

Friends of the M. N. Spear Memorial Library
P.O. Box 256
Shutesbury MA 01072

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Resident
Shutesbury, MA 01072

A place for . . .
*Meeting
neighbors
old and new*

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Great News!

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See pages 2 and 8 for details.

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Great News!

Last July the Town of Shutesbury was awarded a provisional grant of \$2.1 million from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners. This grant makes it possible for the Town of Shutesbury to build a new library to replace the 109-year-old M.N. Spear Memorial Library.

With this grant we are able to build not only a new library but a new municipal building that has room for everyone. Much-needed space for library materials for people of all ages, space to read, study, and work, and room for more computers, is combined with a community meeting space that can be used for library programs such as computer classes, author visits, craft workshops, chess tournaments, job search classes, and so much more.

The preliminary design calls for a 5,800 square foot building that will serve the Town for many years to come. Total project costs of \$3,555,838 include sustainable energy features such as superior insulation, photovoltaic panels, a geothermal heating and cooling system, and natural lighting. It is possible that this new library could have very low or even no energy costs. Escalations and Contingencies amount to \$412,000, money set aside to cover inflation and unforeseen expenses that may arise in such a large municipal project.

The \$2.1 grant award covers 59% of the costs for the new building— and an additional 4% in "credits" (planning grant, Library

A place for . . .
Resume-building workshops

Please visit
www.yesforlibrary.com
!

Trust, & land) raises the grant coverage to 63% of total project costs. The remaining \$1. million needed must be provided by a combination of private fundraising and Town appropriation. Volunteers have already raised nearly \$160,000 in pledges and donations and are committed to continuing the fundraising efforts until they have raised at least \$400,000.

At the October Special Town Meeting, Shutesbury residents voted to allow the Town to borrow up to \$1.4 million, the total amount needed to match the grant. In January, voters are being asked to approve a debt exclusion override, so that the amount that is borrowed can be assessed on property tax bills over the next 20 years.

It is highly likely that this proposed new library will cost the taxpayers of Shutesbury less than \$1 million dollars.

This opportunity is the result of four years of research and planning. It is available now and it will be at least 2017 before the town could even begin the arduous process of applying for another grant (if there are still grant funds available in 2017).

Over the next several weeks, there will be forums and information sessions to learn about and discuss the proposed Shutesbury Library and Community Center (see page 5). Please join the discussion.

and you have the same in Mary Anne Antonellis. And like us, your librarian has the support of a very active Friends of the Library group.

So what's not to love? Taxes. Like Shutesbury, Wendell has one of the highest tax rates in the state, though our per capita income and property valuations are lower than yours.

But Wendell citizens decided to "bite that bullet" knowing we would ***never again have such an opportunity for generous State support.*** Not for a moment have we regretted that decision and give thanks every day for the Wendell Free Library, the heart-beat of our community.

Please do come and visit us before you cast your vote on January 10th. We would love to see you and show you around our beloved library.

Sincerely yours,

Margo Culley, for the Friends of the Wendell Free Library

Wendell Library Hours: Tues. 3-6; Wed. 10-8; Sat. 9:30-3:30

It's a new century and we need a new library so that our grandchildren's children will have a library that meets the needs of their generation.

Twenty years from now when our oldest granddaughter, Maggie, might have a daughter or son of her own, I hope they will come visit their grandmother (our daughter) and be thrilled with the new library that will then no longer be new. They will look at the M.N. Spear Library on the common and see it as we see the West Schoolhouse now, a cherished, historic building. But like the West Schoolhouse, the Spear Library can't hold the dreams and desires that we have for future generations. Right now we have an opportunity to build a library for our children and their children's children.

Let's go for it.

Sally Fairfield



A place for . . .
Quiet study and homework help

An invitation from the Friends of the Wendell Free Library

Dear Shutesbury Friends and Neighbors,

We are writing to invite all of you who may not yet have visited the new Wendell Free Library to please come and see us before your town vote on January 10th.



As many of you know, Wendell was also the fortunate recipient of a state grant for the construction of a new library which we opened in 2007. Before that, we had been happily using a small 700 sq. ft. library without running water or facilities.

It would not be an exaggeration to say our new library has transformed this small town. It has served all the traditional functions of a library and at the same time has become a vibrant center of community life.

