City/County Library Committee Meeting
Wednesday, March 18, 2026, at 1:00 PM
City Council Chambers, City Hall (10 3rd Ave SW)
Any person needing special accommodation for the meeting is requested to notify the City Clerk's office at 857-4752.

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

   2.1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - FEBRUARY 11, 2026

   **It is recommended the committee approve the minutes of the February 11, 2026 meeting.**

3. NEW BUSINESS

   3.1. LIBRARY COMPARISON

   - **a. Patron Numbers**
   - **b. Programs**
   - **c. Services Provided**
   - **d. Door Count**
   - **e. Staff**

   3.2. BUDGET

   - **a. Discussion about budget process**
   - **b. Discussion on budget with two buildings as City Employees**
   - **c. Discussion on budget with two buildings as County Employees**
   - **d. Discussion on budget with one building as City Employees**
   - **e. Discussion on budget with one building as County Employees**

   3.3. SPACE DISCUSSION — 2018 SPACE ANALYSIS

4. NEXT STEPS

5. UPCOMING MEETING DATE

6. ADJOURNMENT

Minutes 2/11/26

City/County Library Meeting

Present: Phyllis Buechler, Tami Ware, Rub Fuller, Ron Merritt, Lisa Olson, Miranda Schuler, Christine Cherry.

Also Present: Kerrianne Boetcher, Joshua Pikka, Marissa Haman, Dave Lakefield, Mikayla McWilliams.

No members were Absent

1. Introductions: Each committee member stated their name.
2. Historical Context: Josh gave a history about the times where a similar committee had met in the past. He had highlighted instances in 1998, 2004, and 2018.
3. Committee Chair Appointment: Fuller nominated Ron Merrit to be chair, second by Tami Ware. A vote was called: Aye: Buechler, Ware, Fuller, Merritt, Olson, Schuler, and Cherry. Nay: none.
4. Committee Goals: Lisa Olson said that we should first identify cost savings. Ware stated that the goal should be to retain all services. Fuller mentioned that combining entities should save taxpayers money. McWilliams asked a question about the current collection and if space can be made by deselection. Cherry responded by saying that libraries do constantly go through their collection and deselect materials that aren't being used. Fuller asked about identifying current overlap. Pikka stated that there is some overlap, but we are not changing demand, so the same demand for these materials will continue to exist no matter if they are housed in the same location or not. Cherry brought up that the Minot Public Library just had a space needs analysis and is already wanting to do changes to fit our needs better. Cherry said that overlap in services is not always a bad thing. Olson stated that there could be cost savings, but in a poll the county residents have not wanted the libraries to move in the past. Meritt asked about what the mill levy is for the city and county, Haman and Lakefield answered that the county is currently at 2.7 mills and the city 8 mills. Boetcher shared information on the two shared library services in Jamestown and Mandan. Ware stated that a goal should be to expand bookmobile services. Boetcher asked if the committee wanted to run numbers as one entity take the library or if a 3rd entity is created. Ware asked if it comes to a popular vote, if the county voices would be heard in a separate vote, or if they would get mixed in with the city vote. Merrit said that we should look at if we want to merge and keep two buildings, merge and combine buildings, or do not combine. Schuler stated that we should not create a 3rd entity, either make all employees county or

city. Schuler asked when we would need ballot language, Marisa said that we would need ballot language by August. Ware stated that instead of a merger the two entities could trade services. Cherry asked if the county library services the jail, Kerri stated that they do service the Mountrail county and other entities including jails, which is defined in agreements with those entities, but do not service the Ward County jail. They do service several senior centers and the Ward County Juvenile Detention Center. Fuller asked what the usage of the libraries are, to see if they are servicing separate individuals, are the same individuals. How the libraries are used differently would be helpful, statistics. Ware asked for the presentation that Ackerman had did in the previous meeting. Pikka will bring this information to the next meeting. Schuler asked for total amount of square footage in buildings of James River Valley and Morton-Mandan. Boetcher will bring this information to the next meeting. Committee goals would be to find cost savings measures in library services. Goal to have the work done in June.

5. Questions to Consider: Josh stated that the main questions are to identify cost savings in keeping the buildings and in combining buildings. Schuler stated that there should be numbers for library employees being part of the city and part of the county.
6. Public Comment: None.
7. Next Meeting: The next meeting will be scheduled for 1PM on March 18th.
8. Adjournment: Ware moved to adjourn Fuller second. Vote was called. Aye: Buechler, Ware, Fuller, Merritt, Olson, Schuler, and Cherry. Nay: none.

| Category / | Patron |
|---|---|
| Business/Organization | 12 |
| Minot 9-17 | 1704 |
| Minot Adult | 11179 |
| Minot under 9 | 1347 |
| NonResident | 43 |
| Region II 9-17 | 150 |
| Region II Adult | 1094 |
| Region II under 9 | 68 |
| Special Service | 27 |
| Staff | 29 |
| Temporary | 14 |
| Ward 9-17 | 226 |
| Ward Adult | 1635 |
| Ward under 9 | 225 |
| Total: | 17796 |

| **WCPL Patrons** | **Number** |
|---|---|
| Bell | 496 |
| Berthold | 683 |
| Bishop Ryan | 154 |
| Blaisdell | 7 |
| Burlington/Des Lacs | 1,637 |
| Carpio | 30 |
| Des Lacs | 27 |
| Donnybrook | 24 |
| Douglas | 24 |
| Edgewood Vista | 21 |
| Foxholm | 9 |
| Hove’s Corner | 51 |
| ILL | 1 |
| Kenmare | 1,157 |
| Kenmare School | 229 |
| Library | 828 |
| Lostwood | 11 |
| Makoti/Ryder | 190 |
| Max | 16 |
| Minot | 3,430 |
| Montessori | 158 |
| Nedrose | 1,204 |
| Our Redeemers | 122 |
| Our Saviors | 2 |
| Palermo | 13 |
| Parshall | 782 |
| Plaza | 486 |
| Pursuit | 22 |
| Rice Lake | 4 |
| Ross | 15 |
| Ruthville | 20 |
| Sawyer | 356 |
| South Prairie | 1,082 |
| Stanley | 28 |
| Surrey | 980 |
| Tagus | 8 |
| Terricita Vallejo | 7 |
| View | 20 |
| Ward Cty Monthly | 8 |
| White Earth | 21 |
| **Total** | 14,363 |

