

Talcott Free Library Board Meeting for Strategic Planning

Monday, April 14, 2025

Members present: A. Floto, L. Floto, D. Garlow, R. Geddeis, G. Kovanda, Director M. Gove.

Absent: T. Garlow, A. Ragaller.

Special Guest: Amanda Standerfer, Founder and Lead Consultant, Fast Forward Libraries.

Members of the Public: 5.

President Kovanda called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m.

All rose and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comment: None.

President Kovanda laid over the approval of the Secretary's Report until the next meeting.

Amanda Standerfer conducted the strategic planning session, outlining the Board's role in the Learning and Dream Phases. The Board will be determining the "Why," (vision and mission), and the "How," (strategic direction and goals). The Staff will collaborate with the Board on the "How," and execute the "What," (activities and evaluation).

After tonight's session, the Fast Forward team will develop a strategic plan outline for the new board to review and discuss steps for implementation.

Reviewing the data gathered during the Learning phase, Standerfer noted: 1) Talcott cardholders represent 24.7% of our district population (30% would be a desirable goal). The number of registered cardholders has rebounded since the pandemic but remains lower than before. 2) Our circulation was slightly depressed during the pandemic, and has since exceeded pre-pandemic levels. 3) Other measures of patron usage and programming were also affected by the pandemic as well as building construction closures. 4) A community survey produced responses by an amazing 2.8% of our service population. These responses, in Standerfer's experience, usually hover around 1%. 5) More than half (56%) of survey respondents learn about library news and events through Facebook/Instagram. The library website, word of mouth and email newsletter were each cited by 27 to 37% of respondents. 6) Respondents rated customer service and library facility as the aspects of highest satisfaction. 7) Respondents shared many ideas that would make it easier to use the library. 8) Early literacy and updated technology were top concerns among the 12 items considered important for the future of our library.

After a short break, Standerfer invited board members to present their individual ideas for future action on post-it notes. She placed these suggestions into five "buckets" for consideration going forward: programming, organizational development, marketing, technology and accessibility. Many of these items overlapped with similar input from staff. Among the many proposals were: figuring out how to allow back door access to the building, more signage, board/staff events to promote better understanding, acquisition of more Spanish language materials given the recent increase in our Hispanic population, outreach to local experts for enriched programming, self-checkout, sidewalk improvement, more special events during National Library Week, focus group meetings, and more.

President Kovanda thanked Standerfer for her work and for a productive meeting.

Adjournment: A. Floto moved, and D. Garlow seconded, to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 7:32 p.m.

Submitted by: L. Floto, Secretary