



**Town of Amherst
Special Town Council Meeting
Library Update
Monday, July 13, 6:00 p.m.
Virtual Meeting
Minutes**

Complete video is available online: <https://amherstmedia.org/content/special-joint-amherst-town-council-jones-library-board-trustees-july-13-2020>

1. Call to Order

Councilors Participating Remotely: Councilors Bahl-Milne, Brewer, De Angelis, DuMont, Griesemer, Hanneke, Pam, Ryan, Schoen, Schreiber, and Steinberg

Councilors Absent: Councilors Ross and Swartz

Library Trustees Participating Remotely: Tamson Ely, Alexandra Lefebvre, Robert Pam, Lee Edwards, Chris Hoffman, and Austin Sarat

Library Trustees Absent: None

Others Participating Remotely: Town Manager Paul Bockelman, Finance Director Sean Mangano, Clerk of the Council Athena O’Keeffe, and Kuhn Riddle Architects President Aelan Tierny

After confirming all participants could hear and be heard, President Griesemer declared the presence of a quorum, called the meeting to order at 6:06 p.m. and announced audio and video recording by Amherst Media.

Sarat declared the presence of a quorum and called the meeting of the Library Trustees to order and confirmed all Trustees could hear and be heard.

Note: Pursuant to Governor Baker’s March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18, this meeting of the Town Council and Library Trustees was conducted via remote participation.

2. Presentations and Discussion

a. Library Update

President Griesemer spoke about the purpose of the meeting, to hear costs of repairs to the library, and specified questions that would not be addressed at the meeting.

Library Trustee President Austin Sarat spoke about the repair estimate the Trustees received from Western Builders; the amount of which triggers federal and state law that would require the building be made ADA accessible in the course of the repairs.

1) Jones Library Accessibility Review and Recommendations Report – Kuhn Riddle Architects

Kuhn-Riddle President Aelan Tierney spoke about the following:

- 2017 Western Builders evaluation identified required repairs did not take into account accessibility upgrades that would be required based on the associated costs
- Accessibility trigger: if renovations or improvements are 30% or more of fair cash value of the building, the building is required to comply with 521 CMR
- Scope of study and tasks
- Project approach
- Potential costs
- Two options: lower-cost three-phase approach, and a priority-first approach in two phases
- Both options bring building into full compliance
- The repairs would not increase the library space or improve the program spaces within the library

2) Council Questions and Discussion

Councilor Schoen joined the meeting at 6:28 p.m.

Councilor Schreiber asked about systems in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, and about the value of renovations versus a larger-scale building project.

A. Tierney responded that the study began before the COVID-19 crisis; there will be more information in the coming year. The study was meant to look at numbers and not values.

Councilor Schoen asked how library spaces might be reconfigured.

A. Tierney responded that Kuhn-Riddle was asked to look at existing conditions and accessibility of existing conditions, reconfiguring library spaces would be a much larger study.

A. Sarat spoke briefly about the Library Trustee's study of the library thus far, and findings that the library cannot provide the services needed within the existing space.

Councilor Pam asked what we are meant to do with this.

A. Tierney responded that the point of the study is to see the cost of renovations in order to weigh the value of renovations versus expansion.

Councilor De Angelis asked that, given there would be accessibility on all floors, if that would open space that was unavailable until now.

A. Tierney responded that it is possible, but the study does not move any walls or change the layout of any library spaces.

Councilor DuMont asked about regular maintenance and if delaying maintenance has raised the cost of potential repairs.

A. Tierney responded that it may not have raised the cost but it may have quickened the need for repairs; eventually everything does wear out.

3) Public Comment – none

Councilor Schoen stated that her questions were sent in ahead of the meeting, accessibility on all floors allows reuse of more spaces, any potential offsets with doing this rather than the larger project, and spoke about the potential use of Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds.

A. Tierney an historic tax consultant would need to be consulted regarding CPA funds.

Councilor Hanneke stated that it costs a lot of money just to repair the building and there are no gains in sustainability.

Councilor Ryan asked about next steps and the project timeline.

A. Sarat stated there are questions about sustainability, once we have answers the Trustees will present a revised plan to the Town.

Councilor Brewer stated that we need to be clear about the community's role and Town Council's role going forward, and asked how to address constituent questions about the status of the project and next steps.

A. Sarat stated that the design submitted to the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) needed modifications, the project is currently number two on the MBLC waitlist.

Councilor Pam stated that before plans are finalized there should be adjustments in light of COVID-19, and asked about damage due to a leak in the special collections area.

A. Sarat expressed concern about a cascade of issues and repairs.

Library Director Sharon Sharry spoke about efforts to preserve the materials in special collections.

A. Lefebvre commented that the same problem happened last year when the AC was turned on.

Councilor Schoen stated that repair estimates would need to be adjusted if the work will not be completed this year.

A. Sarat spoke about the library programs leading the design of the library. The Trustees believe an expanded and renovated library is what the town needs. The Trustees will provide the cost of the level of sustainability the Town wants.

President Griesemer thanked the Trustees for their participation.

3. Topics Not Reasonably Anticipated by the President 48 Hours in Advance of the meeting

4. Adjourn

MOTION Hoffman moved, second by Pam, to adjourn the meeting of the Library Trustees.

VOTED 6-0 by roll call to adjourn the meeting of the Library Trustees at 6:59 p.m.

President Griesemer declared the meeting of the Town Council adjourned at 7:00 p.m. on July 13, 2020.

Respectfully submitted,



Athena O'Keefe
Clerk of the Council

Record of Agenda Packet Materials and Documents Presented

07-13-2020 FINAL Joint Meeting of the Town Council and Library Trustees Agenda - Library Update

Jones Library - Access Study Exec Summary-2020-06-08

Jones Library Accessibility Study - 2020-06-10

Jones Library-Town Council-2020-07-13

List of Questions re Kuhn Riddle Estimates as of 6-30-2020