# MPL Programs

## Teen Event Costs

Event
Teen Advisory Groupd Meetings
Movies
Crafts
Gaming
3D Builds
Makerspace
Board Games
Life Size games
Cooking
Escape Rooms
Outreach and visitis
Tours

| Children's Programs | Supply Cost | Notation |
|---|---|---|
| Maker Monday (25x per year) | $150 | |
| Smart Start (25) | $150 | |
| Lap Sit (25) | $25 | |
| Family Story Time (9) | $30 | |
| Puppet Shows (2) | $0 | |
| READ Dogs (12) | $0 | |
| LEGO Club (18) | $100 | |
| Bey Blade Club (22) | $0 | |
| Summer Camps (26) | $500 | |
| Head Start Visits (10) | $0 | travel |
| Daycare Visits (25) | $50 | |
| Community Learning Centers (35) | $0 | travel |
| No School or Early Release (30) | $300 | |
| Literacy in the Field (1) | $3,520 | donations |
| Summer Reading Program (2 1/2 months) | $4,366 | grant, donations, Friends' request, sponsors |
| Sweater Weather Reading Program (4 months) | $400 | Friends' request |
| 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten (ongoing) | $500 | Friends' request |
| Tours w/Craft (7) | $50 | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Outreach SRP presentations & other (15) | $0 | travel, paper, ink (over 5,000 brochures for students) |
| Passive Crafts (275) | $20 | leftover crafts from various story times |
| Passive Desk Game (12) | $100 | prizes through supply budget from Friends' |
| Passive Coloring Sheets (12) | $0 | paper & ink |

**Adult Programs**

| | |
|---|---|
| 12 Social Programs | $240.00 |
| 3 Craft Programs each month, plus ~3 more each year, average monthly cost of $73.29 | $880.00 |
| **4 Game Programs each month, plus 1 more each year** | **$840.00** |
| 12 Miscellaneous Programs per year | $700.00 |
| | |

| **Ward County Programs** | *Per Event | |
|---|---|---|
| Teen STEM (25 a year) | $50.00 | |
| Elementary STEM (25 a year) | $50.00 | |
| Playdough (24 a year) - Minot and Kenmare | $0.00 | *Donations were given for playdoug |
| Storytime (50 a year) - Minot and Kenmare | $50.00 | |
| Family Movie - (24 a year) - Minot and Kenmare | $24.99 | |
| Adult - Kenmare Book Club - 12 a year | $0.00 | *Book Club Kits Requested from ND: |
| Adult - Crafty Crew - 12 a year | $50.00 | |

| times per annum | Cost per event | |
|---|---|---|
| 3 | $15 | $45 |
| 2 | $10 | $20 |
| 35 | $25 | 875 |
| 9 | 0 | 0 |
| 11 | $10 | 110 |
| 4 | $10 | 40 |
| 9 | 0 | 0 |
| 6 | $10 | 60 |
| 5 | $20 | 100 |
| 3 | $50 | 150 |
| 15 | $5 | 75 |
| 3 | 0 | 0 |
| | | $1,475 |

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| Name | Cost to Patron | WCPL |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Copying | $.15/$.25 | $0.20 |
| Roll Printer | $1.00 per foot | N/A |
| 3D Printing | $.20 per gram | N/A |
| Lamination | $.50 per sheet | N/A |
| Printing | $.10/$.25 | $0.20 |
| Tech Tutor | Free | N/A |
| ILL | $3.00 per item | $3.00 per Request (up to 10 items) |
| Homebound | free | N/A |
| Meeting Rooms | Free/$20/40 | Free/$25/$40 |
| Study Rooms | Free | N/A |
| Research Serices | $15.00/$20.00 | N/A |
| Adaptive Gaming | Free | N/A |
| Tool Library | Free | N/A |
| Video/Board Game Library | Free | N/A |

| Resource | Cost | WCPL | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Copyright Compliance License – annual | $681.00 | | $764.00 | |
| EBSCO Core Collections – annual, | $2,173.00 | N/A | | |
| ODIN – 2x per year | $691.59 | | $330.65 | |
| Value Line – annual | $3,885.00 | N/A | | |
| Gale eBook Subscription | $150.00 | N/A | | |
| Data Axle – annual | $1,920.00 | N/A | | |
| Beanstack – annual | $1,497.75 | N/A | | |
| Xbox Subscription (Adaptive Gaming) – annual, $31.25 | $31.25 | N/A | | |
| Minecraft Server | $300.00 | N/A | | |
| NoveList – | $4,294.00 | N/A | | |
| OCLC – annual, | $19,612.62 | | $2,673.68 | *Paid to NDSL for catal |
| WebDewey (OCLC) – annual, | $391.12 | N/A | | |
| Overdrive Consortium | $6,000.00 | | $4,000 | |
| Novelist Plus | $2,254.00 | N/A | | |

loging costs

| Library | 2025 Door Count |
| --- | --- |
| WCPL Total | 21,902 |
| Minot PL | 94,701 |

| Job Title | Salary | Employment Type | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Library Director | $100,931.00 | FT | |
| Technical Services Librarian | $76,918.40 | FT | |
| Adult Services Librian | $75,046.40 | FT | |
| Child Services Librarian | $64,708.80 | FT | |
| Teens Services Librarian | $67,995.20 | | |
| Admin Assistant | $50,544.00 | FT | |
| Building and Grounds Super | $71,427.20 | FT | |
| Building and Grounds Worker | $48,110.40 | FT | |
| Technology and Circulation Lib | $63,135.00 | FT | |
| Teen Associate I | $43,596.80 | FT | |
| ILL Associate II | $57,200.00 | FT | |
| Special Services Associate II | $55,806.40 | FT | |
| Programming Associate II. | $53,123.20 | FT | |
| Children's Associate II. | $50,544.00 | FT | |
| Outreach Associate II. | $51,812.80 | FT | |
| Children's Associate I. | $46,763.74 | FTE | 1831 |
| Other Children's Associate I. | $44,678.40 | FT | |
| Full Time Library Assistant I. | $39,499.20 | FT | |
| Library Assistant-Childrens | $16,959.20 | PT | |
| Library Assistant-Childrens Evening | $10,214.00 | PT | |
| Adult Library Assistant | $11,343.28 | PT | |
| Adult Library Assistant | $18,760.04 | PT | |
| Adult Library Assistant | $8,725.60 | PT | |
| Adult Library Assistant | $4,362.80 | PT | |
| Adult Library Assistant | $18,760.04 | PT | |
| Adult Library Assistant | $4,362.80 | PT | |
| Adult Library Assistant | $1,632.00 | Pt | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Library Director | $87,032.00 | FT |
| Associate Director | $52,237.92 | fte |
| Bookmobile Driver | $42,498.00 | fte |
| Bookmobile backup driver | $35,742.72 | fte |
| Librarian I | $50,225.76 | fte |
| Kenmare | $28,155.30 | fte |
| Assistant | $8,512.40 | |
| Assistant | $11,786.40 | |
| Sub | $9,495.00 | |
| Sub | $9,495.00 | |
| | | |
| Total | $335,180.50 | |

