

**Montague Board of Library Trustees -- Building Subcommittee
12 December 2022 -- ZOOM**

attendance Tricia Perham, lydia ievins, Will Quale, Caitlin Kelley, Dave Harmon, Ariel Shira

5:03pm called to order

Review and approve previous minutes

The 16 November 2022 building subcommittee minutes were approved without amendment.

Overview of topics which were addressed in sometimes overlapping ways

- * funding sources for a feasibility study of potential sites for a new Great Falls library building
- * scope of the window repair and replacement projects for Montague Center and Millers Falls buildings
- * forum to discuss the past, present, and future of the Montague Center branch and Old Town Hall bldg

Montague Center storm window replacement

We learned from a vendor that cost range for this project was significantly higher (~\$80-90,000) than our committee's expectation. (The vendor we thought we could use and had a two-year-old estimate from no longer does storm windows; updated prevailing wage, lift rental, etc, costs were surprising.)

We discussed whether -- given this higher cost range for just storm windows -- it made sense to do that now, if there might also be a plan to replace the windows themselves down the road. Moreover we noted that this question opens up a larger discussion (see below).

We discussed doing the OTH ground floor storm windows now, and the OTH second floor storm windows at some later time as a separate project (separate funding request), This not only would cut costs but would eliminate the lift rental (about \$6,000 per month for two months) entirely from this project. We determined this wouldn't make enough of a difference (just the first floor storm windows would about \$40,000; if this had gotten the project down to about \$20,000 we might have explored this idea further).

For reference, an estimate for full window replacement might be ~\$180,000 total; that estimate is based on doing all the work from the outside of the building.

Dave asked where the estimates come from. They came from Tricia and Renaissance Builders and are "a lot more sophisticated than back-of-the-envelope, but not technically a quote".

Dave expressed that this whole project seems like it should shift from the library's responsibility to ATA Walter Ramsey's responsibility, if our understanding of Walter's (newly created) job is correct. Will agreed we should look into that.

Meanwhile, over in Millers Falls ... a much simpler storm window situation

The quote for storm windows at Millers Falls came in at around \$10,000. The difficulty will depend on how well the windows were installed years ago -- if they were installed badly, it will be easier to get

them out. A second estimate might be lower; we think the \$10,000 is a worst-case scenario estimate and that labor costs might be appreciably less.

Following our earlier thought, Tricia wondered whether getting these quotes should also be Walter's responsibility (not ours).

We discussed whether it makes sense -- if we are taking Montague Center storm windows off the table for now -- to instead ask for one more small project at Millers Falls, replacing the back door. This is easily justifiable for both energy efficiency and safety. We didn't have an estimate in hand, but Tricia figured back-of-envelope this would be \$1,000 give or take, maybe \$1,200 for the door, plus installation, painting, etc, which at prevailing wage would probably take this to about \$4,000 total. (Making Millers Falls storm windows plus door come to about \$14,000 total, we think.)

(That would leave only one major building improvement left on the table for the future for Millers Falls -- replacing and altering the storefront. (For that, we think Walter got a quote of \$41,000 a year or two ago, and it might be more now. We agreed that's not a high-priority project for right now.) Once that project is done, someday, Millers Falls will be "done" and only need routine maintenance (including a new roof someday, but way down the road).)

Dave asked Ariel if the energy committee would support the new back door; Ariel wasn't sure offhand if that's a measurable enough improvement to qualify for green communities money. Caitlin raised the issue that this is also a safety issue. Dave clarified that he doesn't want to delay the back door in hopes of grant funding. Tricia thought the storm windows will have a larger impact on energy efficiency than the back door, given how the existing "storm windows" are just single-pane plexiglass. (Ironically, the fact that the current back door sticks shut (the safety issue...) might actually make the current door more energy efficient. Not that that's an argument in favor of keeping the current door!)

