

**Town of Weymouth
Massachusetts**

Robert L. Hedlund
Mayor

75 Middle Street
Weymouth, MA 02189



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MEMORANDUM

21 007

TO: TOWN COUNCIL
FROM: ROBERT L. HEDLUND, MAYOR *RH*
**RE: COMMUNITY PRESERVATION FUND TRANSFER FOR THE
PURPOSE OF DIGITIZING HISTORIC LIBRARY DOCUMENTS**
DATE: FEBRUARY 9, 2021

I hereby submit the following measure to Town Council for its consideration and action:

“That the Town of Weymouth transfer the sum of \$22,680.00 from the Community Preservation Historic Resources Fund (4906-321005) for the digitization of microfilm reels of the Weymouth Gazette as submitted by the Weymouth Public Libraries and approved by the Community Preservation Committee.”

This measure requires a legal notice and public hearing.

At the time of this submittal, the Community Preservation Historic Resources Fund account balance is \$201,418.00.

Referral Dte. _____ PH Dte. _____
Comm. Referral _____ TC Vote _____
Comm. Vote _____ TC Vote Dte. _____
Comm. Vote Dte. _____

Weymouth
Town Council

2021 FEB 11 AM 8:46

RECEIVED

Department of Planning and
Community Development

Robert J. Luongo
Director of Planning and
Community Development
email: rluongo@weymouth.ma.us
(781) 340-5015

*Town of Weymouth
Massachusetts*



Robert L. Hedlund
Mayor

75 Middle Street
Weymouth, MA 02189

www.weymouth.ma.us

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor Hedlund
FROM: Robert Luongo, Director of Planning & Community Development *RL*
DATE: February 8, 2021
SUBJECT: Request for Funding - CPA

At the February 4, 2021 meeting of the Community Preservation Committee, the committee reviewed and discussed the application put forward by the Weymouth Public Libraries in the amount of \$22,680. Robert MacLean, Director of Library Services, presented the request to digitalize 126 microfilm reels containing 93 years of the Weymouth Gazette.

After review and discussion, the following motion was approved unanimously;

Motion to appropriate and fund \$22,680 for the digitalization of microfilm reels of the Weymouth Gazette as described in the request put forward by the Weymouth Public Libraries, from the historic resources fund balance account. 4906-321005

The Community Preservation Committee appreciates your review and action on this recommendation.

ATTACHMENT: Funding Request submitted by the Weymouth Public Libraries dated January 28, 2021
CC: Pat Cook, Town Accountant
Christopher Hannan, Chairman, CPC

TOWN OF WEYMOUTH
Community Preservation Committee
Application for Funding

Name: Rob MacLean Date: 1/28/2021
Phone: 781-340-5002
Email: rmaclean@weymouth.ma.us

Affiliation/Organization (if applicable):

Weymouth Public Libraries

Project Name: Digitization of the Weymouth Gazette
Amount Requested: \$22,680

Purpose (select all that apply):

- Historic Preservation
 Open Space & Recreation
 Community Housing

Description:

Please provide a written narrative with detailed data, including cost estimates, schedule, budget, maintenance plan (if any), and implementation strategy. Include other funding sources and their amounts. Attach separate sheets as needed.

Describe how this this project helps to preserve Weymouth's character.

Please provide a written narrative including the goals of the project, who will benefit, and how the project relates to planning documents such as the Town's Master Plan. Describe the nature of support and outreach for the project. Attach separate sheets as needed.

Applicants are encouraged to be creative and consider projects that will benefit the community, including but not limited to projects that may not receive typical funding from traditional sources.

Submit to: Community Preservation Committee
C/O Dept. of Planning and Community Development
75 Middle St, Weymouth, MA 02189

Please provide a written narrative with detailed data, including cost estimates, schedule, budget, maintenance plan (if any), and implementation strategy. Include other funding sources and their amounts. Attach separate sheets as needed.

In our continuing efforts to be prepared to help tell Weymouth's story as it commemorates its 400th anniversary in 2022, the Weymouth Public Libraries hopes to digitize 126 rolls of microfilm containing 93 years of *Weymouth Gazette*, now *Weymouth News* totalling an estimated 126,000 pages. Previously, issues have been digitized one year at a time, as they enter the public domain, to be uploaded to the Internet Archive, and become discoverable through the library's website. Copyright law allows for digitized copies to be used in a single location, so we propose that these 93 years be made available for use on a designated computer in the Local History Room at Tufts Library. This would allow visitors to search the entire collection easily. It would also allow users who do not know the exact date to search among many issues.

One of our most common requests is for an obituary for a Weymouth resident, and having this collection digitized would allow for someone to not only find the obituary, but also discover other times the person was mentioned in the newspaper. Historical copies of *Weymouth Gazette* are popular and our issues from 1867 through 1924 have been viewed 540,744 times online in the last four years. As we have done previously, we will continue to publish digitized issues online as copyright allows.

Not only is microfilm challenging for many users, it is an ephemeral medium that is prone to deterioration. While our microfilm appears to be in good shape, once it begins to show signs of decomposition, it is often too late to be salvaged. This is in part a public benefit project, in that it allows for increased accessibility, and part a preservation project, so that these years of Weymouth's newspaper of public record will be retained.

The work will be done by New England Micrographics in Marlboro, Massachusetts and will cost \$22,680. We have worked with New England Micrographics in the past for projects like this, and have always been pleased with the professionalism and efficiency of their work. If approved for funding, we will initiate this project as soon as possible.

Describe how this project helps to preserve Weymouth's character. Please provide a written narrative including the goals of the project, who will benefit, and how the project relates to planning documents such as the Town's Master Plan. Describe the nature of support and outreach for the project. Attach separate sheets as needed.

The weekly newspaper is a wonderful way to step back in time and see what Weymouth was like over the past 170 years of the *Weymouth News*. It tells the story of our industries, cultures, and people, and how they have grown and changed over the years. The ability to view and search through newspaper articles and images brings history alive in a very visceral way. These primary sources will support school projects, genealogists, historians, scholars, residents, and anyone with an interest in Weymouth history.

This project is also in line with our shared values of inclusivity and accessibility: it would allow low-vision users to enlarge the image as well as use a screen reader, which is not possible when using a microfilm reader. This would open up this piece of the historical record to those who were not able to access it easily otherwise.

We would promote this service on our social media channels, monthly newsletters, as well as in-library signage.