

**Minutes**  
**Great Barrington Board of Library Trustees Special Meeting**  
**Ramsdell Library**  
**1087 Main St., Housatonic, MA 01230**  
**February 5, 2024**  
**5:06 PM**

**Call to Order**

Roll Call: Patrick Hollenbeck

Sandra Pantorno(arrived 5:12pm)

Rob Shaeffer

Carol McGlinchey

Lauren Clark (arrived 5:32pm)

Ruby Chang

Dawn Jardine (Library Director)

Donna Brown (assistant Library Director)

Sharon Gregory(community member)

Michelle Loubert(community member)

Eileen Mooney(media)

**Discussion:**

**1.CPA Special Grant Funding:**

- Grant funding of \$50,000 for Building Program and Building Conditions Assessment due May 31, 2024 to apply for the MBLC Construction Grant.
- To represent Community Support, MBLC require investment of \$150,000 from the town. We need a town vote and letter stating the pledge is agreed upon by the town and will be used for design and planning phase.
- Building Program Document is a program that helps us understand what we need, what we are looking for and how we are going to build the library. This include Focus Groups, Community Gatherings to understand what the community's needs and wants. It takes a lot of efforts.
- Building Needs Assessment: we received a draft from the DPW today which I have sent to the board members in the packet (175 pages). The assessments to bring building up to code is around \$1.855M. Tight and Bond noted this is an assessment and actual number will need to be updated. This number was from June,2023. This would improve electrical, structural, HVAC and Plumbing but no fire suppression which need two tanks with it's own water due to low water pressure. This is what the building needs no matter what happens. Sharon: what about handicap parking, also, historical changes need approval and this draft does not include what a historical building needs ant that is important for people to know. Historical buildings have different standards. Pat: You are correct and for example, \$50,000 for electrical but what about the walls which will need to be penetrated and that is not going to be cheap. This is bare bones and bringing it up to code. Sharon: Will we be making the second floor and basement usable? Pat: Hopefully will do that! Also, each floor need to have two bathrooms and an elevator to provide accessibility. This draft does not include an elevator. We had ADA consultant from Boston come last week Jeff Dougan. He told us there are state grants for elevators up to \$250,000 and cycle comes up once a year.
- Ruby:The town requires any expenses over \$30,000 to require 3 bids. I had contacted 3 consultants recommended by the MBLC for the Building Program. They are Mary Braney, Patricia Basler, Barbara Friedman. All three are busy with projects for other libraries, some are also applying for the same MBLC Grant. They will not be available till March at the earliest. I had asked for quotes and none got back to me. Mary Braney did the Snow Library and the report was amazing but she was too busy. We looked at other options for reputable people and have an open bid. We do have an RFP (request for proposal) which will be sent out. We need to talk about who to send this out to as a board. I have not gotten any of the three MBLC consultants' CV or work samples and still waiting.

- Rob: Are we to look these consultants up and see the work they have done and come back for discussion in 2 weeks at our next meeting?
- Ruby: I think you can, Patricia Basler's cost is around \$95.00/hour. We are scheduled to have a zoom presentation around 5:45pm from DesignLab out of Boston. They are an architectural firm who did the West Branch (our sister library) of Somerville's Library. I think the Board should look at their presentation and be able to ask questions. We had talked about Rethinking Libraries and their proposal at our last meeting and their cost came out to be \$23,000 for just Building Program.
- Building Conditions Assessment Discussion: Sandy: discussion reviewed due to late entrance. Ruby: I had discussed and included in my email to each of the consultants, Ramsdell has a Building Program from 2020 and the work includes building on that report to the new requirements from MBLC. They were just too busy. Two out of the three were going on vacation and none will be able to get back to us till March. Sandy: who actually puts that out so that it is "apples to apples"? Ruby: We have an RFP that have been written which I had sent to all of you this afternoon. This document was updated from another RFP written in 2019 for Ramsdell that never went through. This was written by the town with name of the library director at the time who was Amanda and updated.
- Review of consultant sources are Tighe & Bond (from DPW), edm (engineering, design, management; Pittsfield MA, Farmington CT, Troy NY.) We had two recommendations for dem from Mark Makuc, the Library Director from Monterey and DesignLAB. Carlo Schneller, Senior Structural Engineer from edm came out on January 17, 2024 and did a walk through and photo session at Ramsdell. He is super busy and said he has done many similar projects for the MBLC but is extremely busy with many other projects to do but knows what MBLC requires for the document. We are getting down to the timeline where many consultants are busy and we need to make some decisions and that is why we are having this special meeting. Sandy: We cannot make decisions unless we see the numbers. Ruby: You are correct and we need to determine who we want numbers from. Sandy: Why don't you just get the few that you have? I don't know engineering firms. Ruby: We did reach out to another firm, Sorenson Partners, Architects & Planners out in Westborough which was recommended by ReThinking Libraries. We had a zoom meeting with her in December and the cost for them was \$35,000. Rob: Are each of the consultants giving us the same results? Ruby: The criteria is determined by the MBLC Construction Grant. That is our goal. Rob: is that document created by us or MBLC? Ruby: By MBLC, they are all familiar with what the criteria are since they have done this type of work before. Lauren: What about the projected dates on the RFP. Ruby: This is a draft.

