to the Library. Trustee, Friends, and Foundation Boards, Teenagers working towards community service requirements, some great folks working on grounds beautification, and never-ending support of the friend’s annual book sales just to name a few.



### **Purpose and Duties:**

The Belmont Public Library is guided by the past and focused on the future. Its mission is to enrich the lives of the community by empowering its citizens personal, educational, and professional growth. The Library is dedicated to advancing literacy and fostering life-long learning. We aim to provide a center for information and discovery through innovative programming, robust collections, and responsive services. The Library is a place for Belmont to learn, share, and create, and relax.

### **Summary of Activities and Accomplishments:**

#### **Circulation Services**

The Belmont Public Library was the 10<sup>th</sup> best circulating public library in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts with an overall collection use in FY19 of 648,076 items circulated. This increase makes FY19 the best usage in our Library history. There are over 370 public libraries throughout Massachusetts. In addition to Belmont, the top 10 include the cities of Boston, Newton, Brookline, Cambridge, and Quincy. All of these communities much larger than us and include multiple branches. To be included on a list with these large and successful city libraries shows the dedication and talent of our amazing staff, and also the love and support from a dedicated patron base. When taking these five off the list, the true picture of the Belmont Library is shown, a top five town library in our state of Massachusetts.

We successfully completed another year of our homebound delivery program called “Books on Wheels,” a partnership with the Council on Aging circulating hundreds of items by delivery to homebound citizens in Belmont.

Staff in both the Circulation and Reference Departments carefully select and curate a variety of displays throughout the Library, highlighting current events, holidays, trends and unique interests. These bimonthly displays drive very strong circulation statistics regularly.

The Circulation team handles all items delivered from and to other Minuteman libraries, typically over 110,000 items annually.

#### **Adult/Reference Services**

We offered a wide range of adult offerings this year, offering new programs, and enhancing mainstay offerings. Offerings are guided by the demands and interests of the community and our changing demographics. There was something for everyone among the adult offerings including our mainstay offerings like our Friends Author Series, Dial M For Movies film review group, and Music on Saturday offerings. We also expanded programs including our Library of Things, added ELS conversation groups and launched new programs our “Space Series” and Spanish language groups.

2019 marked the 50th anniversary of the moon landing. We celebrated this milestone during our summer reading program, and as part of our celebration, we interviewed people who had first-hand memories of this historic event. We called it Moon Memories: An Oral History Project. These oral histories are archived on the



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library's SoundCloud account, and available for use through the website. Ask us for guidance and we'll be happy to show you how to access them.

To honor Apollo 11 landing on the moon, we also hosted an inflatable planetarium. The projected show on the inside of a dome was *Life in the Universe* and it took a fresh look at those special places in space that might harbor life, including all of the planets in our solar system. It was a beautiful scenic tour of our universe through the eyes of astronomers looking for clues about the origin of life and the development of intelligence. This program was made possible by a partnership with the Council on Aging – Beech Street Center

Our space series also took some time to focus specifically on Mars, revealing the secrets of the Red Planet highlighted the exploration of the red planet. The program included Percival Lowell's drawings of canals on Mars, a discussion of HG Wells' *War of the Worlds*, and then moved into the modern era with NASA & ESA orbiting spacecraft, landers, and rovers!

Finally, Exoplanets Around Other Stars taught participants how the latest satellites are finding planets around our neighboring stars, and the incredible variety and numbers of planets found among them. We learned how NASA and the ESA plans to explore those newfound planets with the upcoming James Webb Space Telescope. The series was a great success and was a fun way to teach patrons about space and honor the past while looking to the stars.

The Music on Saturday Series hosted concerts throughout the year. We travelled back in time with a special performance by Studio Two, a headlining Beatles tribute band that focuses on the early years of The Beatles. They performed with period attire and equipment. Celtic and Folk Music with Colleen and Sean found common ground among different generations, in their love of the music of Ireland and the UK. They performed traditional and contemporary songs with pleasing harmonies. Violinist Joshua Peckins presented a lecture recital featuring solo violin music by Bach and Ysaye, with warm and personal stories about the composers and their music.

Many authors presented their work to patron through author talks, book groups, and other program opportunities in 2019. These offerings are always well attended, but we really were able to feel the impact had on the patrons this year through the feedback we received, and the circulation of books presented on.