# 2026

| Account Description | Minot Public Library | | | Ward County Public Library | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SALARIES | $ | 1,311,328.00 | | $ | 300,339.00 |
| RETIREMENT | | | | $ | 41,347.00 |
| SOCIAL SECURITY | $ | 87,881.00 | | $ | 18,621.00 |
| HEALTH INSURANCE | $ | 261,066.00 | | $ | 96,257.00 |
| WORKERS COMP | $ | 3,000.00 | | $ | - |
| UNEMPLOYMENT | $ | 53.00 | | $ | - |
| LIFE INSURANCE | $ | 905.00 | | $ | 28.00 |
| MEDICARE MATCH | $ | 20,180.00 | | $ | 4,355.00 |
| UTILITIES | $ | 69,921.00 | | $ | 16,273.00 |
| AUTOMATION | $ | 144,327.00 | | $ | 15,218.00 |
| BOOKMOBILE | $ | - | | $ | 21,700.00 |
| GENERAL OFFICE | $ | 65,000.00 | | $ | 15,500.00 |
| BOOKS | $ | 140,123.00 | | $ | 38,000.00 |
| TRAVEL | $ | 9,245.00 | | $ | 5,000.00 |
| NON OFFICE EQUIP. | $ | 103,119.00 | | $ | 11,000.00 |
| BOOKMOBILE REPLACEMENT | | | | $ | 20,000.00 |
| MISCELLANEOUS | $ | 33,999.00 | | $ | 600.00 |
| REIMBURSEMENT TO GENERAL FUND | $ | 122,799.00 | | $ | - |
| **TOTAL** | **$** | **2,372,946.00** | | **$** | **604,238.00** |

| | Combined Totals | | Merged Total City | Merged Total County |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | $ 1,611,667.00 | | $ 1,641,167.00 | $ 1,611,667.00 |
| | $ 41,347.00 | | | $ 199,489.00 |
| | $ 106,502.00 | | $ 106,502.00 | $ 106,502.00 |
| | $ 357,323.00 | | $ 361,130.76 | $ 344,359.20 |
| | $ 3,000.00 | | $ 3,000.00 | |
| | $ 53.00 | | $ 53.00 | |
| | $ 933.00 | | $ 933.00 | $ 933.00 |
| | $ 24,535.00 | | $ 24,535.00 | $ 24,535.00 |
| | $ 86,194.00 | | $ 86,194.00 | $ 86,194.00 |
| | $ 159,545.00 | | $ 157,965.00 | $ 157,965.00 |
| | $ 21,700.00 | | $ 27,700.00 | $ 27,700.00 |
| | $ 80,500.00 | | $ 80,500.00 | $ 80,500.00 |
| | $ 178,123.00 | | $ 170,000.00 | $ 170,000.00 |
| | $ 14,245.00 | | $ 15,745.00 | $ 15,745.00 |
| | $ 114,119.00 | | $ 114,119.00 | $ 114,119.00 |
| | $ 20,000.00 | | $ 30,000.00 | $ 30,000.00 |
| | $ 34,599.00 | | $ 34,599.00 | $ 34,599.00 |
| | $ 122,799.00 | | $ 122,799.00 | $ - |
| | **$ 2,977,184.00** | | **$ 2,976,941.76** | **$ 3,004,307.20** |
| | Savings | | $ 242.24 | $ (27,123.20) |

| Comments |
|---|
| MPI puts retirement in this line. |
| |
| |
| |
| WCPL does not budget for this |
| WCPL does not budget for this |
| |
| |
| |
| |
| Enhanced/ Increased Services |
| |
| Can save on duplication. Could possibly drop this more if needed, perhaps we could save more money over time. |
| Added travel for courier services. |
| |
| Bookmobile price will increase. |
| |
| See narrative for note on this item. |

# 2026

| Account Description | Minot Public Library | | Ward County Public Library | | Combine |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SALARIES | $ 1,311,328.00 | | $ 300,339.00 | | $ 1,6 |
| RETIREMENT | | | $ 41,347.00 | | $ |
| SOCIAL SECURITY | $ 87,881.00 | | $ 18,621.00 | | $ 1 |
| HEALTH INSURANCE | $ 261,066.00 | | $ 96,257.00 | | $ 3 |
| WORKERS COMP | $ 3,000.00 | | $ - | | $ |
| UNEMPLOYMENT | $ 53.00 | | $ - | | $ |
| LIFE INSURANCE | $ 905.00 | | $ 28.00 | | $ |
| MEDICARE MATCH | $ 20,180.00 | | $ 4,355.00 | | $ |
| UTILITIES | $ 69,921.00 | | $ 16,273.00 | | $ |
| AUTOMATION | $ 144,327.00 | | $ 15,218.00 | | $ 1 |
| BOOKMOBILE | $ - | | $ 21,700.00 | | $ |
| GENERAL OFFICE | $ 65,000.00 | | $ 15,500.00 | | $ |
| BOOKS | $ 140,123.00 | | $ 38,000.00 | | $ 1 |
| TRAVEL | $ 9,245.00 | | $ 5,000.00 | | $ |
| NON OFFICE EQUIP. | $ 103,119.00 | | $ 11,000.00 | | $ 1 |
| BOOKMOBILE REPLACEMENT | | | $ 20,000.00 | | $ |
| MISCELLANEOUS | $ 33,999.00 | | $ 600.00 | | $ |
| REIMBURSEMENT TO GENERAL FUND | $ 122,799.00 | | $ - | | $ 1 |
| **TOTAL** | **$ 2,372,946.00** | | **$ 604,238.00** | | **$ 2,97** |

See narrative for note on building availibility

See narrative for note on staff savings over time through retirement

| ed Totals | | Merged Total City | Merged Total County | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 11,667.00 | | $ 1,641,167.00 | $ 1,611,667.00 | Mpl puts retirement in this line. |
| 41,347.00 | | | $ 199,489.00 | |
| 06,502.00 | | $ 106,502.00 | $ 106,502.00 | |
| 57,323.00 | | $ 361,130.76 | $ 344,359.20 | |
| 3,000.00 | | $ 3,000.00 | $ - | WCPL does not budget for this |
| 53.00 | | $ 53.00 | $ - | WCPL does not budget for this |
| 933.00 | | $ 1,193.00 | $ 80.64 | |
| 24,535.00 | | $ 23,467.13 | $ 23,467.13 | |
| 86,194.00 | | $ 69,921.00 | $ 69,921.00 | |
| 59,545.00 | | $ 148,327.00 | $ 148,327.00 | |
| 21,700.00 | | $ 27,700.00 | $ 27,700.00 | Enhanced/ Increased Services |
| 80,500.00 | | $ 70,000.00 | $ 70,000.00 | |
| 78,123.00 | | $ 165,000.00 | $ 165,000.00 | Some duplication of titles may be needed, but some can be eliminated. Note, that this is around $50,000 less than just MPL had as a budget in 2018 |
| 14,245.00 | | $ 14,245.00 | $ 14,245.00 | |
| 14,119.00 | | $ 103,119.00 | $ 103,119.00 | |
| 20,000.00 | | $ 30,000.00 | $ 30,000.00 | |
| 34,599.00 | | $ 33,999.00 | $ 33,999.00 | |
| 22,799.00 | | $ 122,799.00 | $ - | See narrative for note on this item. |
| **77,184.00** | | **$ 2,921,622.89** | **$ 2,947,875.97** | |
| | | $ 55,561.11 | $ 29,308.03 | |

Narrative with Proposed Budgets

March 2026

At the February meeting of the City/County Library Committee meeting, directors from the Minot Public Library and Ward County Public Library were tasked with coming up with budget estimates for the libraries if they had merged into one entity. We were also told to look at what would happen if the library staff became employees of the city and of the county, and if we had merged physical locations or stayed in our current locations. We were told to try to find cost savings in both of these scenarios. The following narrative is a discussion of those items.