During the final year in our “old library,” we served 4,500 library users; last year we served almost 12,000. Library-sponsored programs in the final year of our old library numbered only two; last year we sponsored 218 (and an additional 114 non-library sponsored programs) in which more than 3,500 people participated.

But the numbers tell only part of the story: the library serves patrons of all ages with regular pre-school playgroups as well as programs and dedicated space for teens. Essential to many of us is our generous number of computers and WIFI access in what is still “dial-up land.” We also have an art gallery in our meeting room booked well into next summer with exhibits of the work of local artists. Also in the meeting room we have a state-of-the art Blue Ray movie theater offering regular series of films.

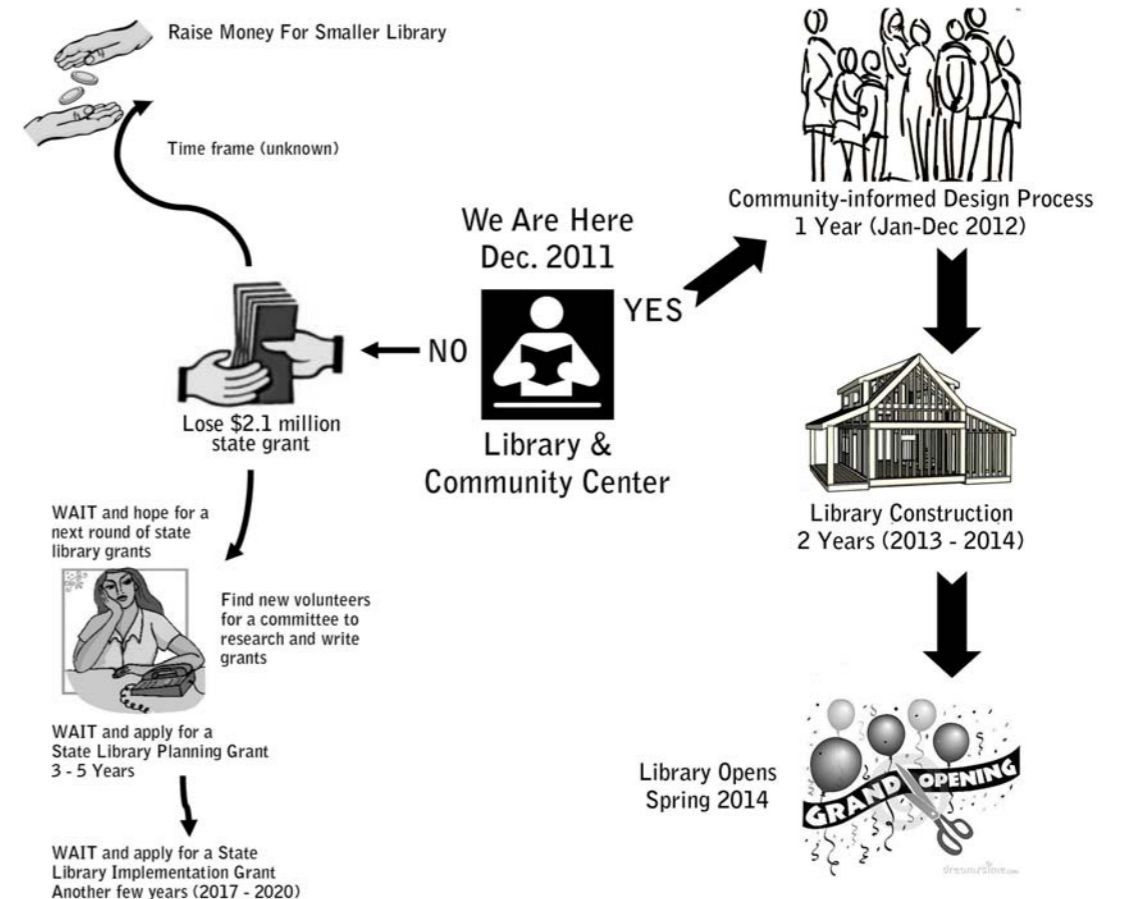


Our new facility has also allowed us to apply successfully for a number of grants: for collection development, to purchase solar panels, and to hire a teen coordinator and a number of library “senior aides.” And the town has also found wonderful uses for our “old library,” now the Senior Center and heavily used by a number of groups in town.

