



Conor M. Baldwin
Chief Financial Officer

Allison Chambers
Deputy CFO

MEMORANDUM

TO: Eileen M. Donoghue, City Manager *EMD*
FROM: Conor Baldwin, Chief Financial Officer
CC: Victoria Woodley, Library Director
DATE: October 7, 2021

SUBJECT: MOTION RESPONSE: 8/24/21 – C. Nuon/ C. Samaras - Req. City Mgr. Work With The Pollard Memorial Library To Find Funding And Create A Book-In-Van Program To Get Books To Kids In Neighborhoods That Are Distanced From Downtown.

One of the many negative impacts of COVID-19 had on the City of Lowell was the temporary forced closure of the Pollard Memorial Library (PML). Even after the building reopened, many residents remained hesitant to visit the library. At your direction, the finance department has worked with the Library staff to develop a comprehensive plan to purchase a “Bookmobile” vehicle and fund the necessary programming and incidental costs using available funds from the American Rescue Plan Act (“ARPA”).

Lowell’s library is a staple of the community that provides services to residents far beyond the availability to check-out books. For example, the Library provides computers, internet access, job searches, consortium networks, e-books, electronic databases, mobile hotspots (Wi-Fi), and virtual programming. It has long since been a priority of the PML Board of Trustees, the City Council, and the Administration, to restore the Bookmobile program which once existed, many years ago. As the Administration has sought public input regarding the use of ARPA funds via the website, the overwhelming majority of suggestions received, to date, have been in support of using the federal dollars to develop this program. A copy of one such public input response is attached for reference.

For those who don’t have transportation to get to a library, bookmobiles and other traveling library services bring books and resources directly to Lowell’s neighborhoods. In addition, many communities who have recently developed Bookmobile programs have found that their most successful recent visits have been to lower income housing developments that have lots of children. Modern Bookmobiles typically bring free Wi-Fi and internet access to communities who may have limited or no internet access. COVID-19 has both amplified the need for these services and also made changes necessary in the way bookmobiles operate. The availability of funding via ARPA has provided the opportunity to kick-start this program and the work has begun to roll out this program as soon as possible. The finance department met with the Library staff in September to review their funding and programmatic needs. Attached is a draft narrative and budget from the Library. We look forward to updating the Council further as the procurement and implementation phase progress.



Since 1844, Lowell's public library.

Victoria B. Woodley
Director

Board of Trustees
Eileen Donoghue
City Manager
President Ex-Officio
Donna S. Richards
Chair
Katy Aronoff
Suzanne Frechette
Syed M. K. Hasan
Linda Kilbride
Helen Q. Littlefield
Sara Marks
Anne C. Mulhern
Muriel Parseghian
Amy Watson

Date: September 20, 2021

To: City of Lowell Finance Department

From: V. Woodley, Library Director
S. Thibodeau, Coordinator of Community Planning

Re: Proposed Budget for Mobile Library Van

Our mobile library van would serve three main functions:

- 1) Deliver materials and resources to organizations (after school / daycare / school fairs & resource nights; elderly housing / nursing homes) and/or homebound patrons
- 2) Activate neighborhood spaces such as parks with resources (laptops/printers) and programming.
- 3) Increase the visibility of the library within the community to promote resources available at our main and Senior Center branches. Attending fairs, festivals and parades.

Lowell's population size and geographic layout would make having a larger physical branch system more ideal but a mobile branch is a way to serve outlying neighborhoods and build community. A mobile library van is a scalable project which might conceivably grow to incorporate a trailer, a second vehicle or a physical branch.

In order to be successful, a mobile library needs dedicated staff to organize the calendar, order and stock materials for events and deliveries, and conduct programming.

Backup information to proposed Budget:

Line 5: Mercedes Sprinter Cargo van: 170" Wheelbase High Roof | 6 Cylinder Diesel | 4500 | 6,327 lbs. Payload OR a Ford Transit van with High Roof, extended cargo compartment 3.5L V-6 engine, all-wheel drive

Line 6: In addition to the paint job that the van comes with, we would need to "wrap" it with the Library's logo.

Line 7: Customization would include some shelving, cargo straps and tie-downs inside the cargo compartment, electrical wiring, etc.



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Line 8: We would need a ramp to roll book carts and bins to the ground from the van.

Line 9: We need some type of power source for our cargo lights and electronic/computer equipment. We did see one book van that used a solar panel as a power source. Another option would be a generator, but that would be extremely noisy and necessitate carrying gasoline around for the generator.

Line 11: We will be acquiring a trailer also, which we will need to tow with the van.

Line 14: We will need several book carts to bring the collection of items that patrons can look through to the various sites.

