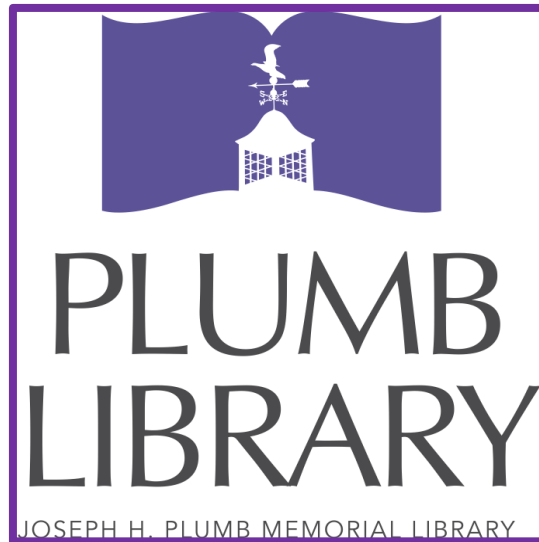


JOSEPH H. PLUMB MEMORIAL LIBRARY



Five-Year Plan

2021-2026

Joseph H. Plumb Memorial Library
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Gail E. Roberts, Library Director

Approved by the Board of Library Trustees on April 8, 2021

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MISSION STATEMENT

It is the mission of the Joseph H. Plumb Memorial Library to make available to the residents of the town of Rochester a center which provides information, entertainment, education, and enrichment. We seek to provide these services to all segments of the community, and to all age groups. Our collection will reflect the wants and needs of the whole community, and we will make available, as best we can, material in many formats and reflecting many points of view. The Trustees and staff are committed to intellectual freedom, and support the Library Bill of Rights.

VISION STATEMENTS

- Rochester will be a town that provides something for everyone.
- Rochester will have inviting, well-lit and well-maintained public spaces.
- Rochester will be a town that values education, and its historical heritage.
- Rochester will remain a family oriented community where residents have the opportunity to interact and build relationships through an array of social events.
- Plumb Memorial library will be a focal point of community life that connects and unites the people in town.

COMMUNITY PROFILE

The Town of Rochester is a small rural community located in Southeastern Massachusetts, with a current population of more than 5,600 (2019 U.S. Census estimate). The town does not have a significant industrial or commercial presence. The main industries are cranberry production and the SEMASS trash-to-energy plant. The most visible businesses are located in a commercial strip in the center of town, but a growing number of less-visible small professional and service businesses are operated out of residents' homes. According to the 2019 American Community Survey, the overwhelming majority of Rochester residents employed outside the home commute to another town for work.

According to the United States Census, about 30% of Rochester's population is under 18 years of age (as of 2019). Rochester has an elementary school and is home to Old Colony Regional Vocational Technical School. Students in junior high and high school attend regional schools in the Old Rochester School District. Parents of preschool-aged children are fortunate to have several private preschools in the area from which to choose. An “over 55” community was opened in 2005, and a new one is under construction across the street from the library (44 units). Approval has just been granted to start construction on a large apartment complex (208 units) at the edge of town. Obviously, the population of Rochester is expected to grow over the next 5 years.

LIBRARY PROFILE

The library has always played a small but important role in the town's life. That role has grown as the library has responded to growth in the town by increasing its open hours, expanding its services, and improving its collection.

The library is well-utilized by diverse age groups, providing many programs during the year for children and adults. Each summer, the library hosts a Summer Library Program with the help of the Friends and other volunteers. Access to free internet through library computers is available during library hours, as well as free wireless access available 24/7. We continue to have a solid base of adult patrons who read for pleasure, but we have been noticing a downward trend in attendance at special programs, such as genealogy presentations. After closing for COVID, all of our programs became virtual and were conducted over Zoom. In the spring and summer of 2020, we used our outside space, especially for the Summer Library Program for children. The break in face-to-face programs caused by COVID may provide opportunities for redesigning the library's programming.

Current Library Service

The library complies with all the requirements for State Aid for a library of its size:

- Open to all Massachusetts residents
- No charge for normal library service
- Open at *least* 15 hours per week
- At *least* 19% of budget spent on materials
- Have appropriately qualified personnel
- Municipal appropriation is at *least* 2.5% greater than the average appropriation of the last 3 years.

The Building

The present library building (along with the land it is built on), was donated to the Town of Rochester in 1976 by Dorothy Plumb, in memory of her late husband Joseph, enabling the library to be moved out of the Town Hall. The library building is a one-room, open-plan, Cape-style structure with a vestibule. Lack of space for expansion or change of usage has been a constant problem, which has been addressed and attempted under previous Five-Year Plans. The library lacks dedicated quiet-study space for patrons and has no staff area where employees can work, take breaks, or conduct meetings.

