



BELOIT
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY EST. 1910

STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-2023

Year 1



CONTENTS

Table of Contents

- 2 Introduction and Executive Summary
- 3 Our Mission, Vision, and Values
- 4 The Planning Process
 - Internal Assessment
 - External Assessment
 - Organizational Assessment
- 5 Goals and Strategies
- 6 Goal 1: Expansion of Financial Base
- 7 Goal 2: Facility Economic Sustainability
- 8 Goal 3: Increasing Community Engagement/Visibility
- 9 Goal 4: Diversification of the Board
- 10 Goal 5: Increasing Collection Preservation and Access

Board of Directors

Richard Dexter, President
Nicolette Meister, Vice President
W. Richard Gerhard, Treasurer
Teri Downing, Immediate Past President
Ellen Joyce
Jacquelyn Jackson
Tom Larsen

Staff

Donna Langford, Executive Director
Jesse Herschner, Administrative Assistant
Leith Rohr, Archivist

Mayor Henry Adams,
from the 1916 Beloit
Pageant, introducing
the new symbol of Beloit
with his crew.



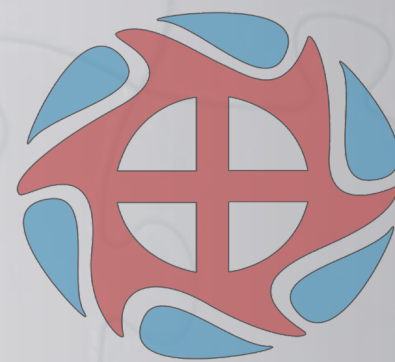
LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I am pleased to present the 2021-2023 Strategic Plan for the Beloit Historical Society (BHS). As a repository of local history, BHS is committed to the preservation and access of this material in order to enhance community pride. It is an exciting time for BHS as we work to digitize the collections; first by moving paper records to a computer database and secondly creating digital images of the collection materials. As this work progresses, staff is making connections between materials as a detective does with clues to determine more of each story.

The Strategic Plan and its related Interpretation Plan provide guidance and defines the role of collections in organizational activities to increase community access. The Strategic Plan also identifies costs related to function and provides strategies to successfully meet our challenges.

The next few years promise to be exciting and creative. We invite you to join us as we explore Beloit's history.

Donna Langford



INTRODUCTION AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Sharing Beloit's history to enhance community pride.

BELOIT HISTORICAL SOCIETY (BHS) is in a period of transition and change due in part as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. This transition is resulting in an expansion of educational programming and services for researchers.

The 2021 - 2023 strategic plan builds on the foundation set by the 2017-2019 plan which was internal focused in updating policies and procedures. The 2021 - 2023 plan shifts to an external focus to address community needs and to guide the Beloit Historical Society toward positive change.

The BHS Board of Directors and staff spent the remote year of 2020 strategically planning for this next 3-year plan with activities to be implemented during 2021 - 2023. BHS members and community leaders participated in a survey to provide feedback and perceptions about BHS; its facilities, programs and potential.

Reports from the professional assessments of the collections and facilities conducted in 2017 continue to be relevant and were used as a measure of comparison for the 2020 planning discussions. Data from the assessment reports, community survey results and an internal SWOT analysis resulted in the identification of common themes and high priority issues, defining five strategic goals to guide BHS during the next three years.

5 GOALS

1. Expansion of Financial Base
2. Facility Economic Sustainability
3. Increasing Community Engagement / Visibility
4. Diversification of the Board
5. Increasing Collection Preservation and Access



BHS flat files containing maps and other printed materials.



Strategic Plan documents are available at:
beloithistoricalsociety.com/strategicplan.php

OUR MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES

beloithistoricalsociety.com

IN THE MIDST OF A WORLD OF CHANGE, THE BELOIT HISTORICAL SOCIETY MISSION, VISION, AND CORE VALUES REMAIN THE SAME.

MISSION

Sharing Beloit's history to enhance community pride.

VISION

To make history the focal point of community pride and to serve as a constant reminder to the community of its great and diverse heritage.

CORE VALUES

We believe...

- History strengthens community pride.
- Local history is an economic and cultural asset
- Local history can engage citizens
- History can help us address contemporary challenges
- Shared history builds a strong community

We are committed to...