Author Cheryl Suchors discussed her book *48 Peaks: Hiking and Healing in the White Mountains* as part of our Friends Author Series. At age 48, Cheryl set out to hike the arduous 4000 Footers of New Hampshire, enduring breast cancer, and redefining success along the way.

Author Kwan Kew Lai discussed her book *Lest We Forget: A Doctor's Experience with Life and Death During the Ebola Outbreak*. After fighting through yards of red tape, leaving her family, and putting her own health at risk to help suffering strangers, Kwan Kew Lai finally arrived in Africa to volunteer as an infectious disease specialist in 2014, during the largest Ebola outbreak in history. What she found was not only blistering heat, inhospitable working conditions, and deadly, unrelenting illness, but hope, resilience, and incredible courage.

For many years, the Library offered a senior book discussion group as a collaboration with the Belmont Council on Aging. This year the group was retired allowing two new clubs to begin in its place. For 20 years



participants and Librarian Miriam MacNair enjoyed the group thoroughly and we are honored by the contribution this group made to our Library. Miriam now offers a Classics Book Group at the Library and the Council on Aging started a club at Beech Street Center called Page Turners.

The monthly Books and Bites program featured a great collection of authors this year. Miriam spoke on the life and work of the writer Sarah Orne Jewett, focusing on two of Jewett's works of fiction: *Deephaven* and *The Country of the Pointed Firs*--and on the biography *Sarah Orne Jewett: A Writer's Life* by Elizabeth Silverthorne. Miriam also discussed the novel *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen.

We had more great authors speak on their works as part of Books and Bites throughout the year.

- Julie Dobrow - *After Emily: Two Remarkable Women and the Legacy of America's Greatest Poet*
- Sylvia Ruth Gutmann - *A Life Rebuilt: The Remarkable Transformation of a War Orphan*
- Maryanne O'Hara - *Cascade*.
- Belmont Author Sara B. Fraser - *Long Division*
- Stephen Puleo - *American Treasures: The Secret Efforts to Save the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Gettysburg Address*

We hosted a screening of the documentary, *Generation Zapped*. This film highlighted the potential health risks of wireless technologies and provided tips on how you can keep yourself and your family safe. After the screening, we were joined by Cece Doucette, who has helped introduce legislation to educate and protect the public, who facilitated a Q&A session.

At our Fix-It Clinics, participants brought in small household appliances, clothing, electronics, mobile devices, toys, and more and received free guided assistance from volunteers with repair skills to disassemble, troubleshoot, and fix their items. These hands-on events build community connections and reduce the number of repairable objects that are thrown away.

In the spring patrons learned strategies to help maximize social security. John J. Duddy, President of Strategic Tax & Insurance Services, Inc. taught participants about many common mistakes people make when signing up for Social Security benefits.

Journalist and author Robert Whitaker highlighted research that showed long-term outcomes for medicated patients are poor. As a result, new initiatives are emerging that lessen the use of medications and focus instead on creating supports that help children and adults struggling with mental difficulties get well and stay well. A lively and informative Q&A session followed his presentation. This event was made possible by a partnership with Science for the Public.

The Belmont Library hosted renowned bird photographer Peter Christoph for three events: Art of Bird Photography, Birds of New England Swamps, and Whatever Happened to the Birds of J.J. Audubon? He shared his epic birding adventures in a presentation that was both entertaining and informative

In May the Library hosted a Mental Health and Racial Equity talk presented by CHNA17. Its goal was to start conversations and build awareness of the connections between race and health, particularly focusing on mental health.



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Belmont Against Racism hosted a film screening of *Activized: It's the American Thing to Do*. This film profiled a handful of ordinary Americans who have surprised themselves by becoming political activists.

Aldrich Astronomical Society astrophotographer, Kevin Boucher shared amazing Hubble pictures and some of his own photography. During his presentation, Kevin also discussed tips and tricks on how you can capture your own astrophotographs.

Commemorating courage and sacrifice, the Belmont Public Library, in partnership with Belmont Veterans Services, hosted our annual Purple Heart Day Ceremony on August 7<sup>th</sup>

For our adult sessions of the Alien Autopsy Escape Room patrons were tasked with rescuing a surviving alien from the government. By solving puzzles, and gathering clues, participants worked their way through the room, turning off security cameras and disarming laser security systems.

Librarians started the Belmont Public Library Cookbook Club. Working from a different cookbook each month, participants select a dish to make and bring to that month's potluck where they discuss what they liked and disliked about the book. The club has consistently been filled to its capacity participants each month and showcases one of the Library's deepest collections.