#### **Vote and Sign:**

CPA Special Grant Funds Agreement—Ruby sent it from last meeting in January and again before this meeting. This is from the town and we need to read and sign the document which will be returned to Chris Rembold. The document is passed around and everyone of the board members signed the document. It was turned into the town February 10th.

Ruby make a motion to pass the CPA Special Grant Funds, Rob second.

Roll Call vote: Unanimously passed.

#### **DesignLab Presentation via Zoom:**

Various personal laptops were used so everyone can join. We did not have a large screen for projection. The presentation lasted about 25 minutes. With Ben Youtz (architect partner) and Andrew Brooks (director), Maryann Upton and Andrea Scanlon, two other team members. They are project partners and currently working for the town of Stow with their library the same age as Ramsdell. The talk lasted 25 min with time left for discussion. (Copy of the powerpoint is available through Trustees Board.) They are a women-owned firm and have Just label which indicate Equity in the firm as well as the product of our work. They have worked for the cities of Somerville and Providence RI. And higher education libraries such as Vanderbilt's entire library systems in Nashville. Many of the trends of higher ed libraries are applicable to town libraries as well. The West Branch is like a big sister to Ramsdell. This Carnegie funded library now has a new Entry and Community Gathering Space. We reconfigured interior spaces as well. We transformed the Providence 50's era library Empire Street wing entirely to welcoming 21st Century library with various programming spaces. We imagine a modest team led by DesignLAB ourselves. We enlisted edm from Pittsfield and they are familiar with

the building and designed the recent boiler replacement and worked on a number of other libraries in the area. They would help with the mechanical, electrical, plumbing and fire protection assessment of the building in consideration of the future renovation. Optional consulting with landscape architect and envelope consultant that we might consider on our team. Our design philosophy is Critical Stewardship—design that is universal responsibility to history and the environment through the lens of community. We see each of our projects as an inflection point building on what has come before and influencing what comes after. We recognize buildings continuously evolve over time. Critical Stewardship direct our focus to people and away from things. We are happy to be able to engage in the wonderful work of libraries.

What we see libraries are evolving— when Ramsdell was built, it was mostly focused on the individual and consuming information. ..read books, collect data as an individual. In the past 25 years, the digital age, the original function of the library still exist, housing collections. Spaces are seeing other programs and activities that are expanding, including maker spaces or performing venues to art galleries to all other sorts of things. We like to use the analogy of libraries evolving from a grocery model, now are more like the kitchen at home where people are gathering as the heart of the home to libraries are the heart of the community. It is no longer the gathering of data individually to making and creating and sharing spaces with others. Libraries need to appeal to a diverse group of people, users, learners. Everyone is different in how they engage and absorb information. They want to collaborate with others. We will go through with you about different typology of users and best way to accommodate them in the future. We also explore different service models. Services have evolved and no longer just checking in and out books. There are library of things and meeting rooms that can be reserved. Librarians will be in the center but services could be on line, digital or commercial functions such as going to a kiosk and reserve a room. We see renovating libraries as a community living room where folks could come together and informally share a space together. We can see displays of art work, even a small cafe where food is served. These are some of the ideas we see in our conversations with other library groups. Diversity of meeting rooms is important post-pandemic to large spaces to those for meeting of 2-3 people that is more discrete and quiet. Maker Spaces are appealing to certain library users. Great Barrington has a rich local history and archives may be displayed in such a way that is accessible and engaging. Children and middle school children need their own type of spaces that are different from other patrons and we need to accommodate them as well. Events are also inspirational for larger spaces such as for lecture to performances are often incorporated in the activities of the library these days. With that comes flexibility. Taking one space such as reading room during the day and set up as lecture space in the evening. This is critical to arrange the spaces to meet all your needs at different times. We think about outdoor spaces with opportunity for outdoor reading rooms or areas to support children. Story hours can go outside during the warmer months to a garden space. Musical performances could be configured for use. Food trucks as part of the library site... lots to be considered in the outdoor space as well. In the post pandemic world, thinking about flow through space such as picking up books that were reserved and how sequence will work. Flexibility is key so spaces could be quickly rearranged for different uses. Mechanical flow of air to create a safe environment. This is the framework of some of the topics we want to discuss as well.