- Preserving Greater Beloit history
- Sharing respect for a diverse history to further develop our sense of community and enrich the lives of all our citizens
- Serving the public by providing resources and education
- Being responsible stewards of our communities historical resources
- Presenting an inclusive and unbiased view of the past



Many faces of Beloit over the years.
Photo, Beloit Historical Society

THE PLANNING PROCESS

Sharing Beloit's history to enhance community pride.

INTERNAL ASSESSMENT -

Internal assessment conducted by the Board of Directors and staff began with a review of mandates stipulated in the Articles of Incorporation and By-laws, the 2017-2019 strategic accomplishments and the 2017 professional collection and facility assessments which had defined priorities and recommendations on an immediate, within a year and within a 3-5 year timeline. A SWOT analysis (defining strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) focused on the 2020 situation and availability of resources.

EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT -

A survey was compiled with questions phrased to assess public perceptions of our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, and to gather observations. The survey was mailed and emailed to 298 members and community leaders with 74 respondents. Seventy-one of these respondents had also participated in focus groups during 2016. This provided a comparative perspective and valuable comments.

TESTIMONIALS:

- Much Improved
- Enhanced resolve to forge ahead
- A demonstrated capacity for change



A community event staffed by BHS volunteers.
Photo BHS archives

ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENT

The Board of staff reviewed the survey results with raw data visualized as charts and compared to the Board's SWOT analysis. Common themes quickly became apparent which resulted in five goals to focus on over the next three years.

The 2021 - 2023 Strategic Plan was adopted by the Board of Directors in May 2021.



GOALS AND STRATEGIES

GOAL 1: EXPANSION OF FINANCIAL BASE

beloithistoricalsociety.com

Sharing Beloit's history to enhance community pride.

The 2017 – 2019 Strategic Plan focused internally in the review and update of operational procedures, building a foundation for the next phase of strategic planning. This 2021 – 2023 Strategic Plan focuses on the Beloit community and the operational support to function successfully. On-going projects of facility maintenance and collections care were carried forward into the current strategic plan.

Achievements:

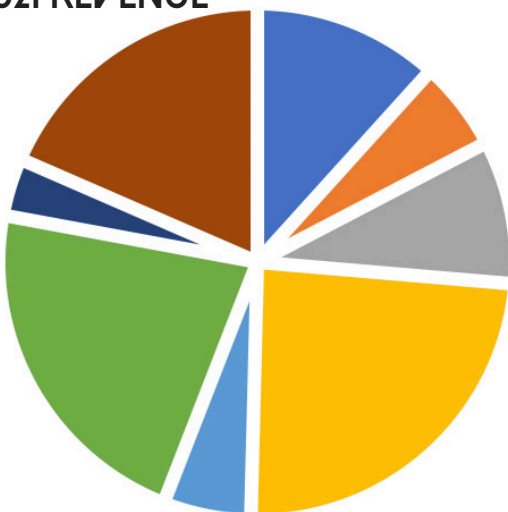
- ✓ Enrollment in AASLH STEPS Program American Association for State & Local History (AASLH) Standards and Excellence Program for History Organizations (STEPS), a self-assessment program to provide guidance in assessing policies and practices.

In order to support operational growth, diversification and expansion of funding sources is needed. During strategic planning, current revenue resources were identified and evaluated in terms of sustainability and reliability over time. New fundraising methods are being investigated to communicate project information and increase the ease of giving.

Strategies

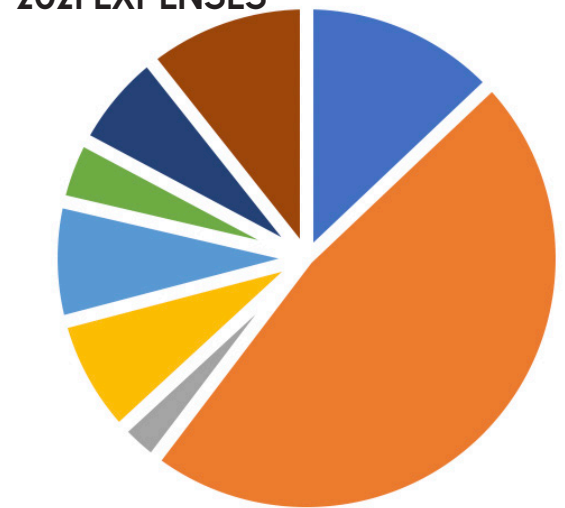
- Develop a museum store
- Expand the sponsorship program
- Create publications on various Beloit history topics

