



Seekonk Public Library

Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2018

The Seekonk Public Library provides high quality library service from its facility at 410 Newman Avenue. Each year the library takes up the challenge to respond to the increasing demand for service by Seekonk residents. Through careful management and creative application of public and private resources, the library met and in many cases exceeded the expectations of its users in fiscal year 2018.

Seekonk Public Library remains one of the most highly used town services. The library was open a total of 2,935 hours last fiscal year. With few exceptions, the library was able to maintain its six day, sixty-hour a week schedule. Visits to the library increased by 2% over the previous year. The library was visited 97,165 times last fiscal year, which averages to about 1,861 people per week. Over four thousand individuals used their Seekonk library cards in fiscal year 2018. The library also issued 661 library cards last year to first-time users.

The library continues to struggle to offer services from a deteriorating thirty-nine year old building with insufficient space. Library operations were placed under additional strain when a large tree toppled onto the library's roof during a severe winter storm in March 2018. The fallen tree did extensive damage to the roof. Water poured into the building from multiple roof leaks and over 600 books were damaged as a result. The library was closed several days and it had to restrict access to some areas of the collection for about a month. Fortunately, insurance covered nearly all of the cost to restore the building, fix the roof and replace damaged books.

The library had a hazardous substance review performed as part of its construction grant application. In December 2016, debris contaminated with small amount of asbestos were found above the ceiling tiles. Although the debris did not pose a threat unless handled, the discovery prompted extensive air quality testing on two occasions in fiscal year 2018. Both sets of tests showed that there were no airborne particles or threats to the health of library visitors or employees.

There is reason to hope that Seekonk will have an adequate library building in the near future. In July 2017, the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) made a tentative award of 7.3 million

One of the MOST USED of our Town Services

Seekonk Public Library in FY 2018

- Total hours open: 2,935
- Total visits: 97,165
- Active card holder: 5,777
- New users getting cards: 661
- Total items lent: 274,293
- Reference questions: 11,168
- Times the library meeting room was used by other groups: 258
- Total attendance at children & family programs: 6,286
- Total attendance at adult & teen programs: 1,876

dollars to the Town to pay for about 48% of the roughly 15 million dollars needed to construct a new library building. Seekonk was not among the first projects to be funded, so it was placed on a waiting list. The MBLC has awarded over 78 million dollars in construction grants since 2017, and Seekonk is now ninth on the waiting list. We currently estimate that the MBLC will offer the Town funding in the summer of 2020. The Board of Library Trustees began working with an ad hoc group of private citizens and non-profit organization in anticipation of this offer. The group is working to coordinate public support and fundraising efforts for the project.

Seekonk Meadows, the passive recreation area adjacent to the library, began its sixth full year of operation in 2018. Thousands of people visited the Seekonk Meadows to walk its pathways, appreciate nature or to attend the concerts and other events produced by the library.

The library's primary attraction is its diverse and interesting collection of materials. The library offers users a choice from among 214,367 items. This includes materials in a physical collection of approximately 63,000 printed items and 23,000 electronic media items, including CDs, DVDs, and Blu-ray. The Library's investment in a variety of physical and on-line media is part of an overall effort to develop a collection reflective of the diverse needs and interests of Seekonk residents.

The library now offers library users access to over 128,000 electronic items online, including, movies, TV shows, eBooks, recorded books, and music. This large increase in the number of offerings was due to the introduction of a new on-line service, Hoopla, and an increased investment in an existing service, OverDrive. The number of resources available through the SAILS network also increased significantly. In addition, Seekonk library users now have increased access to the electronic resources of other library networks throughout the state.

Books and other printed materials still account for approximately two thirds of the physical collection. Electronic resources (CDs, DVDs, electronic books) account for the remaining third. In 2018, the library

Smart Memorial Library Trust Report for Fiscal Year 2018

Town Meeting approved a bylaw in October 1985 that established the Smart Memorial Trust. The initial assets of the trust were those of the Smart Memorial Library, which had been one of the principal public libraries serving the Town of Seekonk prior to the construction of the current library building on Newman Avenue in 1978.

The purpose of the Trust is "to support the goals of the Seekonk Public Library to provide the widest possible range of informational, educational, and recreational services to all individuals and groups in the community". The members of the Board of Library Trustees also serve as the trustees for the Smart Memorial Trust., and the enabling bylaw requires them to report annually to the Town on the status of the Trust. The Town Treasurer holds and manages these trust funds.

The Smart Memorial Trust fund balance as of June 30, 2018 was \$39,961.52. The library expended a total of \$380 in fiscal year 2018. These funds were used for staff training. The Trust earned a total income of \$787.10 last year.

continued to build its collection of Blu-Ray video discs and electronic games. The library also increased the availability of downloadable e-books, magazines, audio books, and musical recordings through services such as OverDrive, Axis 360, Flipster and Freegal. These electronic resources are part of an overall effort to develop a collection reflective of the diverse needs and interests of Seekonk residents.

One indication of how successful these efforts have been is that Seekonk Public Library consistently has one of the highest per capita lending rates in the state. The library circulated 274,293 items last fiscal year. Children's materials accounted for approximately thirty-five percent of this total. This total includes thousands of electronic items that people downloaded either at the library or from home.

