

*Town of Weymouth  
Massachusetts*

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# Press Release

For Immediate Release – September 23, 2016

## Hedlund announces way forward in funding for a new library

*Town hires Johnson Roberts Associates of Somerville to prepare schematic designs for the state's library construction grant program.*

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Weymouth, MA – Mayor Robert Hedlund announced today that the Town of Weymouth will move forward with its grant application to the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) for constructing a new main library for the community. The Mayor's finance team confirmed that sufficient debt capacity will be available in the coming fiscal years to support the project as well as support other critical capital projects.

"After reviewing the Town's debt capacity and future projects, we are confident that a new main library for Weymouth can be a reality. I've asked staff to continue their work on a state construction grant application and to proceed with schematic designs for a library that will meet the needs of the community for decades to come," **said Mayor Robert Hedlund.**

The MBLC's Massachusetts Public Library Construction Program would assist the Town in paying 43 to 44 percent of eligible construction costs for a new public library. Since 1990, the MBLC has helped more than 200 cities and towns across the Commonwealth pay for costs associated with new library construction, additions, renovations, special projects, and preliminary planning activities. However, funding for the program only becomes available every five to six years. This makes the current grant round a valuable opportunity to reinvest in the Town's library infrastructure.

"Our 21st-century collections, programs, and services have outgrown our 50-year-old building," **said Rob MacLean, Director of Library Services.** "With a new main library,

we can play a more vibrant and central role in the life of the community for all patrons from newborns to seniors.”

The Town’s existing main library – Tufts Library – was constructed in 1965 and was considered a modern library of the time. Now over 50 years later, Tufts is saddled with significant repair issues. Existing building systems are beyond their expected service life. Each summer the Town must spend tens of thousands of dollars for temporary fixes to the air conditioning. A permanent HVAC fix at the Tufts Library would cost around one million dollars. In addition, repairs and improvements are needed to the library’s parking, roof, elevator, storage, IT infrastructure, and space needs. Fixing these additional deficiencies would cost millions more.

Also, Tufts has fallen behind as more and more libraries have transformed themselves from classic “storehouses of information” into people-centric environments, ideal for community gathering, collective learning, and individual self-improvement. Mayor Hedlund and his staff recognized the need to reinvest in the Tufts Library shortly after taking office. He assembled a Library Construction Committee, initiated development of a Library Building Program, and committed \$100,000 to hiring an architectural firm for schematic design. The Town is now on track to submit a completed construction grant application by January of next year.

In the next phase of the process, the Town will work with the firm Johnson Roberts Associates of Somerville to prepare schematic design plans for a new main library. A schematic design is a prerequisite for funding from the MBLC, and Johnson Roberts has historically been responsible for more designs per grant round than any other firm in Massachusetts.

“We are delighted to help the Town of Weymouth plan for their library’s future,” **said Stewart Roberts, AIA and Principal at Johnson Roberts Associates.** “Public libraries have never been more relevant; we are excited to work on a project that will reinvigorate the neighborhood, and be a resource for the Weymouth community for generations.”

Johnson Roberts Associates has been responsible for the design of over 70 public libraries and has completed construction of 30 public libraries. Since founding their practice 22 years ago, the firm has successfully prepared 35 submissions for library construction grants, resulting in 35 awards.

“Johnson Roberts Associates is a highly-qualified architectural firm that has specialized in public library design for more than 20 years,” **said Hedlund.** “Their track record for helping communities obtain grant awards under the state’s public library construction program is unmatched. I think together we can build a real 21st century library that is a reflection of the community’s values, heritage, and needs.”

“Johnson Roberts understands public libraries, and we understand Weymouth,” **added MacLean.** “Together we can design a new library that will represent a strong project for MBLC funding.”

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