

Oct. 11, 2015

I have been asked to submit a summary of goals and accomplishments to the board prior to the director evaluation. I would like to introduce this document by saying that in my almost three years here at the Holmes, I have tried to be very responsive to ideas, recommendations, and other input from members of the board.

In addition to those I receive from the board of trustees, I also receive many ideas, suggestions, and requests for different programs and activities from our library staff, our Friends of the Library board, and members of the library community and public, along with requests to partner with other organizations such as TRIAD, the Council on Aging, and the Cultural Council on events. Many of these require at least some planning and some engagement of others on the staff; some require quite a lot of lead time and advance planning and publicity.

In addition, when I was hired to be library director, I was asked to help make the Holmes more visible and recognized as a leading library for its size. I have been working hard towards this goal – I have been on the SAILS Library Network Board since July 2012 and served on two SAILS committees: OverDrive and Legislative Breakfast. I have chaired the OverDrive Committee since July 2013 and am co-chairing the Legislative Breakfast Committee this year. Last February, for the breakfast, at my suggestion I took photos of legislators with their constituents who attended the breakfast, and wrote a press release which was sent out to all the SAILS library directors. All they had to do was add their names and the names of their reps and send it off with the captioned photos to their local news outlets. Regarding the press release, Debby Conrad, the SAILS executive director, emailed me to say: “I think this reads beautifully by the way. I am going to ask you to do our press releases from now on - much better than anything I have produced.”

I have also been representing SAILS on the statewide Commonwealth E-Book Collections steering committee, and for the southeastern region of libraries, started up and run the Southeastern Massachusetts Reader’s Advisory Roundtable, which had a very successful first year -- October 2014-June 2015 -- and has just started the second year of meetings this month.

This is work which helps make the Holmes Public Library known in the library community and furthers the goal that I was asked to work towards by the board of trustees. I believe that the Holmes Public Library is much better known and respected now by the Board of Library Commissioners staff, the Massachusetts Library System, and the SAILS Library Network than when I started in January 2012.

However, some of the programs which we have done over the past year have been suggested by members of the board of trustees:

Books in Bloom (May 2015) – I know Priscilla was disappointed by the participation in this event this year. It was publicized and promoted on cable, in the newspapers, in the Buzz, at the

Council on Aging, at TRIAD, on Facebook, and in the library newsletter and calendar. Several people said they would be interested in doing it next year, and I will contact them next year. There was a very large town funeral just before the week of Books in Bloom, which is something unexpected that can't be planned for, and as it turned out, Priscilla's own plans changed so that she was unable to attend the closing event and volunteer appreciation which we had scheduled after making sure it would work for her. I think it's the kind of event that could build from year to year; the staff and I have tried very hard, both years, to participate in Books and Bloom and encourage others to.

Meet Your Elected Officials (November 2014) – This was also suggested by the Board of Trustees, and the library partnered with the Board of Selectmen and the Town Administrator to schedule this event. This event was given the full amount of planning, publicity, and promotion, which all takes a good deal of time. Although it was not well attended, it seemed as though the people who did attend got something out of it. It was pouring out all evening which may have contributed to the low turnout; again, that is not something that can be planned for.

Programs that have been started at the request of library patrons include the monthly Word Game Night and the weekly Drop-in Knitting, as well as Local Authors Night, which we did for the benefit of the library writers' group and to support local authors such as Halifax resident Eugene Coghill. It can be difficult to get an audience to come for a single local author, so I put together the Local Authors Night and invited her to speak with two other authors and members of our writers' group. Asking Rosalind Cuschera here was also done at the suggestion of Priscilla. It probably seemed like a long time between when the suggestion was made and when we had the author here, but this was a very successful event and I believe it was made better by the structure and the timing of it.

When scheduling new events and publicity campaigns, we have to take the existing calendar into account. With just the regular weekly and monthly programs, we have a very busy calendar already. We don't like to schedule programs too close together if we know there are people that would want to attend both, but maybe not the same day or two days in a row. There are also the groups that use the Community Rooms and have it booked for certain days and times.

As the library director, I receive many suggestions every week for activities that we could offer at the library, and many requests to speak at the library or to present a program at the library. I have to balance out the need to try to please many different constituencies – including the Board of Trustees, the Friends of the Library, library patrons, and other local groups – with the needs of the library, the library budget, and the amount of planning and promotion each program requires over and above all the regular program planning and promotion that needs to be done.

And, of course, programs are only one part of the job. Preparing reports and budgets, responding to email, helping patrons, filling vacant positions, and applying for grants are all important and take a great deal of time also.

In my time here, I have worked hard to build relationships. It takes time for any new person to come into a new job and develop strong working relationships. I believe it was especially difficult here, due to the position of assistant director being also new and therefore there was no established process for working together effectively, and also knowing that the staff's experience with the previous director was not the best.

In my last evaluation I was told that I appear to have difficulty delegating. This is possibly because when I've been in the position of assistant, which I was in my two previous positions, I tended to offer to take on specific parts of a project or to do something that I saw needed doing, so I may have expected it to work the same way when I had an assistant instead of being an assistant.

I have found it difficult to establish a good working relationship with Jean, but I have hopes that we can continue to try to work together. Each of us has strengths that the other does not, and we could make an excellent team if we can agree that a success at the library, regardless of who was most instrumental in that particular instance, is a success for the library, not for any single member of the library staff. If one of us looks good, it makes the whole library look good.

I receive many compliments from people in the library community on my own work as well as on work done by other members of the staff, but I tend to share only the compliments given about the staff with the board, so as not to toot my own horn. I have a strong work ethic and give many hours of my own time to the library. (The writing of this self-evaluation has all been done on my own time, for example.)

One of the major goals that the trustees had for me as director was to get another Halifax Reads program underway. Keeping in mind that we had no Technology Coordinator for July and August and that I was filling in for her, and given that we had no funding in place, and that the Friends of the Library had already asked to have two separate author visits – one we scheduled for September and one for November – as well as having two big fall fundraisers, it was a rush job to get Halifax Reads going for the fall.

I applied to Rockland Trust Charitable Foundation to cover the cost of the Weekends with Daisy books, once we were able to ascertain that copies of the book were actually available, and held off on publicity for as long as possible in case that funding came through, but the request was denied just last week. The Halifax Reads selection seems to be well received and the books are getting checked out, but it has cost us \$1300 from the Gift Fund. The Friends of the Library contributed a little over \$400 to cover the cost of the large print books.

I suggest that we plan for the next Halifax Reads to be in the spring of 2017, with the book and schedule of events settled upon the previous fall in time to apply for Cultural Council funding in October 2016.