Thanks to funding from a Small Town Capital Grant Project in the amount of \$100,000 obtained by Town Facilities Manager Andrew Daniel, the full basement is being renovated and is expected to be finished in June 2021. The basement will include a large program/meeting room space, a handicapped-accessible co-ed bathroom, a wheelchair lift, a staff room, and storage space. The storage space will supplement a small room

currently housing the historical collection, plus already existing storage space. This will provide much needed program space, a quiet area, and a staff area.

Unfortunately, as a result of this remodeling, the space previously designated as an office for the library director can no longer be used as an office. This must be addressed in future plans.

The Collection

The library's collection consists of fiction and nonfiction titles for children, young adults, and adults, a historical collection, and collections of large-print material, DVDs, audio books, video games, museum passes, and periodicals. The library catalogue was fully automated in 1995 with bar codes and since then has been an active participant in the SAILS Library Network. This enables Rochester library users to access the resources of 72 other libraries in 40 communities, including public, college, and school libraries. Although our own collection consists of over 87,000 print and digital items, access to the collections of other libraries in our network means that the Rochester library circulates over 34,000 unique print and digital items per year.

Given the Plumb Library's community focus and small physical space, our collections are reviewed and "weeded" continually to rotate out materials that are not relevant to our patrons, so that we can offer newer books and other media matching community needs and interests.

The library also supplies online services to our community, presently including Freegal (downloadable and streaming music and videos); Universal Class; World Book; CreativeBug; Hoopla; and TumbleBooks. Through our membership in SAILS, we also offer Overdrive/Libby and NoveList.

Our collections include a "Library of Things," which offers a telescope, 3 WiFi Hotspots (courtesy of T-Mobile), snowshoes for children and adults, an electric usage meter, MOBY STEM backpacks, a ukulele kit, and a yarn ball winder and swift for use by knitters and crocheters.

The Organization

The library is governed by a board of six Trustees elected at-large for three-year terms in a three-year staggered election cycle. The library's work is directed and managed by a Library Director who is appointed by the Trustees, supported by a staff of one full-time Library Assistant II for Circulation Services, one full-time Library Assistant for Children's Services, and one part-time Page.

The library is also fortunate to have a dedicated group of Friends and Junior Friends, along with other volunteers, who donate their time to assist with library projects, programs, and day-to-day duties. At the time of writing, the library is open 41 hours a week, including two evenings per week and four hours on Saturday.

The Budget

The library currently operates on an adequate budget. The community has strongly supported our efforts to maintain our funding to provide services during these difficult economic times. We receive some State Aid funds each year and have been awarded grants in the past. The Friends of the Library funds some special library programs and projects, and the library has some library trust funds and large donations that can be utilized for specific improvements in the building and collection.

COVID-19 Impact

When the library was closed by the Town on March 19, 2020, the work of the library did not end; it moved online. Joseph H. Plumb Memorial Library staff shifted to providing as many services as were feasible over the internet. The Children's Librarian collaborated with the school system's Media Specialist to do virtual book talks with children. She then worked with the Director to add requested titles to our Overdrive account so that children could check them out as ebooks. She continued the library's much-loved Story Times online. Staff on the library's Facebook and email accounts answered questions for patrons. Physical mail was collected twice a week by the Director, who also monitored the building's physical safety and condition.

When staff was recalled to reopen the library, space became an issue of safety for employees and patrons. Social distancing for all three staff members is impossible in the small space behind the desk. The Children's Librarian continued to do Story Time from home, using the library's Zoom account, which was purchased and donated by the Friends of the Library. We offered curbside pickup from the end of May and started admitting patrons to the library by appointment to browse at the end of October. During the warmer months, we used our spacious yard for outdoor activities. Adult programs such as the Knitting Group and the Book Discussion Group have gone online, though the Knitting Group will meet outside when the weather is warmer. With funds from a CARES Act grant, we purchased two study carrels to allow shielded usage of the two public computers, plus a laptop for the Children's Librarian to use for library work.

For future planning, much depends on how the basement space can be utilized for programming; how space on the Main Floor can be arranged for the public to safely use; and what restrictions will be placed on us by the Town or the Governor.

ACHIEVEMENTS FROM 2016-2021 PLAN

This planning process is undertaken every five years so that the library can re-examine and clarify our role in the community and assess and clarify the needs of our patrons.

Over the past five years, we have accomplished these goals set forth in the previous Plan:

- Expanded the library's usable space and storage by remodeling the basement

- Made the library more welcoming and accessible with an accessible bathroom and a wheelchair lift
- New printers were purchased, one dedicated to staff use and one for the public
- Bandwidth was increased on the public internet connection paid for by the town
- Two new laptops were purchased, one for the Director's use (a regular equipment purchase) and one for the Children's Librarian (under the CARES Act)
- Expanded the library's email list
- Adopted the LibraryAware service offered by SAILS to produce our newsletter
- Added Ancestry Library Edition, but discontinued it as it was prohibitively priced and only available to use in the library building
- Collection policy updated
- Collaborated with the Mattapoisett and Marion libraries on the MOBY project in 2005 and on the One Book, Tri-Town reading challenge in 2019 (**The Muralist**), developing and hosting a broad range of activities across the three communities
- Started a Book Discussion Group with the Rochester Council on Aging (temporarily discontinued due to COVID restrictions).