Of course we would not have had such success without our librarian extraordinaire, Rosie Heidkamp,

Calendar of Events

- Dec. 3 - Jan. 8 : Library Layout on Town Common
- Tours of Library: Saturdays 12/17, 12/24, 12/31 and 1/7, at 9:00 am
- Thursday Dec. 15: Listening Session at the Village Co-Op, 7:00 pm (See page 5.)
- Wednesday Dec. 21: Listening Session at Pine Brook Camp, 8:00 pm
- Thursday Dec. 22: Winter Solstice Community Celebration, Town Common at 5:00 pm
- Tuesday Jan. 3: Listening Session at Shutesbury Athletic Club. 7:00 pm



If you'd like to help with efforts to support a new library and community center, call Joanne Sunshower at 259-1129 or email YesForLibrary@gmail.com

The Shutesbury Finance Committee answers frequently asked questions

The voters of Shutesbury have been asked to approve a debt-excluded override for the purpose of building a new library. This has raised many questions about the town's finances. The Finance Committee studies this, and all, financial issues very seriously. Here is a summary to some of the questions that have been asked.

In general, how are the town's finances?

The town's finances are in very good shape. We have over \$1.2 million in cash reserves (\$834,000 in Free Cash and \$368,000 in Stabilization). These reserves represent the Finance Committee's conservative fiscal management.

Do you see any need for a general override in the near future?

No. The last override in 2007 solved the town's structural deficit. Prior to that, the town had been balancing the budget using Free Cash, a practice that was unsustainable. The override also included incorporating capital items into the budget for the first time, recognizing the town's need for ongoing capital expenditures. This means the town doesn't have to utilize reserves to the extent that it had in the past to fund capital projects.

Will a new library affect the town's future operating budget?

Yes, however the effect will be modest. The current operating budget of the library (\$50,432) is less than 1% (.9%) of the town's budget. At the Annual Town Meeting for FY12, the library's operating budget was increased, partly in anticipation of building a new library, and partly because of increased use of the present library. It is anticipated there will be additional costs for operating the new library, however, even if the library's operating budget doubled, *which is unlikely*, it would still be less than 2% of the town's budget.

How will a new library affect our ability to carry debt for future capital needs? In particular, what about the fire station cleanup or a new roof at the school?

The Finance Committee has planned for future capital needs. Building a new library, funded by a debt-excluded override, won't affect the town's ability to carry debt for other capital items (i.e. vehicles, highway or firefighting equipment). *It is important to realize that in the Finance Committee's opinion, the town will be able to afford ongoing departmental capital expenses within the current tax structure.*

As for the fire station, the Finance Committee has long been aware of the need to clean up the fire station. It has, in fact, been planning for such an eventuality and warning the town about this obligation for several years. Some of these expenses have been included in the budget for the past two years as part of these cleanup costs, and will remain in the budget

The following chart represents the Fiscal Year 2010 municipal budgets of the new, larger libraries in our neighboring communities, including our budget for the current fiscal year for comparison.

Our neighbors in surrounding towns have all built new libraries in recent years and have managed to keep operating costs low. As you can see, the budget's in New Salem, Pelham and Wendell are all lower than our current budget, even though they have much larger libraries. Leverett's budget is 60% higher than our current budget, but the building is five times the size of our current library.

Did you know?

No matter how it gets built, permits and oversight, excavation, grading, septic system, and water supply costs all add to the bottom line.

Budget Information for Local Libraries FY2010

	Population served by library	Total Appropriated Municipal Income (TAMI)	TAMI Per capita
Leverett	1,787	\$81,972	\$45.87
New Salem	957	\$40,810	\$42.64
Pelham	1,399	\$37,440	\$26.76
Wendell	1,002	\$28,932	\$28.87
Shutesbury FY 12	1,771	\$50,432	\$28.47

LIMITED TIME OFFER

2011 only 8 towns awarded grants

Next round maybe in 2017

FUTURE BUILDINGS FACE INFLATION COSTS

Invest now for the future

What will happen to the library budget?

Some Shutesbury residents have expressed concern that a larger library would also mean increased operating costs. Research about the experience of neighboring communities has taught us that a larger library can be operated on a small budget.

The largest expense in the Library budget is personnel. The Library Trustees instructed the Library Facilities Needs Assessment Committee (LFNAC) to plan a library that could be supervised by one person so that there would not be a need for additional paid staff.

Libraries everywhere benefit from skilled and dedicated volunteers. We already have more volunteers than we have room for in our current library. A larger library will benefit from more volunteers.

