To the members of the Working Group, appointed and elected officials, public, and my community of librarians and readers: Thank you, humbly, for this opportunity to share some of the characteristics of the Mary L. Blood Memorial Library in West Windsor (in the village of Brownsville) and our growing community at the northern base of Mt. Ascutney.

It is important to note that the Mary L. Blood Memorial Library is a community resource, in a former ski resort town (with one hotel, one grocery store and cafe [the Brownsville Butcher & Pantry]), one K-6 elementary school, a historical society, post office, volunteer fire department, one formal place of worship, abundant trails and a town forest. Across the Brownsville-Hartland Road is our town hall, aptly named "Story Memorial." I write to you from Abenaki land, where settlers, dignitaries, Merino sheep, Morgan horses, sundry cows & chicken, deer, champion skiers, new residents & visitors, a usually sweet parade, and a perhaps unusual number of poets reside. The library has not changed (very much) from its original form, established one hundred and twenty-two years ago.

To this point, I thank you for taking up this consideration. Like many Vermont libraries, the Mary L. Blood Memorial Library is more like a one room schoolhouse. We have historic items lining the high bookshelves--some of which relate to the Civil War. At our entrance, large gray colored plaques list names of those who served in (most) past wars who lived in town. Among these are members of the "54th Mass Colored." This is our only entrance and it's also our only exit. The library is on a small patch of land; we have only narrow shoulder land to the north and south. To the west, a large lawn offers excellent opportunity for children, teens, and any others--for reading and for events--but we use it sparingly, as it is not currently considered the library's property but rather part of the parsonage next door. We have no egress, limited ADA access (thankfully, a ramp was created), and our growing community could really use a larger space. Six different groups meet here (and this is in a pandemic); perhaps we'll have more when we're pandemic-free.

Aging In Place and Youth Services are two of our most identifiable priorities. We see infrastructure as a key to services, particularly as we expand staff, open hours, technology, to meet the requests of our community. Wood crafters and an architect have helped us envision options. We need a new circ desk area, librarian's office and storage, more meeting/reading spaces, more technology. Our basement is very 19th Century but it could suffice for storage and office space (with at least one new stairwell). Our attic is gorgeous, by all accounts of those who have walked in the light of it--lit by three turn of the century windows (and quite possibly with a glimpse of the mountain). Turning the attic into usable space makes sense to us, given the library's small parcel of land...but probably an elevator system will need to be part of the plan.

Our community nurse meets here for clinics, a teacher at the local school holds youth events that amaze me, we have a robust Friends group and a smart and dedicated board of trustees, enthusiastic volunteers, a who's-who of regulars who value this resource more than the eye can say...and yet we're still limited because we're only now trying to catch-up to 21st Century needs. I write this after a long virtual pre-town meeting (perhaps the only time in history "town" and "meeting" have had its attendance be "pre"; last year, 2020, we were all so shocked to be in a state of emergency). I thank you for the opportunity to express the character of our library. The COVID19 pandemic has shown us that people really need a library: For shelter (we did install air conditioning during our closed months, during stay at home orders), for edification, entertainment, multicultural sanctuary and mental health, for community, for technology and communication, for teacher's resources, and for the preservation of a historical building in the center of our village.

Be well, stay safe, and keep reading.

Sincerely,

Peter Money

Librarian

05037

(Forgive me: Due to the fact that I'm still in the library, after "pre-town meeting," I am writing this--and sending--although I have not re-read its contents. I hope you'll understand.)

--

Peter Money, Librarian

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[www.facebook.com/WestWindsorLibrary](http://www.MaryBloodLibrary.wordpress.com)

As well as on the West Windsor town site (SEE Mary Blood Library under Town Government)