

Trustees of the M.N. Spear Memorial Library
March 28, 2022 7:30pm, on Zoom
Minutes

- Members present: Michele Regan-Ladd, Tim Logan, Brad Foster, Savannah Ouellette, Melanie DeSilva, Kate Cell
- Mary Anne Antonellis: Library Director
- Guests: Susie Mosher, Tom Siefert, Martha Favre, Penny Jaques, Becky Torres, Rita Farrell, Dan Paquin, Matt Franz.

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

- Tom Siefert- Why is the Shutesbury Athletic Club (SAC) included on the Library website? Answer: It is linked because it is a Shutesbury, non-profit organization that is part of the community of Shutesbury, the library has worked collaborative with the SAC for many years, and they do not charge the library for events.
 - Tom Siefert: Where is the evidence that they are a non-profit and up to date on their paperwork? Answer: This is a reference question that can be answered through the library. Email Mary Anne and she will help with this reference question.
- March 15 and March 21st meeting minutes approved unanimously.
- The estimator is a huge international company. This trustee's spouse is a contractor and thinks that the estimate is very high. This trustee thinks that you could shave over \$300k off immediately just from the costs included in this estimate that are not even in the building program we submitted.
- If you take the square footage and apply it to the cost, you get at about \$1500/sq.ft (This was corrected at the 4/4/22 meeting to \$720/sq.ft.) There is a quarterly construction report that is released regularly which shows the cost per credit for a high-cost hospital would be about \$600/sq.ft. If we are awarded the grant, we need this corrected before this could go to town meeting.
- We cannot move forward with this estimate.
- Mary Anne talked to the MBLC today and said there have been a lot of questions about the estimate. The MBLC is as stunned by the estimate as we are. The MBLC did this in good faith. We do not have time to do another cost estimate before town meeting, so we need more time to get another cost estimate if we are offered the grant. If we get this grant, we need permission from the MBLC to secure another more accurate cost estimate, and then go to town meeting- either a special town meeting or a town meeting in 2023.
- Did the estimators use Western, MA prevailing wage instead of Boston, MA prevailing wage? It seems like they used Boston prevailing wages. The cost estimate is sloppy. It includes a flagpole and equipment for the staff break room, but a flagpole and staff break room are not part of the building program. There is an automatic hand dryer in the cost estimate, but there is not one of these in the building program. There is a \$10,000 sign in the cost estimate which is not in the building program. If we hire our own cost

estimators, we can have discussions with the cost estimator to get a more accurate cost estimate.

- The Trustees have to explain to the public that the MBLC made a \$2 million mistake in reporting the preliminary cost estimate to us.
- This building is twice the cost of the previous project, which inflation does not account for.
- We need to wait until April 7th to see if we get the grant. We need to talk to the MBLC about acknowledging that the estimates are problematic.
- Susie Mosher, Friends of the Library- This was an experimental process. Mistakes can be made and be fixed. The MBLC sincerely wants a path for small towns to get a library. The MBLC was under pressure to get this done and that has not helped the process. We need to let go of May 21st to get this ready for town meeting. It is ok to slow this down, and to do our due diligence. The MBLC can award us the grant with the understanding that we need more time. There are other ways to get estimates. We need to spend some time establishing the state/town split of the cost- that estimate does not reflect what we understood to be the state/local split. State Senator Jo Comerford may be able to help us with this. Focusing on a fall special town meeting makes more sense- we will have a good estimate and have more time to understand the state/local split, and get some of our additional questions answered. All of us are in this together. Small towns like ours need libraries too.
- The trustees need to be prepared with a statement that we can be put out tomorrow morning.
- Becky Torres, Town Administrator- If we say we reject the estimate, we lose the chance of getting the grant. We need to bring the estimate back to the MBLC and articulate our concerns with the estimate.
- The trustees need to correct the statement put out last week. We can say things as a matter of fact without accusing the MBLC of anything. We can send it to the MBLC as a professional courtesy.
- Becky Torres, Town Administrator- We need to find out if the MBLC is willing to grant us an extension. Communicate what is known at this point and no more.
- The MBLC is very upset by the cost estimates.
- Penny Jaques, Friends of the Library- the timeline keeps getting moved forward. Weren't we supposed to know who won the grant in February? Answer: in the original timeline, they expected to make the grant announcement in February.
- A statement was drafted to go out tomorrow morning. Mary Anne will send it to the MBLC tomorrow morning as a professional courtesy and then it will be posted tomorrow morning.
- Rita Farrell, Selectboard- How did the estimators come up with the soft costs; why the 40% additional costs? Answer: 20% is for architectural, engineering, owners project manager, clerk of the works, and eligible furnishings, and 20% for ineligible furnishings and equipment, and site work (we were expecting this to be less).
- Becky Torres, Town Administrator- Recommends we include the town's amount in the statement.

- Trustees unanimously approved the statement going out tomorrow morning.
- Next week we should meet to prep for the April 7th MBLC meeting and strategize how to ask the MBLC for an extension of time if and only if we are offered the grant.

Documents discussed:

- Statement on the cost estimate

Next meeting: Monday, April 4 at 7:30pm and Monday, April 11 at 7:30pm

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