

January 26, 2011

Meeting: GF Public Library Building Committee  
Wednesday, January 26, 2011 – 7 a.m.  
Grand Forks Library Meeting Room

Members in Attendance: Al Grasser, Paul Holje, Jeff Regimbal, and Wendy Wendt

Also in Attendance: Library Board members Lila Christensen, Kay Powell, and Susan Mickelson; Roger Helland, Widseth Smith Nolting; City Council member Doug Christensen; Chamber Director, Barry Wilfahrt; reporter Tu-Uyen Tran representing the GF Herald; and reporter Victor Meza representing WDAZ TV

1. **Call to Order** – Chair Jeff Regimbal called the meeting to order at 7:07 a.m.
2. **Introductions** – Chamber Director, Barry Wilfahrt, was introduced to the group.
3. **Minutes** – Motion by Jeff, seconded by Paul to approve the minutes of the January 19 meeting as distributed.
4. **Traffic Study** – Motion by Wendy, seconded by Al, to approve the Traffic Study report as presented. Unanimously carried. Copies of the final report will be posted on the GFPL website at [gfplibrary.com](http://gfplibrary.com).
5. **Site Feasibility Study** -- A revised draft of the Site Feasibility Study was reviewed, with special attention paid to a site scenario added for consideration following the last Building Committee meeting. Scenario #2a features a plan for construction on the property located immediately north of the existing library. This option allows for continuous operation from the existing library while construction is in progress. Committee members favored this scenario as the preferred project plan. Doug recommended that the budget for property acquisition in Scenario #2a be increased to \$630,000. Motion by Jeff, seconded by Paul, to approve the Site Feasibility Study as presented, with revisions as noted by the Committee. Unanimously carried. Susan will coordinate with Rick McCarthy to make necessary corrections in the report prior to noon on January 27, at which time the documents will be delivered to all City Council members.
6. **Project Cost** – The proposed project cost for Scenario #2a is \$20,828,359, which does not include finance fees. The group discussed at length whether this proposed cost would be prohibitive to voter support. Al invited comments for possible consideration of an across-the-board 20% decrease in the scope of the project in order to reduce total cost. He mentioned recent projects undertaken by the City that followed a strategy to build for near-future projected needs with plans for additions or expansions in 20-25 years. He questioned whether it is wise to carry debt load for unused capacity. Paul mentioned the possibility of future needs being met by utilizing a main library facility with branch locations rather than expansion of the main building. This option, however, is not operationally feasible at the present time. Wendy reminded fellow committee members that the

current project proposal was based on the consultants' best estimation for immediate needs of the community, with planned flexibility for future expansion. Kay voiced concerns regarding any plans to scale back on a project that was never intended to be elaborate in the first place. She feared that a compromise at this point in the process would result in a mediocre facility.

Motion by Jeff, seconded by Wendy, to approve and support the proposed project cost of \$20,828,359 for construction scenario #2a. Unanimously carried.

7. **Sales Tax Levy** – Committee members discussed three options for the proposed sales tax levy: ½-cent, ¾-cent, and 1-cent. Barry provided an overview of the current sales tax structure in Grand Forks and in Fargo/Cass County. Grand Forks city sales tax collection is currently at 1 ¾ percent. With the addition of a recent levy scheduled to initiate on April 1, 2011, Fargo will be at 2 ½ percent.

Because of the prolonged period of time needed to collect the total project cost via a ½-cent sales tax, this option was unanimously removed from consideration. No decision was made regarding the committee's preference between a ¾-cent or 1-cent levy. Motion by Al, seconded by Paul, to send a Building Committee recommendation to the Library Board the City Council be allowed to consider options of ¾-cent and 1-cent sales tax and choose the most palatable option. Unanimously carried.

8. **Finance Package** – Doug distributed updated information garnered from the City Council Finance Committee meeting on Monday. An option for self-funded project finance was discussed. Assuming a 1-cent sales tax, the accumulated receipts would be approximately \$700,000/month, which could conceivably cash flow for the duration of the project. A ¾-cent sales tax levy could also cash flow, but with necessary interest costs paid to the City for internal financing. The cash flow option was especially welcomed by committee members due to the projected savings of \$2,070,000 with a ¾-cent sales tax levy or savings of \$3,800,000 with a 1-cent sales tax.

9. **Property Acquisition** – The recommended project site under Scenario 2a would require acquisition of property directly north of the existing library, as well as a triangle of undeveloped land to the east of Library Circle. Christensen stated that City Council and staff would be responsible for acquisition of any necessary property, thereby relieving the Library Board of that responsibility.

10. **Hard Sunset Dates** – It is the Building Committee's intention that the ballot language include a hard sunset, with specific dates for initiation and retirement of the sales tax collection. Because the hard sunset dates are directly determined by the level of sales tax, it was not possible for the Committee to provide specific dates. Motion by Al, seconded by Paul, that City Council establish the dates for the hard sunset language, based on the recommended sales tax level, and that total project costs not be included in the official ballot language. Unanimously carried.

11. **Interface with City Council** – Susan reported that project update meetings have now been held with all members of the City Council, as well as Mayor Brown and his administrative staff.

12. **Agenda for January 31 Presentation to City Council** – Susan distributed a draft agenda for the presentation. Suggestions for revisions and additions were discussed. Susan will contact additional people to request their participation and based on those conversations will revise the agenda and distribute on Monday morning. Susan will also coordinate with all presenters to include the necessary information on Powerpoint slides to be shown on the projection system at City Hall and to

the television-viewing audience. Rick McCarthy will be arriving in Grand Forks on Sunday afternoon and will meet with Susan on Monday to finalize the presentation materials.

13. **Next Meeting** – The next Building Committee meeting will be held at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, January 31, 2011, when the group presents the proposed elements of the library project to City Council. Agenda items will include presentation of the Feasibility Study and Traffic Study, finalized project costs, projected operating budget; decision on sales tax amount; recommended dates for hard sunset; and proposed date for the special election.

14. **Adjournment** -- The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 a.m.

Duly recorded,

Susan Mickelson