

Bowdoinham Public Library

Evaluation of Services for Older Residents

Final Report

January 2016

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Executive Summary

During the fall of 2015, the Advisory Committee on Aging applied for and received a grant from AARP to work with the Bowdoinham Public Library to conduct a needs assessment. The goal of the needs assessment was to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the library's facility, services, and resources and to learn what the Bowdoinham Public Library can do to improve the system of services for patrons age 60 and older.

In consultation with Kate Cutko, Director of the Bowdoinham Public Library, and Jill Hooper, President of the Board of the Bowdoinham Public Library, a paper survey was designed that was mailed to all residents of Bowdoinham who are age 60 or older. Surveys were collected during the first three weeks of November, 2016. Of the 697 surveys distributed, 305 were completed and mailed back in the postage paid return envelope that was included with the survey or were hand delivered to the Town Office or Bowdoinham Public Library. The return rate was 44%.

People who received a survey were asked if they were willing to participate in a focus group to learn more about the resources, services, and programs that older residents want to have in

We have a very good library for our town. It adds to the information we can get online. Socialization and seeing people is important to keep us old people going and feeling involved with the town!—survey respondent

their library and to explore ideas about how to address some of the needs identified in the paper survey. On November 18th, 19 residents shared their opinions at a community focus group.

Forty-one percent of people who returned a survey use the library regularly, at least once a month. Another 26% use it occasionally, at least once a year. Unsurprisingly, most people (83%) who use the library come to borrow books. However, people also come for socialization or to volunteer, to attend a meeting or program, to buy used books, and to use the technology. Sixty-four percent of regular and occasional library patrons listed more than one reason for coming

Overall, 88% of respondents rated the helpfulness of staff and volunteers as "excellent". Survey respondents who use the library at least occasionally

were given the opportunity to write a sentence or two telling us what aspects of the library keep them coming back. The top four answers were the:

1. **library collection;**
2. **quality of the service;**
3. **welcoming atmosphere; and,**
4. **feeling of community.**

One resident wrote: "*I think the library is one of the jewels in Bowdoinham's crown*", a sentiment that was reflected in many of the comments. Clearly, the Bowdoinham Public Library provides a high quality service that residents appreciate.

However, residents also had a few recommendations to improve library services. The primary areas identified for improvement were accessibility and library hours. People stated that they had trouble getting inside the building but, once in the library area, had few difficulties accessing the resources in the library.

Some residents found accessible alternatives to using the Bowdoinham Public Library. They asked friends, neighbors, or relatives to pick books up for them. They found books at the recycling barn or used online sources and downloaded electronic books. A few residents paid to use either the Topsham Public Library or the Curtis Memorial Library in Brunswick because those facilities are fully accessible.

The warm and welcoming atmosphere when I get into the library keeps me coming back. The stairs and the hall are very unfriendly. I feel like I break out of the clouds and into the sunlight every time I walk into our library. I will miss our little library when I can't do the stairs anymore. —survey respondent

The second challenge identified was the hours that the library is open. Twenty-four percent of respondents said that the times the library is open need improvement. Satisfaction with the hours differed significantly for people who used the library at least occasionally and respondents who did not use the library. While 65% of active patrons said that the hours worked well for their schedule, only 36% of people who do not use the library were satisfied with the hours.

People were equally likely to say that they needed additional morning hours as they were to say they would like to have additional evening hours. However, when asked what time of day was most convenient to visit the library, current library patrons overwhelmingly agreed that afternoon hours were best. While 67% of respondents who at least used the library at least occasionally said that afternoon hours were best, only 20% said that evening hours were convenient. Among older adults who do not use the library, morning hours were preferred by 53% of people while evening hours were most convenient for 41%. Two frequently cited complaints about the hours were: (1) the split hours and the lack of regularity from day to day; and (2) finding a convenient time to visit the library outside the respondent's regular work hours. Several respondents said that they planned to use the library after retirement, when their schedule could accommodate the library's open hours.

People in the focus group stressed that the Bowdoinham Public Library is a vibrant part of the community. They praised the library as a place to volunteer, connect with the community at large, discover reading material to borrow or used books to buy, and to find programs for all ages. Bowdoinham residents shared their pride in the ongoing work of the Friends of the Library and, especially of the Annual Plant Sale. Participants agreed that increasing accessibility and, possibly, space would ensure that all residents of Bowdoinham enjoy the library's many benefits. They also explored the possibility of building and distributing "little libraries" and/or developing a book delivery service for homebound residents.

Introduction

In 2015, the Advisory Committee on Aging in Bowdoinham conducted an update to its 2012 needs assessment. Among other findings, the Advisory Committee on Aging learned that, although older adults were members of the Board and participated in the Friends of the Library as volunteers raising funds for the library, they were less likely to use the resources offered by the library or to participate in library programs. To learn more about why older residents were less likely to use the library than other age groups, the Advisory Committee on Aging applied for and received an Age-Friendly Community Development grant from the AARP.