2021-2026 PLAN DEVELOPMENT

The following Plan of Service was developed and written by the Library Director, in consultation with the six members of the Board of Trustees and the staff of the Joseph H. Plumb Memorial Library. The Plan is grounded in two needs assessment processes: a SWOT Study and direct feedback from the library staff describing challenges facing the library itself given the community's evolving needs.

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats Study

SWOT RESPONSES

- Strengths: From Staff, Patrons, and Trustees:
Staff; book selection; use of limited space; responses to COVID restrictions; Community outreach; programs for all ages; open hours.
- Weaknesses: From Staff, Patrons, and Trustees
Limited space; Need more items in the "Library of Things"; phone system; communication with the public; program attendance; lack of gathering space for the public.
- Opportunities: From Staff, Patrons, and Trustees:

Outreach to millennials; expanding programs; potential for use of basement program space.

- Threats: From Staff, Patrons, and Trustees:
The pandemic; future town and state funding; staff burnout; Town Facility Manager stretched too thin (one person covers 6 buildings); patrons too busy; expansion of Town population; digital collections; aging patron population.

Other comments:

"Wonderful library. It has been a real oasis during the Covid crisis."; "We have a great library for our small town. Keep the small town, welcoming feel."; "The library has always been a place for the community to gather, I would like nothing more than to have the ability to outreach for more members of not only Rochester, but surrounding towns to see how great our little library is!"; "I feel like we have finally hit the brick wall and should scrap all things we're doing and start over from scratch. Maybe a reformatting of all library services when COVID ends? A grand "reopening" of the library? Get back to basics and do those things amazingly well?"

Challenges

- Library use has been declining with a generational shift in usage patterns. As our most senior citizens move south or pass away, Baby Boomers are not adopting their parents' habits for community-based entertainment and engagement. Young Millennial families are engaging more with school or other organizations' sports and extracurricular activities than with library events. We see children's use drop off after first grade and not increase again for many years. Once parents stop wanting the library to supply early educational support, for example with picture books and early readers, the whole family stops coming. We lose many regular readers to sports activities prioritized by schools or parents. Given our rural location, children cannot come to our library on their own by walking or on bikes. They must be driven here by parents who are increasingly burdened by taking their children to many activities.
- Use of online services is evolving. We are about to drop Transparent Language (a language learning service) due to cost and lack of interest. Other services are not getting the attention they deserve. More publicity is needed to further increase use of these and our other online services.
- Increase community engagement and the library's visibility by adding supportive services which are useful to the community but which do not create additional staff duties. With more people using electric cars, there is a growing expectation that charging points be provided in public locations. Defibrillators are present in all town buildings except the library, and, again, this is now an infrastructure item that people expect to be available in case of need. One of the most-used items in the library is the copier, and people also still need to fax documents often, a service the library is expected to provide our patrons. Scanning is also frequently requested, a capability the library does not now have. The library could further

support its constituents by having a Notary Public on staff, as this service is only available at very limited times in town.

- Program collaborations with Marion and Mattapoisett have been successful, but continuing group activities for our community under the restrictions and cautionary measures imposed by COVID-19 make building on those successes difficult without massive changes to the activities included in the programs. We are still learning how to safely be a library under these conditions. We should also reach out to other neighboring communities to work on collaborative programs.
- The “Library of Things” has been very popular with the community. We should add things to it without creating excessive maintenance and upkeep issues for library staff or safety issues for patrons.
- The retirement of the Library Director in 2022 needs to be planned for and a new hire accomplished with minimal disruption to the library’s operations. This also includes increasing staff wages, and increasing the Children’s Librarian’s level in the town’s Compensation Plan to make her level more in keeping with her amount of work.

OUR GOALS & OBJECTIVES FOR THE YEARS 2021-2026

The *goals* describe the result or the outcome that the library is trying to achieve. The *objectives* are ways in which progress towards achieving those goals will be measured. Specific *activities* are tasks to be performed in pursuit of the goals and objectives. In order to ensure that the plan is a living, changing document, activities will be developed on an annual basis and will be changed and modified as needed.

BUILDING

GOAL 1: RESIDENTS WILL HAVE A LIBRARY FACILITY THAT IS WELCOMING AND ACCESSIBLE TO ALL CITIZENS.

