

There were many good takeaways from the interview I conducted with the East Hartford Library Director, but I will lay out three of the larger ones here. The first main point and one of the biggest takeaways for me was the idea of a peer support network or being director or a manager does not mean you are alone. The second is flexibility, you can only plan for so much, and don't get stuck in your own ways. The last main point is to prepare, prepare, prepare. As director or manager there are meetings, grant writing, events, just be prepared for all don't run blind all the time.

The first takeaway and theme, the idea peer support network or splitting the work is important in any area but from the interview with my library director it is especially important in the library space. This also goes into networking going forward, always networking for support. The director I interviewed, on many of the questions, brought up having a network of people to rely on whether it be in her own library or with other librarians in the state, and members of the town board. Even in small group projects for college or at work, splitting the workload and who will work on what is extremely important to efficiency and just giving people peace of mind. Having people to rely on for working, knowing they are there can help motivate you to do good on your work, and in many cases makes the work go by faster. The workload split at the EHPL was, roughly, the director handles most of the "politics" any situation with the town, the funding, grant writing, among other large-scale projects. While her assistant director will handle the libraries day to day, if maintenance needs to be called in for the bathroom, the payroll, events. But they will both work together if the other needs it as a support network. The idea of the support network and went into the idea of just networking. To any manager networking is important, having those relations with others in your field can help dramatically for future planning, finding jobs in the future, referring services, running by ideas. Not just in the leadership class but in many other classes taken during the MLIS networking had been an important topic and an idea that people have said will never really end, networking will always be needed and building out the support network can only get better as it grows. The last thing the EHPL director left me with was find a mentor or a few to start that networking.

The next takeaway and theme is "flexibility" in any aspect of work or life the ability to be flexible or know when to be flexible is important and especially in a director, or leadership position. The topic of flexibility came up during the interview on many occasions, flexibility during work, planning events, being flexible for employees, knowing when to change your schedule to fit more pressing or important items in. One of the biggest examples the EHPL Director gave me was that the library is not funded as much as it should, so their budget is limited and year to year she has to be flexible with the amount of funding they have for projects. Currently they just had renovations done on multiple buildings. The renovations took 3 years and not everything they wanted done was able to get done, they had to pick and choose and be flexible in the projects due to funding, and they still have renovation projects planned but not started. Tying into the idea of a support network, you might be in someone's support network, so it is also important to know when to be flexible to help them while also doing your own work.

From all the skills a leader should have that we have learned in class, the skill of being flexible can help dramatically in almost all areas. Flexibility doesn't have to be dropping everything to help someone or bending your way of doing something to bring in someone else there can be a middle ground that people will need to find.

The third takeaway and theme from the interview is prepare, prepare, prepare. Being prepared can have a lot of positive effects on work, people's perceptions of you, and anxiety to name a few. The director I interviewed said that she always tries to be prepared for meetings whether it be town board meetings or an interview as part of a grad school students project, she always tries. Being prepared can look like many different things to many different people. To prepare for the interview she pre-read the questions and wrote a few things down to ensure she had points to talk about, and for town meetings she would often do a little research or have notes or PowerPoints to hold talking points. The idea of preparing also goes into being prepared for anything and best you can and not let unexpected events ruin you. This theme also ties back to having that support network, being prepared is also knowing when you need help so prepare by letting your network know ahead of time you might need help on a project. This can speed up the help you get and won't dump a problem you are having onto someone else, allowing them to prepare as well. During the interview I was also told to prepare to be a coach if I am ever in a leadership position. As director people look up to you for direction so being prepared for that will make it an easy job for others under you to work. Being prepared can be very different between person to person as mentioned above.

The three themes and takeaways of a support network, flexibility, and preparedness are ideas that were not just presented in this class but many of the other MLIS classes and for good reason. These three ideas are important in every aspect, not just as a leader or manager, part of my library directors support network is the East Hartford mayor even a boss can be support. Before the interview I was a little intimidated by the idea of being a manager or a library director, or a director of any kind, and I still am somewhat, but after the interview and hearing what was told to me that fear is lessened. I had learned a lot from this interview and also a past interview with a reference librarian. I have so far learned that people in the library field are eager to help and this has eased my fears about going into this profession. And I have learned that there is a lot of support that these library professionals had, I know this level of support will be different from library to library, the Hartford library and EHPL are rather large. It was also nice to pick the brain of a library director on my own rather than watching the async lectures, even though I do not think I picked up any new information what I did gain from the interview has stuck harder than recorded lectures or videos.

For this interview I used a total of 12 questions, all 10 from the list of questions provided and 2 questions that came up during the interview, those two questions were,

1. Did you know you wanted to be a director when you graduated or was it a thought? (for context: She graduated with a degree to be a Childrens Librarian)
2. Did you hesitate or how ready were you for the director position? (Context: She had switched jobs and after some time heard from her past library that a director position opened up and they thought of her)