Process of looking at the next few months. Andrew noted we have a great foundation of information to build on. A lot went into the documents you have compiled including the previous building program studies and most recently the new Strategic Plan that concluded in the fall. There is a lot of great information there. We were really excited to see the final priorities in the Strategic Plan and many are what we had just discussed for a future library. You guys are well on your way. It is a great springboard for this potential process. Screen shows the proposed work plan for the next several months. We are working toward the application for the MBLC grant due in May. We are in the first week of February. The next step is the existing conditions assessment where we would come out with edm to Ramsdell and take as close a look at the building. Parallel to that would be at the same time hosting a programming workshop with appropriate stakeholders including library director and staff. Both would be information gathering sessions. We will learn about your program now and aspirations moving forward. We will gather the community's desire for the building and take that information back and synthesize emerging themes. We will present that back to you all called the



preliminary findings workshop. We would take that information and seque into different spaces that may needed to be added or reconfigured. We will then have 2-3 workshops where we will present the ideas to you all and getting feedback till we will get a consensus on what the vision is for Ramsdell. We will package all of that together to support this grant application to the MBLC. It is a quick process over 3 months and a lot to do but within a comfortable range of time. This is a familiar range of time that we have done in the past. We will have various groups that will give opinions. It would be important to keep the project on pace but make sure everyone's voices are heard. We will have multiple ways of engagement including community meetings. This could start as listening sessions and also feedback sessions. Passive engagement we use a lot such as boards posted. This was one for the Boston Public Library including polls through QR codes. We were able to collect enormous amounts of data. We will be able to build a program statement. Whether it is quiet tech room or large meeting rooms or circulation desks we will build where things fit in different categories. Program adjacencies like office in quiet areas or teen rooms adjacent to the children's library. Then we will go back to the community to confirm those programs. We recently did for the town of Stow. Their program statements are important to determine what the community really wants and we were able to develop them alongside other options. If the town would like, we can provide landscape options which would really help to connect interior with exterior programs. DesignLAB have high standards for sustainability. We have built the most sustainable buildings in the world. We can provide this service as long as the town shares the same goals with us. Full range include LEED Gold to NetZero. Great Barrington is a green community and has adopted stretch codes. We already have experience working with Cambridge and Stow. With these goals, we open doors for more grant opportunities. We recently helped one client with the Massachusetts DOER Decarbonization Grant which was \$500,000 to build a building that does not use fossil fuel and completely electric. We help with negotiating between pros and cons for the community. We provide the cost options to make sure the program will still fit within the budget. There are other levers we can pull such as HVAC elements or exterior design to maintain the quality of the project that you all deserve. We can guide the decision on the potential cost impact may be at a very, very high conceptual level of analysis. Program and Vision is identified for Ramsdell, we have helped other clients after the program has been developed with fundraising support by developing renderings or images, models or fundraising packages sent out as part of a larger capitol campaign. This we can offer much later down the road as well. This concludes our presentation and facilitate any questions.

- Sharon: This is the second library for the northern part of Great Barrington. The demographics are different from the GB CDP. The Housatonic CDP is significantly less such as income and such. I was hoping there would be more of an outpouring of interest to save the library, renovate it. How can we get more engagement. Many people are working 2-3 jobs and many have ideas of old fashion libraries and not thought of it as community space. Ramsdell library is not known to have a lot of events compared to Mason Library. It has been closed a lot due to personnel reasons and covid. Do you have suggestions for reimagine this project and get community support?
- Ben: You are not alone in this sort of perspective but we offer with Trustees guidance is develop community engagement process where we could put ideas forward with visioning sessions in the beginning, not designs or programs but putting ideas of what other towns have done and what Ramsdell can be to build momentum and engagement and excitement. We do that and still be realistic of what is attainable. We will work with all of you to strategize this.
- Sharon: Do you think the surveys we had done is enough or do we need more?
- Ruby: I think the initial survey and focus groups done for the Strategic Plan was transparent. However, having examples of seeing what other libraries have become to the community will give us a sense of what is doable. Unfortunately, we have not had great usage of this library through Covid and lack of staff... so people have not had a lot of expectations of what this library could be. They are wondering why are we bothering doing this since we do have a library and we already have a resource and even Mason, we do not get as much usage as we could have. We need a lot of community engagement and get people really excited about what benefits could be achieved from efforts of the municipality and staff that can produce a place that they can be proud of. What we are looking for is guidance.



