

Montague Board of Library Trustees -- Building Subcommittee
24 July 2023 -- Town Hall

Attendance Tricia Perham, Lydia Ievins, Will Quale, Caitlin Kelley, Walter Ramsey, Steve Ellis, David Detmold, Barbara Friedman (consultant)

Call to order.

4:03pm Meeting called to order.

Past minutes.

All minutes from previous meetings of this committee were approved (with minor spelling corrections).

Presentation by Barbara Friedman, likely to be our consultant.

Library Consultant Barbara Friedman presented her vision and strategy for guiding us through the MBLC MPLCP grant application process, should the full Board of Trustees vote (at their meeting later the same day) to extend an offer to Barbara. Her (well-crafted, informative) presentation slides will be publicly available online.

Of particular note, she identified five nearby libraries of roughly comparable size, population served, or characteristics which have recently benefited from MPLCP grants -- three for new buildings and two for substantial renovations -- and have completed their construction programs. These are the new libraries in Erving (7,695 sqft), Granby (12,170), and Hadley (11,805); and the renovated libraries in Athol (18,954 sqft) and Leicester (16,044). [for reference, Carnegie's size was given as 5,523 sqft in the 1999 Building Program, and in that 1999 Building Program the proposed size of a renovated Carnegie would have been approx. 13,390 sqft.] The Building Committee (and interested members of the public) will tour each of these libraries through the summer and autumn months.

Barbara reminded us that the MPLCP grant covers "land, planning, project management, site prep, utilities, construction, capital equipment, **mobile** shelving, and **mobile** modular service desks" but does NOT cover "fixed shelving, furniture, computers, landscaping, paving, and certain other ineligible costs". Thus, we will need to -- in addition to the grant funding (~67% from MBLC and ~33% from Town Meeting) -- separately raise and conserve money sufficient for these non-covered costs.

She clarified that while the "ideal" space allocation for a library includes 10% structure, 30% paving, and 60% "landscaping, setbacks, and amenities", with one parking space per 400 sqft of building area recommended, these are preferences, not requirements, so exceptions can be made for certain circumstances. The most important considerations for any site include street visibility, accessibility, parking, soils and geotech, safety and security, maintenance, deliveries, garbage, bike racks, outbuildings, exterior service and programming, and room for expansion; rather than universal application of precise percentages.

Barbara offered her recommendations about building committee representation and size, now and in the future; and about the way different dedicated groups -- trustees, building committee, and friends -- must each commit to the project and coordinate work based on who should (or can/shouldn't/can't) do certain things related to publicity, fundraising, and garnering support for town meeting and at the ballot box. For instance, Trustees CAN fundraise, we CAN present reasonable arguments and information, but we CANNOT directly ask for votes at certain junctures (either for the Town Meeting vote to place a debt authorization on the ballot as a question, or for the town election vote on that ballot question). As for the building committee, Barbara recommended not changing the committee from its present form at this point, but adding various experts (on aspects of design and construction) later on. Inviting people to accompany us, including potential future committee members, as we tour other libraries is a good idea.

We identified a few questions that will require further careful thought, investigation, and discussion, including "what are the cost and politics of moving the war memorial to a different location" and "is our moose the only taxidermied moose in an American public library".

Building committee size.

We discussed whether to keep the Building Committee at 3 people or expand it. The bylaws only specify "minimum 2 people"; it's been 3 people for at least five years. Going to 5 people is not recommended by Steve and Walter, who say "we generally avoid committees being a quorum of the full board". [Later that day, at the full board meeting, when committee assignments were made for 2023-24 we decided on a 4-person Building Committee, with Tricia, Lydia, and Will continuing and David Detmold joining.*]

Review progress of existing capital and ARPA projects.

Walter presented a review of progress on Old Town Hall projects. The roof repair went out to bid, with bids due 14 August. The masonry repair went out to bid, also with bids due later in August. Some slate roofers have said our needs can be met for less than \$25,000; and six or seven masonry firms have pulled the RFP. The windows project is on hold until we figure out where we are on the budget after the roof and masonry work is done, since roof and windows have a combined \$250,000 allocation (masonry has a separate \$100,000 allocation).

For the Old Town Hall roof, we have been told that patch repairs plus ongoing maintenance could last 50-100 years. A carpenter inspected the roofline and said that with already-done beam shoring-up we are in good shape.

We discussed the scope of needed electrical work at Carnegie, and Tricia is at work on this.

Other items not anticipated.

None.

Next meeting.

Thursday 17 August 3pm Millers Falls Branch (meeting).

Thursday 17 August 4pm Erving Public Library (tour, officially also a public meeting).

Adjournment.

5:15pm adjourned.

* On committee size, see also <https://youtu.be/fZ9WiuJPnNA?t=14>