

What's the bottom line?

Basic renovations (details below) to 10 Court St. would be \$1.5 million. A full renovation of the space would be \$6.5 million or more. Purchase and repair at CSJ would be \$1.2 million.

Basics about the buildings:

The campus library is approximately 28,000 square feet, all on two floors and all fully accessible. The main library is in excellent condition, with clean, modern furnishings. The offices spaces do need work, and we need to add a children's room.

10 Court St. is just less than 25,000 square feet, spread out across a $\frac{3}{4}$ basement, main, mezzanine, second and third floors (not counting the attic). The third floor is about 1,500 sq.ft. of essentially unusable space, cut in half by the Fox Room, with no ADA access and no fire escapes. Because the building is in the Courthouse National Historic District, fire escapes would have to fit in architecturally, which likely means building three-story, brick-faced towers and / or putting a walkway across the upper half of the Fox Room.

Adding an elevator would likely eliminate the grandfather clause for the current elevator. Code for a new elevator in a public building of this size is a double-sided one large enough for a gurney, which would require demolition of the current elevator shaft and construction of a new one. The ballpark starting figure on that was \$180,000.

What are the benefits to the children's area you're talking about?

Three. First, sightlines. We can't see about half of the children's area at 10 Court without walking into it. **Second, out of the traffic flow.** Right now, those hidden corners are where first-time visitors just looking for a warm chair wander toward, which isn't where we would like them to be. And parents have to walk their kids through the gauntlet of computer users. A common complaint is that a small child saw too much of a bikini model, or a teenager playing a violent game on the internet. We cannot and will not censor legal computer use, so we need to get the family area away from the computers. **Third is noise.** With no barrier between the children's room and the rest of the building, when kids come down from playgroup, it's too noisy for the other users, hard on the parents who are trying to get the kids to USE YOUR INSIDE VOICE, and hard on the kids who should be able to have fun in the library.

The new building will have the children's area out of the flow of traffic, next to and visible from the main room and the librarian's office and workspace, and behind doors that close. **Oh, and the baby changing station will be in the children's area**, instead of in the lobby at the far end of the building.

What is the condition of 10 Court St? Who let it crumble?

No one let it crumble. The building is in good shape given its age. Its twin is in Windsor, VT, still owned by the USPS, and the second floor is no longer usable due to deferred maintenance.

By comparison, RFL has put some \$250,000 into capital repairs over the past five years, including:

- Fox Room ceiling collapse, including new floor, lighting and paint;
- Renovating the lobby restrooms to improve safety, meet ADA requirements, and replace old domestic pipes with plumbing that is up to commercial code (previously, most days we had to close at least one toilet due to severe clogging);
- LED lighting throughout (which will have paid for itself in one more year through lower electrical costs);
- Replacing pipes deemed during inspection as at risk of "catastrophic" failure in the boiler room. Once we fixed the pipes so they didn't leak, the extra pressure was too much for the old pumps, which failed one after the other;
- Rewiring the Fox Room and side offices to add capacity (and grounding the outlets!) ahead of the Google event;
- Replacing the failed tile flooring and subflooring around both desks;
- Wiring for ethernet (some of which goes back at least six years, some was more recent);
- New Fox Room AV system (with two large donations);
- Wiring for computer stations;
- Closing off the failed restroom by the help desk and replacing the desk damaged / rotting from gray-water leaks;
- Outdoor lighting on the building, and between it and Grace Church for public and staff safety;
- Mezzanine railing upgrades to meet new code requirements.

It's just a very expensive building to run, especially for a nonprofit whose primary mission is to provide services, not run a museum.

Didn't the city just spend a lot of money on it?

The city bond was 10 years ago and ran for 10 years. It paid for a new roof (the old one leaked into the collection) and the worst of the plumbing.

It sounds like you've already fixed everything. What's the problem now?

- The HVAC (heating / ventilation / air conditioning) system needs work. The boilers were deemed not urgent 10 years ago, but they are now five years past expected life expectancy and several plumbers / heating people tell us they are likely to fail completely in the next 5 or so years. None believe they are good for another decade.
- Many of the valves around the building (hot water heat) will also need replacement.
- The air conditioner is dead.
- The 1858 plaster failed spectacularly in the Fox Room and needs work throughout the original front box structure.
- The building envelope (so we can control wasted heat / heating costs).

- Adding railings to the front and back stairwells, which are not close to code but are grandfathered.
- There's a lot of peeling paint in the non-public areas and there's asbestos in the basement restroom. Little stuff like that, but which adds up over 25,000 square feet.

What's this about "not working as a library?"

The most important design element of a library building today is sightlines, for obvious safety reasons. When the mezzanine went in 40-odd years ago, it was designed essentially as a book warehouse: The library with the most books crammed into it wins. But it means we can't see what's happening in our building. When we're fully staffed (and we rarely are), we can see about 10% of the building. We can and do try to patrol, but the computer users need a lot of assistance, which ties us down. So we can't monitor for either misbehavior or medical emergencies. The public has the right to a safe library; in fact, for many people library = comfort. At the new site, we can see end to end from anywhere in the main room.

Anything else?