- Ben: We are prepared to help you with that. We could design (poster) boards and set them up in both libraries and other sites such as cafes where we know folks who don't go to the library will go. We need to reach out to folks who don't use the library as well. Passive postings as well as in person engagement through images and photos to get community aware of what is possible. This is a critical part of an engagement process and get the word out.
- Sharon: I would like to see renderings of what we have (Ramsdell) instead of what other town libraries are like is important. People can understand what we need. When I worked to enlarge the business zone of GB, landscape architects put up renderings of the street shops such as Domaney's and then showed photographs of Main Street to show what we look like but you don't have to look like this. People relate easily that way.
- Ben: You are right but we also need to fulfill requirements of what MBLC requires and not necessarily what the future library design may look like. This comes later. We need to be careful and achieve the needs of the grant application without getting too far ahead of ourselves.
- Sandy: If we want to go forward with your company, when would you need the decision by to make this work?
- Ben: We need this soon. We are going up against the May deadline. We are anticipating.. in getting this conditions assessment and programming effort done. We had developed this timeline in December and anticipating start this week We need 5-6 weeks to do both the existing conditions assessment and program... community engagement to get all the data we need with qualitative and quantitative feedback to develop our recommendations.
- Sandy: At what point is too late?
- Ben: A couple of weeks... mid February. We need to get out there February 19... maybe 26th... we could make it work. We would have to make an already condensed process to a more condensed process. It is workable. I am saying this not with just us, DesignLAB in mind but all of you to give you the product you need and MBLC requirements. We will be supported with work from edm, local and knows the building.
- Zoom Session ended 40 min later.

#### **Cost:**

- Ruby: The cost of DesignLAB services is going to use up the full amount of CPA Special Round Grant of \$50,000. Out of this amount, \$35,000 is for the Building Program due to travel and community engagement multiple sessions with posters and discussions. The work of edm will cost \$15,000 for needs assessment. Obviously, things can change depend on what the work actually entails. This proposal was **before** they saw the DPW draft. Now we have some basis for them to work on and they will supplement that work. ReThinking Libraries had referred us to Sorenson & Partners and their cost was around \$35,000 just to do the Building assessment. The Building Program that was proposed by ReThinking Libraries was around \$23,000 with additional expenses in travel from Colorado. These two companies would cost much more. We also had ongoing discussions from three buildings program consultants from MBLC who are very busy and we cannot get their proposal till March. These are all verbal proposals except DesignLAB which is via powerpoint. We are having today's special meeting to get your consent as to whom we should send out the RFP. Do you think you have enough bids and where do we go from here? I need to hear from the board.
- Lauren: Where would we get the money for the excess if the bids come in to more than \$50,000? We really have two people bidding. We decide and will get more solid numbers. We need to decide really fast.
- Sandy: I would be more comfortable working with those two but with numbers in front of me... in writing. We are suppose to take care of the financial part...would send out the bid to both.
- Rob: Is there any reason we wouldn't work directly with edm? Instead of having them as subcontractor for DesignLAB? My brother is a contractor who adds additional cost to the subcontractor's fee. This way we can cut some of the cost for savings. I am not impressed with Rob (Cullen)'s proposal, does not make sense and having travel on top of it. I find edm and DesignLAB would be a good team to work with. Lauren's point, where is the money coming from if it is more than \$50,000?

- Ruby: You want consistency in what you are looking for, for example you have a Building Program we need a gathering space. Ben would then go to edm and say I need to check the structure of this and need to know what happens if we are going to do this. Then, edm would need to place more focus on this area. They work together is the way I see it.
- Rob: Where is the extra cost funding going to come from if they run over?
- Lauren: We need to pick someone and the people that are closer is going to come in less money. So it seems to me we need forward with them. Again, it is not in stone till we get it on paper. Lets move forward. It is a short timeline.
- Rob: I totally agree they are the best choice. Just want to know what is going to happen when money goes over.
- Lauren: I am comfortable making a decision to go with them.
- Carol: Now we are under the wire, if we don't get the MBLC grant, we will have to reimburse the CPA the \$50,000, don't we?
- Ruby: We use the information from their report to go forward with design and plan with fundraising funds. We do not have to reimburse the town.
- Sharon: I think we can agree to use DesignLAB with contingent upon they coming in at \$50,000. They want to build a long term relationship. I doubt they will want to squeeze a couple thousand dollars more.
- Carol: I do not see any reason we could not approve of DesignLAB tonight.... With the timeline that we have.

