

## Town Council Support of the Jones Library Project Extension

**From** Griesemer, Lynn <GriesemerL@amherstma.gov>

**Date** Tue 12/3/2024 3:53 PM

**To** Masse, Rachel (BLC) <rachel.masse@mass.gov>

**Cc** Comerford, Joanne (SEN) <Jo.Comerford@masenate.gov>; mindy.domb@mahouse.gov <mindy.domb@mahouse.gov>; Koby.Gardner-Levine <Koby.Gardner-Levine@mail.house.gov>; Jones Library Trustees <trustees@joneslibrary.org>

1 attachment (671 KB)

MBLC 12-3-24.pdf;

Dear Ms. Masse:

Please find attached and duplicated below the Amherst Town Council's support for an extension to our deadline to sign a contract with a General Contractor from December 31, 2024 to March 31, 2025.

Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners  
90 Canal St., Suite 500  
Boston, MA 02114

December 3, 2024

Director Amyot and MBLC Commissioners:

On behalf of the Amherst Town Council, I want to thank the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners for your ongoing support of Jones Library Renovation and Expansion project. You have worked with us to keep this project moving forward through COVID and by giving us an extension in June 2024. We will be coming before you this Thursday, December 5, 2024 to request an extension to our deadline to sign a contract with a General Contractor from December 31, 2024 to March 31, 2025.

Renovation and Expansion projects have become more challenging every year and, in our case, this is compounded by the fact that of the original portion of the existing Jones Library is a historic building.

Our team has been working hard and successfully to raise the external funds for this project that complement the very generous and increased grant from MBLC for a total of \$15.6 Million and the Town of Amherst's Commitment of \$15.8 million plus Community Preservation Act funds of another \$1,000,000. And amazingly, with all of the obstacles in its path, fundraising, which is the third major source of funding for this project has reached the 85% mark by successfully securing donations from individuals, foundations, and state and federal grants. AND, the list of prospects for additional funds is impressive, further demonstrating the team's knowledge of the philanthropic world.

Two of the very largest grants are federal totally \$2.1 million – one secured by Congressman Jim McGovern through US HUD and the other, a highly competitive and prestigious challenge grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). It is these grants that require a full Historic Preservation

review involving the MA Historic Commission (MHC) AND Despite having initiating the required reviews well in advance, these processes are taking more time than was anticipated.

Our Town and Library officials are navigating a complex and multifaceted process to secure the agreement from the MA Historic Commission necessary to satisfy federal regulations. I want to express my confidence in the integrity of their work. And, if I may be so bold, I would encourage

you at the MBLC to reach out to your colleagues in state government at MHC and ask for them to come to the table in good faith and in a timely manner in order to bring this project to fruition.

I totally support the Renovation and Expansion of the Jones Library, because it will extend and renew the life of this fabulous facility as a library for the future to be used by many generations to come; and no matter how you look at it, the option of repair will cost the Town significantly more money.

Unlike the last time we requested an extension, we are now sitting on a bid that is lower than our presently Town Council Authorized borrowing authorization of \$46.1 million.

Like many I have looked for answers and a path forward similar to those described by our Library Director.

What I do know is that once finished the Jones Library will once again be a hub of activity in the center of Amherst – an economic engine. In addition to providing services for residents of all ages, our vision goes beyond those items supported by the MBLC, including housing our Civil War Tablets – one of our Town's most serious recognitions of the role Black residents of Amherst have played in American history.

Please support us in our continued effort to achieve our vision for a Jones Library of the future by granting the extension to March 31, 2025.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

*Lynn Griesemer*

Lynn Griesemer  
President and District 2 Councilor  
On behalf of the Amherst Town Council

Cc: Congressman Jim McGovern  
Senator Jo Comerford  
Representative Mindy Domb  
Jones Library Trustees

*Lynn Griesemer*  
*President and District 2 Councilor*  
*Amherst Town Council*

Please be aware that emails sent to and from this account are considered a public record and therefore cannot be kept confidential unless specifically exempted by the [Massachusetts Public Records Law](#).