The first note to be aware of in the following budgets are the fact that this is what the directors could come up with as a best guess for what our budgets would look like if they were combined. There may be other savings or other costs that we do not know about at this time. The directors also know that there are some line items that can be adjusted either way should the library board decide to do so. The directors had attempted to take our actual expenses and see what they would look like combined, without trying to make any large structural changes to the budget.

If the libraries merged and stayed at our current locations, the cost savings would be minimal at the start. There are some cost savings that were identified. Current staff that work at WCPL would be entitled to lesser benefits if they became city workers, including retirement. We would be able to cut a $1,000 administration fee charged by our e-book provider. Also, a slight raise in the price of the MPL catalog would be offset by the loss of the WCPL catalog bill. Both projections do show modest savings, some of which are offset because of increased use of the bookmobile requiring more upkeep to the vehicle. If it is used more, the cost of fuel, oil changes, and other upkeep will rise as well. The county also would like to increase how much they set aside for a bookmobile, as they expect that to increase in the future. There is a savings projected at less than $1,000 if employees were at the city, or a $27,000 increase as Ward County Employees.

One note to focus on in the combined budget is the MPL line item "Reimbursement to General Fund." This is a current bill that MPL pays each year to the city of the use of different city services. WCPL does not currently have a line item equal to this, even though they do receive services from other county departments. Any merger that includes the library being under the city would include a similar line item, while any merger that includes the library being under the county would not include that line item. This cost savings under the county may be an illusion since this is essentially the city paying itself for costs of services which mostly do not cost the city extra to be provided to the library. Most of the services that the city provides the library are ones that would be provided for other departments whether the library pays for them or not. For example, if the library was no longer the responsibility of the City of Minot, the HR or Legal departments would not need less staff. The cost for these services would still need to be spread to other city departments. So, these savings that appear would be savings for the library but not for the taxpayers as a whole.

Another note is about the “Books” line item. This item can be adjusted as needed as there is some “wiggle room”. Some have suggested that having a combined collection would mean that we would not have to duplicate material. However, the demand in the community is not changing with the merger, so some duplication would have to be continued. We were able to anticipate a drop in the budget in both scenarios, but perhaps not as much as some may have thought. This may be a line item in which we may see savings as time goes by if a merger happens.

A final note on this budget is the WCPL Retirement line. MPL does provide some retirement savings for their employees, but WCPL provides a lot more. This results in any budget that has library employees being county employees would cost a little more than as city employees.

If the libraries could merge into one building, we start to see a little more savings. Utilities for the current WCPL building would be eliminated. Smaller cuts were identified with the loss of having to rent printers and copiers at WCPL. We also felt that in one space we could eliminate a small part of the collection budget. This includes reducing some books and serials that would need to be purchased. It would not be a great savings because the same demand will still exist in the community, but there could be some reference materials and other books that we may not have to replace quite so often if we did share collections. The total savings projections amount to about $55,000 under the City and about $29,000 under the County.

While it is encouraging to see cost savings at one building, we would like to point out that this number is quite misleading. It factors in having a building that could handle a combined collection in staff. Which is something that the current MPL building does not have. The building can take in a couple bookshelves in a few specific areas, but for the most part there does not exist the space to accommodate even a small part of the WCPL collection without losing services.

In 2025, MPL completed a space needs assessment that identified a need for a $5 million renovation project that was needed to update the building. It would make the building more ADA accessible and it would replace some aging infrastructure inside the building. It would also allow us to move the circulation desk downstairs. Having one central circulation desk is very important because it allows us to staff the library with less people, which would save us money. The funds to complete such a project are still not accounted for.

The current MPL building already has a lack of space. We have run out of room in our adult fiction area. We also do not have a dedicated teen area, which would enhance services for our teenage patrons. We also have had many requests for more meeting rooms and gathering spaces. The current building does not suit our needs that we currently have, even before any extra material is added.

Another space concern is room for staff. We currently have several staff at MPL that we do not have workstations for. This lack of staff space is felt specifically near the circulation desks. We also have staff currently in locations that may not be safe in times of fires or other emergencies. These are all concerns that the MPL needs to address. The prospect of combining more staff at the current MPL building would only put more stress on existing problems.

Finally, the housing of the bookmobile and its collection are a concern in this model. We do not have the space to store the bookmobile or its collection at the MPL building. A large garage would need to be built to house it. However, previous attempts to build a garage on MPL property were denied by city staff because of the chance of a flood wall coming near to the library. If we did build anything on MPL property we may have to tear it down in a few years anyway. We could house the garage on a different property, such as near the city hall or police department, but that would bring extra transportation costs.

Because of these concerns, the directors feel that at this time the MPL building is not a candidate for a merger that would encompass bringing the WCPL collection into one building. While no entity has the funds delegated to a space needs analysis, preforming one is also not likely to result in a space that would be needed to combine libraries together in one space. Especially not without losing services currently provided.

We also are aware that there are a lot of hidden costs with moving locations. When WCPL moved locations 10 years ago, the cost to do so was approximately $10,000. It is estimated that that number could double in 2027. We also would have to process each book in the collection again to have new identifying materials on it. WCPL items also do not have RFID tags on them as MPL items do. Any item that is taken to the MPL building would have to be tagged at a cost of $.20 per book just for the RFID tag. The cost of staff time to do such a thing would be important to factor as well.

There is a chance for staff savings in staff retirement. The proposed merger in 2019 identified 4 positions that would be cut when staff retire. The amount that this would be for us would depend on if we were able to combine our current circulation desks into one or not. Any savings that all would rely on a building big enough to fit all staff. It seems like an eventual loss of 2 full time and 2 part time workers is possible depending on the details of the merger. Savings with those retirements could reach near $115,000 per year. The full-time positions identified have a salary of about $50,000 each. With the remainder coming from part time salaries. However, these savings would not be immediate and would depend on the space that the library would occupy. We would need a building that could combine two libraries into one, as we would not be able to save on staff if the buildings stayed separate.

We did check with Morton-Mandan and the James River Valley Library Systems. Morton-Mandan had the same ballot language for both ballots and voted at the same time. James River Valley had slightly different language but again voted at the same time. Both votes required that 51% of the city and 51% of the rural voters pass the vote in order for the measure to pass.

