**SPECIAL PROJECT FUNDING REPORT**

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| Library: | Taft Public Library | | |
| Address: | 29 North Avenue | | |
| City & Zip: | Mendon, MA 01756 | | |
| Phone: | 508-473-3259 | Email: | librarydirector@mendonma.gov |
| Report (circle) | First Second X Third (Final) | | |
| Date Completion Expected: | 06-30-2020 | | |

This is to report on the status of the construction project which is partially funded with funds through the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners and governed by the Regulations and Assurances in the application and the grant Agreement.

NARRATIVE: (Describe briefly what happened on your project during this period. If necessary, use an additional sheet.)

The library’s contract with the MBLC was submitted to Mendon’s town counsel by Trustee Chair Amy Fahey in late January 2020. Fahey asked town counsel who would be considered the appropriate awarding authority on the project funds and asked for additional information on how best to proceed with the RFQ process for a feasibility study of the rectory. Town Counsel Cindy Amara responded that it was her belief, based on Massachusetts General Law, that the Trustees of the library are the awarding authority and she passed along a copy of a formal RFQ that could be modified to suit our needs as well as examples of designer contracts to work from. Amara also mentioned that, per Massachusetts General Law, since the design cost for the project was under $30,000 it did “not have to follow designer selection procedures” and qualifications could informally be obtained “by sending a request to designers [we] think will be best suited for the job.”

Fahey consulted the RFQ Amara sent along with samples of RFQs from similar Massachusetts projects noting elements typically incorporated into each. Common elements of the RFQ (project description, background on the current library, a summary of needs, and the scope of the services requested) were discussed at the Library Board of Trustees meeting on February 13th and it was agreed by all members that a subcommittee would be formed to finalize the RFQ.

A subcommittee consisting of Trustee Chair Amy Fahey, Trustee Secretary Ellen Agro, and Library Director Andrew Jenrich met to finalize the RFQ on February 26th. Trustee Vice Chair Wayne Phipps also agreed to sit in on the meeting to provide input. The particulars of the RFQ were discussed and drafted during the meeting and Amy Fahey worked on refining the draft post-meeting in preparation for the Library Trustees meeting on March 11th. On March 11th the RFQ was approved by the Board and it was sent the following day to the Mendon Select Board Secretary to be posted. Following posting on the 12th, Fahey reached out to four architecture firms she had become familiar with (and had identified as doing reputable work) through her work for a construction company. The deadline for architect project submissions was set for April 1st.

Two bids were submitted as of April 1st, one by BKA Architects and the other by Abacus Architects + Planners. Trustee Secretary Ellen Agro sent copies of each architect’s submission to all board members and the library director for evaluation with an eye toward selecting the architect at their April 8th Trustees meeting. Wayne

Phipps and Andrew Jenrich were tasked with checking references for Abacus and BKA respectively prior to the meeting. On April 8th the Trustees and Library Director met via Zoom to go over their evaluations and complete evaluation scoresheets for each firm. Based on the strength of their references, the thoroughness of their submission, the quality of past work, and their vision for the feasibility study project (informed by the work they did previously in designing the current Taft Library building at 29 North Avenue), Abacus was chosen as the firm to complete the project. Following the meeting, Amy Fahey contacted town counsel to have the contract drawn up between the town and Abacus. Once completed, the contract was approved by the Select Board at their April 21st meeting.

The Trustees and Abacus arranged to have a kickoff meeting on April 22nd to discuss lines of communication between the Trustees, town, and architect going forward, the elements to be incorporated into the designs for the three options given (multipurpose building, pavilion, and landscaped space), and the project timeline. Those present at the meeting on the 22nd included the Trustees, the Library Director, Children’s Librarian Tara Windsor, and Abacus Principal Architects David Eisen and David Pollak. It was determined that Amy Fahey and Andrew Jenrich would be representing the Town at future meetings with Abacus and would be the primary email and telephone contacts with the firm. The group decided that there would not be any public meetings held given the short timeframe for the project as well as the challenges presented by the current COVID-19 health emergency, but that town boards and commissions as well as local organizations would be contacted to find out the needs they would like addressed with the construction of a community building or space. Amy Fahey agreed to lead the community outreach effort. The group then discussed the primary program elements needed for a library/community building addition (a multipurpose room, kitchen, storage room, bathrooms etc.), an outdoor pavilion, and a landscaped space. They also went over some of the inherent challenges in realizing a project of this kind, addressing adequate parking and the current public well. David Eisen asked if Amy Fahey could speak with the Mendon Water Commission since reuse of the rectory property will require reevaluation of DEP approvals of the existing well water supply. Eisen said Abacus would look into current zoning for library parking with the proposed expansion to the library. At the conclusion of the meeting Abacus stated they would begin the planning and design effort as soon as possible and would arrange for a follow-up meeting in the coming weeks. It was agreed that work on the feasibility study would need to be completed by June 19th. If the timeline proved at all problematic, both parties agreed to revisit the contract and consider an addendum to address the issue.

The following week Amy Fahey asked that Andrew Jenrich solicit feedback from library directors who have been involved in similar projects and could shed some light on the successes and challenges they encountered in the process (what features of the project they were most pleased with, what they wish they had done differently). Jenrich said he would send the question out on the C/W MARS directors’ listserv. Fahey and Jenrich would then share their collected feedback from community groups and regional directors with Abacus in May.

Prepared by Andrew Jenrich Title Library Director, Taft Public Library Date 05/11/2020

Submit via email to:

Andrea Bunker

[andrea.bunker@state.ma.us](mailto:andrea.bunker@state.ma.us)

FINANCIAL: Taft Public Library – Rectory Feasibility Study

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| I. PROJECT FUNDING | | | |
| 1. | State Funds Awarded | a | $25,000 |
| 2. | State Funds Expended to Date | b | $0 |
| 3. | State Funds Encumbered to Date | c | $0 |
| 1. | State Funds Remaining in Local Account | d | $25,000 |

Attachments:

Project Information/Documentation (please list)

X Contract (*attached to accompanying email along with this document*)