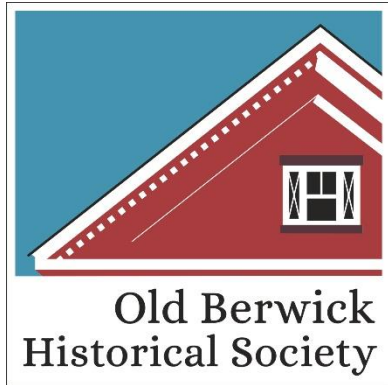


OBHS Strategic Plan 2019-2024



The Old Berwick Historical Society promotes public awareness of and appreciation for local and regional history through a variety of activities that explore, preserve, interpret, and celebrate the past, and through stewardship of the Counting House and its collections.

We serve history lovers from all over the country, especially Seacoast New Hampshire and Southern York County, Maine.

Since 2016, OBHS has become revitalized through several different initiatives in the organization. One crucial step was recognizing that the Board needed to hire an Executive Director to organize and direct the operations of the society. This took the burden of everyday tasks, and planning and running programs and events, off the shoulders of the Board. The Board then focused on long-range planning for the health of the organization including increasing volunteers, focusing on funding, and providing quality programs.

In late 2017, the Board went through a long-range planning process. The Board identified three major goals for the next several years; to expand and modernize how we interact with our audience, to address storage and collections needs, and to build our endowment. We believe that these are the keys to growing our organization in participation and membership, and to responsibly prepare for the future.

The Board also recognized the need to update our goals for each committee, since our last long-range plan was attempted in 2012. The following report is the result of several months of meetings. To help us achieve these goals, we welcome involvement from our members and supporters.

UNIFYING THROUGH OUR STORIES- EDUCATION

The Education Committee ensures that OBHS presents a cohesive vision for each season. We strive to have our residents feel a connection to this place. We create immersive opportunities that are intended to reach a variety of audiences outside of the museum.

New Education Initiatives

- ❖ Reframe the Hike Through History so teachers and students can learn and present the material through a modernized approach.
- ❖ Find possible storage alternatives for the Hike Through History props.
- ❖ Provide opportunities for families to explore our local history together.
- ❖ Offer an immersive one-week summer history camp to middle school students.
- ❖ Create educational kits for the museum, which can be lent to schools.
- ❖ Create a history app with several tours of South Berwick.

EXPLORING OUR STORIES – PROGRAMS

The Programs Committee strives to provide a variety of learning opportunities to children, families, and older adults. We incorporate a range of educational options to learn about local history- from school programs to scholarly lectures- and engage a diverse audience. Our programs are always free.

New Programs Initiatives

- ❖ Provide opportunities for families to explore our local history together.
- ❖ Support exhibits with themed programming.
- ❖ Engage our senior citizen audience.
- ❖ Seek opportunities for partnership with other non-profits and historical societies.
- ❖ Increase History Strolls throughout South Berwick.

PRESERVING & INTERPRETING OUR STORIES – COLLECTIONS

The Collections Committee strives to collect, preserve, and present items from South Berwick and our local region. We accept donations of objects and archives, work to preserve our collection, and present our archives and objects through exhibits at the Counting House Museum, South Berwick Town Hall, and South Berwick Public Library. We regularly assist guests with research queries, and strive to be known as a top research facility on the Seacoast. We collect objects according to the guidelines in our Collection Policy.

New Collections Initiatives

- ❖ Promote our museum as a top research facility on the Seacoast.
- ❖ Improve storage and conditions of our archives and objects.
- ❖ Begin a deaccession project for our objects with no provenance.
- ❖ Widen access to our archives through workshops and training.
- ❖ Initiate a cataloging project to process a backlog of items.
- ❖ Hire a part-time Collections Manager to address cataloging and curatorial needs.
- ❖ Create a semi-permanent exhibit about early South Berwick history featuring items from the Chadbourne and Old Fields archeology digs.
- ❖ Create archives exhibits focusing on family histories to celebrate our town and to engage descendants and current residents.
- ❖ Create objects exhibits to highlight our collection, draw in new audiences, and educate the public about our diverse history.