The AARP Age-Friendly Community Development grant included money for a mailed survey to all residents of Bowdoinham age 60 or older and a focus group of community residents. In addition, the grant provided money for the following programs and resources:

1. The addition of large-print books to the library's existing collection
2. The addition of audio-books and an audio player
3. Creation of a lending system for devices—such as a jar opener for people with limited hand strength, prism glasses to help a person see even if vertigo makes bending the neck difficult, and a seatbelt extender-- that older residents can try in their home or automobile to see if the item works for them, to make their everyday life easier.
4. Technology classes geared to the needs of older residents
 - a. Internet Safety
 - b. Facebook for Seniors
 - c. Appy Hour
 - d. You and Your Smart Phone

Methodology

In consultation with Kate Cutko, the Director of the Bowdoinham Public Library and Jill Hooper, President of the Board, the Advisory Committee on Aging developed a short questionnaire that was distributed to all residents of Bowdoinham who were, in October, 2015, age 60 or older. A total of 750 surveys were mailed. Fifty three surveys were returned as un-deliverable. Of the 697 surveys that were delivered, 305 were completed, for a return rate of 44%.

Each mailing included a cover letter (see Appendix 1), the survey instrument (see Appendix 2), and a separate sheet of paper asking people to share their contact information to be entered into a random drawing for one of three prizes and to indicate if they wanted to be added to the library's mailing list, the Advisory Committee on Aging mailing list, or to participate in a focus group (see Appendix 3), and a stamped envelope addressed to the Bowdoinham Town Office.

Thirty-one residents indicated that they were interested in participating in a focus group. All 31 of the people who volunteered to participate in the focus group were contacted for inclusion.

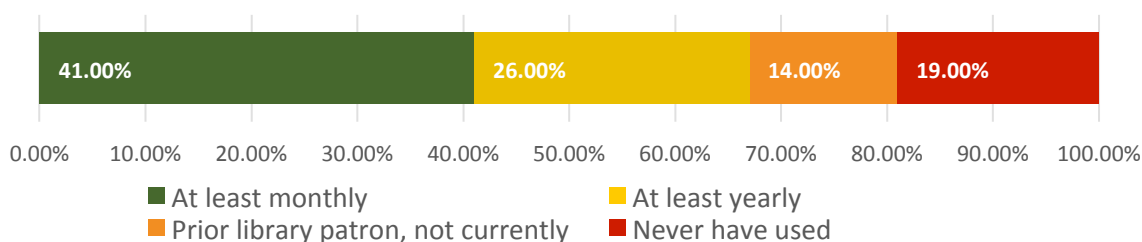
Of the 31 contacted, 21 said that they planned to attend the group. On November 18th, 19 residents shared their opinions at the community focus group. Kate Cutko, representing the Bowdoinham Public Library and Patricia Oh, representing the Advisory Committee on Aging, facilitated the focus group. See Appendix 4 for the focus group guide.

Survey Results

Library Usage

The majority of the people who completed surveys used the library at least occasionally (see **Figure 1**). Among respondents who indicated that they use the library, 61% visited the library at least once/month. Among non-library patrons, 47% had used the library in the past but were no longer using it regularly.

Figure 1: Frequency of use of the Bowdoinham Public Library



Library Patrons, adults who use the library at least once/year

People visit the library for a number of reasons. It was rare that a person stated that they only visited the library to borrow books. Among library patrons, only 22% visited solely to borrow books. The most frequently cited reasons for coming were:

- 36% To buy used books from the sales shelves
- 33% To find information/use reference materials
- 24% To read magazines
- 28% Socialization or volunteer opportunities
- 23% To borrow videos, DVDs, or audio-books
- 22% To accompany a child, friend, or relatives
- 21% To attend a book club discussion group, meeting, or other program
- 12% To use the library computer, wireless internet, or printer

The survey asked people who use the library to tell us what it is that motivates them to continue using the Bowdoinham Public Library. The top reason, cited by 43% of patrons, was the library's collection of books, audio-visual materials, and periodicals. Among other reasons

were the services and the librarian (23%), opportunities for socialization and meaningful volunteer work (13%), and welcoming atmosphere (12%).

People who don't use the services of the Bowdoinham Public Library

About one-third of people who returned the survey either said that they did not use the library or that they had used the library in the past but no longer use it. The survey asked people who do not use the library regularly to tell us why. Twenty-six percent of people listed more than one reason for not visiting the Bowdoinham Public Library.

The primary reasons, listed by 78% of people who do not use the library, were that they either bought their own books, periodicals, and audio-visual materials or that they got their information on the Internet. However, almost half (43%) stated that one reason they do not visit the library is accessibility or the lack of transportation. A minority of respondents don't come to the library because they got their books elsewhere or don't enjoy reading. Fourteen percent get their books from a relative, friend or neighbor or from another library. Twelve percent of non-library users said that reading wasn't their thing.