Sally Cragin, award-winning columnist and tarot expert, taught a hands-on Tarot Card workshop that included the history of this unique art form and its practices. Patrons learned the rudiments of the four suits, the significance of the numbers, and the interpretation of 'Major Arcana' cards. Participants also got to practice performing readings for one another.

We hosted an evening with author Jonathan M. Hansen where he discussed his book, *Young Castro*, and its implications for our understanding of the history of US-Cuban relations going back centuries and of US-Latin American relations today.

In partnership with The Belmont Gallery of Art, artist Agusta Agustsson presented a Make-Your-Own Cutlery Wrap craft workshop. Using everyday products, participants printed a unique receptacle for eating utensils out of an old cloth napkin for on the go eating.

Daniel Zimmerman discussed his book, *Shots in the Dark*. He read segments from the book followed by several 'how I did it' stories, culminating in a Q&A.

Murder Mystery Party: Haunted Hunter filled our library with mischief, mayhem, and murder! Jest Murder Mystery Co. provided two professional actors to facilitate the evening's festivities. Once everyone arrived, every participant was given a part to play in the story, and everyone was encouraged to embody their given character. After the first act ended in the murder of a ghost hunter, it was up to our audience to decipher the clues, act their parts, and solve the whodunit! There were numerous standout acting performances from the audience, with "Hugh Huffman" taking home a trophy for his brilliantly acted old man character.

The Library hosts several recurring adult events in addition to our author talks and music series. If you never visited our groups like the Knitting Club, Tai Chi, or our Library Director run Dial M for Movies film club, try



them in 2020.

In partnership with the Belmont Media Center we hosted an interactive Halloween experience. Participants walked through the halls of a virtual reality haunted house! While the house was not real...the SCARES were!

Librarian Nancy McColm gave a talk on Ancestry.com library edition, focusing on what's included in our subscription, and how to search in ways that maximize the chance of finding one's family's records. After the talk, all attendees went to the Reference Room to practice what they had learned, and to receive one-on-one help.

We continue to offer two different weekly conversation groups for adult English language learners from countries all around the globe, with a Monday morning group held from September through May, and a Wednesday evening group all year long. These groups serve between 20-30 patrons each week.

Coordinator of Public Services Mary Carter led a yearlong effort to right size the collection of adult materials. Patrons now have easier access to sought after books and materials, and popular collections will now have the chance to grow as needed. In the coming year we will look to cut down on the signage that exists and relocate collections to increase ease of use and navigation within the Library.

### **Technology & Technical Services**

After the retirement of 47-year employee Fred Dooe, we took the opportunity to reassess the way Technical Services functions for the Library. The back of the house services focus on both the management of technology infrastructure, management of materials both as they are prepared for public use, and as they are removed when no longer useful. It made great sense to our Library Director to take both groups of staff members which worked side by side, merge them into one department focused on these backs of the house duties. We also implemented a new reporting structure to better align staff and improve service delivery.

Former Technology Librarian Ellen Girouard became the Coordinator of this new Department called Technology & Technical Services. Ellen hired former Natick Library Director Lauren Pfindner to come and be our new Technology Librarian.

The library greatly expanded its' Library of Things collection in 2019, adding more items, created specialized branding, cataloging, packaging and a dedicated web page. The program was piloted in previous years with great success. In order to highlight this unique collection, logos were created that reflect the library's original branding, but play off it with an expanded color palette. This branding was carried through to the Library of Things page, <https://belmontpubliclibrary.net/services/library-of-things/>, leading to many inquiries regarding these new and exciting lending opportunities. In addition to existing items, the Library of Things now includes a telescope, sewing machine, Nintendo Switch, digital microscope and graphing calculators. Plans are underway to expand this collection even further with more science learning, digital conversion and streaming possibilities.

Belmont patrons continue to expand their use of digital materials. We saw a 25% increase in usage specifically of Hoopla, RB Digital and Overdrive, our three most popular digital circulation methods. The Library can be used, on site, in your homes, even while traveling abroad, these increases year over year show us that while patrons continue to want physical books and other materials, they are also value digital access as well.



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### **Children's**

The Children's Department in Belmont is one of the busiest in the state, currently ranking 11<sup>th</sup> overall for collection use statewide. While our Jane Gray Children's Room is undersized and outdated, it is the destination of children and family's town wide. As the school age population continues to grow, we see our attendance at programs and usage of our collection doing the same.

