

Kimberly-Little Chute Public Library Plan: 2011-2015

Summary

The Process

The planning process started in January, 2011 with the formation of a Planning Committee facilitated by Rick Krumwiede, Director of the Outagamie Waupaca Library System (OWLS). Three stages were completed throughout the process: evaluation, community analysis, and development of service plan.

The Evaluation

The evaluation stage looked at current programs and services of the library using a variety of processes and tools: surveys of library staff, library board members, and library users; review of statistical information regarding the library's services, patrons, and collections and how the library compared with other libraries; evaluation of how well the library meets the Wisconsin Public Library Standards; comparison of the library's current space to recommended space allocations.

The general conclusion reached by the Planning Committee is that the programs and services of the library are very well-liked by patrons, who especially appreciate the library staff. Most public survey respondents (94%) said that they were either extremely or very satisfied with the library's services, and an even greater number of respondents (96%) indicated that the library staff is extremely or very helpful. Library Board members and staff also take pride in the library and the work that they do for it.

However, while the library offers many services that are comparable to those of libraries in similar sized communities, it does not compare favorably with its peers on several measures. Some observations include:

- The library doesn't lend as many items nor have as many visitors as libraries with a similar municipal population or with a similar service population. However, libraries with similar populations tend to have significantly more computers, larger staffs, and significantly larger operating budgets.
- On average, libraries in every peer group had more public Internet computers.
- Libraries that loaned a similar number of items had more staff and larger budgets.
- Libraries with a similar program attendance tend to be located in significantly larger communities, have more staff, and have larger operating budgets.
- Libraries with a staff size (FTEs) similar to Kimberly-Little Chute's staff size tend to be located in smaller communities, operate smaller facilities, be open for fewer hours, circulate fewer items, and experience lower program attendance. These libraries also have operating budgets slightly smaller than Kimberly-Little Chute Public Library's budget.

Comparing the library's 2010 service data to the recommended quantitative service targets contained in the Wisconsin Public Library Standards (5th edition) shows that most of the library's measures are below the minimum recommended standards. The library's measures were "Below Basic" in six (6) of eight (8) categories: Staff FTE, Periodical Titles, Audio Recordings Held, Video Recordings Held, Materials Expenditures, and Public Internet Computers. Perhaps most significant is the fact that the library's

staffing level is approximately 1.5 FTEs below what is considered to be necessary to provide a basic level of library service.

The fact that the library does not meet state recommended minimum standards on six of eight measures is troubling. It appears from the data that the library is constrained in its ability to provide recommended levels of materials, public computers, and staff by its operating budget. Furthermore, the library's staff, which does not meet minimum size standards and is smaller than its peers, is responsible for operating two facilities. This makes it difficult to provide anything more than basic library services and creates additional stress for library employees.

Because the evaluation results indicated that the library's budget may be less than optimal, the library's 2010 municipal appropriations were compared to those of other Outagamie County libraries. The Villages of Kimberly and Little Chute levied an average of 50.8 cents per \$1000 of valuation for library purposes. This was 24 cents per \$1000 less than the average of the other six municipalities operating libraries in Outagamie County.

Municipality	Rate per \$1000 EAV	Cost for \$100,000 Home	Cost for \$200,000 Home
Outagamie County Average*	\$0.748	\$74.77	\$149.54
Village of Kimberly	\$0.459	\$45.95	\$91.90
Village of Little Chute	\$0.544	\$54.41	\$108.82
Kimberly-Little Chute Library	\$0.508	\$50.79	\$101.57

*Includes Appleton, Black Creek, Hortonville, Kaukauna, Seymour, Shiocton

Also in 2010, the Villages appropriated an average of \$30.60 per capita for library purposes. This compares to the Outagamie County municipal average \$46.33 per capita, OWLS systemwide average of \$47.20 per capita, and the statewide average of \$40.28 per capita.

Municipality	Per Capita Support
Outagamie County Average*	\$46.33
Village of Kimberly	\$31.92
Village of Little Chute	\$29.81
Kimberly-Little Chute Library	\$30.60

*Includes Appleton, Black Creek, Hortonville, Kaukauna, Seymour, Shiocton

The Planning Committee did not attempt to project future space needs. Rather, it looked at how well the current facility measures up to the recommended size for a facility providing the level of services

currently offered by the library. The existing library facility contains 25,846 square feet of space. According to state standards, the library should be approximately 30,000 square feet to adequately provide the services that the library now offers. Given that the library experiences efficiencies because both locations are part of shared municipal facilities, the library's current space is probably minimally adequate for its current operations. However, the library's current space is not sufficient to accommodate any expansion of collections, programs, or technology-based services.