Next most important are flexibility (so you can use the same space for more than one thing over the day, and so you can accommodate more varied public requests), and the ability to do outdoor programming. The campus site is ideal for both; 10 Court very, very difficult.

Where is the money coming from?

The library has been working toward a major renovation at 10 Court St. since at least 1987, when Paula Baker was hired as director. When we would get a large, unexpected gift, we would put it into the capital fund for just that purpose. And it was the right choice: When we started talking to the city about the renovation in the past five or so years, they made it very clear that while they were willing to consider a bond for structural repairs, they would expect us to foot the bill for "library" improvements. We have invested the money in the stock market, which has boosted our nest egg considerably in the past few years as well. But when it came time to finally move forward (after 33 years!) with renovations, we did our due diligence and saw the unique opportunity to buy a larger, newer, better, library space, renovated for \$1 million in 2006, and decided to pursue it instead of spending the money on 10 Court St.

What about grants? Isn't there preservation money for old buildings?

We have gotten some small grants and constantly look for more. With the lobby restrooms, for instance, we got funding for the power door, but that was all that was available, and only because it provided ADA access. We did a full walkthrough with a Preservation Trust of Vermont field worker. They are interested in helping restore the third-floor plaster ceiling, but only if we replicate the original, which is much more expensive than using drywall or similar materials. And they are only interested in the 1858 box, as the rest of the building is not distinctive enough to fit their mission.

We dipped into one statewide emergency repair fund three years running. On the third try we were given half our request and asked to please find another source as they weren't our maintenance budget.

Why not just raise money to do the "library" portion?

The \$750,000 renovation is a fraction of what it would cost to get 10 Court St. up to the standards at CSJ. Following the 2010 bond, we commissioned a study to see what it would cost to really make the place work. The plan – which was beautiful – ranged from \$6.5 to \$11.4 million. That gives you some idea of the scale of the accommodations we were making to not be a burden on the city. Any reasonable request on the city's pocketbooks will trap us in a substandard facility, with a much, much better and much cheaper option across town.

The current building is an important part of downtown Rutland.

The building isn't going anywhere. The city owns it and can turn it into anything it likes. Whatever the city feels downtown needs. The building is in good condition for its age, but it has not aged well as far as being a modern library. And we're committed to continue to support Downtown Rutland through programs and events, just as we have for years. Rutland Free Library isn't leaving Rutland ... just changing addresses.

One of the concerns city leaders have expressed for many years is that Rutland City supports the library both through taxes and the free use of the building, while our other supporting towns (Rutland Town, Mendon, Tinmouth, & Ira) only provide funding. Moving into the new Library building on the community campus levels the playing field between city residents and those of our supporting towns.

It's a part of Rutland history.

So is the Library, which has previously resided at 23 Merchants Row, the predecessor to the Post Office building on West Street, and Longfellow School.

The fact that 10 Court St. is in a National Historic District prevents intrusive design changes. And we're planning for a larger, more accessible Vermont History / Genealogy room in the new library, so we're embracing our local history.

And so is the CSJ campus. Clementwood Manor, originally a private home, is on the National Register as well.

People won't be able to walk to the library anymore.

The choice of any site determines who is within walking distance. For many of the people who live in the southwest neighborhood, the community campus at CSJ is about the same distance as downtown, and the last phase of the Creek Path was always designed to reach the campus. The campus is handy for Center Rutland and for the neighborhood near Pine Hill Park. And it solves our biggest concern around access, which is the complete lack of accessible parking at 10

Court St. We have one handicap accessible space that doesn't even have a curb cut. The community campus site lets us provide good, ADA-compatible access, and The Bus already serves the city Recreation Department on the same site.

What shape is the campus library in?

Giorgetti Library in its current form opened in 2006 as part of an \$8M campuswide renewal project. Mary Giorgetti was the foremost of many local residents to fund a \$1M renovation of the library itself. The second renovation of the library, to provide it with state-of-the-art technology in 2016, was funded with a \$2.2 million federal Title 3 grant (<https://www.mountaintimes.info/csj-reimagines-giorgetti-library-through-learning-commons-model/>). By moving, we can use that investment instead of spending public money a second time for the same purpose.

The rooms around the library proper need work, as do the roof and siding, but that's all included in the purchase & renovation price.

Will Rutland Free expect the city to maintain the new Library?

No! The Library will be responsible for its own building. Moving into a relatively new and newly renovated building will lower our maintenance costs, so we can put a little aside every year toward long-term building needs. It is the kind of prudent stewardship that residents and taxpayers should expect from their civic institutions.

What about programs? I attended First Wednesdays in the Fox Room regularly.

The new Library offers much more flexibility. There are classrooms attached to the main room that will be available for a wide range of public needs, plus the Boardroom, which will be open for public use. And the Library has volunteered to the developer to manage the Casella Theater in the Tuttle Building on the campus. It's a beautiful space with amphitheater seating that will accommodate the larger events like First Wednesdays in more comfort than we have now.

That's just one example of how the various facilities on the campus – the city Recreation Department gym, Rutland Free Library, Casella Theater, and a new seniors' community – can all work together to provide more services more efficiently than we can at 10 Court St.