

WIGGIN
MEMORIAL
LIBRARY

start here, go anywhere!

STRATEGIC PLAN

2027-2028

Letter from the Director



> *“ How can the Wiggin Memorial Library best serve and contribute to the well-being of Stratham in the years ahead? “*

The Wiggin Memorial Library serves many roles in our community: a place to learn and discover, to gather and connect, to experience culture and ideas, and to enjoy a sense of belonging. Just as Stratham itself continues to evolve, so too does the library, adapting to the changing needs and aspirations of the community.

Over the past nine months, we have taken time to think deeply about that evolution and to ask an important question: How can the Wiggin Memorial Library best serve and contribute to the well-being of Stratham in the years ahead?

I am delighted to share the result of that work: our new two-year strategic plan.

Our planning process was guided by Christine Friese, a consultant experienced in working with libraries on strategic planning. We began by revisiting the foundation of who we are—our mission, vision and core values—and considering what we want the Wiggin Memorial Library to mean to our community.

From there, we listened.

We invited input from community members and library staff and sought to understand both what people value about the library today and what they hope to see from us in the future. What we heard was both affirming and inspiring. Again and again, we were reminded how much the Wiggin Memorial Library and its staff matters to people and how deeply it is woven into the life of our community. People value what the library offers today, while also sharing thoughtful ideas and aspirations for what it might become in the years ahead. As Library Director, I found that combination especially exciting: a deep appreciation for what the library already is, coupled with enthusiasm for what it can become.

After considering all that we heard and connecting it with our new mission, vision and core values, three areas of focus emerged for the next two years:

- ***Enhance Patron Awareness & Communication***
- ***Enrich Services, Collections & Programs***
- ***Reimagine Space Use & Aesthetics***

Together, these priorities are about creating a library that is more welcoming, appealing and intuitive to use, more effective at connecting people with everything we offer, and increasingly responsive to the changing interests and needs of our community. Of course, a strategic plan is only a beginning. Its real value will be found in what we do with it—and in the ways we continue listening, learning and adapting along the way.

Thank you to everyone who shared their ideas, experiences and hopes with us during this process. This is your library, and we are excited about where we go from here together.

Steven K Butzel

Steve Butzel
Library Director

start here, go anywhere!



Mission, Vision and Core Values

OUR MISSION

The Wiggin Memorial Library champions literacy, fosters community, and promotes lifelong learning through welcoming and dedicated service to all.

OUR VISION

We envision the Wiggin Memorial Library as the thriving heart of Stratham, supporting opportunities for connection and collaboration, while providing free and open access to information and resources.

Wiggin by the Numbers 2025

41,448 VISITORS

67,600 CIRCULATION

380 PROGRAMS

5,850 ATTENDEES

OUR CORE VALUES

- ***Inclusivity***
  We honor the dignity and myriad perspectives of all patrons.

- ***Intellectual Freedom***
  We uphold the right to learn, read and explore freely and protect intellectual exploration and independent learning.

- ***Community Building***
  We strive to strengthen relationships within our community built on trust and mutual respect.

- ***Lifelong Learning***
  We foster curiosity and continuous growth for all ages.

- ***Responsiveness***
  Through excellent customer service, we listen to our patrons and adapt to meet their evolving needs.

- ***Innovation***
  We embrace creativity and new ideas to better serve our community.

- ***Confidentiality***
  We commit to protecting the privacy and confidentiality of our patrons by safeguarding personal information and borrowing records.

Areas of Focus

1. **Enhance** Patron Awareness & Communication

- *Broaden community outreach*
- *Optimize promotional channels*
- *Expand education on library's digital services*

The library offers an increasingly broad range of resources, services, programs, and opportunities—but their value depends on people knowing about them and feeling confident accessing them. We aim to strengthen connections between the library and the community, making it easier for people to discover and use all that we offer. In doing so, we plan to engage existing patrons more deeply while reaching new residents and others who may not yet recognize all that the library has to offer.









2. **Enrich** Services, Collections & Programs

- *Adapt collection development to emerging borrowing trends*
- *Broaden program and service offerings*
- *Explore new youth, teen and family engagement opportunities*

The ways people use the library continue to evolve, and our collections, programs, and services evolve with them. We will continue to explore new formats and opportunities that reflect changing interests and borrowing habits, make library services and programs accessible in different ways, and strengthen our connections with children, teens, adults, and families throughout the community. By remaining curious and responsive to how people want to learn, discover, participate, and connect, we will continue to broaden the ways the library enriches community life.







3. **Reimagine** Space Use & Aesthetics

- *Improve navigation & discoverability*
- *Optimize community and learning areas*
- *Enhance exterior and interior environments*

The library's physical environment shapes how people experience the library—from the moment they arrive to the way they browse, gather, learn, connect, or simply spend time here. We will look for opportunities to improve the aesthetics and functionality of the building, both inside and out, to better support the myriad ways our patrons experience the library.

