

Avon Town Council Approves Plans For Library Expansion

By Julie Stagis, The Hartford Courant, December 2, 2010

The town council on Wednesday voted unanimously to approve the final plans and specifications of the Avon Free Public Library expansion project, with an overall budget of \$8.7 million. It also authorized Town Manager Brandon Robertson to sign a construction contract with Enterprise Builders not to exceed \$6,579,864.

"The original project went to referendum based on \$9.5 million ... tonight we're coming to you with \$8.7 million, without compromising the integrity of the building," said Diane Hornaday, chairwoman of the library building committee.

The committee voted Nov. 17 to recommend its final plan to the council. It had worked to shave the budget down from \$8.9 million, with a target of \$8.5 million, an amount the town council informally agreed upon earlier this year.

Avon residents approved a \$9.5 million budget for the expansion in October 2009. Uncertainty over whether the town would receive a \$1 million state grant, and assurance from architect Peter Wells that \$800,000 in savings could be found in the project, led to the \$8.5 million figure.

The committee rejected certain suggestions from the construction manager when paring the budget, including skimping on work in the proposed courtyard and installing a 30-year roof instead of a 50-year roof.

The committee felt "that you need to leave in the work that's to be done in the courtyard," Hornaday said. "The residents expect to see something nice." The courtyard will also provide usable space for programming, she said.

The committee also increased its originally "thin" contingency fund to 7.17 percent of the project's cost, a move with which council members agreed.

Town Council Chairman Mark Zacchio thanked the committee members for their "patience and fortitude." "I see no issue with the \$8.7 [million], and ... it's very, very prudent to increase the contingency," he said. "I think you delivered a great set of plans."

Later in the meeting, members of the Avon Volunteer Fire Department presented their capital budget proposal for fiscal year 2011-12. The police department was also on the agenda, but withdrew its \$52,000 request for renovations to the police annex because there was money left over from a previous project.

The fire department's extensive wish list was topped by two new pumper fire engines, valued at \$700,000 each, to be paid over the next four fiscal years.

The department also plans to replace several other trucks, build a station in the northwest section of town and build a multitown training facility in the coming years.