

# Library awarded \$1.5 million DOLA grant

Ballot question now makes or breaks new library

By REGAN TUTTLE Editor | Posted 21 hours ago



Over the weekend, Lone Cone Library Director Carrie Andrew received notification that the state Department of Local Affairs has awarded the library \$1.5 million in grant funding for the purpose of constructing a new library building in Norwood.

“It feels like this project is really going to happen,” Andrew said. “The library doesn’t have to ask tax payers for so much money. We’ve raised 37 percent of the project.”

Andrew wrote the grant this spring and applied for \$1.5 million in funding on April 1.

She found out in early summer that Lone Cone Library had moved forward in DOLA’s selection process and that she was expected to appear for a hearing July 20.

Last month, she traveled to Salida, with the support of her husband, and gave a seven-minute presentation on Norwood’s library to a panel of approximately 10 representatives from around the state. Andrew had five minutes to answer their questions about the new library.

According to her, getting the grant seemed like a long shot. DOLA is in the middle of litigation, and some funds have been frozen. Andrew also completed the application process without having a financial match, a requirement for most grants.

Thrilled to have heard the library received the full amount, Andrew said the win is for the whole community.

The projected cost of the new library is \$4 million. With a chunk of that amount coming from DOLA, Andrew said the library’s property tax request on the fall ballot will be significantly less than the board originally expected.

Though she is celebrating, she wants the public to know that DOLA’s award becomes official only if that ballot question passes. Ultimately, it’s the community’s decision.

“With all this being conditional, if we don’t pass ballot, we lose DOLA,” she said. “I would hate to turn down \$1.5 million, or any other funds we could raise before then.”

Andrew said the board will continue to pursue other grants and fundraising efforts to meet its goal. One local corporate donor has already made a \$10,000 pledge for the new library.

If all goes according to the library board’s plan, and the ballot measure passes in November, the board will begin the process of selecting an architect and contractor. Groundbreaking would likely occur in the summer of 2017. Norwood could have a new library in 2018.

Last Friday, Andrew discovered that the existing library building’s assessed valuation dropped, due to a drop in the local oil and gas market and decreasing property values. She said that the library will now lose 24 percent of its budget and would have gone to the ballot for a property tax request anyway.

She said the new library opportunity, with grants and community support, can now establish itself as independent from the oil and gas industry.

The Lone Cone Library District board met Monday evening to discuss moving forward.

Andrew said she is grateful to the library board, the individuals who helped proofread the DOLA grant, County Administrator Lynn Black for her support, DOLA Regional Field Officer Ken Charles for his guidance and her husband.

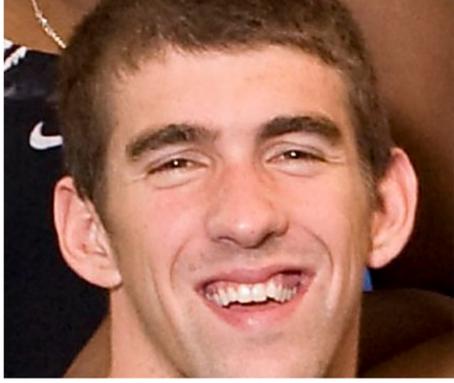
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