Many users of the library took advantage of its membership in the statewide library network to borrow almost thirty-five thousand items from other libraries. The availability of these other items is a major benefit of participation in the Massachusetts Library Network. Seekonk Public Library also lent approximately thirty-two thousand items to other libraries. The Massachusetts library grant formula compensates local libraries for these loans to users in other communities. Last year, the Town of Seekonk received over twenty-four thousand dollars in state aid.

The many programs and classes offered by the library were another major reason that people visited last fiscal year. Last year, the Adult Services staff produced 113 programs with an attendance of 1,404 people over the course of the fiscal year. Our popular museum passes service, covering nineteen local attractions, continued to be popular with 823 checkouts in fiscal year 2018. In addition to general technology support of library computers and related services, hosted regular iPad and Android Help hours in the library and began monthly technology classes at the Seekonk Senior Center. Adult Services provided support for online services and collections, including the popular new service, Hoopla, for downloads of books, music, TV shows, movies, and comics.



Partnerships continued to play an important role in program offerings. Thanks to funding from The Friends of the Seekonk Public Library, Sturdy Memorial Hospital and The Rehoboth/Seekonk Medical Center, we continued our Outdoor Summer Concert series featuring Atwater-Donnelly, the Jesse Liam Band, and Bill Harley. Support from the Seekonk Cultural Council helped us provide additional programs including the popular pastel painting program and new dyed silk scarves workshop. The library was also pleased to bring back the popular community paper shred event co-sponsored with the Seekonk Recycling Committee.

In addition to arts, exercise and music programs, two themes that stand out this fiscal year are local resources and visiting authors. Local expertise was showcased in presentations for adults on flower arranging, a Bitcoin Basics series, and local author Kevin Saleeba on his Seekonk history book Black



Goose. Local interests were featured in programs on the cranberry industry and native bird photography. Additional authors visiting this year included NY Times best-selling author Elizabeth Berg, Chronicle TV show host Ted Reinstein, and gardening series writer Neal Sanders. The library also added a discussion group to its offering. The Romance Novel book group held eleven meetings last year.

The library also offered 273 programs for children and families. These programs had a total attendance of 6,286. About four hundred children participated in the Summer Reading Program. This popular program helps to keep students reading during the summer months. Last year the library initiated a major outreach effort to teenagers. The library offered twenty-two programs for young adults. The Youth Services staff also produced fifty-seven programs that targeted at teenagers. A

total attendance at these young adult programs was 472.

Various groups and organizations used the library's main meeting room 258 times last year. This was in addition to 328 times the space was used for library programs. All of these programs support the library's larger mission to promote life-long learning, childhood literacy, personal health and wellbeing, and informed public discourse.

The library has a total staff of twenty people. Eight are full-time employees and six of these are professional librarians. Sixteen members of the staff are represented by the Seekonk Library Staff Association, American Federation of Teachers, Massachusetts. The collective bargaining agreement with the Library Staff Association expired in June 2017. Negotiations with the Board of Selectmen remain ongoing into the current fiscal year.

All of the library staff members take great pride in the personal services they provide. Last year, the library staff members provided reference assistance and individual instruction to users of all ages a total of 11,168 times, which represents a 4% increase over the previous year. Many of these questions involved using the wide variety of electronic resources available through the library. The staff also devotes a great deal of time to assisting the people who connect their personal devices to the free Wi-Fi service at the library, which the library also upgraded to increase the speed of this services.

Approximately 5,400 personal devices logged on to the library's wireless network last year to connect users to the internet countless times during the year. The public also initiated over nine thousand sessions on the library's thirty-two public computers. All of this assistance and instruction is part of a

larger effort to help people become knowledgeable users and consumers of new information technology.

The library is also working to remain in the forefront of technological innovation. The library completed the initial phase of its conversion to the use of RFID (radio frequency identification) technology. RFID will allow the library to automate many routine, labor-intensive tasks. The resulting increase in efficiency will improve the quality of service offered to library users, and allow the library to keep-up with a growing demand for service in the future.

The library could not be the popular and effective service it is without the support of the community.

The library is fortunate to have the support of many individual volunteers. Forty-six volunteers worked at the library last year and they contributed 3,203 hours of service. Two non-profit organizations, the Friends of the Seekonk Library and the Seekonk Library Trust, provide additional support to the library. Money raised by the Friends supplements the basic services paid for with tax dollars.



Annual Volunteer Appreciation Brunch

These popular additional services include the museum passes, family night programs, and the summer concert series. In fiscal year 2018, the Friends of the Library donated approximately \$18,000 for these and other services. The Seekonk Library Trust exists to solicit and accept donations from private sources for library purposes. The focus of the Library Trust is on addressing long-term needs of the library. Both organizations are important parts of the public and private partnership that provides quality library service to the people of Seekonk. The Board of Trustees wishes to thank both organizations on behalf of all library users for their help in making last fiscal year a truly exceptional year.

Lastly, a critical ingredient to the library's success is hearing from you about the job we are doing. We welcome your comments, complaints, and recommendations. For your convenience, the library has set up an email account, trustees@seekonkpl.org for you to contact the Board of Library Trustees.

Respectfully Submitted,

BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES

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