

Catherine Goldsmith, Director

Starksboro Public Library

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“The Working Group shall study: 2. the role that libraries play in emergency preparedness... public health and safety, community identity and resiliency, economic development, and access to public programs and services.”

I have SO much I could say about this but I know the deadline is past. Perhaps this quick note will still help.

I believe that these issues are the ones that are hardest for non-library users to understand; including some of our board members and trustees.

For me, these issues are absolutely connected to ****free access to information**** and that is **WHAT WE DO**. It is why I am a LIBRARIAN. If people don't know that information exists, they can't even try to look for it.

Public Health? if people don't know how to find reliable information about health and their community, they just may not know. They may just rely on neighbors, friends and hearsay. Our small public library hosted 4 vaccine clinics. It cost us nothing and gained us good will from towns all around.

Identity? So much fun. I am collecting all the Starksboro tidbits I can find and publicize them. Every town has a unique history and character - we have to find those things and have fun with it. There's only one Starksboro in the US, really helps with online searching! That "Sam Hill" expression, supposedly it was named after an early surveyor and engineer from this town.

Emergency Preparedness? I had a former board chair say "don't talk to the local Emergency coordinator". Can you imagine?

The library is a heated and (sometimes cooled) space, we have electricity, charging cords, computers, printers. The library can offer so much in an emergency. Our library doesn't have a generator yet, but I hope to someday soon. Ditto for "Resiliency". We know people by name, by skill set and by face. We are a place where residents go to ask questions and express worries.

Economic Development? Again, access to computers for job applications and printers for printing resumes, shipping returns, etc. Internet for researching jobs and employers. Books on higher education and developing a business plan. We have access to Census Data and not just the ten year census.

PUBLIC programs and services. If the library hosts it - it is open to all - everyone. This small library is looking to improve our basic accessibility but I don't host events if it isn't free and on the first floor. Many people can't climb stairs and don't want to tell you why. I'm hearing that access to the Deaf is pretty awful everywhere in VT including major medical facilities! We've got to do better. We help publicize other organizations programs and collaborate as much as we can. We bought an OWL Meeting camera with our ALA Libraries Transform grant - it is being used 2-3 times a week in our little town. I am

so excited about bringing this resource to town.

Sorry for the exclamation points. Thanks for all your work. VT libraries are often small and funky but we are powerful! Thanks for gathering the data and getting the word to the legislature.

Best to all,
Catherine Goldsmith, Director
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