#### **FY25 Library Budget discussion:**

- Dawn: Reviewed last year and this year budget. We need budget for technology. If you look at end of last year, the amount was much less than the 50% of the actual budget due to no director and there was not a lot of spending. What we can do is apply to the town to move the money to a different line to purchase 5 laptops, 3 for patron use and two for staff use. We can purchase 3 years of Recite Me. Transferring \$6000 from collection budget to office supply and I think the town will approve of it. I would send a proposal to Allie (finance office) to sign and then to Mark(TM) to sign for approval and move the funds over. We can spend this as soon as we can approve it. The year after next when I have better handle on the budget, I am going to change some of the lines around going forward. Looking at the budget, we will have significantly more next year compared to this year. The proposed budget for FY25 was almost level. Mark tried to restore it and gave us \$10,000 more. Rob explained the budget in detail noted there was a surplus of \$48,000. From this would come money for the computers. Dawn: \$14,000 was only 20% of the 1/2 year of budget and it should be 50%. It was an aberration because we were short staffed. Sandy asked what is \$81,000 that was in the budget from FY23....Ruby explained that was the previous fiscal year when we had full staff. Dawn: There was a big budget cut from FY2023-24 . Mark will give us back \$10,000 this year and another \$10,000 next FY. We are fine for budget right now. FY27/28 we are on schedule to have all our computers replaced. We are not going to ask for additional money from the town for technology tomorrow. We will be able to get licensing and contractor as part of the upgrade.

#### **Advocacy for technology needs in light of Selectboard/Finance Board review coming up this Week.**

- Discussion on advocacy for \$150,000 requirement for MBLC Grant ensues since there is no need for advocacy for technology at this point. Sharon noted that we are not saving taxpayer's money by using CPA funding and going to town taxpayers' for funding through capitol improvements. We should all go to town meeting in two days to advocate for the \$150,000 through capital improvement funds.

#### **LSTA (Library Science Technology Act) Grant application Update**

Pat; the first draft is due end of February.

#### **Discuss and Vote**

**Engagement of services for Ramsdell Buildings Program and Condition Assessment:** Rob makes a motion that we go forward to engage DesignLAB for Ramsdell Building Program and Conditions Assessment contingent estimate of \$50,000. Ruby second the motion for engagement of DesignLAB for

the services for Ramsdell Building Program and Conditions Assessment contingent on their cost proposal of \$50,000.

Discussion: Carol... we don't really have a choice and would others make the timeline. Rob Cullen did not say no. Ruby we need to make a decision. Michelle and Rob both agree they are already behind and this is two months they have been thinking about this.

**Vote: Roll Call unanimously yes.**

**Request for Budget approval of \$600.00 for children's toys for Library of Things**

- Dawn: There is no toys in the Library of Things and I would like to purchase two dolls with all the accoutrement such as skateboards etc one boy and one girl from American Dolls. In the previous library that I worked in, we had an amazing successful program with them. We had 9 of them and only had a couple of them on the shelves. Check out is 3 weeks and is renewable. You can get a lot of different ethnicity and cultures, dolls with hearing aids and wheelchairs and gender queer and also with different racial backgrounds. Discussion of racial background make up of 3% Black American and 8% Latino backgrounds in Great Barrington. You can customize them. Rob: concern with check out time of 6 weeks may be too long. Dawn: It may be wise to keep it one week. This is a pilot program. Carol: Can request donations as well. Ruby make a motion for purchase of Children's toys for the library of things for \$600.00 as a pilot program. Rob second. *Edited: Money will come from donations..(2/21/24)*

**Roll Call: unanimously all agreed.**

**Request for the library to purchase the program Recite Me on our website**

- Dawn: We can pay for this through our budget transfer. We need to initiate this with a 3 year subscription. This program makes our website accessible for all with translation of website in different languages that are read to you. They have over 100 languages and have it read to you. You can change the font for people with dyslexia and reading bar. This service will extend to a pdf website as well such as a newsletter. I think it is a worthy investment. This would work with vision problems. We will do a social media campaign. There is several ways it can show up on the website, such as accessibility icon on the website and you click it and all the tools open up. Somethings does not work well such as a flyer and if we put more text in it, it will read the text. We will need to look into it.
- Pat: This is part of our Strategic Plan as well. This accessibility part.

Rob: I make a motion to purchase this accessibility software for website Recite Me for 3 years. Pat second.

**Roll Call: unanimously approved.**

**Approval of FY2025 Library Budget:**

Ruby makes the motion to approve of the FY 2025 Library budget(as discussed earlier) Lauren second. No discussions or comments

**Roll Call: unanimously approved.**

**Advocacy for town future funding for library.**

- Ruby: I would like to see approval for advocacy to the Town for \$150,000 funding as part of application for the MBLC Grant Application for Ramsdell. Recommend going to the town meeting. Pat had put in the request to be part of the town budget at end of December. Mark said yes. We need to show our advocacy for this capital expense funding. I also left open for any other comments or discussions for Mason library as well, with the \$150,000 as part of it.
- Lauren: Do we have something to show such as powerpoint? People are voting for it not the town government.
- Ruby: This is for budget meeting in 2 days.
- Michelle: This way, the board goes into the town meeting as a unified front.

Ruby makes a motion for agreement to advocate for the \$150,00 on the line item budget for application for the MBLC Grant for Ramsdell. Carol second.