Community Analysis

The second step in the planning process was to investigate the nature of the community and what that might mean for library services in the future. A variety of processes were used to conduct this investigation:

- Eight focus group sessions were held to solicit input from a broad cross-section of residents.
- Seven community leaders were interviewed to gain insight into the challenges being faced by the community and its residents.
- Basic community demographics were compiled and discussed.
- Planning Committee members engaged in an exercise to choose service responses for the library that might best address the community's needs.

Residents of Kimberly and Little Chute take a great deal of pride in their communities. They appreciate the small town atmosphere, and they value the quality of life that they experience. School and church play essential roles in the lives of families, and there is an abundance of recreational activities available. The library is also viewed to be a significant asset, but there is a perception among some residents that it is underutilized.

Both villages, and their residents, are facing many of the same challenges being faced by communities throughout the state and nation. Foremost among these challenges is how to continue providing the level of governmental services that people expect and need. Funding services and infrastructure will become increasingly difficult during the economic downturn, especially with constraints imposed on municipalities by the state, and changing demographics are likely to result in additional challenges for the community.

Community members have identified a number of needs and have indicated that the library should play a significant role in meeting those needs. They would like the library to continue to be a primary source of information, to make up-to-date technology resources available, and to be a significant source of educational programming for all ages. Furthermore, they expect that all of these activities will be available to every citizen without charge.

As much as the community sees the library occupying a significant role at the center of community life, fulfilling that role involves significant challenges for the library. Given the findings of the evaluation portion of the planning process, it seems likely that the library has neither the space nor the financial resources necessary to address the identified community needs.

Development of Service Plan

The Kimberly-Little Chute Public Library is a relatively young library, having been established in 1994 to provide library services jointly for the Villages of Kimberly and Little Chute. This planning process is the first time that the joint library has been systematically evaluated, and many results of this evaluation are very positive. Library users are very pleased with the library, and the library's services are heavily used. Yet, the library does not provide the complete range and level of recommended services that are commonly provided by libraries in many similar sized communities.

A significant motivation for establishing and maintaining the joint library has been to allow the Villages to provide library services as cost effectively as possible, and it appears that they have been successful in this endeavor. However, there have never been any benchmarks for evaluating whether the level of support for the library was appropriate. Through this process the Planning Committee has discovered that, while the Villages have actively supported the library throughout its history, their level of support is somewhat lacking from what is needed to optimally meet the community's needs.

Clearly, there is a tension between the economic challenges facing the community and the need for adequate resources to enable the library to address identified needs and correct deficiencies. It's in this context that this plan has been developed. The Planning Committee understands that it must be realistic in its expectations regarding financial support for the library, but it also believes it has a responsibility to develop a plan to address the needs of residents and the library's deficiencies. The library will make every effort to successfully implement this plan, but it acknowledges that full implementation may not be possible within the timeframe covered by the plan.

Values, Mission, Goals & Objectives

The planning process has resulted in a new Statement of Library Values, Mission Statement, and Goals & Objectives that will guide the programs and services of the library over the next five years. The plan will be reviewed annually to assess progress and modify objectives, as necessary.

Statement of Library Values

The Kimberly-Little Chute Public Library is committed to the following values. These values are the guiding principles that shape everything the library does. They are intended to guide planning, decision-making, and the programs and services the library provides to its users for at least the next five years.

We value people:

- We treat library users and staff with dignity, respect, and compassion.
- We respect the diverse cultures, thinking, and learning styles of the people we serve.
- We respect people's right to privacy and confidentiality when using the library.
- We believe in teamwork.

We value information and intellectual freedom:

- We are passionate about early literacy, lifelong learning, and instilling the love of reading in people of all ages.
- We are ideas champions who facilitate access to information & resources that will assist people in shaping their own beliefs, goals, voice, and personal development.
- We provide current information in a variety of formats to meet the needs and interests of our community.
- We provide up-to-date technology and staff trained to assist people in its use.