I get books from the recycle barn and use my kindle because getting in and out of the library is too hard. I can't manage the stairs and can't walk the path up to the driveway. –
survey respondent

People who don't use the library were asked what could induce them to start coming. The three most frequently cited reasons were nothing (42%), better in accessibility (33%), and . improvements in the library collection or programming (25%).

Library facility and services

The survey asked people to rate on a scale of one (needs improvement) to three (excellent) the library facility, hours of operation, and services offered by the library.

Library Facility

Recently, at the request of a resident, the book return box was moved from the top of the stairs to ground level. Fifty-five percent of respondents rated the new location of the book drop as "excellent".



Respondents were least satisfied with the ease of access entering the Bowdoinham Public library; 57% of respondents stated that accessibility "needs improvement". The survey included room for respondents to add comments to explain their ratings. Older residents described difficulty using the outside stairs that go from ground level to the second floor of the Coombs Municipal Building, where the library is located. They also described struggling with the interior staircase and with the lighting in the halls. Many of the respondents were not aware that the building has ramp access to the library. The ramp is located at the back of the

building, at the end of a driveway on the library side of the Coombs Building. There is space for two cars to park side-by-side at the ramp access. People who did know about the ramp, described the parking at the top of the ramp as inadequate. Several people who needed to use the ramp did not know that they could leave their cars at the ramp parking area.

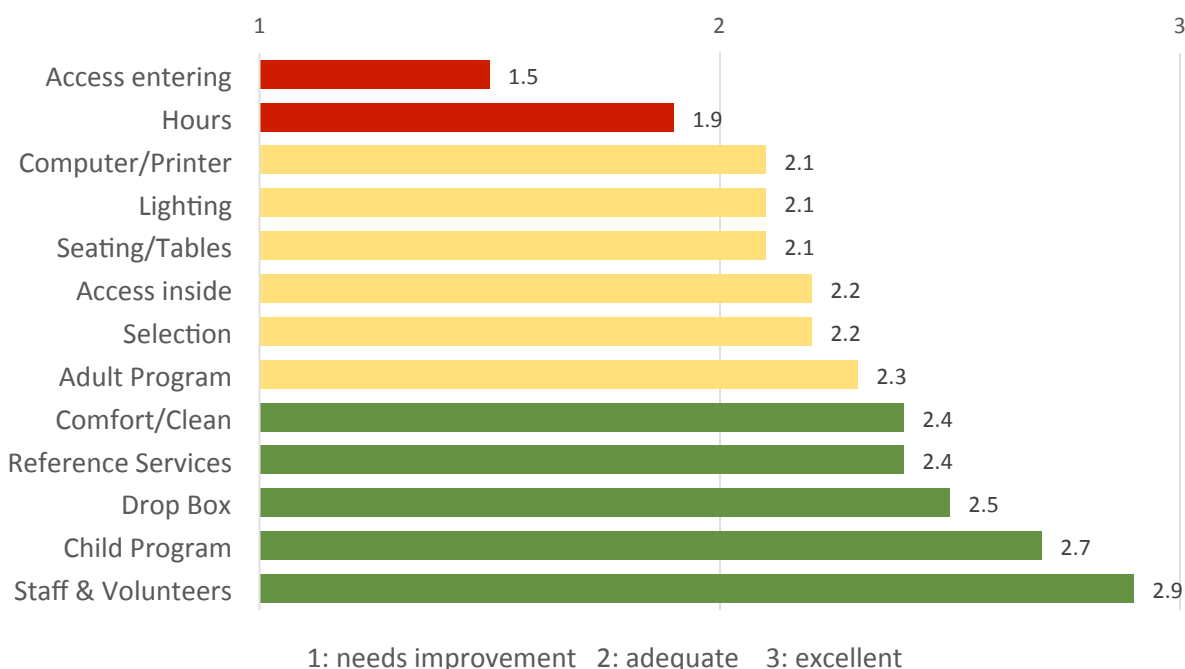
Within the building, respondents were least satisfied with lighting and most satisfied with the comfort and cleanliness of the library (see **Figure 2**).

The survey provided a space for people who answered the question to make suggestions about ways that the library could improve its space. By far, the majority of the comments were about the challenges people faced using the ramp entrance to the library, the dim lighting in the hall, and difficulty using the stairs. A few people also noted that the hallway outside the library could be used as a friendly and welcoming space by creating a rotating display, re-painting or adding a mural, and changing the carpet to a lighter color.

Several respondents made suggestions for the addition of a quiet reading area. There was enthusiasm about the existing reading space, in front of the library circulation desk but people pointed out that if the current table and chairs were already occupied, a newcomer could feel unwelcome. People also stated that the area was great for socialization but not so good for quiet reading. They wanted a quiet place where they could read or contemplate outside the bustle of the main room.