Morton-Mandan Language (from Barb Sandstrom, their current director) - "Shall Morton County establish Joint Library Services with the City of Mandan including operation of the County Library Bookmobile according to the provisions of section 48-38-11 of the North Dakota Century Code?"

James River Valley Language (from Joe Rector, their current director) - Rural voters received a ballot that asked something like, "Should Stutsman County provide joint library services with the City of Jamestown?" City voters received a ballot that said, "Should the City of Jamestown provide joint library services with Stutsman County?"

Overall, the directors feel that a merger should be approached very carefully. The warning that the Morton-Mandan library gave us that a library merger can result in better services for the library patron, but without a cost savings is a warning that should be given great attention to. There can be cost savings that are found, but we also must pay attention to what services are cut to make this happen. We were also warned about the hardships of combining two staffs from Jamestown and making sure that no one felt slighted or ignored in the process. Jamestown also encouraged maintaining a "separate" collection for the bookmobile that allowed both areas to circulate materials without causing massive wait times. The failed 2018-2019 merger vote shows that the county's interest must be taken into account if any merger would be successful. Especially since a large part of the identified savings comes from the retirement of the WCPL employees. The directors are interested in any benefit that can be given to the community by this merger, but perhaps waiting until a larger space is identified may make more sense.

Josh Response to 2018 “Space Analysis of Merged Libraries” by Ackerman

At the February 2026 meeting of the City County Library Committee, Alderman Fuller had asked for a copy of a document called “Space Analysis of Merged Libraries” that was done by Ryan Ackerman 8 years ago. Using this document to plan any remodeling is very problematic because it is so out of date. In this document I will try to provide information to update some of the things listed in this document as changes have occurred in nearly a decade. I will also provide my feedback as the current director of the library.

The first major change to this document comes on Page 4. In it Ackerman lists the south-west walls of the children’s library that could be re-arranged to accommodate more material. This area now does not exist as it once did, as some of it has been turned into a play area, a stage, and a closet that is now in the story room. So, this area is not available to be used for more storage without another remodel and loss of area that is currently there.

Another note is on page 5 Ackerman lists that the Makerspace can be moved to accommodate more shelving. However, he does not note that the ceiling is lower in that area and cannot accommodate a regular book shelf. Some shelves could be put in there, they would just need to be shelves that are smaller and hold less items.

Page 5 also includes notice about different renovations that were planned. This includes outside renovations that were completed to enhance the existing structure. It also does not include a children’s library remodel which was completed.

Pages 6 and 7 includes discussion about a coffee shop. While everyone does like coffee shops, this just would not be a good use of our limited space. It also is beyond the gates of our security system, so it would not be a good candidate to hold a part of our collection. Use of this room as a meeting room would be possible, if inconvenient. The Library Conference Room no longer exists, it is now used as a tool library. This space could be repurposed, but unless other space could be identified, we would lose our tool library. And as mentioned earlier, I feel that the addition of a coffee shop would not be very helpful. We could use room for staff offices and meeting rooms, not coffee shops.

Page 8 is about bookmobile storage. It seems that this plan seems to suggest that the current bookmobile could fit in the shed or the garage. This is just not true, the bookmobile is too long for either space as it is designed now. Even if the garage could be remodeled to fit the bookmobile, this still would leave us without space that is needed for the bookmobile’s collection. A further problem is that if we were to try to build a garage that does have enough space, the city would not allow it due to flood control reasons. So, there is nowhere that exists on MPL property where the bookmobile and its collection could be housed.

Page 9 mentions the use of a mail room, a room that no longer exists. This room is now used for staff offices. In this plan, it would have been used for a staff break room and the patron lounge and the current breakroom would be turned into a makerspace area. Although this would have fit the makerspace area, doing this plan now would see us lose one of the most used patron spaces and 2 staff offices. This would only increase our need for staff offices.

Page 12 details a plan to locate more staff offices on the second floor. It includes turning rooms that are currently used for patron computer use and moving them to the study rooms. And using the current computer rooms for staff offices. This would result in two offices. While this could be done, it would see us lose the study rooms which are almost always in use. In my opinion this would result in the loss of a major service that we provide. It also locates the computers farther away from the desks and printers, which is a major inconvenience to patrons and the staff. In my opinion this is not an acceptable plan to increase office space as it comes at a cost of services.

Page 13 is about a plan to convert the meeting rooms into a staff meeting room/ Friends of the Library Booksale Room. The plan includes separating the North Room into two rooms via a movable divider. While this does turn 1 meeting room into 2, it does not give us any more room. The same space would exist as is there currently. When we use the North Room for a program we generally use all of it, not just a part of it. All that really would happen is that we would lose a meeting room. This is important because our meeting rooms are our programming spaces, if we lose our meeting rooms we lose the ability to put on programs. The new Friends Booksale Room would also be farther away from where donations are accepted. Meaning it would be very inconvenient to stock that Booksale room. In my opinion this is also not an acceptable option as it forces us to cut services and makes the Booksale room almost useless.

While I am not against ideas to use our space better, I do feel that this report is not something we should rely upon in order to achieve our space goals. It is 8 years old and does not include details from our own Space Needs Analysis that were published last year. It does not give us collection space or staff work space without taking away programming and library service space. It is the opinion of both directors that if we want to even consider combining libraries in the current MPL building we should have an actual space needs analysis done by an architectural firm. We would first need to find funding to have that Space Needs Analysis done, and then identify funding to implement the changes included in the funding. It is important to note that the changes that were needed for MPL to better use their current building will cost five million dollars. This does not include the changes that would allow us to add more office space, more collection space, and a garage for the bookmobile from the WCPL collection. If something like that is even possible we would need to identify who would want to pay for those changes.

**MEMORANDUM**

To: Library Merger Committee
Lisa Olson, Chair

From: Ryan Ackerman

Date: October 1, 2018

Re: Space Analysis of Merged Libraries

**Background**

During the last meeting of our committee, I volunteered to conduct a preliminary space analysis of the Minot Public Library (MPL) to identify the viability of combining the Ward County Public Library (WCPL) services and collections into the MPL space, without the need for an addition to the Minot Public Library. Any necessary addition to the library structure would be contemplated sometime beyond 2023.

I was able to meet with Janet Anderson and Kerrianne Boetcher on September 26th in an attempt to gain some insight as to the space availability within the MPL, as well as some of the opportunities, needs and challenges that would be encountered if the two libraries were merged.

The purpose of the observations stated herein is to generate thought and discussion about the potential space uses and challenges within the current MPL building footprint. The ideas presented herein are intended to start the conversation and should not be misconstrued as the final solution to a potential challenge.