LFNAC also considered energy costs when planning the new library and the preliminary design calls for a building that makes almost all of its own energy.

Some residents have asked how we will pay for the new books and other library materials. We will build the collection slowly. We currently spend about \$11,000 annually on new books and materials for the library, adding 1,500 to 2,000 new items each year.

Due to lack of space we must also discard the same number of items. We are forced to discard items that are still relevant simply because of lack of space.

A place to . . .
Take the grandkids and other visitors

We do anticipate some additional expenses from a larger library. A janitor will cost about \$5,000 per year and insurance for the new building will cost another \$5,000 per year.

ACT NOW

Library & Community Center
adds multigenerational
resources for all:

- WiFi
- Activity Space
- Warm in Winter
- Cool in Summer

until the cleanup is completed.

Concerning the need for a new school roof: the Buildings Committee, Finance Committee, and the Capital Planning Committees are aware this will be a future need. *However, there have been no estimates or quotes regarding the cost of this project.* When the roof does need to be replaced, it will likely be eligible for state grants. For example, currently New Salem is being reimbursed at a rate of 60% of the cost of their new school roof.

Are there abatements available for real estate tax bills?

Yes, abatements, which are a reduction of taxes to those in need, are available. Eligibility is based on age (income and/or assets based) and certain disabled veterans. Information can be found on the Assessor's website at Shutesbury.org, or by calling the Assessors' Office at 259-3790.

How will a new library affect the town's "Free Cash"?

The new library will have little or no impact on Free Cash. The library override doesn't affect anything else in the budget; it only affects whether or not we build a new library. The Finance Committee Handbook states: "Maintenance of an adequate free cash level is not a luxury but a necessary component of sound local fiscal management. Credit rating agencies and other members of the financial community expect municipalities to maintain free cash reserves; judgments regarding a community's fiscal stability are made, in part, on the basis of free cash." The Finance Committee agrees with this management philosophy, and this is reflected in its prudent financial management.

Proponents of the new Shutesbury Library listen to "No" Voters

Proponents of the new Shutesbury Library have become very concerned at the heated division that has emerged from the debate over the new library. Though we support the new library, we are eager to hear from those who do not. Regardless of the final outcome, we want to work to alleviate some of the anger and frustration we sense in our town.

As concerned community members we invite those who *voted no, intend to vote no, or are undecided*, to one of three listening sessions. Library Trustees and Staff will be on hand to answer questions if asked by participants or the facilitator.

Please join us!

Thurs Dec 15 th	7:00 PM	Leverett Village Co-op
Wed Dec 21 st	8:00 PM	Pine Brook Camp
Tues Jan 3 rd	7:00 PM	Pine Brook Camp

Why is Shutesbury's tax rate so high? Go figure!

Some people say that Shutesbury has the highest property tax rate in Franklin County. Others say our taxes are actually lower than those in surrounding towns. So who's right? Actually, both are! Here's how that figuring goes . . .

Step 1: The Finance Committee determines how much money the Town will need and how much it can expect to receive in earned income, fees, state aid, and the like. The difference has to be made up in real estate taxes.

Step 2: The Assessor adds up the value of all the taxable real estate in Town and then distributes the tax burden proportionally: That is, if your property value is 1% of the total Town value, you are responsible for 1% of the Town's expenses. No matter what the tax rate is, that's your share: 1%.

Step 3: The Assessor then calculates the rate of the Town's taxable real estate as a share per thousand dollars of property value — currently \$19.37 per thousand.

Try this thought-experiment. Imagine that our Assessor goes wild one day and doubles the value of every parcel in Town. Woohoo!

A place for . . .
*On-line hunting and fishing
license renewals*

We have the lowest **tax rate** in Massachusetts! BUT, even if the rate is half of what it was before, the tax bill's going to be exactly the same because our share has not changed from what it was before. (And when the Assessor returns to his senses, he'll put everything back the way it was.)

A **rate**, or ratio, is meaningful only if you know the value of the terms. If someone says, "My daughter has a mad crush on a guy twice her age," the ratio of ages is less interesting than the ages themselves: If she's 15 there could be trouble ahead. If she's two, not so much.

The point is, the **tax rate** is only half the story. The **property value** is the other half, and the two play on a seesaw: value up/rate down, value down/rate up.

In Shutesbury, the values are on the low side, the rate is on the high side. In other towns around us, the values are a little higher while the rates are a little lower.