It would be nice to have a place to meet with other people and to have a quiet place to read--in addition to the wonderful space Kate has created near the check-out desk.—survey respondent

Figure 2: Satisfaction with the library facilities, hours, and services



Library hours and services

People were very satisfied with the helpfulness of staff and volunteer, children's programming and reference services. When asked to rate the quality of staff and volunteer help they receive when they visit the library 89% gave it an "excellent" rating. Children's programming was also rated highly, with 74% of respondents saying that it was "excellent. While 43% of respondents said that the reference service was "excellent", only 4% said that it needed improvement (see **Figure 2** for ratings of library services).

People were least satisfied with the library hours. Only 12% of survey respondents said that the hours were "excellent" while 24% said that the hours "needed improvement". Dissatisfaction with the hours was highest among people who didn't use the library. Only 4% of people who state that the either used the library in the past or who never use the library said that the library hours were "excellent" while 44% said that the hours need improvement.

Space was provided in the survey for additional comments. People had a variety of suggestions for expanding the hours. Some suggested that a volunteer may be able to fill some of the gaps. For example, there are three sets of library hours on Tuesdays—10:00-12:00, 2:00-5:00, and 7:00-8:00. Survey respondents wondered if the library could be open all day if a volunteer was trained to fill in the hours when the library is closed on Tuesdays. People also said that it would

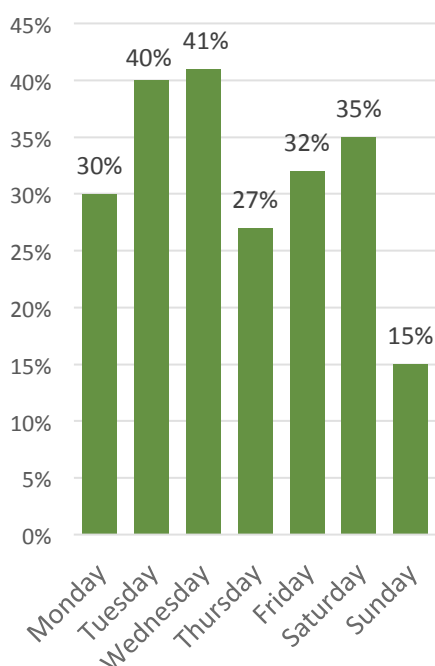
Our librarian, Kate Cutko, has such positive energy it is always a joy to come to the library. —survey respondent

The library is comfy, homey and welcoming-- good vibe. —survey respondent

The greatest asset of the library is Kate Cutko. She is a treasure. —survey respondent

I still feel a little nervous when I use the computerized catalog. Kate and the other staff are a great help! —survey respondent

Figure 3: Most Convenient Day to Visit the Library



be nice to have the same hours every day because they found it difficult to remember

the complicated schedule. Several non-users of the library also suggested evening hours which could accommodate their working schedule.

The survey asked which day of the week was best for people to visit the library and which time of day was most convenient. Respondents preferred Wednesday or Tuesday hours during the week and Saturday on the weekend (see **Figure 3**). The hours that were most convenient for people to visit the library differed significantly for library patrons and people who do not use the library. While 67% of library patrons wanted to visit the library in the afternoon, only 47% of non-users found afternoon hours convenient. Evening hours were more convenient for non-users of the library than for people who visit the library regularly; 41% of people who do not visit the library said that evening hours

were convenient while 20% of library patrons said that they wanted evening hours.

Additions to the library collection and services

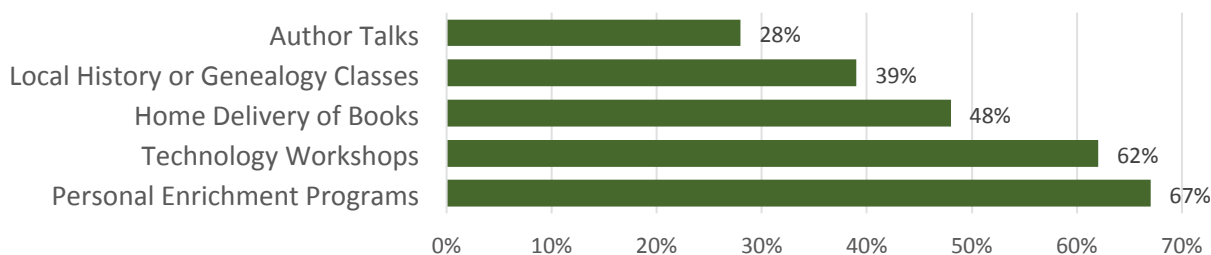
There was a high degree of satisfaction with the library's collection. However, there was interest in improving, expanding, or updating the collection in a few areas. Twenty-one percent of the older adults who returned a survey wanted to add to the audio and video collections of the library. People had specific ideas about the types of books they wanted in the library. Respondents were slightly more interested in expanding the nonfiction collection (47%) than fiction (40%). Among non-fiction categories, 36% were interested in adding to the history collection, 24% wanted more biography, and 23% were looking for more information about health and medicine. Among fiction categories, mysteries was chosen by 38% of respondents.

