

Old Library Accessibility Committee
Meeting Minutes – September 13, 2018
Upper Town Hall – Volunteers Meeting Room
13 Ayer Road, Harvard, MA

Members Present: Wendy Cote-Magan, Chris Cutler, Pete Jackson, Mark Mikitarian, Lucy Wallace
Guests Present: Marie Sobalvarro, Assistant Town Administrator; David Pollak, Abacus (by phone); Joan Eliyesil, *Harvard Press*

The meeting was called to order at 3:30 PM by Chair Lucy Wallace.

Review of Bids and Discussion of Next Steps

Lucy opened the meeting referring to Marie Sobalvarro's spreadsheets for the three sub-bid categories and General Contractor. She noted that two of the three sub-bids had come in significantly higher than as estimated by North Bay, as had the bids from the General Contractors (GC). Marie clarified that the lowest sub-bids would have been incorporated into the GC bids. Marie then distributed another spreadsheet she had prepared tracking the project cost estimates from 11/15/17 up to 9/12/18. This included the June 2018 North Bay General Construction estimate of \$423,303 compared to the 9/12/18 low bid of \$548,052 without the Alt (restoration of south façade) and \$602,722 with the Alt. Restoring the Clerk of the Works (at Pete Jackson's request) added another \$5,100 to the Project Total. This resulted in changing the shortfall in funds for the Project Total without Alt to \$145,116 and with the Alt to \$200,114.

Lucy noted that the November 2017 Special Town Meeting had authorized \$472,000 for this project, with \$50,000 coming from CPC funds and \$383,000 to be borrowed. The motion, which passed, also included a provision that grant funds, if any, would be applied against the amount borrowed. The Mass Cultural Council (MCC) grant of \$192,000, therefore would reduce the amount to be borrowed from \$383,000 to \$191,000. It was Lucy's understanding and Marie concurred that CPIC would be taking an article to this fall's Special Town Meeting seeking authorization to change the borrowing to using existing capital funds. Marie reported that the town has until November 2020 to finalize its agreement with MassDevelopment, the MCC grant administrator. The agreement cannot be finalized, however, until a GC has been selected.

Lucy posed two questions to the Committee: Should we rebid in the spring or go forward now? And, if going forward now, should we ask for additional funds to cover the basic project (\$145,116) or the project plus the Alt (\$200,114). A lengthy discussion ensued regarding the pros and cons of postponing bidding. Both Pete and Chris Cutler felt there was no guarantee that we would see a \$200,000 decrease in GC bids by waiting six months and more probably would see an increase. Pete also wondered if the disparity between the estimates and bids was due to the estimator using costs associated with larger projects. Chris felt that the higher bids reflect a hot construction market and low unemployment, as well as uncertainty in markets due to actual and potential tariffs. In addition, this is a small project. With respect to the amount of additional funding to request, there was general consensus that the difference between with and without the Alt (~\$55,000) given the impact on overall restoration of this historic building's exterior, it made sense to seek the higher amount. It also will address the issue of water leakage into the electrical utility room beneath the current side entrance.

Marie suggested that Pete and Chris meet with GabeVellante to give him an opportunity to review the current construction documents and comments if he saw any issues. Pete will email him the CD's and manual prior to meeting with Gabe.

The committee unanimously approved the following:

On motion made by Pete and seconded by Chris, “To recommend to the Select Board to accept the current low GC bid subject to available funding.”

On motion made by Chris and seconded by Pete, “That the OLAC ask the Select Board to recommend that CPIC and FinCom approve seeking an additional \$200,114 at the upcoming 10/22/18 Special Town Meeting which would include fully funding the Project with the Alt.”

Marie suggested we ask Abacus to contact North Bay and request a detailed explanation of why the estimate was so far off. Wendy Cote-Magan offered to contact North Bay. Mark Mikitarian wondered what it meant not to proceed with making the building fully accessible. Would we then invest in replacing the roof?

Administrative

The minutes of the August 27, 2018 meeting were approved as presented.

Lucy listed upcoming meetings which OLAC members should attend:

Select Board	Tuesday, September 18 th (OLAC on the agenda at 8:55 PM)
CPIC	Monday, September 24 th at 8:15 AM
FinCom	next meeting in October

Call to David Pollak

While Lucy had spoken with David Pollak ahead of the meeting, she reported he was willing to call in. The Committee felt it would be useful to hear his take on the bids and estimate. Lucy gave David a brief summary of the Committee’s decisions. Wendy asked David if he could contact North Bay to get an explanation on their underestimating the project costs; Lucy asked if we could have a memo from North Bay by Tuesday afternoon so she could have it at the Select Board meeting that night. David’s points paralleled the Committee’s earlier discussion, to wit: we did not receive many bids, an indication of a very robust construction market and that this is a small project.

While no future meeting date was set, Lucy advised that should we go forward at the October STM for additional funds, we should meet to prepare our case.

Meeting adjourned at 4:40 PM.