Imagine that, say, Pelham attacked our border and annexed part of Shutesbury. If your property is at that end of town, you're now a citizen of Pelham, and Pelham property values are going to be applied to your house. Your rate may be going down — but your bill's going up, guaranteed.

But what's really important is how high the bill is, right? In 2010, the actual average property taxes paid in Shutesbury were \$4,574, 104th in the state — lower than in Pelham (\$5,900), Amherst (\$5,667), and Leverett (\$5,046).

Walk through a 'virtual library'

A group of volunteers has mapped out the square footage of the New Shutesbury Library and Community Center on the Town Common. Stakes and landscape ties were used to create a visual representation. Rooms and program areas are labeled. A comment box will be available in the M. N. Spear Memorial Library, which is adjacent to the Town Common.

The proposed site of the new facility, Lot O-32 or 66 Leverett Road, is across from the Shutesbury Highway Department.



The new library project has brought to light a long-standing division in our Shutesbury community, but it brings with it an opportunity to build bridges across that divide.

A community planning process that includes input from all, that is open to creative solutions to concerns about design, cost reduction, and tax relief for those who need it, has the potential to bring our community together, not just in the library, but in the project.

It can only happen if we vote Yes.

Catherine Hilton

A dozen community activities for the new library

A town resident recently organized a Weave for Your Sister Project for friends where they wove baskets, filled them with toiletries, then donated them to a local woman's shelter.

The organizer wanted to hold the workshop at Town Hall, but when she asked to do so, she was told the it was not a town-sponsored event and therefore it couldn't use the space.

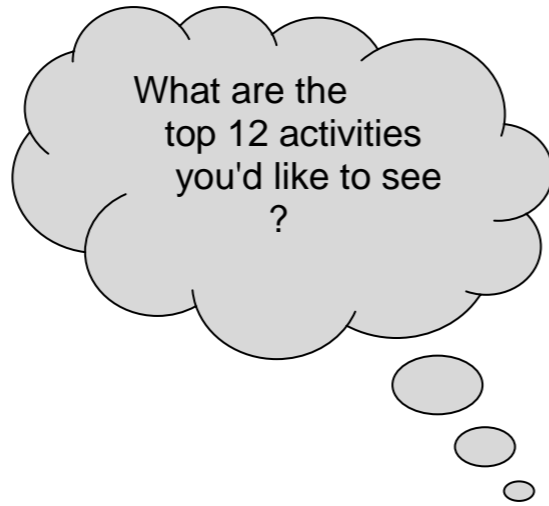
She ended up hosting the workshop on her porch, which luckily worked out since the weather stayed warm.

This project is but one example of the many activities that could be scheduled for the proposed community space planned for a new library.

Here are 12 other ideas for ways to use a new warm, inviting, and cheerful community space:

- Adult Workshops in Acrylic Painting, Beer Making, Woodworking, and more
- Slide Shows on topics such as the History of Stone Structures in Shutesbury

A place for . . .
Small business support groups



- Sing along story hours for young children
- Community pot luck dinners and film screenings
- Talks featuring local authors such as Denis Kitchen, Augusten Burroughs, and John Robinson
- Monthly Lunch and Learn gatherings for Seniors
- Writing workshops for teens hosted by local novelists such as David Durham
- Exhibition space for local artists' fine craft and art work
- Cook off and tasting from Shutesbury candy makers' kitchens
- Boy and Girl Scout, 4H, and Homework study group meetings
- Belly dancing, tap dancing, and salsa dance lessons
- Monthly tea and pastry get-acquainted-with-your-neighbors gatherings.

How can you be heard? One person's reflections

You have concerns and you've raised questions, but you feel you have no way to turn the tide on this library project. Town forums can be intimidating and committee work is too much. What can you do???

Believe it or not, if you vote **YES** for the library, your concerns can see the light of day. You can get answers to your questions and your input can bring positive changes to Shutesbury.

Many neighbors have asked important questions and voiced concerns, especially in the areas of taxes, the choice of the site, and ways to reduce the costs of the library building project.

If you vote **YES** we can secure the library grant and begin the 10 - 12 month planning

phase. Shovels won't hit the dirt until a building committee agrees on a design, including many of the great suggestions offered. Lot O-32 can be further tested to ensure its safety. Shutesbury can talk with other towns working on creating local tax relief.