The survey also asked if people were interested in additional programming or services. There was strong interest in developing classes and workshops on a variety of topics (see **Figure 4**). However, people were concerned that adding programs would tax the librarian's already limited time. Some people suggested that there may be a role for volunteers or members of the Library Board to plan, develop, and implement workshops and classes.

It would be nice to have home delivery but I would be happier if I could get into the library to browse for myself and see people who are there. Visiting the library makes me feel like I am still a part of the community.—survey respondent

Nearly half of all respondents suggested that the home delivery of books would expand the reach of the library to shut-ins and many were willing to help develop the service. However, older residents who struggled with accessibility preferred to come to the library if they could. Visiting the library is more than just about books, it meant being part of the community.

Figure 4: Additional Programming and services



Communication

Communication is vital for people to know what the library offers. The survey asked people to indicate how they would like to find out about Bowdoinham Public library activities. While the majority (61%) like to get their information from the town newsletter, more than half (54%) like getting information from an email newsletter sent by the Bowdoinham Public Library. The least

popular way to get information was from the library website or Facebook page, with 30% of older respondents indicating that they wanted to get information from a public Internet site.

Focus Group Summary

The survey packets that were mailed to each Bowdoinham resident age 60 or older included an invitation to participate in a community focus group. On November 18th, 19 residents shared their opinions about the resources, services, and programs that they want from their library and explored ideas about how to address some of the needs identified in the paper survey.

Vital part of the community

Focus group participants were in unanimous agreement that the Bowdoinham Public Library is a vital part of the Town of Bowdoinham. Participants described the strength of the library collection and programming. Among the programs mentioned were the library story time and summer reading program, two library book clubs for adults, and volunteer opportunities. Town residents were also proud that the library is “keeping up the pace” with its technology offerings. A kindle lending library, free Wi-Fi services, and a library computer were examples given that the library is not falling behind technologically.

The people who participated in the focus group agreed that the library has a central role in building community, that it is one of the linchpins in what makes Bowdoinham the kind of community it is. The space occupied by the library was highly valued by participants but so was the fact that the library is a place that welcomes people of all ages, that plays a central role in many community-wide events, and is a central gathering place where people can meet and connect with each other.

If we were able to come back to this room 30 years from now, we would probably not think of the library in terms of physical space but in terms of these other things—community building, engagement, serving the community, a thing without walls, with entertainment. These different ways of expanding and sharing the different ways that the library is special. —focus group participant

Facility and Accessibility

The Bowdoinham Public library is housed in the Coombs Municipal Building, a historic building that has been lovingly restored by town residents with money earned through the fund-raising efforts of the community. Residents recognized that the historic building placed some limits on accessibility and expansion.

Many of the focus groups were pleased with the Bowdoinham Public library set-up but wished there was more room for meetings, a quiet place to read, and large work tables where children

and adults could work on projects. Several participants applauded the suggestion to make improvements in the Graduate Room to allow it to be a quiet reading room and gathering spot outside the busyness of the library circulation area or children's room.

Although the light inside the library was considered excellent, there were many complaints about the lighting in the hall and on the front stairs. One participant who frequents the library and uses the tele-commuting area provided by the Town Office said that it has taken her years

I think it says something about the town that much of the work on the Coombs Building was done with volunteer labor and that the library is still supported by the plant sale so I love this building. It is difficult for those of us with bad knees but still. –

focus group participant

to figure out which switch works to turn on which lights. There was general agreement that the halls were too dim to see clearly and that lights with hanging string switches were difficult to use. Some participants shared the experience of feeling their way down the stairs to the front exit. The suggestion was made to put a note that an additional switch is available at the bottom of the stairs on the switch at the top of the stairs leading out of the building so that people will not think they are required to use the switch at the top of the stairs to turn the stair lights off when they leave the building.

Residents had a few ideas for increasing accessibility. Simple ideas were proposed—such as improving the signage for the ramp and adding a doorbell that signals everyone on the second floor of the Coombs Municipal Building—not just those in the library—that someone needs the accessible entrance unlocked. A brief discussion of adding an elevator from the ground level to the second floor was followed by a discussion of making the back entrance to the library (currently through the Kendall Room, where the Select Board meets), the primary entrance to the library. There was enthusiastic support for a small addition at the back of the library that would improve the usability of the ramp entrance, add a turnaround areas for cars driving up the existing driveway to the ramp, and increase the number of parking spots for people who need to use the ramp. A significant reason for support of the idea was that it would not change the way the front of the building looks and, thus, would not affect the historic value of the building.

