

Fitchburg library receives additional \$1.5 million for expansion project

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FITCHBURG >> The Fitchburg Public Library (FPL) will receive approximately \$1.5 million in additional funding from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) for its upcoming expansion project, which will help offset rising construction and labor costs.

The funding, which supplements the \$12.5 million total grant award from the MBLC through the Massachusetts Library Construction Program, will support the \$40 million renovation, modernization, and expansion of the library that is expected to begin later this year. The additional MBLC funding offsets the city's financial contribution to the project, which was \$12 million but is now \$10.5 million.

Ten libraries in the state were awarded additional funding as a result of adding 15% to the total eligible cost used to calculate the current grant.

“As one of only 10 other libraries receiving this additional funding throughout the Commonwealth, we are grateful to the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners and our local legislators for seeing the value our renovation and construction project will bring to the community,” said FPL Executive Director Deb Hinkle in a news release. “We appreciate the MBLC’s continued support to ensure our library will remain sustainable for years to come. We are also grateful to State Senator John Cronin and State Representative Michael Kushmerek for working alongside other Massachusetts legislators to advocate for this additional funding.”

Founded in 1859 and home to one of the first children’s rooms in the country, the library is a centerpiece on Main Street, providing generations the opportunity to experience programming and services that open a world of learning. Besides books, media, and other circulation materials available, the library offers discounted passes to area museums and such, children’s programming, internet and computers, printing and copying, historical and cultural heritage preservation, and more.

“The Massachusetts Public Library Construction Program is pleased to partner with local communities, like Fitchburg, using state funding to make building and renovating libraries possible,” MBLC Director James Lonergan said in the release. “In the 35 years since the program’s inception and the more than 200 communities that have benefited from it, we have not encountered circumstances like those brought on by the pandemic. The additional funding recognizes those circumstances and further supports Fitchburg’s project which will

bring economic, social, cultural, and educational opportunities to every resident of the community.”