CELEBRATING OUR STORIES- FUNDRAISING

The Fundraising Committee strives to present unique opportunities to celebrate our past through engaging fundraisers that incorporate history and whimsy. Our goals of education, volunteer engagement, creating community and securing memberships guide our fundraising event planning. The committee also plans the annual membership drive, and secures business memberships. The committee maintains the museum shop, and looks for new items to sell each season.

New Fundraising Initiatives

- ❖ Create fundraisers that offer some historical knowledge.
- ❖ Accurately inform guests about South Berwick and regional history.
- ❖ Fundraisers should vary so they reach a variety of income levels and/or interest in history.
- ❖ Fundraisers should reach purposefully identified audiences.
- ❖ Continue to build membership, with 10% increase in income each fiscal year.
- ❖ Engage business members to create mutually beneficial opportunities.

MAINTAINING PROPERTIES

The Properties Committee strives to maintain and improve the condition of the 1830's Counting House Museum. The Counting House Museum is a regional treasure containing one of northern New England's last textile mill ballrooms, and is on the National Register of Historic Places. It is a repository for documents, photographs and historic curiosities covering a wide spectrum of community life in and around the Berwicks.

New Properties Initiatives

- ❖ Get an analysis of the attic for insulation.
- ❖ Get an analysis of attic for storage needs.
- ❖ Explore opportunities for Hike Through History prop storage off-site.
- ❖ Identify needed upgrades and repairs of the Counting House Museum.
- ❖ Create a plan of actions to act on resolvable building maintenance issues according to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.
- ❖ Work with the Collections Committee to identify the challenges and limitations the building poses to the preservation of archives and objects.
- ❖ Create a plan of action to act on resolvable archives preservation issues.
- ❖ Continue to explore ways to be more ADA compliant.

VOLUNTEERING

The Executive Director, Board of Directors, and the committee chairs strive to continue to engage our volunteers, thank our volunteers, and recruit volunteers.

New Volunteer Initiatives

- ❖ Offer opportunities to educate our volunteers through archives training, seasonal training, and off-site visits.
- ❖ Thank our volunteers in person, in writing, and through an annual history-related field trip.
- ❖ Committees will continually identify gaps in their experience and knowledge, and seek to fill the gaps.
- ❖ The Board will continually identify gaps in its experience and skill sets, and attempt to fill those gaps with new recruits.
- ❖ The Board will be mindful of succession planning as board members begin to retire.

FINANCING

To ensure a dynamic future, OBHS must continue to maintain and grow its financial base in a number of areas including smart investment policies, growing our endowment, capital project funding, and grants.

New Finance Initiative

- ❖ Acknowledge that OBHS must grow and mature to a scale that requires new planning and support.
- ❖ Dedicate more resources to increasing and creating diverse income streams.
- ❖ Develop and implement plans for a robust planned giving program to build our endowment.
- ❖ Support the Executive Director and Board with grant applications.
- ❖ Continue to actively manage our finances, endowment, revenue and expenses with careful, yet innovative, responsibility.
- ❖ Work toward a plan of long-term financial stability 10 years from now.

PREPARING FOR BEYOND 2024

Preparing for the future requires a clear and compelling vision, one that offers a strong and persuasive reason to value the ongoing investment into this organization.

For nearly 60 years, the Old Berwick Historical Society has grown through the generous support of residents from South Berwick and beyond. This has been the work of several generations, and it has resulted in the development of an institution that today is vibrant and admired.

As the Old Berwick Historical Society builds upon our traditions and strengthens our resources, we recognize that our success will depend upon our ability to engage support across the broader community.

We are charting a course for the sustainability of this beloved organization. We ask you to join us in looking toward the future.

Beyond 2024: Exploring Horizon Issues

- ❖ Institutional memory loss occurs whenever there is a turnover in staff, volunteers and the Board. Efforts should continue in proper record keeping and in the cultivation of successive “schools” of leaders to ensure information is carried forward.
- ❖ Aging building and infrastructure will continue to pose risks and challenges to the OBHS resources. Active planning is necessary to meet these challenges successfully.
- ❖ Our collections are at risk due to limited storage and unregulated conditions. Efforts to manage collections inventory will need to be partnered with a specific effort to develop new storage solutions and environmental control, and possibly the construction of new spaces.
- ❖ The new acquisition of any substantial land, building, or collection will need to be accompanied with the recognition of the potential strain on our budget and resources.