Community Outreach

Participants in the focus group wanted more information about what the library offers for residents and about regional developments. Residents valued their small library and were pleased with the array of services that it offers but they wanted to know about programs in other places—such as a demonstration of the 3-D printer at the Maine State Library.

It would be nice to have a constantly updated website or Facebook page with more emphasis on sharing with other communities and getting more services than we could get ourselves—sort of piggy back on what everyone else is doing.

—focus group participant

Residents were also interested in learning more about resources, such as a voltage meters and other items available to borrow through the library.

People who attended the focus group were concerned about increasing outreach to people who either can't or don't currently use the library. There was enthusiastic support for a volunteer-run Bookmobile or home delivery service.

The group agreed that one paid librarian could not offer additional programming without significant help from volunteers. One participant suggested that also discussed increasing volunteer recruitment by having a regular listing of volunteer positons that people could check to see if there was something they would like to offer. There was general agreement that Bowdoinham is a place rich in volunteers, that it was a matter of letting people know what was needed. The spirit of volunteerism that has characterized much of Bowdoinham's development was seen as a vital part of the library's success and of building community.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The Bowdoinham Public Library is more than a place where people can borrow books or attend a book club. It is the hub of community life, a place to gather and exchange information with friends and neighbors, a place to learn the latest technology or explore a new interest, and a place to find meaningful volunteer work. In the written survey as well as the focus groups we heard that Bowdoinham residents value their library and that its influence in the community is far greater than the footprint of its space.

The Bowdoinham Public Library is an important community institution whose form and function will change with the evolving needs of the community and available technology. Bowdoinham residents still use and want to use books but many increasingly use the Internet for all their information and reading needs. E-readers and online e-books fill a significant need in the book market. While many households in Bowdoinham have their own Internet connection or are able to access the web from their phones, some continue to depend on free Internet access at the Bowdoinham Public Library.

The findings suggest the library is on the right path with its services, but needs to increase the effort it puts into spreading the word about the resources and activities it has for area residents and may want to provide some information about what is happening at surrounding libraries. The barriers presented by limited accessibility to the building point to a few key responses. Remote access to library services needs to be well-advertised so people know what they can access without having to worry about accessibility or transportation. However, what people need from their library is more than books—they want the full experience that the library offers. For this to happen, accessibility concerns need to be addressed.

Bowdoinham's older residents want the library to be a place that is open and accessible to all. People of all ages and all abilities should feel welcome. Survey respondents and focus group participants wanted simple changes that would increase accessibility—better ramp access, improved signage, and better lighting. Bowdoinham residents have a long history of, as a community, reaching seemingly unattainable goals. Focus group participants were also interested in an expansion of the library that would increase accessibility and add space for a quiet reading area or conference room.

Next Steps

The *Friends of the Library* met on January 25, 2016 to review and discuss the findings of the report. The group, in consultation with the Bowdoinham Public Library Director, made the following recommendations for next steps:

- Hours: People who responded to the survey indicated that they would like more regular hours at the library. Currently there are gaps in open hours that are hard for residents to remember and few hours to accommodate the schedule of people who work days.
 - Develop a plan for hours that will accommodate a working schedule.
 - Consider the possibility of staffing some library hours with volunteers to allow the library to be open more hours than it currently is open.
- Communication: The survey and focus group findings suggested that older Bowdoinham residents want to know more about what is happening at their own library as well as in surrounding libraries.
 - The library director has identified a volunteer to work with the library director and webmaster to improve the library's website by adding links to information and resources from other libraries and to other community organizations.
 - Continue to develop a quarterly newsletter that can be distributed electronically to library patrons.
 - Create a space in the library to use as a dynamic calendar listing of upcoming library events.
- A quiet reading space: Residents were wanted to find a quiet space, out of the main flow of the library, for quiet conversations and reading.
 - Reorganize the Graduate Room to accommodate a few easy chairs and reading lamps as well as a large table to be used for crafts and projects.
- Accessibility:
 - Continue to work with the Town to increase accessible access using the ramp entrance to the library.
 - Consider an addition to the back of the library that can be used as the main entrance to the library.

- Signage:
 - Install ADA compliant signage throughout the library.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Cover letter to mailed survey



Bowdoinham Advisory Committee on Aging

Patricia Oh, LMSW
Coordinator of Older Adult Services
Town of Bowdoinham
(207) 666-5531, ext. 110
p.oh@bowdoinham.com

Hello!

The Bowdoinham Public Library needs your help.

The Bowdoinham Public Library (BPL) is a great place for people of all ages but there is always room for improvement. The library wants to know what kinds of services and programs residents who have reached the milestone of their 60th birthday want from the library.

Several months ago, Kate Cutko, the BPL librarian, asked the Advisory Committee on Aging (ACOA) to partner with the library's efforts to become more aging friendly. ACOA is a citizen's advisory board appointed by the Select Board to: (1) provide services and advocacy that enable residents to live in their homes and remain actively engaged in the community; and, (2) provide recreational and social programs that enhance health and well-being.