The next planning phase of the library gives the Shutesbury community an opportunity to work out solutions. **This is how a small town succeeds.**

If the last piece of funding is defeated at the polls, the concerns you have raised and care about will sink with this project. There will still be a need for a new library, but inertia will slow the political process and our next chance for a library will be years away. Let's say **YES** and work together to make a library and community center for all of Shutesbury.

Susie Mosher

Worried it's too big?

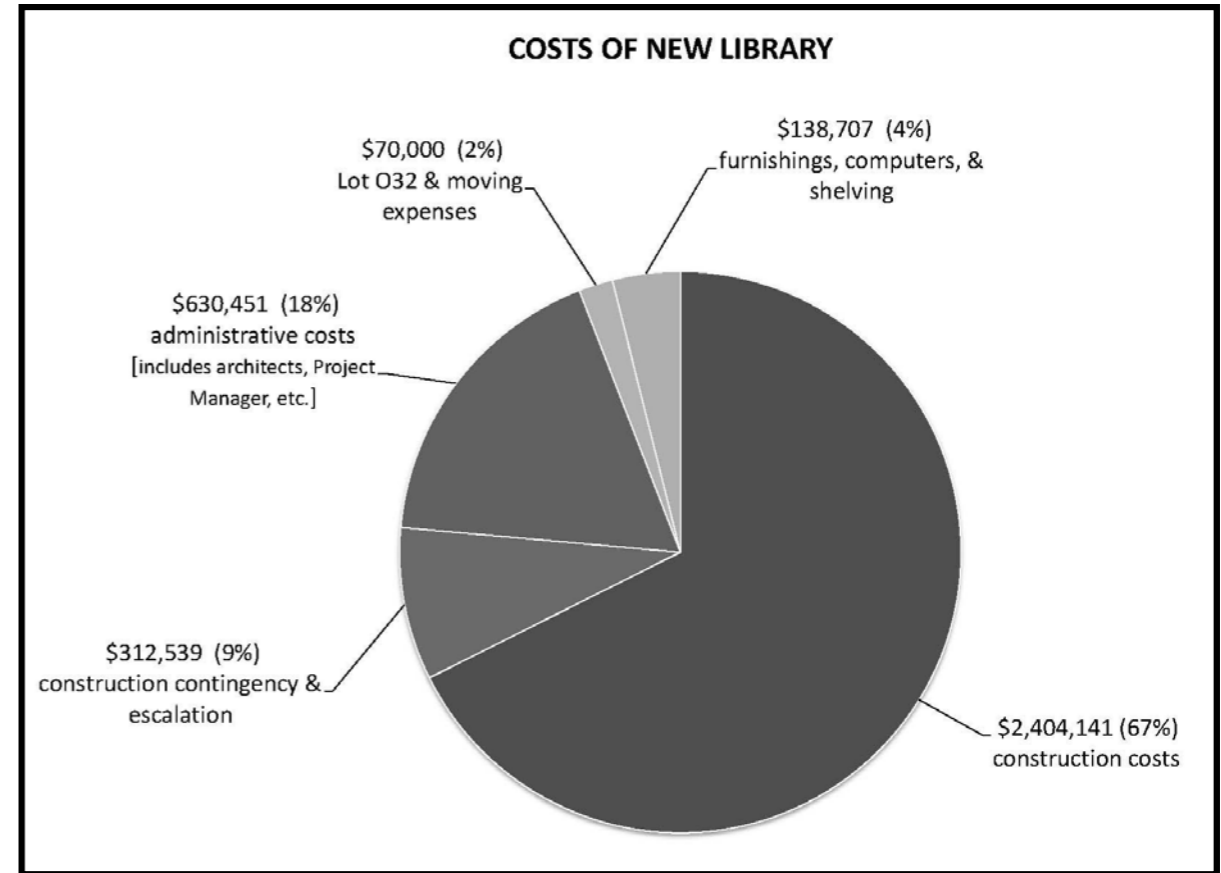
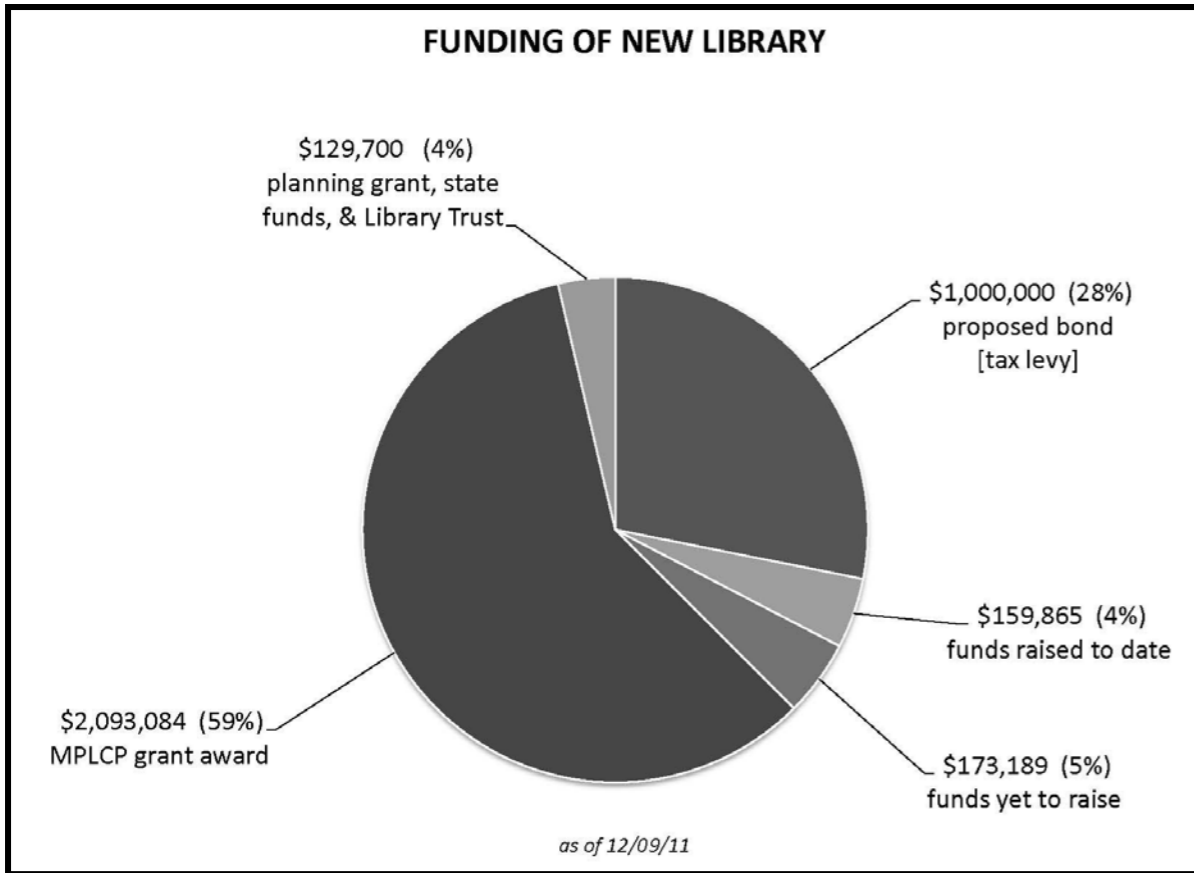
Try OUR MODEL On For Size!