Dave asks whether we are under the capital funding cap for this, at a ballpark \$14,000 (windows plus door), and Ariel wonders whether we are subject to prevailing wage requirements for a project this small. Caitlin and Tricia think the limit is ten thousand and so we are subject to prevailing wage requirements; Renaissance Builders recently got prevailing wage for a smaller similar project. But a one-person contractor (not paying anyone else) is not subject to prevailing wage laws as owners don't have to pay themselves prevailing wage.

We decide to start by asking Walter whether he can put the Millers Falls project out to bid in a timely manner. (We are a little uncertain whether this is within his new role as ATA, but are hopeful it is.)

Back to Montague Center ... planning a forum to demonstrate support for the Old Town Hall

At the CIC meeting where Montague Center's window situation (and current window estimates) were being discussed, CIC member Greg Garrison paused the discussion to suggest that the CIC might not be the best venue for that discussion, floating instead the idea of a public forum for discussion of the Old Town Hall. Caitlin spoke further with Walter, Steve, and Greg, and out of these discussions came plans for a public moderated conversation about the building's value and the community's future visions for it. As the CIC is tasked with long-term planning, this forum would greatly aid their evaluations of funding proposals and support any funding decisions they eventually come to.

This forum is technically about the building ("Old Town Hall"), not about the library ("Montague Center Branch"), and a key goal of the forum is to make clear that these are not one and the same as

they are often popularly misperceived (which we think has historically led to a lot of the long-simmering tension about the library branch). Ariel suggested scheduling the forum for February to give the community more time to organize and perhaps increase potential turnout; Ariel had already asked Walter about this possibility, and Walter agreed too.

We discussed possible community visions for some while, noting that one clear point is that the library does not want to take responsibility for the upper floor of Old Town Hall: our specific concern is limited to ensuring the stability of the building through investment in windows within the next few years and the roof not long after. Caitlin will suggest to the Selectboard that this forum take place, specific date to be determined.

Next steps on getting a feasibility study for a new building for the Great Falls branch

We continued our discussion of the best way to fund the feasibility study required for the MBLC Construction Grant, given our best guess at the grant application timeline (not yet announced by MBLC at the time of our meeting). Earlier, we had planned to request ARPA funding for the study, to be reimbursed later by seeking to reappropriate Article 27 funds at (regular) Town Meeting, but subsequent discussions Caitlin had with Steve and Walter suggested that instead we should seek to reappropriate Article 27 funds at the winter Town Meeting (and not involve ARPA at all).

Dave asked if there was already specific evidence that the Carnegie site is insufficient (for expansion, eg). Tricia and Caitlin said yes, there are clear specific reasons the Carnegie site is insufficient (particularly for parking but also for other things not enumerated in the moment).

Steve told Caitlin that if we later want to study building needs for the three branches (the original purpose of the Article 27 funds), we can ask for more money for this purpose later. Dave expressed concern that this might not be as easy as we hope (given examples of disgruntled voters in Greenfield and Orange). Caitlin countered that it might be worse for the library if it appears that we're holding onto unspent Article 27 funds while asking for new money.

Tricia pointed out that an advantage of ARPA funding is that we could start the feasibility study sooner, even before special town meeting.

Tricia also raised the point that, under the new system of who's responsible for town buildings, a building feasibility study for, eg, the Montague Center Branch's building -- the Old Town Hall building -- should technically come from the town, not the library. Thus we shouldn't feel we need to hold onto Article 27 funds for a future Montague Center building study because that potential future study shouldn't be funded by the library budget.

We all acknowledged the reality that for many people in town, separating the Old Town Hall from the library may be impossible or at least a very difficult thing. And likewise, we acknowledged that many people will not be able to have a conversation about a new library building to replace Carnegie from the conversation about whether to consolidate the branches. The Trustees and Caitlin will develop consistent messaging to make these distinctions clearer.

Finally, we voted to support making an ARPA request now and using regular Town Meeting to reappropriate Article 27 funds to repay the town for the ARPA money. The motion carried unanimously.

6:17pm meeting adjourned