Strategic Planning Process

The strategic planning process began in March 2026, when the Library Board of Trustees and Library Director established a **Strategic Plan Steering Committee** composed of two trustees and two staff members.

With the guidance of strategic planning consultant Christine Friese, the full Board of Trustees and Library staff participated in discussions that resulted in new Mission, Vision and Core Values statements to help guide the planning process. Friese also facilitated a staff focus group to gather employees' perspectives on the Library's strengths, challenges and opportunities for the future.

In May 2026, the Steering Committee invited Stratham residents to participate in two community focus groups, providing an opportunity to share their perspectives on the Library, the services it provides and the evolving needs of the community.

Feedback from the focus groups helped inform the development of a community-wide survey, offered both online and in print during July and August. The survey provided an opportunity to hear from a broader cross-section of the community about their experiences with the Library, their priorities and their hopes for its future.

After reviewing the survey results, the Steering Committee organized two community forums in September to share what had been learned and invite further discussion and input from residents.

Following this extensive community engagement and discovery process, the Steering Committee reviewed and synthesized the feedback gathered from staff, focus groups, the community survey and public forums. The Committee considered recurring themes and priorities, how they aligned with the Library's Mission, Vision and Core Values, and which opportunities could be meaningfully addressed during the Plan's two-year timeframe.

Drawing on this work, the Steering Committee developed the Library's 2027–2028 Strategic Plan, which was adopted by the Board of Trustees on October 19, 2026.

Community Feedback

" I love that the library is a place where neighbors naturally cross paths and where everyone is accepted. "

" The library is awesome, keep up the great work and thank you for being there! "



" It's one of my favorite places because it feels relaxed, friendly and comfortable. It's a space where people can connect without feeling shushed or rushed. "

" I love the sense of community at the library, the kind professional staff, and all the programs they arrange. "

" Thank you for creating such a warm community environment. "

" The new consortium is terrific. Adding this to our existing interlibrary loan service has been wonderful. "

" Wiggin Memorial Library certainly surpasses my former libraries with all your programming and activities and engagement with town residents. Thank you. "

" There are so many things going on and people to connect with! "

" I think the library is a critical community gathering space. More than ever, we need spaces and places to interact with and get to know our neighbors better. "

" I love the sense of community at the library. There's something for everybody! "

A Brief History of the Library





As the Wiggin Memorial Library looks ahead to its 115th birthday in 2027, we are reminded of how deeply rooted the Library is in the Stratham community. While various libraries existed in Stratham as far back as 1799,

the story of the Wiggin Memorial Library began in 1912,

when a bequest from Emma B. Wiggin funded the construction of a public library at 158 Portsmouth Avenue. That building served generations of Stratham residents until 1990, when the Library joined the Town Offices and Police Department in the former Stratham Memorial School at 10 Bunker Hill Avenue, creating the Stratham Municipal Center.

The Library has continued to grow and change alongside the community. When the Stratham Police Department moved into its own building in 2009, the Library expanded into the space it left behind. The resulting renovation created

a dedicated Teen Room, Youth Activity Room, Library Meeting Room and Quiet Study Room.

Since then, continued improvements have included the addition of a brick garden patio through an Eagle Scout project in 2015 and renovated restrooms in 2025.

The Library's collections and services have grown as well, expanding well beyond traditional books and materials.

Patrons can now borrow eBooks and digital audiobooks through services such as Libby and Hoopla, take advantage of discounted museum passes, and borrow technology and other non-traditional items through the Library of Things.

The Library has also strengthened its role as a place for learning, culture and connection through an increasingly wide range of programs and community activities.

Another significant milestone came in 2026 with the formation of CORAL, the Consortium of Rockingham Area Libraries, a partnership among Wiggin Memorial Library, Weeks Public Library in Greenland and Lane Memorial Library in Hampton. Through CORAL, patrons of all three libraries gained access to a much larger shared collection and the ability to borrow materials across library and community boundaries.

More than a century after its founding, the Wiggin Memorial Library continues to evolve with the community it was created to serve.

Letter from the Board of Trustees

Dear Stratham neighbors and friends:

The library belongs to all of us.

Its future will remain strongest when we shape that future together. The priorities outlined in this plan reflect careful listening, discussion, and reflection on where our library is today and where we hope to be over the next several years.

This strategic plan is not simply a document—it is a roadmap for action in 2027-2028 at Wiggin Memorial Library. It builds on current strengths while identifying opportunities to grow, improve, and reach more members of our community. The Board of Trustees is committed to supporting this vision. Our role is to provide thoughtful advocacy and oversight while working in partnership with our library director and staff. We are excited to help these priorities become meaningful results for our patrons.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, thank you for your continued support. We look forward to the journey ahead and to the next chapter in our library's story.



In appreciation,
Gale Lyon, Chairperson

> *" The strategic plan is a roadmap for action in 2027-2028 at Wiggin Memorial Library. "*



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