

Trustees of the M.N. Spear Memorial Library  
April 26, 2022 7:30pm, on Zoom  
Minutes

- Members present: Michele Regan-Ladd, Brad Foster, Tim Logan, Savannah Ouellette, Melanie DeSilva, Kate Cell
- Mary Anne Antonellis: Library Director
- Guests: Jill Marland, Leslie Luchonock, Mike Vinskey, Guy Devito

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

- Trustees unanimously approved meeting April 14, 2022, meeting minutes.
  - Roll call vote: Michele Regan-Ladd- yes; Brad Foster- yes; Tim Logan- yes; Savannah Ouellette- yes; Melanie DeSilva- yes; Kate Cell
- Update on cost estimate from Fennessey: Base cost estimate of construction is very similar to the other one. The difference is the soft cost. The MBLC added 40% to the first estimate for soft costs. Fennessey did not add that percentage. The MBLC is doing research on soft cost percentages.
- Forty percent soft costs are: 20% for eligible costs- architectural design fees, engineering fees, clerk of the works, owners project manager, eligible furnishings (library shelving, staff desks, furnishings attached to the walls), and 20% for ineligible costs- FF&E and sitework; landscaping, parking lot, etc.
- We have made it clear to the MBLC that we do not agree with the 40% number, but they are concerned about volatile construction costs.
- MBLC reached out to seven owner's project managers and are gathering more feedback.
- We are all doing our due diligence.
- We sent questions to RLB- the first estimators and we are waiting for responses.
- Mary Anne- we need to bring the worst-case scenario numbers to the finance committee and to let them know that this is a worst-case scenario situation. We are not going to see a major reduction in the construction estimate. \$2, 938,030.00 minus the value of the land- \$57,000, and the funds saved- \$560,000
- Just because we budget a certain amount does not mean we need to spend that amount. We are to save money on used furniture.
- Mary Anne is seeking an appraisal for the land. Right now, we only have an assessed value.
- There has been some movement decreasing the construction costs in the first estimate. Disappointment that the MBLC will not decrease the soft cost estimate.
- This library is costing more than ten years ago due to inflation.
- The finance committee will consider the library ask in relation to other town needs and will make a decision for meeting the town's needs. We can make an amendment to the article if we need to at town meeting. The borrowing won't commence until well into the project. Town meeting will not lock us

into borrowing a certain amount. We need to get working on a warrant article.

- Draft worksheet to be sent to the finance committee reviewed.
- Trustees unanimously agreed to send the following bottom-line figure representing the town's contribution for the library to the finance committee- \$2,938,030.00.
  - Roll call: Michele Regan-Ladd- yes; Brad Foster- yes; Tim Logan- yes; Savannah Ouellette- yes; Melanie DeSilva- yes; Kate Cell
- Finance committee meeting is tomorrow night
- Rule of the trustees: If we know something we say something.
- Trustee reflection: Disappointment in the cost of the library. This project is not drastically different in cost from 10 years ago if you account for baseline inflation. We need to put out a statement, but should wait until finance committee makes a decision.
- Trustee reflection: We only have one number. It is the ceiling, and we do not yet know the floor. We expect this number to come down more.
- Trustee reflection: the town is enthusiastic about a library, and we need to go for it. We have done an incredible job of communicating up until this point. We need to take a positive attitude.
- Jill Marland- the present official library building plan from the library website says the total square feet is 5,490 square feet. At the October 24th, 2021, library trustees meeting there was a unanimous decision to submit a plan for 6,828 square feet. My questions are 1) which is the correct square feet 2) If the lesser number is correct, where were the cuts of 1,338 square feet made. 3) When was that change made." Answer by Mary Anne- the correct square footage is 5,490 square feet. The changes were made between October 24 and December 3 when the application was submitted. Mary Anne will send Jill the October 24<sup>th</sup> Building Program and the final Building Program so she can look at the differences. The most recent and final Building Program is on the Small Library Project website. Follow-up question from Jill- Does this include the 700 sq. foot pavilion. Answer from Mary Anne- it is a covered porch and not a pavilion. And there was a 700 sq. foot covered porch in the building program 10 years ago too.
- Leslie Luchonock- Kate and others, with respect, the "inflation" numbers you are talking out do not take into account how many residents have been hit hard by increasing town budgets and taxes over the past 10 years. That's the impact of "inflation" writ large. Unless costs come down significantly, you are going to have trouble getting this passed at town meeting. Answer from one Trustee- that is possible. Our best hope is that disagreements are handled respectfully. We have done the very best we could to bring this ceiling down. Our due diligence is to bring this to the finance committee so they can do their work, and if town meeting approves this, to continue to work hard to bring the number down. The best we can do is bring this to the voters and let the voters decide.
- Mike Vinsky- It is the decision of the Finance committee as to how much could be transferred from Free Cash to the library. As a person concerned about replacing the SES roof, I would not be in favor of anything that would not leave money for the roof. I would recommend the Trustees suggest to

the Finance committee that they not transfer any Free Cash to the library and get a loan for the full amount the library needs. Answer: It is our responsibility to provide a number to the finance committee. It is the finance committee's job to decide where the funds should come from to meet the need. We will not be recommending specific allocations.

- Mary Anne's goal in writing the grant and building program was to win the grant from the MBLC, using the data to tell a story about the library we needed to meet the needs of our community for the next 20 year. She made the building program as tight as possible because she wanted to get the grant. And without this grant we have nothing. We cannot build this library on our own. We know we are making a big ask.
- Trustee reflection- We may not have another shot at this. Not only is there almost certainly not going to be another grant at 75% reimbursement, but if we give a second grant back to the state like we did ten years ago, why would the MBLC choose to invest in us again. There is this idea that somehow, we could apply for another grant in a couple of years and that is not realistic. We are not going to get another shot at this.
- Trustee reflection- we need to be positive and believe in the town. We can be realistic, but we should not be negative. This grant is a huge amount of money coming to Shutesbury.
- Trustee reflection- What we want is the best library that the town can afford. The current library does not meet the town's needs. We need a positive attitude.
- Trustee reflection- some people in town are going to be against a library regardless of the cost. We need to stand by what we have done and invite people to join us.
- Trustee reflection- This Trustee's commitment is to keep the costs as low as possible. Some people are scared about the possible tax impact.
- In every fundraising letter, we have been communicating that the goal is to decrease the tax impact of the project. But inflation happens, we have been working really hard, and time goes by. The Friends will keep fundraising. Some people will vote yes, and some will vote no.
- Mary Anne has discovered that the library is in violation of OSHA laws because employees cannot wash their hands. Mary Anne raised this concern with the town's building committee.

Documents reviewed:

- Draft of numbers to provide finance committee

Next meeting: Thursday, April 28 at 7:30pm

Respectfully submitted by Melanie DeSilva, Secretary, Library Board of Trustees