We value service:

- We are innovative and creative and strive for excellence in all that we do.
- Our staff, volunteers, and trustees welcome and serve all equally.
- We believe people should have a positive experience when using the library.
- Our staff is approachable, friendly, well-trained, and committed.
- We believe in integrity and accountability.
- We are here for our users and are responsive to their changing needs.
- We seek to turn problems or challenges into opportunities.
- We provide a clean, accessible, and welcoming facility that is an asset to the community.

We value culture and community:

- We enhance the quality of life of the community through our collections, programming, and services.
- We encourage, inspire, and support the creative and cultural endeavors of library users.
- We contribute to the economic viability of the community.

Mission Statement

The Mission Statement follows from the library's values. It describes the reason that the library exists, i.e., its core purpose.

The Kimberly-Little Chute Public Library enlightens and enriches people's lives through service that exceeds expectations and by providing responsive and dynamic collections, programs, and services that meet the changing needs of our community.

Goals and Objectives

Goal A: The library will acquire and provide appropriate technology to ensure that library users and staff have access to digital collections, online resources, and training in how to use them effectively.

Findings: Throughout the planning process the need to provide technology resources emerged as a theme. Many focus group participants and interviewees specifically mentioned the need for the library to be a community resource for technology resources. Based on comparisons with peer libraries and recommended standards, it is clear that the library needs to increase the number of public computers it has available.

Objectives:

1. Continue to provide free access to public computers and Internet resources, as well as free WiFi access within the library. (2011-2015)
2. Continue to maintain and implement a computer replacement schedule. (2011-2015)
3. Explore the feasibility of providing public Internet computers in the teen areas of the library. (2012)
4. Work with OWLS to establish required technology competencies for staff and implement a program to provide training and assess progress. (2012-2013)
5. Provide and promote, as feasible, one-on-one and/or group computer training for the public, including how to use the library's web site, online resources, InfoSoup, and ebooks. (2012-2015)
6. Investigate new technologies which can be used to access the library's resources and collections, purchase these new technologies when feasible and/or appropriate, and provide training to staff and the public in their use. (2012-2015)
7. Increase the number of public Internet computers to meet, at minimum, the "Moderate" level of service according to the Wisconsin Public Library Standards, as funding and space allow. (2012-2015)

Goal B: The library will be a welcoming cultural center for the community, providing informational and recreational materials, resources, and programming to meet the varied needs and interests of library users.

Findings: The library currently provides a wide variety of material and programs that are used and appreciated by the community, and this is considered to be a fundamental role of the library. The data indicates use of library materials and attendance at programs compares favorably with peer libraries. In addition, approximately 95% of library users who have an awareness of the library's programs for children and adults are satisfied or very satisfied with them. Furthermore, focus group attendees and interviewees identified the provision of information and programs, including employment information and community information, as important for helping to meet community needs.

Objectives:

1. Review materials selection and acquisition procedures and make necessary changes to ensure that appropriate materials are selected and acquired efficiently. (2011-2012)
2. Continue maintaining, developing, and posting photos, resident memories, and videos to the Centennial Memory Project blog. (2011-2012)
3. Maintain, at minimum, the current level of programming for children, teens, and adults. (2011-2015)
4. Establish a schedule for regularly weeding all collections. (2012)
5. Explore the feasibility of partnering with community organizations to provide training and support for job seekers. (2012)
6. Establish archival storage practices for local history materials in the Kimberly collection, and explore digitization projects that would increase access to historical collections. (2012-2013)
7. Establish a partnership with the Little Chute Historical Society to increase access to local history materials and enable programming opportunities. (2012-2013)

8. Utilize the library's web site and social media tools to share information about current events, authors, books, media, and resources that support the varied needs and interests of library staff and users. (2012-2015)
9. Continue participation in Fox Cities Reads and the Fox Cities Book Festival. (2012-2015)
10. Explore the feasibility of coordinating a community events calendar and/or community organization information on the library's web site. (2013)
11. Develop and implement a program for regularly notifying community organizations that the library will distribute their introductory and event materials. (2013)

Goal C: The library will be instrumental in creating a community of lifelong readers by promoting early literacy and encouraging reading.

Findings: Promoting early literacy and encouraging reading has long been a priority for the library, and the Planning Committee believes that this priority must continue. Public survey and focus group results confirm that the library is doing a good job promoting early literacy and encouraging reading and that this activity should be a priority. In recent years, the library has partnered with other organizations (e.g., Fox Cities Reads, Fox Cities Book Festival) to encourage reading, and focus group attendees have suggested that the library develop additional partnerships to promote early literacy and encourage reading.

