

# **THOMAS BEAVER FREE LIBRARY 2020-2023 STRATEGIC PLAN**

Founded in 1888, the Thomas Beaver Free Library has a long tradition of serving the needs of the local community. Recognizing community needs are changing, the Board committed to developing a strategic plan to ensure the Library was meeting current needs and also to position the Library to meet its mission into the future.

## **Library Mission**

*The Thomas Beaver Free Library offers the citizens of Montour County, Rush Township and Riverside Borough educational and social opportunities by providing materials, services, and programs for all. We encourage lifelong learning and intellectual curiosity in our diverse community by connecting people and ideas in a welcoming and inclusive space.*

The Strategic Planning Committee convened in February 2019, and created a process and timeline for developing the plan. Central to the process was seeking as much community input as possible within an aggressive time frame. Data was collected from focus groups, short in person interviews, and an online survey. Demographic data of the surrounding area was also examined.

The Board analyzed the data collected by the Strategic Planning Committee and identified the following goals as the most important to meet current needs and for the long term strength of the Thomas Beaver Free Library.

- ◆ **The Thomas Beaver Free Library will pursue sustainable, reliable funding in order to meet its mission and the evolving needs of the community.**
- ◆ **The Thomas Beaver Free Library will embrace its role as a social hub for people; bringing together people from across our community.**
- ◆ **The Thomas Beaver Free Library will increase awareness of library services and resources among its constituents.**
- ◆ **The Thomas Beaver Free Library will enhance educational programming for adults.**
- ◆ **The Thomas Beaver Free Library will develop a culture of assessment and continuous improvement for all service areas.**

## **Library Overview**

The Thomas Beaver Free Library serves a population of over 20,000 people. The Library is governed by a Board of Trustees consists of 15 members responsible for the operation and management of the Thomas Beaver Free Library including securing funds, directing finances, planning, evaluation, and policy-making. The Library has a full time Director and 11 part-time employees responsible for daily library operations and providing services.

The Thomas Beaver Free Library receives approximately 20% of its operating funds from State Aid. The rest of the Library's budget comes from local fundraising, grants, memorial gifts, donations, and savings reserves. There is no library tax from the county or local municipalities.

## **Strategic Planning Process**

Focus groups were conducted in May 2019. The 28 participants consisted of community stakeholders who were knowledgeable of the social, educational, economic, and technology needs in the area. The participants discussed unmet needs in the community, with an emphasis on the role the Library could play in meeting those needs, as well as identifying other community organizations with which the Library should partner.

189 short in-person interviews were conducted on three separate occasions in May. The open-ended questions were designed to obtain general impressions of the Library, how it is currently being used, and suggestions for improvement.

An online survey was open in June and July and received 175 responses. The online survey was designed to obtain more quantitative data about the value of library services by both users and non-users of the library.

Demographic data, including age distribution, poverty and income levels, and educational attainment, was reviewed for Montour County and the surrounding municipalities to understand the characteristics of our service population better.

Strategic Planning Committee Membership:

Kathleen McQuiston, Director

William Fait, Board President

Kathleen McWilliams, Treasurer

Robin Kessler, Secretary

Joan Brabander, Board Member

Helen 'Sis' Hause, Board Member