By completing the attached questionnaire, you will help the Bowdoinham Public library to know what your preferences are for the library. Please feel free to add comment if you feel that they will help us to understand your answers.

Please return the completed survey by November 15th.

As a thank you for completing the survey, you will be entered into a drawing to win one of three prizes:

Kindle Fire 7", 8GB with Wi-Fi
\$50 Certificate to the Library Plant Sale
\$50 Certificate to El Camino Restaurant in Brunswick

If you would like to be entered into the drawing for one of the three prizes, complete the page that asks for your contact information and return it with the survey in the enclosed envelope.

This mailing includes a November calendar of ACOA-sponsored events. For more information about ACOA or services for older residents, contact Patricia Oh, Coordinator of Older Adult Services by email (poh@bowdoinham.com) or phone (666-5531, ext. 110).

Best,

Patricia Oh, LMSW
for the Advisory Committee on Aging

Kate Cutko
Librarian, Bowdoinham Public Library

Bowdoinham Public Library Community Survey

The Bowdoinham Public Library, with the help of the Advisory Committee on Aging, is conducting a survey to find out what residents think the Bowdoinham library is doing right and what could use some improvement. Your response will help the library to identify the resources, services, and programs that adult patrons (aged 60+) want to have in their library.

We want to hear from all of you! Surveys are not limited to one per household. Additional surveys are available at the Bowdoinham Town Office, Bowdoinham Public Library, and Town Landing.

Please return this survey with the drawing entry form in the enclosed stamped envelope or drop it off at the Town Office.

1. How often do you use the Bowdoinham Public Library?

- ☐ At least once a month.
- ☐ At least once a year.
- ☐ I was a library user but no longer use the library regularly.
- ☐ Never.

2. If you use the library, what is your main reasons for using the library? Please check all that apply. Don't put a checkmark beside any of the options if you don't use the library.

- ☐ I don't use the library. (if you don't use the library, skip this question and question 3).
- ☐ To borrow bestsellers, fiction, or non-fiction books.
- ☐ To borrow large-print books.
- ☐ To find information/use reference materials.
- ☐ To accompany a child, friend, or relative.
- ☐ To borrow videos/DVDs or audiobooks.
- ☐ To use the library computer or Wireless Internet.
- ☐ To read magazines or newspapers.
- ☐ To attend a book club discussion group, meetings, or other programs.
- ☐ To buy used books from the sale shelves in the hallway outside the library.
- ☐ Other _____

3. If you visit the library often, what keeps you coming back?

4. If you don't use the library regularly, why not? Please check all that apply.

☐ I use the library regularly (if so, skip the rest of this question and question 5).

☐ I buy my own books/magazines/DVDs.

☐ I get my information on the Internet.

☐ I don't have any transportation.

☐ Library hours aren't convenient.

☐ The library is too busy/loud.

☐ There isn't enough parking near the ramp.

☐ I don't know how to use the library's computerized catalog.

☐ Reading isn't my thing.

☐ Other _____

5. If you don't visit the library regularly, what would draw you there?

6. Tell us what you think of the library facility. Please rate each. If you are not familiar with the issue, place a check under "don't know".

	Needs Improvement	Adequate	Excellent	Don't Know
Ease of access getting into the building.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ease of access inside the library.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adequacy of computer/printer.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Seating and tables.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comfort and cleanliness.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lighting.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Book drop box.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please add any additional comments: _____

7. How would you evaluate the library's services in the following areas? Please rate each. If you are not familiar with the issue, place a check under "don't know".

	Needs Improvement	Adequate	Excellent	Don't Know
Hours of operation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Selection and availability of materials.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Helpfulness of staff and volunteers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reference service.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Children's programming.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adult programming.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please add any additional comments: _____

8. Please check all the area(s) in which you would like to see the library's collection improved, expanded or updated.

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> General Nonfiction | <input type="checkbox"/> Self-help | <input type="checkbox"/> Romance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Biography | <input type="checkbox"/> Christian Fiction |
| <input type="checkbox"/> History | <input type="checkbox"/> Arts/Culture | <input type="checkbox"/> Audio/Video |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Science/Technology | <input type="checkbox"/> General Fiction | <input type="checkbox"/> Magazines |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health/Medicine | <input type="checkbox"/> Mystery | <input type="checkbox"/> Children's Materials |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Travel | <input type="checkbox"/> Science Fiction | <input type="checkbox"/> Young Adult Literature |

Other: _____

9. Library Facility & Hours

The Bowdoinham Public library is open Tuesday, 10AM-12PM, 2PM—5PM, and 7PM-8PM; Wednesday, 2PM—6PM; Friday, 2PM—5PM; and Saturday, 10AM—3PM.

Please check all that apply:

- ☐ The hours the library is open work well for me.
- ☐ I wish the library was open more during the morning hours (before noon).
- ☐ I wish the library was open more during the afternoon hours (between 12:00 and 5:00).
- ☐ I wish the library was open more during the evening hours (after 5:00).

