

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE NEED

The Town of Montague has a small three-branch system that provides library services to the community. The Carnegie Public Library, listed on the National Register of Historic Places in the mid-1980s, was built early in the twentieth century with funds from the Carnegie Foundation. The building with its buff colored Roman brick walls and marble ionic columns is an attractive example of public architecture. However, the approximately 5,500 square feet of space cannot provide adequate and efficient work space for the library staff, provide enough patron seating for study space, nor accommodate book and audio-visual collections that meet the needs of the more than 8,383 residents of the town. It is quite difficult to gain access to the Artifact's Loft due to the long winding staircases to the second floor. The Loft does not meet the load bearing requirements for a library. The building does not meet current standards for library service resources and will be even more problematic as new technologies become available and demand for information services grow.

According to recent library research reported in Section I: Montague and the Town Library of this building program document, the primary reason people use public libraries is for enjoyment and hobbies or to get information for personal use. This data is consistent with Montague resident use of the library as described in the results of the Montague Public Libraries planning process. The Montague staff and Trustees participated in a planning process that identified the Library's Mission and goals for service to the community. The proposed expanded and renovated Carnegie Public Library will help the staff and trustees better meet the library needs of the community.

Using the results of the planning process as a standard, the Montague Public Libraries are inadequate to meet the 1999 needs of the community and even less able to meet the town's projected twenty-year needs. For example, one significant problem is the lack of sufficient parking. On-site parking is non-existent at the Carnegie Public Library. Patrons and staff must park on the street. Lack of parking limits public use of the facility. Section II: The Library Today describes the current inadequacies in detail.

THE SOLUTION

The Montague Public Libraries Trustees and administration determined that providing additional functional and efficient space for library services could eliminate the inadequacies. The Montague Public Libraries was awarded a Planning and Design grant from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners. The grant provides matching funds to assist Library administration and the community with the preparation of schematic design for a library construction grant. In preparation for a library construction project, the town hired a building consultant, Vandermark Consulting. The result is the Montague Public Libraries Building Program as defined in this document. Recommendations from the Program are summarized here.

RECOMMENDATION 1:

The Town of Montague should establish as a first priority that Town Administrator Frank Abbondanzio and town officials procure additional space for the library project through

- a. the purchase of the green apartment building on the east side of the library site, and
- b. relocation of the cannon and memorial on the south lawn of the library to another location on library property or other Town owned land.

RECOMMENDATION 2:

The Town of Montague should authorize the construction of a significant addition to and renovation of the Carnegie Public Library. The results of the addition/renovation will be:

- Space to meet community needs for expanded library service, including space for both library collections and meeting rooms for library and community programs
- An enlarged facility that will better serve every segment of the Town – adults, teens, children, seniors, students of all ages, and business people
- Expanded space for terminals, computer workstations, and laptops to keep pace with essential electronic information needs
- Separation of noisy activities from quieter reading and research activities
- On-site parking for patrons and library staff
- Library access for the physically handicapped, including wide aisles and an elevator
- An energy efficient building

THE FUTURE

The Library Trustees and staff are aware of the importance of the project to Montague and will provide information on a regular basis to the community. The Trustees and staff will work with Town agencies because the proposal will have an impact on the Town's resources and several agencies.

Every taxpayer wants to know what the financial investment in such a building project will be. The financial investment in each library project is unique and is influenced by – but not limited to – the complexity of the project. For example, too much other construction at the time the library project is bid can inflate costs because there are fewer companies interested in the library job. Also the length of time to develop a project from start to completion can result in greater costs. The cost of a project will increase by an average of 5% for each year

that passes prior to the beginning of actual construction. Any cost for the project given by an architect should have a 5% factor built in. Construction cannot be completed faster than two years after the town receives an architect's estimate. Therefore residents should assume that the library project will cost at least 10.25% more than the original estimate. Also, some architects have better skill at cost estimating than others.

Montague is about to begin one of the most exciting of all community projects. More than any other town facility the public library is available for use by everyone.