It was a record-breaking year in the Jane Gray Dustan Children's room. Program attendance at the library and outreach to schools and other partners throughout town totaled 14,971, a 17% increase from our previous year including an approximately 41% increase in the number of attendees specifically at outreach programs held outside of the library building. This increase in outreach programming was a top priority of Children's Librarians.

Librarians regularly visited four Belmont preschools (The Wonder School, Waverley Square Daycare, Belmont Cooperative Nursery School, and Ranjana Jha's family daycare and preschool) and made a special visit to the Henry Frost Children's in the fall. The Library continued to lead weekly story times at the Farmers' Market.

The library built a strong foundation for regular outreach with local elementary schools and Chenery Middle School. During the fall of 2018, the library reached out to the fifth-grade class at the middle school to ensure that all fifth graders had the chance to create a library card of their own. The library enjoyed visits from second graders from the Burbank School and the Wellington School where students were able to learn about library materials and resources and get new library cards.

Librarians have started regular visits to the Belmont Gallery of Art for story times and crafts that connect to their exhibits. The newly reformed Belmont Youth Commission helped provide popular events including an ice cream social for middle schoolers, and a Pizza with the Police event where families could meet and socialize with Belmont Police officers. The Belmont Media Center ran after school programs where kids of all ages could experience Tilt Brush and other virtual reality programs.

Children's program and service offerings are responsive to the needs of the community. As the schools have seen increased demand for services, we have also seen these increases in our Children's programming. We have expanded offerings of programs including story time for 1 year olds to accommodate demand. We now have Chinese story time programs and will look to expand to other language story hours given the diverse needs of the community.

While outreach this year was noteworthy, general partnerships with community organizations and the schools were equally successful. The Library offered many popular after-school activities for older children, including from local Belmont companies and organizations such as The Duct Tape Network, Mad Science, Habitat, and Music Together of Belmont. We were able to launch our first Reading Dog program with the help of our former Coordinator of Public Services, and Elvis, her certified reading partner dog. Our Parent Child Book Club continued to bring multiple generations together to discuss and analyze books while munching on pizza. This book club has gotten specific feedback from patrons who treasure their experiences.



*“This parent child book group is such a sweet way for my child and me to take our very introverted love of books out into the community. It helps us build a stronger bond between ourselves and our community. And it helps him to build skills of engaging in groups in community that will be useful for him across his lifetime.”*

*“With Deborahs encouraging engagement as facilitator, the library book club provides a wonderful social space to share ideas about different cultures and writing craft with peers. It also recently motivated my daughter to read a longer book than before. Because she struggles with dyslexia, this is huge. Thank you Deborah!”*

The Children’s Librarians continued to partner with the local organizations and town agencies throughout this year. The Belmont Fire Department’s Engine 2 visited and gave kids a chance to see a real fire truck up close. A few weeks later, Belmont Firefighter Ross Vona read stories about firefighters and taught fire safety tips during Fire Safety Week.

The Children’s Department came together with the Reference and Young Adult Departments to create fun successful programs. Summer reading programs kicked off with events for all ages including a craft party, a life sized inflatable planetarium, virtual reality, and a movie and craft party. Spooky fun was had by all at the library’s Halloween party which included crafts, cookies, and a virtual reality haunted house provided by Belmont Media Center.

The Children’s Department’s partnership with the Watertown/Belmont Coordinated Family and Community Engagement (CFCE) grant program remains strong. During the school year, the grant program offers a weekly Literacy Playgroup and parent workshops at the library and provides additional programs and resources to library patrons. A weekly summer STEAM playgroup was offered for families with children ages 5 and under.

It’s official – Belmont kids love to read and bead! 957 children participated in the 2019 Books and Beads Summer Reading Program, a 58 percent increase from 2018. Participants earned different kinds of beads for every fifteen minutes of reading, as well as brag tags and books to keep as prizes for reaching a reading goal. The new program also provided volunteer opportunities to middle school and high school students who volunteered over a hundred hours to help distribute beads.

Children’s summer programs drew large crowds, including a concerts from Charlie Hope and Toe Jam Puppet Band, a puppet show from world-renowned performer Bonnie Duncan, new craft programs aimed at tweens. 2,215 people attended Library summer programs.