**Collection Size**

The Minot Public Library houses approximately 176,000 items. The Ward County Public Library houses approximately 46,000 items, of which approximately 41% are duplicative with items in the Minot Public Library collection. Assuming that duplicative items would be purged from the overall collection in a merged library, there would be approximately 27,000 items that would be added from the WCPL's collection to the MPL's collection. The merged collection would be approximately 203,000 items, or 15% more than the current MPL collection.

**Space Availability**

A walk-through of the MPL was conducted to observe current bookcase configurations, sizes, placement, capacities, etc. The following casual observations were made:

(1) Limited space is available within the current bookcases (stacks) of the MPL, as the lowest shelves of some of the stacks are not utilized. While many of the stacks are not filled to capacity, the lower shelves are intentionally not utilized in an attempt to make the items easier for patrons to access. Accessibility is certainly a valid concern, however it was noted that patrons bound to a wheelchair are also unable to access the top shelves of stacks without assistance. It was also noted that the optimum stack occupancy rate (i.e. how full the bookshelf is) is somewhere between 60% and 80%. Janet and Kerrianne can expand more on the research and rationale behind that statistic.


**Figure 1.** Stacks housing audio books on the second floor of the MPL showing empty bottom shelves.

**Figure 2.** Stacks housing nonfiction items on the western mezzanine above the second floor of the MPL. Note the available capacity within the stacks and seating areas.

(2) The most difficult area to accommodate is likely to be the children's collection. The MPL children's library does have some available capacity within its current stacks, but the desire is to keep the existing stack configurations in place. Adding shelves to the stacks to increase capacity is not recommended because the patrons (children) likely will not be able to reach the materials. There is some space available to add stacks within the MPL children's library, such as along the windows on the south and west side of the space. The configuration of the computers in the children's library consumes a relatively large amount of space. It is possible that the computer stations could be reconfigured to free up additional floor space to add stacks.

**Figure 3.** South and west walls of children's library beneath and between windows could provide room for additional stacks for the children's collection.

(3) Because of its sheer size, the second floor of the MPL would be the most flexible space to accommodate an expanded collection resulting from a merger. In particular, the west mezzanine above the second floor has some space to add stacks. However, this would consume some reading areas that are located on that mezzanine. On the second floor, the relocation of the Makerspace (if necessary to expand the number of stacks) will also present a challenge.

**Figure 4.** The Makerspace is currently located on the second floor of the MPL near the northeast corner of the building. If additional stacks were added in this area, the Makerspace would need to be relocated.

**Other Considerations**

The MPL board has been contemplating a series of capital improvements over the past several years that include both exterior and interior improvements to the library. The exterior improvements are primarily related to safety deficiencies, weather-proofing and inadequate signage for the library. These improvements have been or are in the process of being completed using funding that has already been budgeted and approved by the Minot City Council.

Interior improvement ideas being contemplated by the MPL board include interior renovations to the main floor lobby space and installing new flooring throughout the library. Other space ideas that could be considered for a merged library include:

***Coffee Shop***

A coffee shop could be constructed in the space currently occupied by the Friends of the Library book sale room and the MPL board room. These two rooms are located on the east side of the main entry, and if combined, would be approximately 700 square feet. This space could be leased or there could be a concessionaire agreement in place to generate revenue for the library from coffee (and other) sales.


**Figure 5.** The entry to the Friends of the Library book sale room could be reconfigured into an entry into the coffee shop from the main entry vestibule to the MPL.

***Enhanced Seating / Display Area***

The current display area, located in the main lobby behind the stairs to the second floor, is currently underutilized. This approximately 500 square foot area could be enhanced with seating and tables that would complement the coffee shop, library reading areas, and the works of art that are typically on display in this area. Some seating areas displaced by the addition of stacks within the main library area could be relocated to this enhanced display area, which is shown in **Figure 6** and shaded orange.

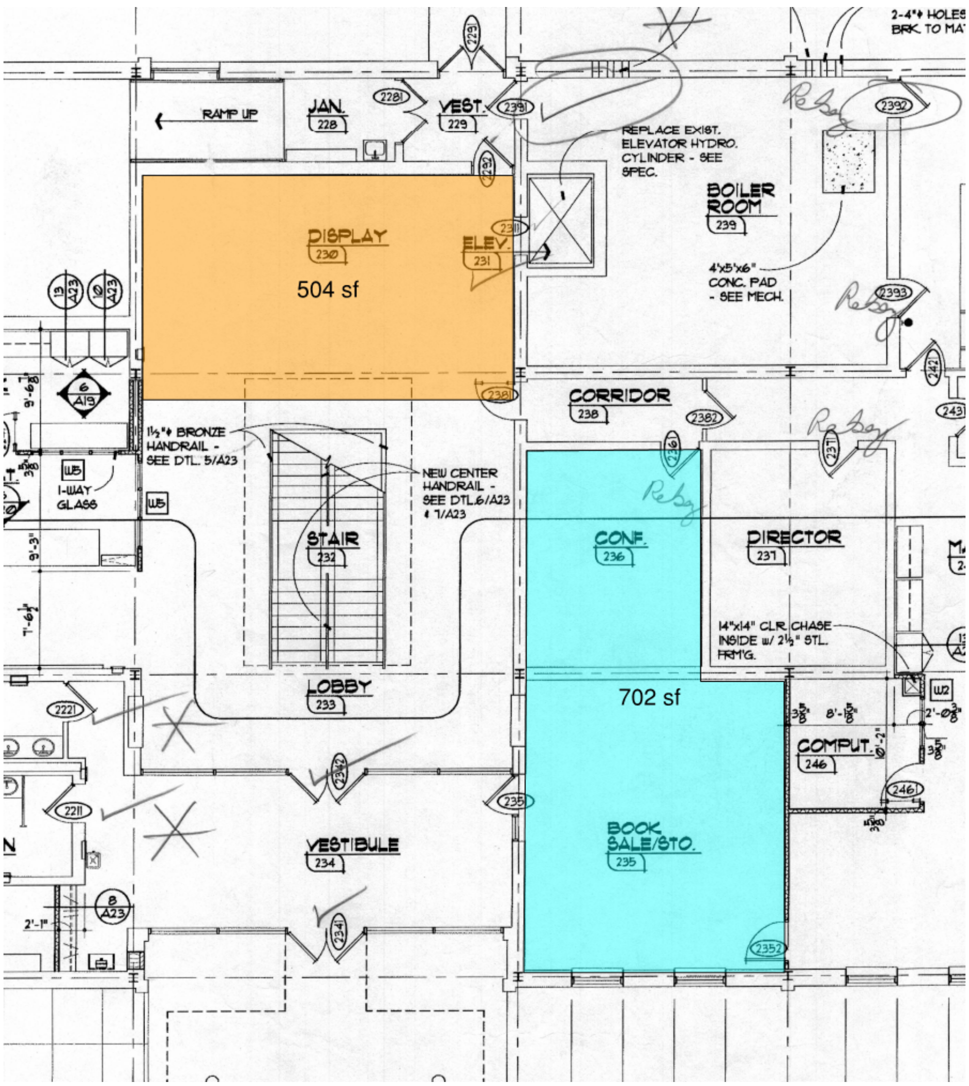


**Figure 6.** The space currently occupied by the MPL conference room and Friends of the Library book sale room could be reconfigured into a coffee shop with access from the entry vestibule in the MPL. The area is shown shaded in blue. The area shaded in orange could be enhanced with seating and tables to complement both the coffee shop and library patrons.