2021 REVENUE



- Government Funding
- Memberships
- Events and Programming
- Fundraising
- Grants
- Donations & Memorials
- Endowment
- Other

2021 EXPENSES



- Repairs and Maintenance
- Postage and Office Supplies
- Financial Services
- Insurance
- Wages and Benefits
- Utilities
- Programming
- Other

TO MEET THE STRATEGIC GOALS OF THE 2021 - 2023 PLAN, THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS WILL:

1. **Expand** our revenue resources to further diversify funding support.
2. **Focus** on facility maintenance in order to provide safe and welcoming buildings for visitors, volunteers, staff and the collections.
3. **Improve** methods and frequency of communication to increase the society's visibility and engagement with the community.
4. **Continue** to provide strong leadership through the recruitment and orientation of board directors.
5. **Improve** storage conditions and use procedures of the collection, increasing its preservation and implement a variety of methods to increase community access.

Beloiters enjoy a friendly foot race at a BHS event in the mid-1960s. Photo BHS photo archives.

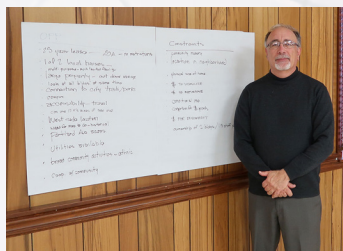


Volunteer blacksmith demonstrating the art of repair. Photo BHS archives

GOAL 2: FACILITY ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

beloithistoricalsociety.com

The society's facilities are the infrastructure that we operate within. They need to be safe, welcoming and functionally efficient. Challenges in providing services to the community include maintenance, location of the buildings within the city and the floor plan within the buildings to provide easily accessible exhibit and programming areas. This strategic goal focuses on identifying areas that need to be addressed and increasing financial resources to sustain the facilities.



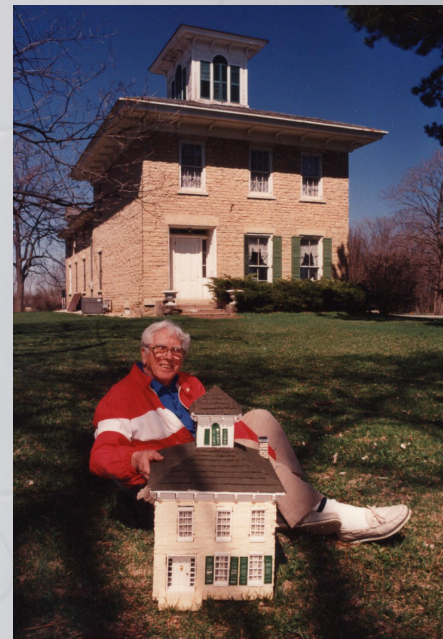
Charles Quagliana, Feasibility Study consultant at the first meeting with the Advisory Committee.

Achievements:

- ✓ Awarded a Fuldner Grant, a matching grant of \$15,625 to conduct the Re-imagining Hanchett-Bartlett Feasibility Study
- ✓ BHS raised matching funds well within the time-frame specified by the grant

Strategies:

- Create a maintenance fund and implement a procedure to regularly add to the fund
- Increase preservation capabilities of the building for the collections by changing the heating, cooling, and lighting equipment
- Develop and implement a disaster plan



This scale model of the Hanchett-Bartlett home was built by a local resident many years ago and can be seen today in the lobby of the Lincoln Center.
Photo BHS photo archives

"Electricity Dance," 1916 Beloit Pageant.

The Lincoln Center needs real upgrades to its electric system, the electric dance won't provide what is needed.
Photo BHS photo archives



GOAL 3: INCREASING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT / VISIBILITY

Sharing Beloit's history to enhance community pride.

Beloit Historical Society is a repository for the story of the people of Beloit. For the public to entrust their individual histories with BHS, it is imperative that the organization continues to increase its footprint in the community. A museum is not a museum unless it is utilized by the public. If no one knows who or what we are, this will not happen.



Visitors to the Beloit Historical Society. Photo BHS photo archives

Visitors to the 1916 Beloit Pageant.
Photo BHS photo archives

THE FOLLOWING GOALS ARE INTEGRAL IN OUR EFFORTS TO INCREASE PUBLIC PERCEPTION.