School vacation programs were also a huge draw. This included Ed’s Comedy Magic Show, Mr. Vinny’s Shadow Puppet Show, visits from real wild animals with Animal World Experience, and the return of our popular New Year’s Eve concerts where children can countdown to the new year early and dance and sing along to music that everyone in the family loves.

A large variety of storytimes and programs for our baby, toddler, and preschool aged patrons were offered. Concerts from popular local musician Matt Heaton, Music and Movement with local resident Rubi Lichauco and musical storytimes from the Powers Music School helped round out our regular early literacy offerings. Sheryl White brought her popular Baby Sign Language and Mindfulness for Preschoolers programs to Belmont. Staff also had a chance to let their unique talents shine. The Ukuladies, a musical duo comprised of two of our





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children's librarians, performed several concerts, and librarians performed their own Halloween puppet show to an enchanted audience of over one hundred preschoolers.

We were thrilled to be able to update the appearance of our Children's Room in 2018. New carpet and paint added some color and brightness to our space. During the renovation we were able to provide children's services in the library's Assembly Room and still provide our usual services and programming.

### **Young Adult Services**

Our Teen Department serves one of our most important demographics in town, our young people in middle and high school. These young adults are in the most important period of their lives so far, and are now discovering what they enjoy, how they feel, and who they are going to be. One of the real joys of our work is watching this time for them happen right in front of our eyes. Our proximity to the schools makes us a daily destination for the teens of Belmont, and we wouldn't have it any other way. Hearing teens talk about loving their library really makes you feel like you're doing it right too, they are totally honest always, so when we hear positive feedback from them, we know it's real.

*"In the past I was worried about coming to the library, because there were lots of kids from school here, and I didn't want them to see me going to the Library. It was really dumb, I mean, they were here too, everyone likes the library, in this town it's cool, and now all of my friends come here all the time."*

*"The Library does the coolest things, it's not quiet or boring, and they always have snacks and fun stuff going on. We come here every day, well, not every day, but it feels like every day. The new YA space is chill too."*

A key accomplishment of the Young Adult department in 2019 is the design and implementation of a remodel of the teen room. The remodel optimized the space usage and improved the comfort of the room. Feedback from teens on this project has been enthusiastic with many new teens enjoying the space. It's become the preferred spot to study, work on homework and hang out.

This year the library offered 113 programs, with 896 total attendees. Due to the aforementioned Teen Room remodeling project, numbers for fall programs were less than projected. However, performance indicators from the summer indicate a very successful year.

This year's summer reading program went through some changes as we revamped it to provide more ways for teens to participate. Rather than using bingo cards, teens were given the chance to earn 20 different embroidered patches that fit the "A Universe of Stories" theme, via traditional activities like reading books, but also via visiting cultural institutions, creating things, or trying their hand at some "adulging." Unlike last year, online sign up was also available. 80 teens signed up for the program, and participation rates were up over last year. Belmont teens earned a total of 300 individual patches.

The patches were not the only new feature of our summer reading program, previous years' summer program offerings have focused on offering all-ages activities, which, while open to teens, did not tend to attract them and would be dominated by children and their families. This year, we expanded our teen and tween only program offerings in June to August, to much success. Young Adult Librarian Rachel Moir tripled our



participation as we went from 97 teens attending 16 teen-only programs during the summer of 2018, to 345 teens attending 33 programs during the summer of 2019.

Girls Who Code, our chapter of the national computer programming organization dedicated to getting young women interested in coding and STEM fields, continues to be a strong presence at the library. The weekly class, which runs 2 semesters, maxes out its 25-person sign up limit, we keep a wait list.

As a final, end of summer celebration, the library hosted teen and tween After Hours Laser Tag in the library, with 24 tweens and teens in attendance.

### **Belmont Public Library Foundation**

The Belmont Library Foundation, a Massachusetts 501(c)(3) corporation, undertakes promotional and fundraising activities for the Belmont Public Library, including construction of a new library building. Now that Belmont's Library Building Committee has created a schematic design for a new building, the Foundation is preparing a major capital campaign to support fundraising efforts. The Library Foundation will be leading the effort to raise private donations for this important project. Please visit [www.belmontlibraryfoundation.org](http://www.belmontlibraryfoundation.org) to learn more.

### **Friends of the Belmont Public Library**

The Friends of the Belmont Public Library continued to provide strong support for the library, funding a wide range of programs reaching all ages and interests. The Friends program highlights included author talks, music on Saturday programming, and many other previously mentioned programs.