Walk through the display on the Town Common

**FINAL DESIGN DETAILS
DECIDED BY CITIZEN PANEL**

some local labor possible

POTENTIAL SAVINGS!



What's the library going to cost you?

Shutesbury's average home value is \$243,814.

With NO fund-raising, the average of that home's tax added over 22 years = \$103.15 per year (= \$25.79 in each quarterly tax payment).

With the CURRENT \$159,865 in funds raised, the average tax added on that home over 22 years = \$86.44 per year (= \$21.81 in each quarterly tax payment).

When the fund-raising goal is reached, the average tax added on that home over 22 years = \$73.68 per year (= \$18.42 in each quarterly tax payment).

The more funds we raise NOW, the less we pay in taxes THEN!

[You can see consequences to your own taxes by entering your assessed value in the worksheet online at <https://sites.google.com/site/yesforlibrary/>]

What will happen to the current building?

The M. N. Spear Library building has been well cared for over the last 100 years and it will continue to be used by the town. It is wheelchair accessible, has received insulation upgrades and has a composting toilet. It does not have running water.

The Select Board will take suggestions from all of us for its future use.

Did you know?

Construction of a new municipal building has to comply with the many state regulations (see www.mass.gov/iq/creform/refinfo.html), and meeting those regulations imposes considerable costs on the construction budget.