



## 2023 Library Visit Interview Form

**Library Name:** Reedsburg Public Library

**Certification Grade:** 1

**Date of visit:** 8/21/2023

**Library staff present at the visit:** Sue Ann M. Kucher, Director

**SCLS staff present:** Tim Drexler

**Amount of time spent at visit:** 2 hours (1:30 – 3:30)

**[Please limit this section to the answers to the specific questions, and include as much detail as possible. Report other information or observations in the “other information” section below.]**

1. What's new and/or innovative at your library?
  - Sue Ann was excited about finalizing a contract with newspapers.com to digitize portions of the library's newspaper collection. According to the pending agreement, newspapers.com would host the digital files online while providing free access to the library. Reedsburg PL would also receive copies of the files for their own use or as backups.
  - The library has added touchscreen monitors for several patron-accessible PCs.
  - Patrons continue to make use of the outdoor locker system the library installed for curbside pick-up during pandemic shutdowns. The lockers are convenient for borrowers with unpredictable schedules or those who can't get to the library during regular hours.
  - Sue Ann has purchased a 2-year license for Tableau's data visualization software and is looking forward to learning how to use it. I offered to help with any questions she might have along the way.
  
2. What are the next projects (big or small) on your library's to-do list in the coming year?
  - The next significant goal is to initiate planning for a long-term library expansion project. According to a space needs study, the library should have about 34,000 square feet available, more than double the current size of 15,400 square feet. Sue Ann is eager to start the ball rolling with the current municipal government as she anticipates an 8-10 year timeline for completion. She outlined some potential options for increasing the library footprint at its current location.
  - In the shorter term, the library is planning some capital improvements in the coming year, including upgrading its outdoor LED sign, replacing the front entry doors, and updating signage within the building.
  - The library will also continue efforts to digitize materials of local historical interest. Janet Gasser has been the primary staff person responsible for moving this project forward.
  
3. What challenges or concerns is your library facing now and in the near future?
  - One upcoming challenge will be hiring a new Children's and YA Services Librarian since Jess

McCarlson has indicated she will be leaving by the end of the year. In addition to filling Jess's full-time position, Sue Ann would like to add a supplemental, half-time Youth Services position focused on early literacy and pre-school programming. She mentioned that the library receives strong support from both Sauk County (which funds libraries at 100%) and their Friends group, so she hopes the necessary funding will be available.

Sue Ann also described how library staff shifted their job responsibilities and schedules after then-Assistant Director Kris Koulter retired last year. She expects similar adjustments may be necessary when replacing Jess. Sue Ann and the staff like to emphasize cross-training among the various job roles, which gives them an advantage in flexibility.

- As noted above, the library building is undersized, creating challenges for collection organization and difficulty meeting patron demand for reservable conference and study rooms. Sue Ann mentioned that the library has received a lot of help from Deb Haeffner to create design and furniture solutions that work in their current space. Library staff may also explore options to increase patron engagement with collections, such as separating non-fiction materials into adult and youth sections or grouping picture books by topic.
  - Sue Ann also described the ongoing challenge of finding the time required to address a backlog of potentially beneficial projects. She often feels "2 steps behind" due to the day-to-day demands of providing library services.
4. How might SCLS help your library or staff with your challenges, concerns, or projects?
- Sue Ann expressed an interest in Continuing Education opportunities related to project management skills. She also asked whether a public-records-related presentation by the DPI (possibly at the WLA conference?) was available as a CE program.
  - Sue Ann noted substantial assistance with library digitization projects from Tamara Ramski. We discussed whether it might be possible to have an intern from the Wisconsin Historical Society or a practicum student from the UW-Madison Information School as a limited-term employee to help with digitization.
5. What would you like to see SCLS focus on or prioritize in the coming year?
- Library staff are looking forward to the return of automated patron notifications from the TalkingTech system. This service is especially important for library patrons living in rural areas who may not be able to switch to e-mail or text notifications. Sue Ann mentioned how she appreciates the work Cindy Weber has done to provide the timely reports staff needs to call patrons manually while waiting for the situation to resolve.
6. Is there anything else you'd like to share or discuss?
- This year, Reedsburg Public Library is celebrating the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its current building. They will host an open house during the week of October 15<sup>th</sup>, which will coincide with National Friends of Libraries Week. 2024 will be the 125<sup>th</sup> (!) anniversary of the library overall. According to historical data, Sue Ann expects the library will reach the 10 million items checked out milestone sometime in September or October of this year.

**Other information gathered at the visit (interesting tidbits, general impressions of the library, or alternative topics):**

- Sue Ann and I started the visit with a tour of the library. Among the highlights:
  - The Community Room, which library staff have optimized for hosting children's programs, and

which local organizations can reserve free of charge.

- The library [Art Collection](#), including the Reedsburg Fabric Mural.
  - The Local History Room, with the collection of local newspapers on microfilm.
  - A multi-purpose quiet room which, during story times and children's events, library staff reserve specifically for families attending. Otherwise, the room is available for booking as a study room.
  - The Large Print and audiobook collections. Sue Ann noted the popularity of these collections among older patrons, who represent a significant portion of Reedsburg's population.
  - The extensive DVD collection, which features a wide range of multi-DVD TV series. This collection fills a need for patrons who don't have access to broadband internet service or for whom streaming video services are not a feasible option.
  - Furniture items collected from other libraries and repurposed by library staff. Examples include a Youth Services desk from the Pinney Branch of the Madison Public Library, a shelving unit from the Baraboo Public Library now used as an open holds shelf, and staff workstations based around cubes purchased from the Belleville Public Library.
- The library will be closed on October 9<sup>th</sup> for a staff in-service day, one of three typically scheduled annually. Jean Anderson and Tracie Miller from SCLS will attend and lead a staff training program. Past in-service days have included field trips to other libraries to gather ideas for the now-completed renovation project.