One major focus each year for the Friends is the summer reading program including funding the book prizes for the Children's Summer Reading program. In 2019, the Friends also funded summer Thursdays with movies, crafts, and games for families. The Friends also continued to fund the library's popular museum pass program. The museum pass program offers free and discount passes to 20 museums and parks. The Library circulated 2437 museum passes this year.

The Friends continued their focus on the exterior of the Library, planting new shrubs and trees and tending to seasonal planters. We are very thankful to Belmont Garden Club volunteers who also pitched in on the Friends' beautification efforts.

Hundreds of Belmontonians support the Friends of the Library through their membership annually, and also through the thousands of donated books, films, and music cd's which come in daily. The sale of these items is an important part of their revenue. In addition, the Friends were able to provide used books for a variety of other worth causes including materials for teacher libraries in Belmont schools and free books for patrons of the Belmont Food Pantry.

### **Library Administration**

#### **Goals for 2020:**

- Continue to drive collection usage, program offerings and community participation. Explore opportunities to enhance existing programs and develop new ones to meet the evolving needs and demographics of the community



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- Outline detailed plan to update the Long Range Plan for 2021 – 2026. Achieve significant results against this plan
- Complete future state staffing model. This will include an assessment of current staff skills, staffing models and will result in a plan for a target state staffing model to meet the future needs of the library.
- Staff Development: Expand opportunities for conference attendance. Provide management training for Department Heads. Conduct in-service staff development programs including health and safety training
- Continue to enhance the partnership and collaboration with the Belmont School Department
- Continue to enhance community outreach and engagement with key programs and partnerships (Library staff and Trustees)
- Continue to advocate for funding and support for library programs, services and facilities (Library Director and Trustees)

Library Administration drove activities and accomplishments in key areas over the past year including continued review and realignment of staff roles and structures, enhanced and expanded key programs and partnerships, and participation in key activities driving the next phase for the library project.

With regards to staffing, as staff have retired and or transitioned, the Library Director with the Trustees have sought to assess, revise and realign key roles, staffing models and reporting structures. This has resulted in a restructuring of the Technical Services Department and includes the hiring and transition of key staff members. In addition, staffing models were reviewed and part time roles considered as to how best to support the library during expanded hours.

A Library Innovation Consultant worked with the staff to assess 21<sup>st</sup> Century library needs and to explore paths to deliver these services. Recommendations confirmed many of the ideas that staff had previously identified and identified new opportunities to enhance services to the community.

The Library Director and staff continuously examine current programs, services and partnerships to identify areas to enhance, improve and in some instances stop. Details on these actions are reflected in other sections of this report. In addition, Library staff participate in a variety of Town events, including Meet Belmont, Town Day, Back to School Nights, host information forums for day care options, and staff a table at the Farmers Market where the community could find out about our upcoming programming, check out a bestseller, or enter a contest.

Expanded Children's room hours to weekday evenings implemented in prior years, has allowed greater access to over 7000 patrons annually. This year, we expanded our hours to include Sundays year round creating a long sought after 7 day a week schedule. Both of these are tied to the needs of our patrons and requests for hours that meet the changing needs of the community and varied uses for library services.

To eliminate barriers to service and to increase usership, many of our peer libraries have chosen to eliminate late fees. In reviewing our fee policy, we decided instead to implement the Food for Fines program as an alternative. Fines can be paid in the traditional way or can now be satisfied with a food donation for the Belmont Food Pantry. Thus far, this alternative has been overwhelmingly received resulting in the monthly donation of hundreds of food items to the pantry and helping them to meet their increased needs.



More than just books!! Circulation, program offerings and participation, use of community space and digital materials, visits to the building....Each category saw year over year increases confirming that Belmont residents are using the library building and services now more than ever.

With this usage and the age of the building, we continue to balance prudent investment in the current facility while we work with town officials and the community for a new building. Each of the major systems are at the end of their life (and beyond). Studies have demonstrated that a new building is not only needed but is the best financial option for the community.

The town appointed Library Building Committee completed the Schematic Design for a new building in late 2019. The Belmont Library Foundation has begun fundraising efforts. We urge you to learn about the Library Project by visiting <https://belmontpubliclibrary.net/about/building-committee/>

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathy Keohane  
Board of Library Trustees, Chair