Objectives:

1. Develop, support, and evaluate a 3-year early literacy initiative, "1,000 Books Before Kindergarten," beginning Fall 2011. (2011-2015)
2. Continue to provide baby and preschool story times, book parties, and other programs that promote learning and the love of reading. (2011-2015)
3. Continue to provide current outreach services to community public and parochial schools, and explore methods for improving or increasing outreach services to schools. (2011-2015)
4. Explore the feasibility of developing new partnerships with community organizations (e.g. HOV YMCA, village park and recreation departments, daycares, senior groups) to promote literacy and encourage reading, as appropriate. (2012-2015)
5. Continue to provide annual Summer Reading Programs for ages 3 through adult. (2012-2015)

Goal D: The library will create a broader community awareness of its programs, services, and resources.

Findings: The library provides a variety of services that are heavily used. Yet, a high percentage of public survey respondents (46%-56%) indicated that they lacked awareness about some of the library's services, including public computers, wireless Internet, children's programs, adult programs. Furthermore, several interviewees commented that the library may be underutilized by community residents. A greater awareness of the library's programs and services will enable community members receive a greater benefit from their investment in

the library, and it is important for community leaders to have accurate perceptions of the library's utilization and impact.

Objectives:

1. Redesign the library's web site and teach staff how to use it to effectively promote the library's programs, services, and collections. (2011-2012)
2. Continue to maintain and develop the library's web site and social media presence (e.g. Facebook, YouTube, Podbean, Flickr, etc.). (2011-2015)
3. Continue to promote the library through monthly event announcements to the press, quarterly articles for village newsletters, postings in Fox Cities Magazine and on their web site, and postings on the library's web site and public Google calendar. (2012-2015)
4. Improve promotion of library services and events via school newsletters provided to teachers, children, and parents. (2012)
5. Explore the feasibility of publishing a monthly email newsletter to publicize library events, resources, and services. (2012)
6. Apply for The Avenue's Community Partner Grant Program. (2012)
7. Improve displays of collections and current event materials to actively promote use of the library's resources. (2012-2015)
8. Participate in community festivals or events, when feasible. (2012-2015)
9. Evaluate public relations activities and develop a public relations plan to brand the library and deliver a consistent message to the public. (2013)

Goal E: The library will work to address the deficiencies identified by the Planning Committee as part of the planning process.

Findings: While public perception of the library is very favorable, the library does not always compare favorably with its peer libraries. Furthermore, the library does not meet state minimum recommended standards on six of eight measures. The library is constrained in its ability to meet state standards or to address identified community needs by the size of its staff and operating budget. The Planning Committee believes that the library has a responsibility to try to address the needs of the community and the library's deficiencies.

Objectives:

1. Continue working to create a new policy manual by preparing, regularly reviewing, and updating library policies. (2011-2015)
2. Work with the Kimberly and Little Chute Village Boards, Outagamie County Board, OWLS, and Outagamie County libraries to achieve equitable funding for providing countywide library service. (2011-2015)
3. Optimize the utilization of space by conducting collection development and maintenance activities, exploring alternative shelving and classification options, and examining facility layout. (2011-2015)
4. Annually review the library's long range plan, assess progress, and modify as necessary. (2012-2015)

5. Review staff workflow with the assistance of OWLS to assess efficiency of processes and make changes as necessary. (2012)
6. Actively seek partnerships with area organizations, businesses, and individuals to support the library's service to the community. (2012-2015)
7. Investigate the feasibility of using new technologies (e.g. RFID, self-check, etc.) to streamline circulation processes. (2013)
8. Develop a plan to address the library's staffing needs and ensure that staffing levels meet minimum standards. (2013)
9. Develop a plan to address the library's collection needs and ensure that materials collections and materials expenditures meet minimum standards. (2014)
10. Conduct a space needs assessment to determine the long-term space needs of the library. (2014)
11. Conduct a cost-benefit analysis of operating the library in a single facility, i.e., one building. (2015)

The Complete Plan

The entire *Kimberly-Little Chute Public Library Plan: 2011-2015* can be found online at http://www.kimlit.org/about_us/planning/2011-2015Plan.pdf. The posted version includes results from staff, public, and Board surveys, focus group sessions, community interviews, and peer library comparisons.