***Bookmobile Parking***

The current maintenance shop located at the northeast corner of the MPL could potentially be used to house the Bookmobile. While the Bookmobile is out, the space could be used for maintenance purposes. Additionally, if maintenance projects are longer term, the Bookmobile could be housed where it currently is in Ward County facilities or it could be temporarily parked outside. Having the Bookmobile parked inside the MPL building would be beneficial from a logistics standpoint. If additional maintenance or storage space is necessary, additional or a larger maintenance garage could be constructed on the north side of the MPL more cost effectively than adding on to the existing MPL structure. The dimensions of the existing maintenance space and Bookmobile should be verified to confirm that the Bookmobile could be parked within the space as it currently exists.

A challenge with converting the existing maintenance space into parking for the Bookmobile is associated with staging and storage of donated materials. Currently, donated materials are staged within the maintenance area prior to being incorporated into the Friends of the Library book sale room or discarded. Refer to **Figure 8**.

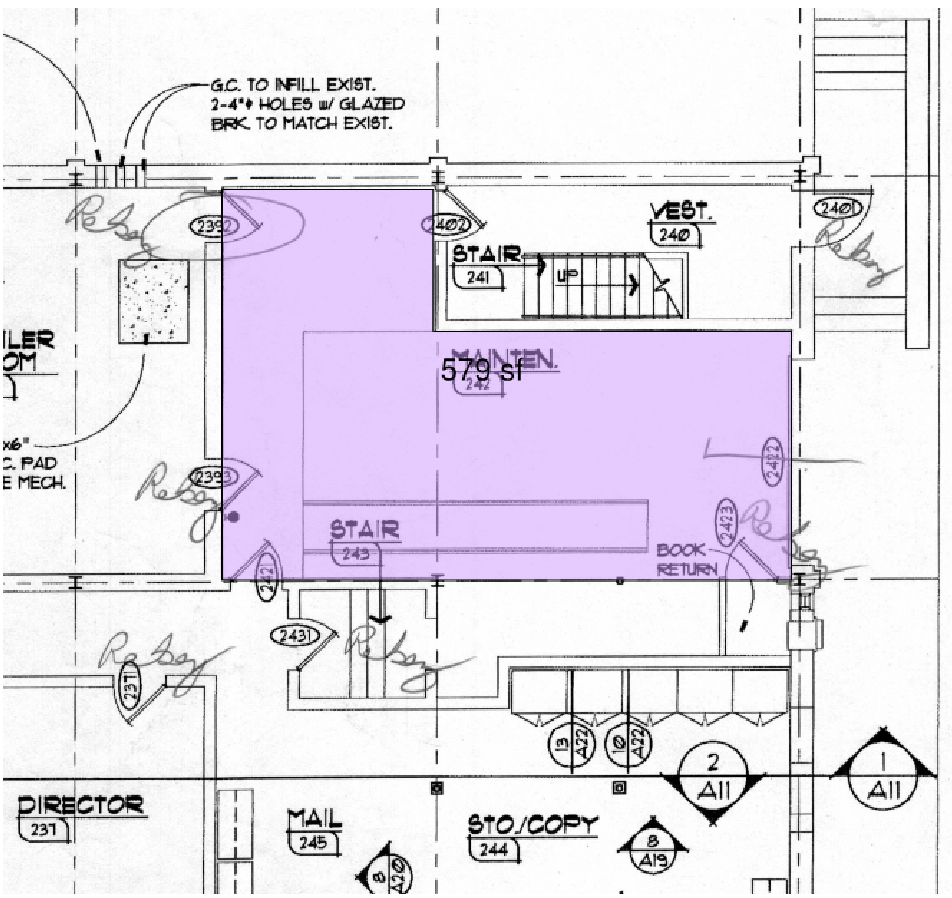


**Figure 7.** The maintenance shop (approximately 580 square feet) could be reconfigured into a parking area for the Bookmobile, shown shaded in purple.


**Figure 8.** Currently, donated materials are staged within the maintenance area prior to being incorporated into the Friends of the Library book sale room or discarded. The Tool Library is also currently housed within the existing maintenance space. Replacement storage space could be incorporated in a new building constructed on the north side of the existing MPL.

### *Makerspace*

On the second floor of the MPL, near the northeast corner, there is an assembly of underutilized space. The mail room is not fully utilized, and the existing public coffee room is located in an area where it is difficult to locate unless a patron knows it is already there. If a coffee shop were placed on the main floor of the library off the entry vestibule, it would replace the need for the public coffee room. The space currently occupied by the public coffee room, the staff lounge and the mail room could be reconfigured to include an improved staff lounge and a Makerspace with some sound control capabilities. Sound from the Makerspace has been an issue identified by patrons of the MPL.