**Roll Call: Unanimously approved.**

**Board Speak:** Thank Dawn and Donna.

**Citizen Speak:** none



**Media Time:None**

**Next meeting: February 14, 2024 at 5 pm. People vote for Mason because it is open.**

**Adjournment: 7:48 PM**

Respectfully submitted,

Ruby Chang

Great Barrington Libraries: Current Status and Needs  
February 5, 2024

Great Barrington Libraries are a source of pride and shared history for our community. These anchor institutions are beloved for their beautiful architecture, interior ambiance, friendly staff, and as sources of information and recreation for all. The past few years have been challenging due to the pandemic and significant loss of staff. In 2023, the Board of Trustees adopted a new Strategic Plan and now, at the onset of 2024, the library is making positive strides forward. However, significant needs remain.

The Town hired a permanent director who started in early January. Now, progress is being made towards hiring two part-time circulation technicians and two full-time positions, both of which are programming positions. Filling these positions will allow for the restoration of open hours to both branches in the coming months as well as robust physical and digital collection development including the addition of toys to the Library of Things at Ramsdell, and a return to a full programming schedule.

Collection development in libraries is changing. In 2019, GBL circulated over 125,000 physical items. Unfortunately, the pandemic in 2020 halved that output. Since 2021 however, library use has rebounded, and circulation was back to 98,000 in 2023. At the same time, library use has been shifting from physical materials to digital. Use of ebooks and downloadable audiobooks has skyrocketed 200% since 2019, from a circulation of 8,828 before the pandemic to 22,600 in 2023. This trend towards digital reading will continue. Unfortunately, digital materials are much more expensive than traditional print. We are shifting funds from print to digital, but the same budget is buying fewer titles.

Facilities are being improved as well. This winter, the Friends of Great Barrington Libraries, along with local resident Bobby Houston and his design firm Scout House, redecorated the main reading room at Mason Library. Decluttered, with new rugs and tables, it is a more open, welcoming space.

Plans are ongoing for a sculpture of W. E. B. Du Bois to be incorporated into a renovated walkway with curved benches in front of Mason Library. Paid for by donations, the space promises to be a place of beauty, serenity, and reflection in downtown Great Barrington.

Mason needs more work, though. We are grateful that the Town is aware of the building's need for repairs to its clamshell entrance, renovation of its front steps, and repairs to its HVAC system.

At Ramsdell, a ramp was completed this winter which allows wheelchairs and strollers to enter the building easily. However, the interior of Ramsdell is in dire need of updating. In addition to accessible bathrooms, stacks, and an elevator, it lacks HVAC, adequate electricity, restrooms, and workspaces for staff and public. The Board has secured a CPA grant to study renovation needs and plans to seek an MBLC construction grant to cover the majority of the costs of these improvements.

Lastly, libraries are crucial to digital equity. Patron computers at Mason and staff computers at both branches are scheduled to be upgraded in fiscal years 2027 and 2028. However, four public laptops at Ramsdell need to be replaced sooner, and staff need access to working laptops when flexible work is required and for programming. In addition to the town's existing computer replacement schedule, GBL needs access to immediate, small-scale purchasing of computing and other office equipment when needs arise.

Your libraries are moving forward. We are grateful for the support we receive from the community and the Town are determined to keep the needs of our residents foremost in our minds as we continue to develop new and improve existing services.

Respectfully submitted by the Board of Trustees and Library Director  
2/6/2024

Library Director	Dawn Jardine
Board Chair	Patrick Hollenbeck
Board Member	Rob Sheaffer
Board Member	Carol McGlinchey
Board Member	Lauren E. Clark
Board Member	Sandra Pantorno
Board Member	Ruby Chang



