

SPOTLIGHT ON THE LIBRARY CAPITAL CAMPAIGN – updated June 2023

Friends of Appleton Public Library

Friends of Appleton Public Library was formed when two separate organizations merged in 2009. Friends of Appleton Library, or FOAL, began in 1975 to support and advocate for a new library building in Appleton. FOAL achieved its goal and the new building opened in 1981. FOAL continued as a membership organization to provide financial support and advocacy after the new building was completed.

Appleton Library Foundation began in 1985 with a goal of creating an endowment of \$1 million. The earnings would then be used to provide enhanced library programs and services beyond those funded by tax dollars. The Foundation reached its funding goal in the early 1990s, thereby creating the Library Endowment at the Community Foundation. This endowment provides "Friends grants" to the library each year, which supports programs, technologies, services, materials, and special projects.

In 2009, the Boards of those organizations voted to merge since their missions were the same: to support and enhance programs and services at Appleton Public Library. This new organization was incorporated as Friends of Appleton Library, Inc. or, as it has come to be known, Friends of Appleton Public Library. The merged organization was better able to focus on Board and membership development, fundraising, and library advocacy. Friends operates as an independent 501c3 with an Executive Director and has provided \$1.8 million in grants to the library since 2000.

Recognizing that private funding could enhance core library services when the city decided to move forward with a library building project, Friends have been preparing for a capital campaign for over a decade. Friends have been working in support of the city's renovation design and timeline.

History: Feasibility Study Methodology and Results

In Fall 2021, Friends contracted with K. Rose, LLC to conduct a feasibility study for the Appleton Public Library. This planning study, led by Karen Rose, aimed to assess Appleton's readiness and capacity to support a \$12 million capital campaign for renovating and expanding the Appleton Public Library.

Thirty interviews were conducted with participants identified as either potential major donors for a library capital campaign or individuals with valuable insights on the community's philanthropic culture and history.

The interviews elicited advice, impressions, opinions, and information relating to Friends, Appleton Public Library, and this specific project. The questions sought to capture the urgency

and desirability of the proposed project, the viability of a major capital campaign, the availability of leaders and volunteers needed for the campaign, and the availability of gifts necessary for campaign success.

The study results indicated favorable views of Appleton Public Library and Friends, a compelling case for support, positive views of the design, and an understanding of the need to invest in the library to serve the community now and in the future.

Based on the study, the consultants recommended that Friends embark on a \$12 million capital campaign. The identification and confirmation of a significant lead gift of \$3 million provides a pivotal opportunity to leverage additional major gifts. Additionally, the feasibility study identified the potential to secure another \$6.5 million from individual and institutional donors. Therefore, the study suggests that at least \$9.5 million, or 80% of the goal, is available to the library, indicating a strong likelihood of a successful \$12 million capital campaign. A 12–18-month campaign was recommended.

Capital Campaign Progress

Friends hired K. Rose Consulting to continue working on the campaign, and A2Z Design to prepare the campaign materials. A capital campaign case statement was created, an important piece used in donor solicitation, and was recently revised to reflect the updated design.

A Capital Campaign Committee of community leaders experienced in successful capital campaigns began working in June 2022, marking the beginning of the quiet phase of the campaign. The committee has been focusing on soliciting lead gifts with the goal of securing 90% of the total goal before transitioning to the public phase of the campaign, which is slated to occur later this year.

Donors interested in naming opportunities in the new library will be subject to the library's Naming Opportunities Policy, which was approved in April 2022 by the Library Board of Trustees. Donors complete pledge forms and will enter into donor agreements that will be approved by the Trustees to authorize the naming opportunities associated with these gifts.

Friends has approached a local lender to negotiate a bridge loan, which will provide financing to facilitate multi-year gifts. This approach is commonly employed in capital campaigns.

During the time the building was being redesigned, Friends maintained relationships with donors and communicated about the importance of the city's decision to reject the bids and redesign the building. This time has also been used to develop important tools that will be used during the public phase of the campaign such as a campaign video and a redesigned website.

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