



May 14, 2022

Dear Victor and Farmington Residents,

On Tuesday, May 17<sup>th</sup> residents of the Victor Central School District will be voting on a proposal to bring Victor and Farmington a larger library. It has come to our attention that there is a lot of misinformation circulating. We want to make sure the public has the facts needed to make an informed decision. Below is a summary of important facts.

The library Board of Trustees is a group of dedicated volunteers who serve Victor and Farmington and advance the mission of the library to “promote and nurture a sense of community by offering the space and resources for educational, recreational, and cultural enrichment for patrons of all ages.” The Board is composed of members experienced in finance, law, non-profit administration, school administration, and human resources.

In 2017, the Board of Trustees began hearing demand for increased services from library users. Recognizing a population 40% bigger than the current library was built to serve in 1995, they began to research the most cost-effective way to create a larger library.

First, they consulted architects and a structural engineer to see whether a second story could be added to the existing library. Learning that the existing structure couldn't hold a second story and lacked the parking to accommodate an addition, the library Board engaged architects to produce a comprehensive space needs and feasibility study. The report indicated the best way to meet the needs of our existing service area and accommodate future growth would be to consider a 24,000 square foot library with at least 100 parking spaces.

Following this expert advice, the Board hired a commercial real estate broker and worked with the Victor Local Development Corporation to consider over a dozen existing buildings and building sites. The trustees thoroughly vetted all available buildings and building sites in Victor and Farmington. All but one was ruled out due to high cost, lack of parking, ease of access, insufficient size, or other complications. The property at 160 School Street was the first to meet all of the criteria, and after careful consideration the Board signed a contract to purchase the property contingent upon a successful vote this May. The commercial real estate broker helped the Board negotiate the sale of the current building upon completion of the new library. This sale is also contingent upon a successful vote on May 17<sup>th</sup>.

While exploring sites for a larger library, the library was awarded a grant from Causewave Community Partners, formerly the Ad Council of Rochester. The library worked with Causewave to develop a Community Survey, available both online and in hard copy, and distribute it widely. Causewave was pleased to receive 734 unique respondents, and commented on the strong response rate, calling it a reliable and statistically significant sample size.

Of those who responded, 82% said we need a bigger library. Specifically, they wanted more of what the current library offers: more books, movies, and materials; additional programs and activities; a separate children's area to reduce noise levels; and quiet, comfortable places to read and work.

To date, \$265,000 has been raised from generous donors. Many grant proposals, including one for Library Construction Aid from the State of NY, are pending. The library team will continue to seek pledges, donations, and grants to offset the costs of construction and decrease the interest cost of the project.

Based on the 160 School Street site, the Board submitted Requests for Proposals to three different architectural firms and five different construction managers and general contractors. HBT Architects won the bid for the architectural work, while The Pike Company won the bid to serve as Construction Manager and General Contractor. Going forward, Pike will take bids for each of the project's subcontractors.

Working with HBT Architects and The Pike Company, the Board reviewed every building material and space in the design drawings, maximizing usage and durability, while minimizing maintenance costs. Through this process, the project cost was cut by \$700,000. The library released the final cost figure to the public within one week of receipt.

We often hear it suggested that the library Board reduce the size of the proposed library. The Board invested five years of research and careful consideration to propose a library that is not only sized appropriately for our current community but designed to accommodate future growth. A smaller design won't offer the space needed for library features our communities have requested, or allow flexibility for future growth. If the May 17th vote does not pass, both the purchase and sale contracts will expire. A smaller proposal will require a new site search, new drawings, new Requests for Proposals, etc. with added expense, and a longer wait for the space so badly needed.

The library staff and Board understand that asking residents for higher taxes is challenging given the current economic and global circumstances. They also believe that this proposal responsibly meets the needs of existing residents, while providing for future generations.

In the words of author Sharon Salzberg, "Voting is the expression of our commitment to ourselves, to one another, this country, and this world." However you feel about the library proposal, please get the facts at [victorfarmingtonlibrary.org/new](http://victorfarmingtonlibrary.org/new) and cast your vote on Tuesday, May 17<sup>th</sup> at the Victor Early Childhood School.

Sincerely,

The Victor Farmington Library Board of Trustees