

Williamston Community Library Foundation

Board of Trustees: Ed Noonan • Larry Wittrup • John Brazier • Ernie St Pierre • JoAnn Hegedus • Susan Graff • Jeff Bartrem
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The following Trustees were appointed by their respective community governing bodies for two year terms starting in January, 2004 and ending with the Annual Meeting in January of 2006: Jeff Bartrem - Township of Williamstown; Ernie St Pierre - Wheatfield Township; Susan Graff - City of Williamston.

Pursuant to Article IV, Sec. 2 of the Bylaws, at the January 14, 2004 Annual Meeting, the following Foundation officers were elected for 2004: President - Ed Noonan; Vice President - Dan Slider; Secretary - Susan Graff; Treasurer - JoAnn Hegedus.

As 2004 began, the Foundation was awaiting word from the owner of Site 5 (105 W Middle Street) on their willingness to make that property available for sale to the Foundation and whether they would allow the Foundation's appraiser to access the property. Despite numerous contacts through January and February, however, no word was ever received. By March, it was apparent that there was no such willingness. In March, the property at 162 W Grand River Avenue became vacant. Foundation Trustee St Pierre contacted the owners of that property and convinced them to consider selling the property to the Foundation. On April 6, appraiser Ron Scott was retained by the Foundation to establish the fair market value of the property at 162 W Grand River Avenue. With that appraisal in hand, Foundation Trustees met with the owners, but negotiations were unsuccessful.

Of the four leading sites that were identified after site selection workshops in 2003, there was no apparent willingness on the part of the owner to sell Site 5 (105 W Middle Street) to the Foundation, and Site 1 (at the northeast corner of High & Putman) was rejected by the Board based on environmental problems and its proximity to the flood plain. After determining that the cost of temporarily relocating the current library from Site 2 (the existing Library site) would be nearly as much as acquiring a new site that met the requirements of the Needs Assessment, the Foundation Board rejected Site 2 on the premises that it was too small to meet the future needs of the Library, that there was insufficient parking and that the cost of relocating the library temporarily would be excessive. That left only Site 3 (the property at 226 and 304 W Grand River). Back in 2002, the Foundation had arranged for a potential option to purchase that property, but was unable to enter into the option agreement due to lack of funds. In the Fall of 2004, that 41,694 square foot parcel was listed for sale. The Foundation Board was convinced that this beautiful river-front site in downtown Williamston, with ample parking nearby and no known environmental problems was the best location for a new Williamston Community library.



304 West Grand River



226 West Grand River

In the interest of moving forward, the Foundation Trustees decided to acquire that property if funding could be obtained. They met jointly with the Board of Directors of the Friends of the Williamston Library, who resolved unanimously to fund the down payment and first year's interest.

As 2005 begins, the Foundation has reached agreement with Frank and Norma Kolasa, the owners, to purchase Site 3 and is in the process of closing on that property. The Foundation is confident that all the funds necessary to meet the terms of the land contract will be raised through private contributions.

Now that the Foundation has acquired a site for the new Williamston Community Library building, a means for funding construction of the Library building needs to be implemented.

On September 28, Foundation President Noonan wrote to the City of Williamston, Williamstown Township, and Wheatfield Township to formally request that they form a joint building authority (JBA) for the purpose of building a new library.

Working with the same library architects that the Foundation hired for the site selection process, the Foundation put together a preliminary budget of \$5,752,135 for a library which would adequately serve the community for the next 20 years. The budget numbers were based on actual costs of more than a dozen recent library construction projects in Michigan and Ohio and the Foundation Trustees worked closely with the architect to ensure that the budget was adequate for a building of good quality, without extravagance. The purpose of the budget was to arrive at a projected bond requirement. The Trustees fully recognized that the actual cost, specifications, and design would be determined by the JBA, but to the best of their ability, that figure was what they concluded that a new library would cost.

The budget included a capital campaign by which the Foundation would hope to raise \$1,000,000 through private donations, and more than \$365,000 received from CADL for technology, furnishings, and collections. The joint building authority would scrutinize each aspect of the building project in order to keep the overall cost to the community as low as possible.

The budget indicated that a bond request for approximately \$4,750,000 was anticipated. That would translate into a request for around 0.75 mills for 20 years. The cost to the owner of a house with a market value of \$200,000 (\$100,000 taxable) would be about \$75 per year (\$6.25 per month).

At this point, the governing bodies of the three communities are reviewing a joint building authority agreement which was prepared by attorneys for the City of Williamston.

In 2005, the Foundation hopes to assist a JBA through fund-raising campaigns and providing input with respect to the decisions that need to be made to insure that the Library matches the needs and resources of the Williamston community.

In June, 2004, through the generosity of screenwriter Dan Slider, the Sun Theater, and Vanguard Cinema, the movie Postmark Paradise was shown at the Sun Theater and 100% of the proceeds from the showing went to the Foundation. Thereafter, the Foundation sold Postmark Paradise DVDs to raise funds.

Respectfully submitted,



Ed Noonan
President