**Libraries: 01610**

Account		Positions		FY2023		FY2024		FY2024		FY2025		FY2025	
		FY24	FY25 REQ	FY25 APRV	Year-end Actuals	Town Meeting Vote	Actuals thru 12/31/23	Budget Request	Town Manager Recommended				
51143	Head Librarian	1	1	1	\$ 65,748	\$ 72,800	\$ 11,594	\$ 74,160	\$ 74,160	\$ 74,160			
51145	Assistant Librarians	2	2	2	\$ 98,605	\$ 106,603	\$ 26,920	\$ 110,163	\$ 110,163	\$ 110,163			
51146	Library Clerks - FT	7.5	5	5	\$ 258,793	\$ 215,260	\$ 94,118	\$ 221,120	\$ 221,120	\$ 221,120			
51148	Library Clerks - PT	0	2.5	2.5	\$ -	\$ 92,293	\$ 7,986	\$ 93,422	\$ 93,422	\$ 93,422			
51420	Longevity Pay				\$ 1,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 1,300	\$ 1,600	\$ 1,600	\$ 1,600			
TOTAL PERSONNEL:		10.5	10.5	10.5	\$ 424,146	\$ 488,956	\$ 141,918	\$ 500,465	\$ 500,465	\$ 500,465			
52400	Equipment Maint/Repairs				\$ 3,050	\$ 3,000	\$ 947	\$ 3,100	\$ 3,100	\$ 3,100			
54200	Office Supplies				\$ 9,250	\$ 13,000	\$ 5,183	\$ 13,390	\$ 13,390	\$ 13,390			
55800	Nonprint Materials				\$ 34,589	\$ 26,000	\$ 7,366	\$ 31,500	\$ 31,500	\$ 31,500			
55801	Subscriptions				\$ -	\$ 27,000	\$ 10,276	\$ 29,000	\$ 29,000	\$ 29,000			
55860	Books/E books				\$ 81,563	\$ 62,000	\$ 14,032	\$ 73,860	\$ 73,860	\$ 73,860			
55861	Programming Supplies				\$ 2,117	\$ 3,300	\$ 386	\$ 3,400	\$ 3,400	\$ 3,400			
57100	Travel/Training				\$ 51	\$ 1,400	\$ -	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,500			
57300	Dues & Memberships				\$ 540	\$ 1,010	\$ 345	\$ 1,040	\$ 1,040	\$ 1,040			
TOTAL EXPENSES:					\$ 131,160	\$ 136,710	\$ 38,535	\$ 156,790	\$ 156,790	\$ 156,790			
TOTAL BUDGET:					\$ 555,306	\$ 625,666	\$ 180,453	\$ 657,255	\$ 657,255	\$ 657,255			

<b>Dept Head Approval</b>		<b>\$ Increase/Decrease</b>		<b>% Increase/Decrease</b>	
		\$	31,589	\$	31,589
			5.05%		5.05%



Mason Donations: 61361/57800									
Date	Vendor	Vendor #	PO #	PO \$	Spent	PO Balance	Added	Donations Balance	Note
7/1/2023								\$ 23,718.57	
7/28/2023	Donations						\$ 116.25	\$ 23,834.82	
7/24/2023	Ingram Library Services	90032	00240313-00	\$ 14.80	\$ 14.80	\$ -		\$ 23,820.02	FY23 invoice
9/5/2023	Ingram Library Services	90032	00240313-00	\$ 421.83	\$ 421.83	\$ -		\$ 23,398.19	FY23 invoice
9/5/2023	OverDrive Inc.	12926	00240522-00	\$ 939.69	\$ 939.69	\$ -		\$ 22,458.50	FY23 invoices
10/5/2023	Donations						\$ 270.81	\$ 22,729.31	
12/11/2023	Kanopy Inc.	13801	00240762-00	\$ 152.00	\$ 152.00	\$ -		\$ 22,577.31	FY23 invoice
1/3/2024	Donations						\$ 102.70	\$ 22,680.01	
1/4/2024	Donations						\$ 107.50	\$ 22,787.51	

Ramsdell Donations: 61364/55800									
Date	Vendor	Vendor #	PO #	PO \$	Spent	PO Balance	Added	Donations Balance	Note
7/1/2023								\$ 13,093.18	
8/1/2023	Amazon Capital Services, Inc	13595	00240317-00	\$ 26.53	\$ 26.53	\$ -		\$ 13,066.65	LoT replacement
8/8/2023	Patrick Hollenbeck	11742	00240466-00	\$ 294.30	\$ 294.30	\$ -		\$ 12,772.35	Sunday NYT
8/8/2023	Donations						\$ 100.00	\$ 12,872.35	
12/20/2023	Amazon Capital Services, Inc	13595	00240317-00	\$ 100.00	\$ 62.23	\$ 37.77		\$ 12,810.12	LoT replacement; Amazon PO inc
					\$ 383.06				

State Aid: 61261/55800									
Vendor	Vendor #	PO #	PO \$	Date	Spent	PO Balance	State Aid Balance	Note	
MAPS	13971	00240243-00	\$ 2,500.00		\$ 2,300.00	\$ 200.00	\$ 40,658.00		
Earthwork Pro	14055	00240406-00	\$ 150.00	8/1/2023	\$ 150.00	\$ -	\$ 38,358.00		
Maichack Arts	11331	00240402-00	\$ 412.00	8/1/2023	\$ 412.00	\$ -	\$ 37,946.00		
Jerry Schneide	11235	00240477-00	\$ 280.00	8/15/2023	\$ 280.00	\$ -	\$ 37,666.00	spoon man?	
Joseph Cherni	10976	00240564-00	\$ 150.00	9/5/2023	\$ 150.00	\$ -	\$ 37,516.00	comics	
Ellison Educat	14531	00240722-00	\$ 451.34	11/7/2023	\$ 451.34	\$ -	\$ 36,914.66	dicut machine	
Marissa Fount	14532	00240724-00	\$ 600.00	11/7/2023	\$ 600.00	\$ -	\$ 36,314.66	Strategic Plan	
Hannah Van S	14533	00240723-00	\$ 2,250.00	11/7/2023	\$ 2,250.00	\$ -	\$ 34,064.66	Strategic Plan	
ReThinking Lit	14544	00240774-00	\$ 375.00	11/21/2023	\$ 375.00	\$ -	\$ 33,689.66	Ramsdell Consulting	
Blackstone Pu	10710	00240936-00	\$ 153.84	1/29/2024	\$ 153.84	0	\$ 33,535.82	FY23 invoices	
Rivistas	13170	00240935-00	\$ 120.57	1/29/2024	\$ 120.57	0	\$ 33,415.25	FY23 invoices	
					\$ 7,242.75				

