

11/03/08

(8)

## Acton Memorial Library Civil War Exhibit Enhancement

**Amount Requested: \$14,600**

### **Project Summary:**

In 2005 we were granted \$30,150 of CPA funding, with \$4,000 being added from Library funds, to design and install a permanent exhibit to tell the story of Acton's unique role as "first to fight" in the Revolutionary War that founded our nation and among the first to fight in the Civil War that preserved it. The exhibit, "Not Afraid to Go," telling this story was dedicated on Patriot's Day this year and, for the first time, the extraordinary artifacts, documents and images given to the Library over the years by veterans and their families have been preserved and made available to the public.

However, the final cost of the exhibit exceeded the original estimate of \$34,150 for several reasons, the major one being the expansion in scope found necessary to adequately display our artifacts, images and documents and fully tell the story of Acton's role in the formation and preservation of our Nation. This caused the exhibit to grow in area, doubled the number of display panels needed, required more lighting and required more layout study to best fit the available space. Another major factor was the unforeseen difficulty and expense of adequately lighting the exhibit in the original library building, while meeting current codes for height clearance and safety. Finally, the additional curatorial work needed took more time than planned, with the delay adding to the cost.

Eliminating one of the two audio stations planned and deferring the audio programming needed to use the stations reduced cost. We also saved the cost of a computer to provide access to our extensive database on Acton's Civil War veterans by using an old unit slated for disposal. Reusing lighting not suitable for the exhibit in other areas of the library also represented a saving.

Additional funding was sought and received, with the Board of Trustees approving funding from the Lois Parker bequest (a library fund) and generous contributions coming from the Friends of the Acton Libraries, the Acton Memorial Library Foundation and the Acton Rotary and Lions clubs. In spite of this a shortfall still existed that the exhibit designer, Will Twombly of Spokeshave Design, closed by deferring billing for a portion of their services. As their work was exemplary and the added cost was in no way their responsibility we feel the deferred amount should be billed and paid.

This proposal requests funding to add the deleted audio station and do the deferred programming, provide a new stand-alone-computer, add lighting in two areas where it is now inadequate, enlarge some of the graphics in the section on the conduct of the Civil War, improved signage to make the exhibit more visible and pay the deferred bill.

### Audio Station/Programming:

While the exhibit includes text describing the actions and feelings of the people of Acton at the time of the start of the Revolutionary War and before, during and after the Civil War, merely reading what they spoke and wrote cannot convey the same immediacy and appreciation as hearing their words. The audio stations were planned to allow their words, at times with appropriate music and sound effects added, to give visitors to the exhibit this visceral feel for the attitudes and feelings of the people of Acton during these times. Two stations were planned. A station near the beginning of the exhibit would cover the start of the Revolutionary War and the lead-up to the Civil War.

The current exhibit has an audio station in the area covering the conduct of the war, what was happening on the home front and the post-war era. It consists of an audio unit manufactured by Nel-Tech Labs of Derry, New Hampshire, mounted in a custom-built cabinet. This unit accepts up to eight audio clips stored on a standard USB memory stick and allows them to be selected with pushbuttons mounted on the cabinet top surface. Adding similar unit near the beginning of the exhibit is proposed. This unit would be identical to the existing unit except that it would use headphones (rather than small speakers as on the existing unit) in order to avoid emitting sound that might disturb library users. (The low level of sound from the speakers on the existing unit is acceptable because the unit is located away from areas of normal library use.) The estimated cost of this unit is \$1,500 (see estimate as Attachment 3).

In addition to adding the unit, doing the necessary narration, reading, recording, adding of music and/or sound effects and audio mixing and editing be done to provide sixteen (16) sound clips of one to three-minute duration is also proposed. The estimated cost for this is \$2,500 (see estimate as Attachment 4).

Some of the words written and spoken that will be considered for inclusion are:

- "I haven't a man who is afraid to go," spoken by Isaac Davis.
- Conversation between James Hayward, as he lay dying, and his father
- Affidavit of Hannah Davis about the day her husband was killed.
- Letter(s) home from 19-year-old George Reed who went through Baltimore with Acton's Davis Guards on April 19, 1861, including quote "it is not so pretty to be a soldier as it is to play one".
- All or some of the resolution passed by the 1851 Acton Town Meeting opposing the Fugitive Slave Act.
- Capt. Daniel Tuttle's recollections of the call-up of the Davis Guards on April 15<sup>th</sup>.
- James Richardson's page from the GAR book where he describes the trial and execution of the Booth conspirators.
- Excerpts from Aaron Jones Fletcher's diary.
- Quotes from A. J. Fletcher's mother, including the one where she tells him not to re-enlist.
- Selections from the diary of Edwin B. Taft, who served through the War in the 26th Mass. Vol. Infantry.

### **Project Scope:**

The project scope and details of each item included were presented in the Narrative section of this proposal. Project elements and the estimated cost of each are listed below.

1. Audio Station	\$1,500
2. Audio Programming	2,500
3. Stand-alone Computer	500
4. Added Lighting	1,000
5. Enlarged Graphics	900
6. Improved Signage	200
7. Deferred Billing Payment	7,458
8. ~9% Contingency on items 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6	542
<b>Total Project Cost</b>	<b>\$14,600</b>

## Christine Joyce

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**From:** Paulina Knibbe [p.knibbe@comcast.net]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, October 29, 2008 9:51 AM  
**To:** Frank Joyner  
**Cc:** Marcia Rich; Bob Surdel; Manager Department  
**Subject:** Re: Civil War Exhibit Proposal

Hello, Frank. I have read through your document and think this is an excellent presentation of your project.

I think you have explained the back payment issue clearly and coherently. As we discussed on the phone, I think this will be the issue that the CPC has the most difficulty with. But I do agree that it is best to be forthright about your intentions.

It would be wise to have a handout available as you describe below. Ideally this should be in the packet that the Selectmen receive on Friday night before a Monday meeting. That allows us to prepare before the meeting. I believe that you need to get those materials in electronic form to the town manager (manager@acton-ma.gov) by Thursday. Ask them to include it in the selectman's packet.

Paulina

Frank Joyner wrote:

> Hi Paulina,  
>  
> Last night the Trustees approved the proposal. I have attached a copy  
> of the completed proposal including the changes resulting from last  
> night's discussion.  
>  
> Bob Surdel tells me that you have some reservations about making too  
> much of paying for the work for which Will Twombly of Spokeshave  
> Design deferred billing in order to make the total cost match the  
> funding available. Given that a significant portion of the cost (which  
> now stands at \$14,600) is to pay for this deferred billing, I don't  
> see how to proceed without acknowledging it. However, I welcome your  
> advice on how best to handle this.  
>  
> I am still missing an estimate from Billy Thomas, who does pretty much  
> all of the electrical work in the Library, despite Marcia's best  
> efforts to get one from him. We can probably pretty well peg the cost  
> based on previous work of similar scope, and I am prepared to go ahead  
> without an estimate from him.  
>  
> I have thought about having a simple two or three page handout,  
> consisting of the Project Summary text, the text from the Audio  
> Station/Programming and the Project Scope, which lists the items and  
> estimated cost of each. This could go to the Board beforehand or  
> during the meeting. I would appreciate your thoughts and  
> recommendations on this.  
>  
> Please let me know if you would like to discuss this further before  
> next Monday.  
>  
> Frank  
>  
>