

**Town Center and Library Committee**  
**Minutes August 31, 2023**  
**6:30-8 p.m.**

**Present:** Josh Arneson, Laurie Dana, Jeff Forward, Dave Healy, Amy Wardwell

**Community Members:** Mary Houle, Karen Yaggy, Fran & Dave Thomas

**I. Welcome and Public Comment - None**

**II. Additions or Deletions to Agenda**

**III. Items for Presentation or Discussion with those present**

a) **Continue review of cost estimates**

Jeff explained to guests that last meeting was the first time we had looked at the number that the architects have come up with. He explained that this is the number that a cost estimator had drafted based on the design plans developed in consultation with the architects over the last 3-4 months.

Laurie asked if there were questions about Andrew's answers to the clarifying questions posed to him following last weeks' meeting and there were none.

Dave stated that he felt that this was the right building and a good design, that it was fiscally and environmentally responsible project. He questioned Richmond taxpayers' ability and/or willingness to pay for it at this time. He asked if our charge is to report to the Selectboard or to the public. Jeff stated that we need to report to the Selectboard and he would like to ask permission to do a listening tour to take the information public.

Laurie mentioned that there are still the 2 big Department of Libraries grant programs out there that could be used to pay a portion of the sitework related to accessibility and parking at the Library. Still looking at a Fall application process for the \$10 million program through HUD.

There was a lack of clarity about the issue of whether the Committee and the Selectboard need to express their support of this project before it is put on the ballot.

Karen asked if any of the maintenance work on the Library is included in this number and Jeff responded that it was not. Laurie will add that question to the draft FAQ.

Dave would like an update on the remaining work needed on the Library building.

Fran & Dave Thomas posed the following excellent comments/questions:

- The Committee needs to understand the numbers, are there options, need to critique the estimate the same way you would critique a bid on home repairs.
- What would a new building cost?
- They definitely feel that the Committee and Selectboard need to be publically in favor of the bond vote and project you are presenting
- Consider the impact on ALL taxpayers, those on fixed incomes, peoples' incomes are not going up.
- Reach out now to get a sense of where the town is

b) **Discussion of information to present to the Selectboard on Sept. 5**

Items that need to be provided to the Selectboard:

- Final cost and a breakdown of the major items that make up that cost – Laurie will draft a document from last week's minutes to Josh.
- Moving Bond Vote tentative target date to March 2024
- Want to do public outreach and communicate back to Selectboard in Nov. or Dec.
- FAQ of questions that highlight the story of how we got here (Laurie will forward draft to Josh)

**c) Discussion of frequency of Committee meetings**

The committee decided to continue with our original schedule of the Thursday before each Selectboard meeting and to start at 7 pm which makes it easier for some members.

**d) Approval of August 22, 2023 meeting minutes**

Amy moved to approve the revised minutes from August 22 and they were approved unanimously.

**e) Other business- None**

**f) Items for next agenda – September 14 meeting**

Continue cost estimate review and adjustments

Update on Library building work left to do

**8:30 PM IV. Adjourn**