Objective 1: finish basement for use for storage and programs

Activities:

- Coordinate with Facilities Manager for frequent updates on the project.
- Provide funds when needed.
- Purchase furnishings or use what is on hand (Friends of Plumb Library).
- Purchase picture hanging rails to install on the basement wall, which will create opportunities for local artists to exhibit work.

- Hire an artist to paint the risers of the basement stairs to look like book spines. Give donors the chance to choose the books displayed as a Friends fundraising opportunity.
- Develop an appointment system to facilitate reservations to use the space for local groups and committees.

Objective 2: Obtain an electric car charging station for the library's parking lot

Activities:

- Work with the Town, especially the Facilities Manager to research grants that would pay for a charging station.
- Work with the Highway Department for installation..

Objective 3: obtain a defibrillator for the library.

History: The process was started in 2019 with communication with the Fire Department. After several exchanges of emails, the communication died out. The process now has to be restarted.

Activities:

- Check with the Health Department to see if this is still recommended for all buildings, since the start of COVID (touching, etc.)
- Work with the Fire Department to obtain a defibrillator.
- Pay for the defibrillator with funds from the Church Estate donation.

SERVICES

GOAL 2: RESIDENTS WILL BE MADE AWARE OF THE SERVICES THE LIBRARY PROVIDES TO ASSIST THEM IN THEIR PERSONAL LIVES, AT WORK, OR AT SCHOOL.

Objective 1: Market library services

Activities:

- Use social media; develop social media policy, and monthly schedule.
- Send special email, using the LibraryAware account to new registrants

Objective 2: Publicize the historic collection

Activities

- Prepare a resource list of materials available for genealogists or local history buffs.

Objective 3: Have the Library Director become a Notary Public

Activities:

- Since the library is open evenings and weekends, this would give town citizens more access to a Notary.
- Set any required fees.

Objective 4: Add scanning to the copier/fax machine at the next upgrade

Activities:

- The copier/fax machine is contracted by the Town for all buildings. In the next upgrade, the Library should add scanning to their copy machine operations.
- Check with the Town to see when the next upgrade is scheduled.
- Check the Internet connection nearest to the copier to see if it's active and whether it's covered under either the SAILS Comcast or Town Comcast lines.

PROGRAMS

GOAL 3: ALL RESIDENTS WILL HAVE AN INVITING PLACE TO MEET AND INTERACT WITH OTHERS IN THE COMMUNITY.

Objective 1: Continue working with Marion and Mattapoisett libraries for more programs.

Activities:

- Communicate regularly with library directors from Marion and Mattapoisett

Objective 2: Provide programs for adults and children throughout the year.

Activities:

- Solicit ideas from Friends and patrons via a survey.

Objective 3: Help the Friends reorganize and discover new ways to fundraise

COLLECTION

GOAL 4: RESIDENTS WILL HAVE ACCESS TO A COLLECTION OF MATERIALS THAT WILL MEET THEIR NEEDS FOR RECREATIONAL READING, VIEWING, AND LISTENING.

Objective 1: Continue to update old policies

Objective 2: Conduct an annual survey to obtain information from library users.

Activities:

- Conduct an annual online survey using Google Forms.

Objective 3: Work with the Historical Society to organize the Historical Collection and to make it more accessible to the public.

Activities:

- Create an inventory of historic collections. Request assistance from Historical Society
- Inventory the Captain Hadley Collection. Request assistance from the Historical Society.
- Working with the BPL, digitize the collection of Town Reports.

Objective 4: Expand the “Library of Things” to include tools and yard games (croquet, badminton, etc)

Activities:

- Make a list of items wanted. Ask the Friends to fund some or all of these items.

TECHNOLOGY

GOAL 5: LIBRARY USERS WILL HAVE ACCESS TO CURRENT INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY.

Objective 1: Working with SAILS, upgrade computers as needed

Objective 2: Working with the Town, increase the library’s bandwidth.

STAFFING

Objective 1: prepare for retirement of Library Director in Summer, 2022.

Activities:

- Select a search committee from the Trustees, Friends, and patrons
- Set the salary in time for the FY23 budget proposal.

- Examine Director job description for any updates or changes
- Advertise locally (through the MBLC, SAILS) or nationally, if needed.

Objective 3: Include 3% raises for the Full-time staff in the FY23 budget.

- Meet with the Town Administrator and/or Personnel Committee before submitting the budget. d

Objective 2: Promote Library Assistant for Youth Services from Level 6 to Level 7 on the Town's Compensation Chart.

Activities:

- Go over the position's Job Description for updates or changes
- Consult with the Library Trustees, the Town Administrator and/or Personnel Board

Objective 3: Using the Senior Work-off program, recruit a senior volunteer to substitute when staffing is low.

Activities:

- Check with SAILS to see if using a Senior Work-off person is permitted by their policies, or if we can get permission to proceed.
- Work with the COA director to find a Senior that is proficient on the computer.