Line 15: We will need a pop-up canopy and add an awning to the van itself so they can be deployed during site visits. These structures will protect the library materials and people from inclement weather.

Lines 19-20: We will need 2 laptops, a receipt printer, a barcode scanner and a PA system for the van.

Lines 25-26: Since we also intend to use this van for home delivery in the future we will need bags, bins and a handcart to make deliveries.

Lines 29-31: 2 FT staff and 1 PT staff will allow us to keep the book van on the road 5 days a week.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1							
2	Mobile Van						
3	Vehicle						
4	One-time costs				Ongoing costs		
5	Sprinter / Transit van	61,000			Technology		
6	Wrap	2,500			Wifi Hotspot data	300	add % for inflation
7	Customization	10,000					
8	Cargo Ramp / assist steps	1,000					
9	Solar Panel or Generator	6,000					
10	Plates / Registration	200			Other Costs		
11	Towing Kit	1,000			Insurance / Maintenance	15,000	add % for inflation
12					Library materials	5,000	add % for inflation
13	Furnishings						
14	Carts / Bookshelves	2,000					
15	Pop up canopy & awning for van	2,000			Sub-total	20,300	
16							
17	Technology				Staff		
18	Wifi Hotspot data	in kind			Outreach Librarian	47,500	add COLA & step raises
19	2 Laptops, receipt printer, barcode				Outreach Lib. Assistant FT	40,500	add COLA & step raises
20	scanner, PA system	5,000			Outreach Lib. Aide P/T	15,000	add COLA
21					Sub-total	103,000	
22	Other Costs						
23	Insurance / Maintenance	15,000					
24	Library materials	5,000					
25	Delivery equipment: bags, bins,						
26	handtruck	2,000					
27							
27	Sub-total	112,700					
28	Staff						
29	Outreach Librarian	47,500					
30	Outreach Lib. Assistant FT	40,500					
31	Outreach Lib. Aide P/T	15,000					
32	Sub-total	103,000					
33							
34	Grand Total	225,700			Grand Total	123,000	
35							

SPRINTER VAN - PROTOTYPE - FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES ONLY



Baldwin, Conor

From: noreply@civicplus.com
Sent: Monday, August 2, 2021 2:42 PM
To: Donoghue, Eileen; Baldwin, Conor; Chambers, Allison; Keefe Mullin, Kara; Geoffroy, Phillip; Hession, Hannah
Subject: Online Form Submittal: American Rescue Plan Act 2021 - Public Input Form

American Rescue Plan Act 2021 - Public Input Form

Contact Information

First Name	<i>Field not completed.</i>
Last Name	<i>Field not completed.</i>
Company/Organization	<i>Field not completed.</i>
Address	<i>Field not completed.</i>
City	<i>Field not completed.</i>
State	<i>Field not completed.</i>
Zip Code	<i>Field not completed.</i>
Email Address	<i>Field not completed.</i>
Phone Number	<i>Field not completed.</i>
(Section Break)	

Project Suggestion

Please select a category from the "Eligible Uses of Funding"	Support Public Health Response
Estimated Cost of Project	YEAR 1 = \$198,000, YEAR 2 -5 = \$103,000 (+inflation/cost of living)

Title/Subject	Mobile Library Services
Please leave a detailed description of your suggestion below:	<p>The factors that make our city unique and special—many immigrants, broad income and age spectrum, number of languages spoken—also present challenges. Some residents find it difficult to get downtown, many face a digital divide because they can't afford data plans, others face language and technology barriers in obtaining the learning opportunities they seek and even in handling typical administrative needs. To help ALL our residents succeed, the City of Lowell has a tremendous need to get library services to the people to the neighborhoods where they live, to schools they attend, and to the homebound. Many large cities have branches to accomplish this, but Lowell could meet these needs in a cost-effective way with a mobile library. ARPA money should be invested in a vehicle outfitted to transport materials and tents, equipped with the technology to allow patrons to borrow and return materials, get a library card and even print!! The ability to provide a 'hot spot' from the vehicle and offer programs tailored to the neighborhoods' needs/wants would positively impact a greater number of residents. Staffing by a Librarian I and a Library Assistant are needed to ensure that these services would be provided consistently and that the programming relevant to our varied residents and neighborhoods are met.</p> <p>Vehicle - \$80,000 Transportation to create pop-up libraries and/or bring services to schools, recreation sites and neighborhoods</p> <p>Materials/Collection - \$10,000</p> <p>Hardware/Software - \$5,000 (computer/printer/Wi-Fi)</p> <p>Positions - Librarian I (35 hrs.) \$47,500 and Library Asst. (35 hrs.) \$40,500 (annually)</p> <p>Insurance and operating costs - \$15,000 (annually)</p>
Terms and Conditions	I have read and agree to the terms and conditions.

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