4/13/23 Trustee Allocations			
Department	Amount	Spent	Balance
Mason Children's	\$ 5,200.00	\$ 1,292.00	\$ 3,908.00
Mason Adult	\$ 1,000.00		
Ramsdell	\$ 2,000.00		
MAPS	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 2,000.00

Vendor	Date	Spent
MAPS	7/24/2023	\$ 150.00
MAPS	8/8/2023	\$ 150.00
MAPS	8/8/2023	\$ 2,000.00





State Aid

Vendor	Vendor	PO #	PO \$	Date	Spent	PO Balance	State Aid Balance	Note
MAPS	13971	00240243-00	\$		\$	\$ 200.00	\$ 40,658.00	
Earthwork Programs	14055	00240406-00	\$	8/1/2023	\$	\$ -	\$ 38,358.00	
Maichack Arts	11331	00240402-00	\$	8/1/2023	\$	\$ -	\$ 38,208.00	
Jerry Schneider	11235	00240477-00	\$	8/15/2023	\$	\$ -	\$ 37,796.00	
Joseph Chernila	10976	00240564-00	\$	9/5/2023	\$	\$ -	\$ 37,516.00	
Ellison Education Equipment, Inc.	14531	00240722-00	\$ 451.34	11/7/2023	\$ 451.34	\$ -	\$ 36,914.66	
Marissa Fountain	14532	00240724-00	\$	11/7/2023	\$	\$ -	\$ 36,314.66	
Hannah Van Sickle	14533	00240723-00	\$	11/7/2023	\$	\$ -	\$ 34,064.66	
ReThinking Libraries LLC	14544	00240774-00	\$	11/21/202	\$	\$ -	\$ 33,689.66	

**4/13/23 Trustee Allocations**

Vendor	Date	Spent	Department	Amount	Spent	Balance
MAPS	7/24/2023	\$ 150.00	Mason Children's	\$ 5,200.00	\$ 1,292.00	\$ 3,908.00
MAPS	8/8/2023	\$ 150.00	Mason Adult	\$ 1,000.00		
MAPS	8/8/2023	\$ 2,000.00	Ramsdell	\$ 2,000.00		
			MAPS	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 2,000.00

Date	Vendor	Vendor #	PO #	PO \$	Spent	PO Balance	Added	Mason Donations Balance	Note
7/1/2023								\$ 23,718.57	
7/28/2023	Donations						\$ 116.25	\$ 23,834.82	
7/24/2023	Ingram Library Services	90032	00240313-00	\$ 14.80	\$ 14.80	\$ -		\$ 23,820.02	FY23 invoice
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10/5/2023	Donations						\$ 270.81	\$ 22,729.31	
12/11/2023	Kanopy Inc.	13801	00240762-00	\$ 152.00	\$ 152.00	\$ -		\$ 22,577.31	FY23 invoice
1/3/2024	Donations						\$ 102.70	\$ 22,680.01	
1/4/2024	Donations						\$ 107.50	\$ 22,787.51	

1/23/2023: \$932.476 designated to children's room from Gifted Child

[illegible]



## Recite Me Quote

Here is the quote from Recite Me. It's \$750/year but we have to pay 3 years up front, for \$2250. After the 3 years, he said it's likely to increase in price by between 3 and 7% (so \$774 - \$807/year)

I can't access the budget at the moment because the town internet is down and it's stored on their drive. But I think that we would have to pay for this out of state aid or donations, then build it into the budget from FY26 out.

There is some extra money in collection spending, but I have yet to hear back on whether we can move that into other lines. Remember, we will also have to pay Glen, our website manager, to install the app. It is not a difficult app to install though.

Libraries with Recite Me installed for your perusal:

Catskill

Poughkeepsie

Note the different ways that the app can be installed. On the Catskill site, you click the blue accessibility icon on the lower right. On Poughkeepsie, you click on "Accessibility Tools."

>>>From Library Director, Dawn Jardine