Strategies:

- BHS is dedicated to increasing community engagement through new partnerships
- Partnerships with Visit Beloit, Downtown Beloit Association, the school districts, and many others; working with them in new ways
- Development of an interpretation plan and the adoption of History Relevance initiative to increase visitor participation in our exhibits
- Create a communication plan assessing the use of the newsletter, website, and social media
- Update exterior sign with new logo

GOAL 4: DIVERSIFICATION OF THE BOARD

beloithistoricalsociety.com



Representation of the Beloit community on the Board of Directors is important to provide organizational guidance that is relevant to the entire community. A successful board includes a variety of perspectives, skills, ages, genders, cultures and ethnicities that represent the Beloit community. With diversity comes increases collaboration, an increased awareness of a variety of variables related to each topic under discussion, increased access to resources, different perspectives which generates creativity and the discovery of new solutions. Most importantly, a diverse

board of directors increases connections to the community and is better able to make realistic decisions regarding services to that community.

Achievements:

- ✓ Creation and implementation of board orientation materials
- ✓ Development and implementation of a Governance Committee to regularly assess the needs of the organization and identify ways to meet those needs.

Strategies:

- Continued assessment of current skills on the board and identification of needs
- Add diversity policies in the bylaws so they remain a priority



Some of the many items in the vast physical collection of the BHS.
Photo L. Wallis

GOAL 5: INCREASING COLLECTION PRESERVATION AND ACCESS

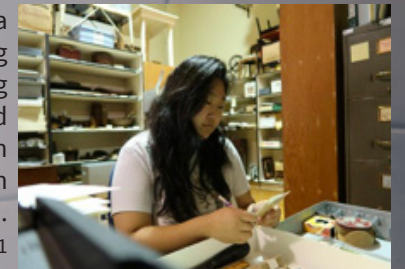
Sharing Beloit's history to enhance community pride.



Original paper card system cataloging items in BHS collection. Photo L. Wallis

The Beloit Historical Society is a repository of local memory contained in its collections of documents, photographs and three-dimensional objects. The collections are the foundation which supports all of the society's services to the community.

Intern Julia Hwang cataloging artifacts and rehousing them in preservation storage boxes. Summer 2021



Collections access is being increased by:

- The cataloging and processing of donations of items to the collections which increases the amount of information available to the public for research and to staff to use in exhibits and programs.

Increasing the internal understanding of the content of the collections is done through cataloging, research of item types and making connections between artifacts to provide greater knowledge of a topic.

- Transitioning from a paper card information system to a computer database software, PastPerfect. This increases the ease of searching particular subjects.
- Serving as a learning tool for students in museum studies, history, archival and historic preservation degree programs. Students gain hands-on experience within a museum collection and BHS benefits with various collection management tasks being accomplished.

BHS Collections

The Beloit Historical Society collects items that relate to the history of the greater Beloit area. The collections include items that were created in Beloit, or have a direct and important connection to an event in Beloit's history or a prominent Beloit. BHS curates two types of collections: permanent and education.

The permanent collections are items with the highest interpretive and historical value. We plan to preserve these items with the highest interpretive and historical value. We plan to preserve these items indefinitely and with the highest standards of care and processing.

Permanent collections include artifacts, photographs and documents.

Education collections are items acquired for educational programs, exhibits, and public access. Education collections are replaceable and are chosen for their historical value as well as their ability to withstand handling. Education collections include library, reference, and hands-on collections.

Acquisitions support the mission of the Beloit Historical Society- sharing Beloit's history to enhance community pride - and are of significant historical value to Beloit.

Achievements:

- ✓ Expansion of internship program: 10 interns, 2020-2021
- ✓ 100 boxes of archival documents fully cataloged
- ✓ Increased storage capacity in Archival storage through the addition of new shelving units.

Strategies:

- Increase records in new collections database by 1000 per year
- Extend internship program to graduate level students

beloithistoricalsociety.com

Don't let ghosts
be the only ones to enjoy the vast
collections at
Beloit Historical Society!

Schedule a visit today for you, your
friends, or your group.

This ghost was found on a drawing of a
Transfer Press at Fairbanks-Morris,
hand drawn in 10-10-67 by H. Browles.

WHAT'S
MISSING?
YOU ARE!

