



## Meeting Minutes

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Trustees Attending: Austin Sarat, Lee Edwards, Tamson Ely, Alex Lefebvre, & Robert Pam  
Also Present: Andrea Bunker, Lauren Stara, Hank Allan, Sharon Sharry, and members of the public

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### 1. Call to Order/Attendance at 4:30pm

### 2. Library Chats: MBLC Public Library Construction Program (Andrea Bunker, Lauren Stara)

- A. Sharon introduced Lauren Stara and Andrea Bunker. Lauren and Andrea talked about their professional experience.
- B. The MBLC's program is a "Whole Library Building Program." What does this mean?
  - a. Grants are not given for small additions, repairs, or reconfigurations.
  - b. Applicants must be willing to re-imagine the entire facility.
- C. What is the importance of the *Building Program*?
  - a. This is the back-bone of the project; the guiding document for the architect; lays out adjacencies and needs for the community; community involvement is key; needs are assessed through usage and trends in the field.
  - b. The MBLC does not dictate *Building Program* elements – if it did, the Jones would probably not have an Atrium today - or building size.
  - c. The community creates the library they believe will serve their community for the next 20+ years; the *Program* is written without regard to the existing structure.
  - d. Must decide what the library services needs are; then decide if those needs can be fulfilled within the current structure, either in the current form or through an addition, or through re-location.
  - e. This document guides the entire process.
  - f. *Program* elements must be library services.
- D. Size
  - a. The MBLC does not dictate size – the community does.
  - b. The MBLC asks all grant applicants to consider census population, service population, and non-resident usage when making decisions about size.
  - c. Have to go by Census population at a minimum; Amherst has sized its Library based on the number of people using its Library today; the user group is important.
  - d. These decisions are made early-on in the process; if Amherst wants to look at these decisions again, it will have to decline this grant, and re-apply in the future.
  - e. The MBLC is bound by the Grant program regulations; Amherst would need a reasonable explanation to not include college students and non-residents as users of the Library.
  - f. A set of independent/impartial grant reviewers looked at and judged Amherst's grant application twice (once for Planning and Design, and once for the Construction Grant itself). The grant application is the beginning of the process; the MBLC works closely with the applicant to make sure the design is functional and efficient.

- E. Why not re-locate these three large *Program* elements (ESL program, Burnett Art Gallery, Special Collections archive) in order to save money?
  - a. Historically, these three elements are core features of the Jones Library’s services; they are important to the community; the community wants those elements to remain.
  - b. Having these cultural resources in the main Library lends itself to serendipity.
  - c. When you think about welcoming people to your community and having resources for them to become integral members of the community, the Library is a wonderful dovetail of those resources – it makes for a stronger community.
  - d. Locating these services in the Library makes sense because the staff is trained to care for the collections, and help the community use them.
- F. What parts of the design can’t be changed during Design Development?
  - a. The site; the size; and no fundamental *Program* elements can be eliminated.
  - b. Changes have to be approved by the MBLC, such as the layout.
  - c. The MBLC is looking to create functional, efficient, and flexible libraries.
  - d. The MBLC has very little to say about aesthetics.
  - e. The MBLC is thrilled to have sustainability measures added.
- G. What are the experiences of other libraries across the state who have gone through this process?
  - a. Circulation and usage increases.
  - b. Programming increases because the libraries now have better spaces for activities.
  - c. Revitalization of that area of town – spending in town increases (e.g., Holyoke and Athol).
- H. Next MBLC Grant Round
  - a. To be re-organized; to be much more competitive (i.e., there will be a very small wait-list).
  - b. Over 40 libraries have already indicated their interest in applying.
  - c. Possibly to occur in late 2020’s.

### 3. Public Comment

- A. *What would have happened to the square footage of the Jones had the Trustees chosen to be guided by the census figure rather than the service population figure?* It may have been somewhat smaller, but the size is determined by the function and suite of services; there is no per-capita square footage formula.
- B. *Can the Trustees “moth-ball” some rooms once the new Library opens, in the case of staffing shortages?* Once the Library opens, it is up to the Town to decide how it will operate. The building must be a free public library for 20 years and the Town must agree to 38 assurances including: “When construction is complete, the Town will make every effort to ensure sufficient funds will be available for effective operation, staffing, and maintenance of the facility.”
- C. *The Jones Trustees recently approved a revised set of schematics after the MBLC’s Review Team placed the condition that our Large Meeting Room be removed from the first floor; did the MBLC also approve the newest set of schematics?* The MBLC has seen several versions of the Jones’ schematics, but not the most recent set. As long as the most recent set is in line with previous versions, the MBLC will be very happy with the newest schematics.
- D. *The MBLC talks a lot about functionality, flexibility, and efficiency. Did the two Grant Review teams feel that our design is functional, flexible, and efficient?* Yes.
- E. *When will the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) sign-off on the Library’s designs?* The MBLC requires notification only, but during Design Development, the Jones will submit another Project Notification Form to the MHC. The MHC doesn’t want to see designs until they are fleshed-out; even though the MHC normally only evaluates the exterior, they also want to see how the old and the new interplay.
- F. *We appreciate the MBLC’s focus on flexibility in library design because having open spaces and good sight lines helps to maintain staffing levels.*

- G. *By accepting the Grant, does the Town commit to maintaining staffing levels?* The Town will be committing to provide adequate staffing to operate the new building, whether that's the same amount of staff, fewer staff, or increased staff. Also, in order to stay certified for State Aid, the Town will have to meet the Municipal Appropriation Requirement and the Open Hours Requirement.
- H. *Regarding the next Grant cycle, if we are awarded a Grant, will it take us another 7+ years to complete the process?* Once the Grant program is re-organized, the maximum amount of time for libraries at the bottom of the (very small) wait-list will be 5 years. (The new Grant process will be more like the MSBA process, streamlined, with only one grant application.)
- I. *If we hire a new Architect, will we be given extra time to complete Schematics and Design Development?*  
No.

**4. Adjournment** at 5:26pm