

Trustees of the M.N. Spear Memorial Library  
October 4, 2021, 7:30 pm, on Zoom  
Minutes

- Members present: Michele Regan-Ladd, Kate Cell, Tim Logan, Melanie DeSilva, and Savannah Ouellette.
- Mary Anne Antonellis: Library Director
- Guests: Leslie Luchonok, Michael Vinskey

Mary Anne made an announcement that the meeting is being held via Zoom due to the pandemic.

- Welcome Guests – We will take questions at the end of the meeting
- Approve September 27 Minutes. Minutes were approved unanimously.
- Acknowledge Shutesbury resident Karen Traub appointed to MBLC Board – We will send a card to congratulate her.
- Library's role in Community Resiliency (i.e. showers/laundry facility): If we take a couple of steps in the direction of community resiliency features, some funds may become available to us- perhaps even \$100,000-200,000 in earmarks. A couple of suggestions to consider- a continuous power supply which would provide a continuous supply of running water; a shower; laundry; renewal energy which we're already planning for. A shower, laundry, and continuous running water to be used only when the power goes out for residents would be beneficial for our rural community. No one suggested or recommended the use of these facilities when power hasn't gone out and no one suggested or recommended overnight guests when the power goes out. How large would this renewal energy system have to be to allow for these additional community resiliency features? How much should we include in the building program if anything? There's a line. We're building a library; we're clear that we're not building an emergency shelter of any kind. Should we include resiliency features in the building program now and continue having community and other discussions about it, preserving our chance of perhaps accessing what could be a sizable amount of money for the community? Decision- We're going to go for power all the time and renewable energy only. The building should be flexible enough to apply for future grants, but we are not going to include a washer/dryer or shower because the Trustees believes this crosses a line. We're building a library only. We do however need to plan to be a cooling center in the summer and a heating center in the winter. This is expected as a responsibility of libraries and the MBLC expects this.<sup>1</sup> Our library already serves this function for the community. The trustees understand this decision may leave money in earmarks for climate resiliency on the table.
- Review Building Program Documents
  - The Community - Concise History
  - Historic and Current Industry/Economic Drivers
  - Population Demographics
    - Question- Is there anything we need to do during this part of the process to demonstrate we're serving people with learning disabilities? Answer: not during the construction process. There are grants libraries can apply for to provide additional services and supports to patrons with various disabilities. Schools provide assistive technologies. In our current building, for example, we are not able to serve many populations of people with disabilities well. For example, we are currently unable to create services for people with autism given the limitations of the building.
  - Library History, Governance and Operations
    - Change "door that can be opened with a push button" to "automatic door."
    - We're going to update the sq. footage of the library so it's consistent.

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<sup>1</sup> From the Small Library Pilot Program Notice: "Environmental sustainability and resilience will be part of the planning process, including the building's energy and carbon use and the potential for the library to serve as a heating/cooling/powering center in the event of an emergency."

- Library Statistics and Demographics
  - Circulation and relationship to population and holdings
  - Programming and program attendance and relationship to population
  - Technology usage and relationship to population
  - Attendance and relationship to population
    - Curbside pick-up and digital services during pandemic were added.
  - Online usage and relationship to population
  - Most popular services
  - Least popular services
  - How facility hinders library services
    - Addition of the lack of a toilet during COVID and people needing to cross the street to use the bathroom in the town hall which is unsafe due to traffic/lack of a crosswalk.
  - Building Program Planning Efforts to date
    - Added positive, uplifting concluding statement.
- Meeting on October 18, 2021 at 5:15pm added.
  - Wish list tree comments have been taken down and will be compiled.
  - Community input will be incorporated into the building program.
  - Questions from the guests
    - Leslie- Has the long range plan been submitted? Answer- yes. And it should be posted by next weekend. Question- Is there any acknowledgement of different incomes in the building program? Answer- We added what information we could find. Four trustees looked for the very information Leslie suggested we include. We cannot find income information broken down further than what we included which includes the percentage of people living below the poverty line. Leslie is concerned that the town is not working hard enough to plan for resiliency concerns which are not the responsibility of the library, but of the town itself.
    - Mike- When will the recording of this meeting be posted? Answer- Tomorrow and it will be available and it will be available until the meeting minutes are posted. Mike is concerned about the affordability of this project, and there are a lot of low-income people in this community; we've used CPA money to build a habitat for humanity house and passed a way to reduce taxes for those having trouble paying their tax bills; there's food insecurity and income insecurity. "These things are happening right here, but as I listen to the wish list of things that are potentially going to the library, it just seems to me that it's basically a bunch of rich people putting together a library and not considering lot of the other people that are living here in town." A lot of people have the distinct impression that there's no way to have an input into this.

Answer- You're not alone in bringing these comments to us. We've heard concerns during our community meetings and have worked to incorporate them. Our position has always been that we need to build a right-sized library; a library that this community can afford. Also, our job is to hear people's wishes, ideas, and ideals, including pie in the sky ideas, and put them into practical perspective and make practical choices based on these ideas. One of the documents we reviewed today was a long list of different kinds of public meetings we have held for the community to provide input, attended by different groups of townspeople that we've been working so hard to reach. We have heard these concerns, take them seriously, and are incorporating them into the work we are doing.

Answer from Mary Anne- For ten years the Friends of the Library have been working very hard to raise money, and they have raised more than \$250,000. And then the Trustees with the support of town meeting has been working very hard to raise more than \$250,000 and now we've got \$522-523,000 in the bank. We heard loud and clear last time around that people were concerned about the potential costs of a project like this, and we worked for ten years to save money to decrease the possible tax impact of this

project. You said Kristen Burgess is talking about food insecurity? The library is involved in the neighborhood food project. The library helps connect food from people in Shutesbury who have the means to donate food and delivers that food to the Amherst Survival Center every other month. In October we have 37 households contributing bags of groceries to the survival center. It's going to be our biggest collection yet. For more than a year, the library has been delivering food to seniors in Shutesbury once a month. The library partners with the Council on Aging and the Amherst Survival Center to deliver two-weeks worth of groceries to the doors of seniors once a month. The library is well aware of food insecurity and works to help people who have food insecurity and to provide the food for those people. The MBLC knows that it's hard for small towns to build libraries. That's why they created this pilot project and are paying for an increased percentage of the construction costs. They're paying 75% instead of 60% of eligible costs. It's a huge difference. They're providing more technical support and guidance because they know it's hard for small towns like us. The library is aware there are people who have limited resources in town and the library is the one resource in town that provides free recreation, enrichment, cultural enrichment, and educational resources for people. The ways that the library provides access to resources is really incredible, and people in the community love it, and they use it, and it's my pleasure and privilege to provide for people. In terms of what the library does for resiliency. This is the library, and the library does a lot, and every year we provide more services with basically the same resources. Every year we expand our services. And the library is thinking about resiliency because towns that have good social infrastructure are more resilient in times of emergencies, but it's not the libraries job to decide what the whole entire town does on regarding resiliency. We already do more than our share, happily.

- Mike- He's impressed with the library services, especially during the pandemic. The library does so much, why do you need to do more? You have been able to expand with the same building, why do we need a bigger building? Answer- It's not sustainable. It's not fair to the community to rely on one very generous employee who is willing to use her home as an auxiliary library space for storage and program preparation. This isn't fair and it's not sustainable. The library director goes above and beyond because she cares about the community and she's passionate about what she does and the community needs the services, but what the community also needs is for the services the librarian provides to be sustainable and the way to make what the librarian does sustainable is to build an adequate library facility. This building is totally inadequate, it's not safe, and we've been saying that for ten years.
- Next meeting date, Monday, October 11, 2021