What day during the week is the best day for you to visit the library?

- ☐ Monday ☐ Tuesday ☐ Wednesday ☐ Thursday ☐ Friday ☐ Saturday ☐ Sunday

10. In the future, I would like to see the Bowdoinham Public Library offer the following services or programs (Please check all that apply):

☐ Home delivery of books to shut-ins.

Technology classes

- ☐ Social Media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Blogging, Instagram).
- ☐ Basic Internet Skills (e.g. email, finding and evaluating information).
- ☐ Using Technology (e.g. downloading apps for a smart phone, I-pad, or tablet).
- ☐ Using the Internet safely.
- ☐ Individual tutoring (by volunteers).

Personal Growth and Development classes

- ☐ Brain Health.
- ☐ Household and Personal Safety.
- ☐ Health (e.g. frugal and healthy eating, physical fitness).
- ☐ Financial Planning (e.g. reverse mortgages, retirement planning).
- ☐ Working after retirement (e.g. "encore" careers, finding volunteer work).
- ☐ Caring for others (e.g. grand-parenting, caring for a relative with dementia).
- ☐ Preserving family stories, photos, and genealogy.

☐ Local History & Genealogy.

11. How would you like to find out about Bowdoinham Public Library activities?

- ☐ Email Newsletter
- ☐ Online: Website or Facebook
- ☐ Town Newsletter

12. Please feel free to provide any additional comments that you feel would help us improve our services.

Thank you for your time and support on this important library project. Your responses will be used to help us improve library services to our community.

Please return this sheet in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope along with your survey to enter the random drawing for one of three prizes.

Kindle Fire 7", 8GB with Wi-Fi
\$50 Certificate to the Library Plant Sale
\$50 Certificate to El Camino Restaurant in Brunswick

Your privacy is important to us. *Please do not write your name on the enclosed survey.* This sheet will be separated from your survey when you return them to the Bowdoinham Town Office in the enclosed envelope.

Printed Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

We have a few last questions for you. Please place a check beside any of the following that interest you

☐ I would like to be added to the Advisory Committee on Aging mailing list. If so, place a checkmark beside how you prefer to receive information: ☐ postal mail ☐ email

☐ Please send me the Bowdoinham Public library e-newsletter.

☐ I am willing to participate in a focus group about services and programs that can build on what the Bowdoinham Public library already offers.

☐ Please send me a copy of the final report.

☐ I am interested in helping the library develop programming for older residents.

☐ Contact me about volunteer opportunities at the Bowdoinham Public Library.

Appendix 3: Return for drawing, information, or inclusion in focus group

Age-Friendly Library: Focus Group Questions

1. Opening Question: Could each person please introduce yourself, say how long you have lived in Harpswell, and add one more interesting detail about yourself.
2. What is it like to age in Harpswell?
 - What things are helpful that we have here?
 - Is there awareness of available services?
3. If there is something you could change about aging in Harpswell, what would it be?
 - People
 - Safety
 - Do you feel your home is safe enough to live in alone as you get older?
 - Do you have a relative, neighbor, or close friend you can call for assistance?
 - Getting around
 - Closeness of amenities (shopping, medical care, etc.)
 - Availability of activities designed for older adults—i.e. meals, Senior Center, exercise classes, etc.
 - Cost of living
4. Where are the gaps in services for older adults in Harpswell (or Brunswick)?
 - What are the barriers to accessing services?
5. What is the general willingness of older adults to ask for or accept help? Are there barriers?
 - When did you ask for help and feel good about it? What made it easy/okay to ask for help?
 - What gets in the way of asking for help?
 - What kinds of offers of help are successful – why is it sometimes people feel comfortable taking/asking for help?
6. Help with home repair (painting, roofing, installing doors, etc.), home maintenance (shoveling, raking, mowing, etc.) and home care (help cleaning, shopping, cooking – not health related, etc.) were the top things older adults in Harpswell said they needed in our survey.
 - Are these challenges for you or people you know?
 - What would be the elements to designing a successful response to these needs?
7. Do you know folks who are struggling to gain access to the food they need? If so, what would help?
8. Thinking about transportation – most folks are driving into their 90s and are still reliant on individual transportation to get to services. Even though they're driving, many older adults would be relieved if they didn't have to drive so far to access things like medication and food.
 - What systems would you want in place if you were no longer able to drive?
 - What kinds of things would reduce the stress of driving on older adults?
9. If you could imagine the ideal community to grow older, what would it look like?
 - Who lives there (friends/relatives, people the same age)
 - Types of amenities (recreation, shops, services)
 - Ease of navigating the environment / how you get around

- Outdoor spaces
- How does Harpswell compare

Wrap-up Questions

Before we finish, are there any other issues we haven't discussed that you want to raise?