

TRUSTEES OF THE J. V. FLETCHER LIBRARY

LIBRARY BUILDING PROJECT

Town voters approved the Library Building Project enthusiastically at Special Town Meeting October 17, 2022, and at the November 8 Local Ballot. In June of 2023, a Library Designer Selection Committee submitted a RFQ and selected the firm of Finegold Alexander Architects and the detailed design process began. This year, the Board of Library Trustees have worked hand-in-hand with the Westford Permanent Town Building Committee, Clean Energy and Sustainability Committee, Historical Commission, and Town Management in completing the final design and preparation for going out to bid in January 2025. As of August

*Lynn Clermont, Chair
Marianne Fleckner,
Treasurer
Buffie Diercks, Secretary
Caroline Roache
Glen Secor
Debbie Teal*

11, The Board of Library Trustees have participated in 12 meetings with the Permanent Town Building Committee and a special meeting with the Historical Commission on February 21. In addition, Library Trustees Buffie Diercks and Glen Secor have represented the Trustees in the Library Building Project Working Group. Marianne Fleckner is the Trustee liaison with the Westford Library Foundation Committee and Debbie Teal is the Trustee liaison with the Friends of the J.V. Fletcher Library. The Board of Library Trustees thanks both organizations for their incredible advocacy and fund raising efforts.

TRUSTEE FY 2024 GOALS

- I. Board of Library Trustees liaisons and library staff will routinely meet and work with the Permanent Town Building Committee on Designer Selection and Design Development to advance the Massachusetts Public Library Construction Project.
- II. The Board of Library Trustees will support library administration and library staff in the securing of an off-site operational facility and the smooth relocation of library collections, staff, operations and services.
- III. The Board of Library Trustees will collaborate with the Friends of the J. V. Fletcher Library, Inc. in launching the J. V. Fletcher Library Foundation to pursue fund raising on behalf of the Library Construction project.
- IV. In keeping with the initiatives of the Town and School Safety Task Force, the Board of Library Trustees will pursue safety, security and mental health support measures in the areas of:
 - a. Policy
 - b. Procedure
 - c. Emergency Response
 - d. Mental Health collections and programs
- V. In keeping with the initiatives of the Town Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee, the Board of Library Trustees will promote collection, display and programming initiatives which reflect the charge of this committee.

RECOGNITION

The Trustees would like to thank the wonderful Library Staff for once again enhancing and expanding programs, collections and services. The Trustees held a Staff Recognition Breakfast — hosted by Trustees Diercks and Teal — to honor library staff and volunteers and to mark the significant anniversaries of service in 2023 for Suzette Blanchette, Heather Nevits, Bari Pender, and Judy Madsen.

LIBRARY POLICIES, REVISED, APPROVED OR DELETED

- ~~Safety Deposit Box Access Policy (7/8/19)~~ deleted 1/8/24 [Box closed during fiscal year and contents moved to Library]
- Policy on Naming and Recognition (4/1/2024)
- Policy on Program Attendance and Sponsorship (1/8/24)
- Policy on Study Rooms and Tutorials (11/6/2023)
- ~~Library Laptops for In-House Use (11/6/17)~~ deleted 11/6/23
- Hotspots Loan Policy (11/6/23)

TRUSTEE COLLECTIONS, TRUST FUNDS AND BOARD ACTIVITIES

The J. V. Fletcher Library Trustees used Trust Funds to pay for Staff memberships and professional development, a Staff Recognition Breakfast, Petty cash, and library circulating materials. State Aid to Public Library funds were spent on:

- MVLC Membership (partial payment)
- Hotspot Subscriptions (portable WIFI)
- Assabet Reservation Software enhancements

The Board Library Trustees have continued to hold all its open public meetings online and posts all meeting agendas and minutes on the Town of Westford Website. The Board has also participated in Legislative Advocacy for the MBLC budget, Legislative initiatives and the Library Building Construction Grant funding.

VOLUNTEERISM

The Trustees thank our volunteers for their dedication to the Library. The Friends of the J. V. Fletcher library and its volunteers have given hundreds of hours of service sorting book donations, running the book sales and advocating for the library through websites, lawn signs, mailings and social media. Volunteers have also been involved with the Link to Literacy Initiative, offering ESL tutoring.

FRIENDS OF THE J. V. FLETCHER LIBRARY AND FOUNDATION

The Friends of the J. V. Fletcher library organization is a committed and valuable partner of the Library. Their generosity pays for all of the many programs and museum passes that the Library offers. This past year, Friends initiatives and support included:

- Fall 2023 Fall Appeal fund raising
- October, February, and June Book Sales, each raising more money than the one before!
- Establishment of the Library Building Project Foundation Committee dedicated to fund raising for J.V. Fletcher Library Building Project including their *1,000 Homes for \$1,000 Campaign* and their *Naming Opportunities Campaign*
- New (and former) Museum Passes and Online Pass Reservation software
- Programs for all ages including special Summer Reading Programs and Holiday Programs
- Popular Bestseller Books
- Equipment and furnishings
- Library Wishlist items

RETRENCHMENT IN FY25 DUE TO TOWN BUDGET CUTS

Due to the failure of the Town of Westford Tax Override, the Operating budget for the J. V. Fletcher library has been cut by - 5.48% (\$71,500) and has fallen below the State of Massachusetts Board of Library Commission's Municipal Appropriations Requirement (MAR). Massachusetts law states that a municipality must appropriate a figure of at least the average of the last three years of municipal appropriations to the library for operations, increased by 2.5% in order to be certified for State Aid to Libraries. A municipality must meet MAR or apply and receive a waiver of MAR. Also note that the municipality of Westford must remain certified for 20 years from the receipt of a MBLC Building Grant or forfeit the full amount of the grant. To retain certification and meet the appropriated library budget, the library made the following changes to FY25 services starting July 1, 2024:

- Reduced library hours by 5 hours per week but still maintain the state mandated 50 hours per week: the library now closes an hour earlier on M-TH and SAT and discontinued Sunday hours
- Staff Meetings reduced from one hour per month to 30 minutes virtual
- Reduced Library Page hours
- Reduced Book Budget
- Reduced Mileage, Conference and Dues Budget
- Work with Town Management to apply for the Municipal Appropriation Requirement (MAR) waiver
- Work with Town Management on a 5-year plan to recover from not meeting Municipal Appropriation Requirement (MAR)

Attachment: FY 2024 Year-End Trust Fund Fiscal Report

Note: The Library Trustees meet at 7:00 PM virtually or at the library on the first Monday of the month. Meetings are open to the public and residents are always welcome. An updated meeting schedule is maintained at the library website: westfordlibrary.org and agendas and minutes are posted on the Town website. Joint meeting recordings may be viewed on the WestfordCAT website. The Trustees may be reached through this website and all library policies are available there for public viewing.