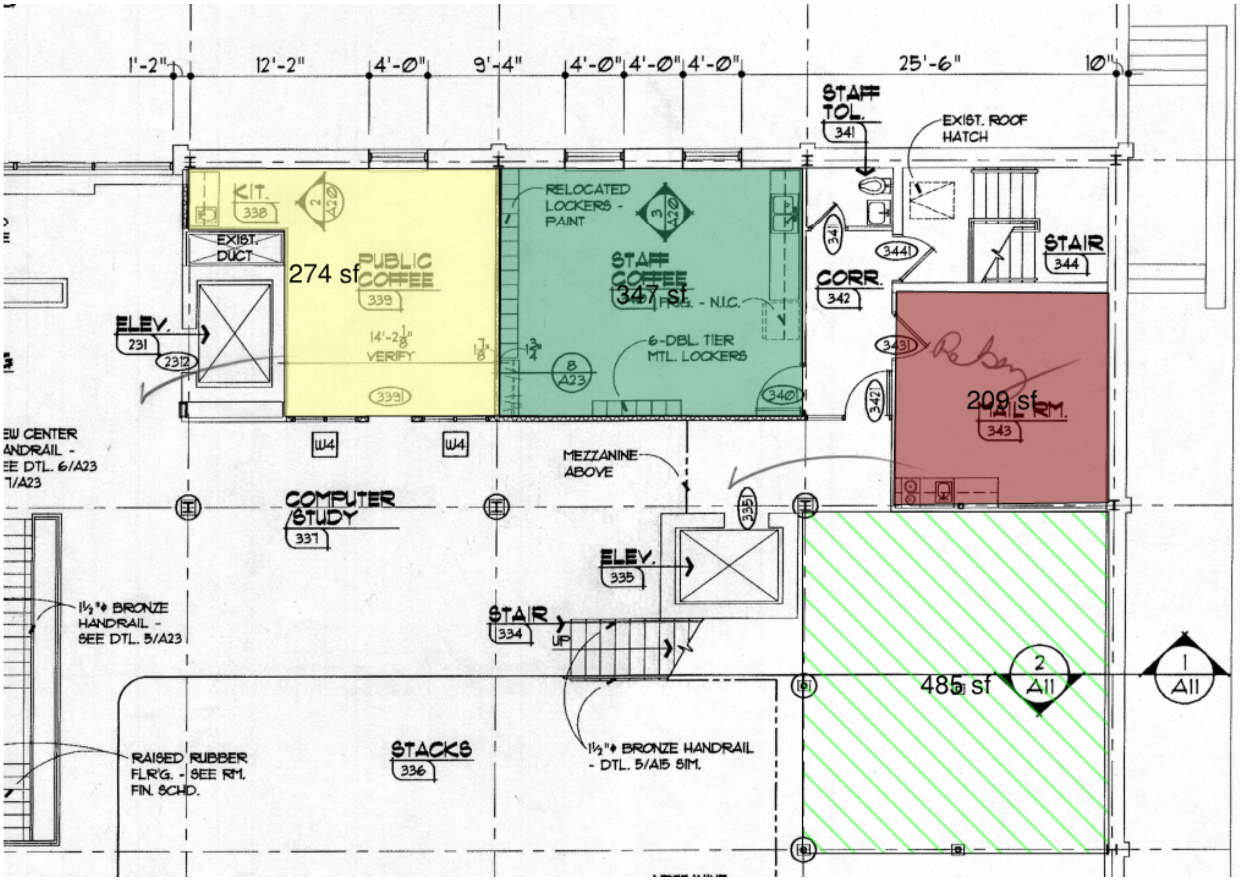


**Figure 9.** The Makerspace currently occupies approximately 490 square feet on the second floor of the MPL (shown hatched in light green). If a coffee shop were established on the main floor of the MPL as shown in **Figure 6**, it would eliminate the need for the public coffee room (shown shaded in yellow). Additionally, the mail room on the second floor (shown shaded in maroon) is under-utilized, and the functionality could be incorporated into other spaces within the MPL. The area currently occupied by the Makerspace could be utilized for the placement of additional stacks, and the areas shaded in yellow, green and maroon could be reconfigured to accommodate both a staff break room and the Makerspace, as shown conceptually in **Figure 10**.

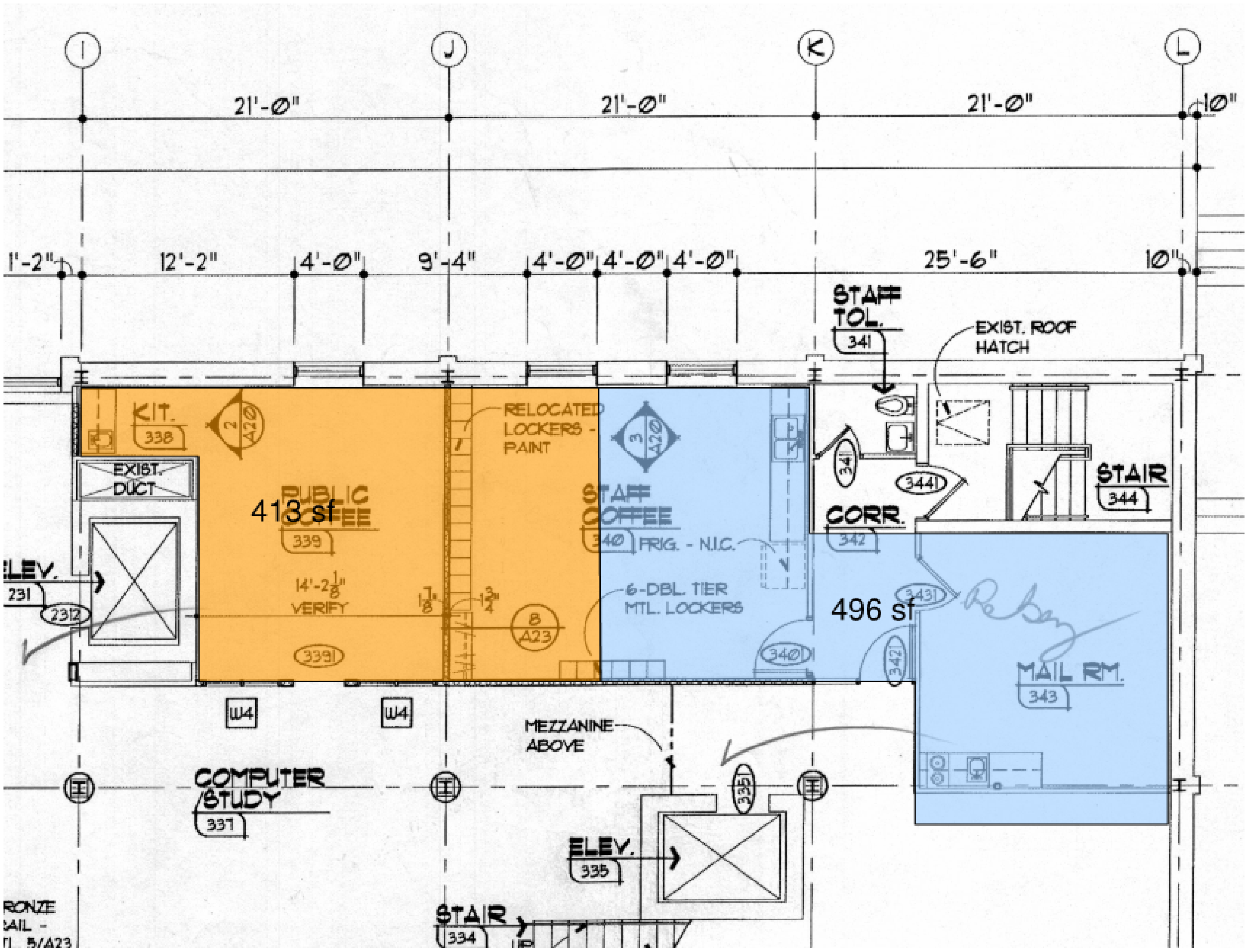


**Figure 10.** The staff break room could be reconfigured to occupy the space shown shaded in orange, while the Makerspace could be reconfigured to occupy the space shown shaded in blue. It is possible that these spaces could be interchanged, with the staff break room being locate on the east side, provided that emergency egress routes are maintained to the stairwell located at the northeast corner of the building.

### *Staff Offices*

With the increase in staff for a merged library, additional office / desk space would need to be established. Offices could be added in the vicinity of the Reference Desk on the second floor of the library along the south wall. Offices could be built in the space currently occupied by the microfilm booths, and the microfilm booths could be relocated to the area currently occupied by study booths.

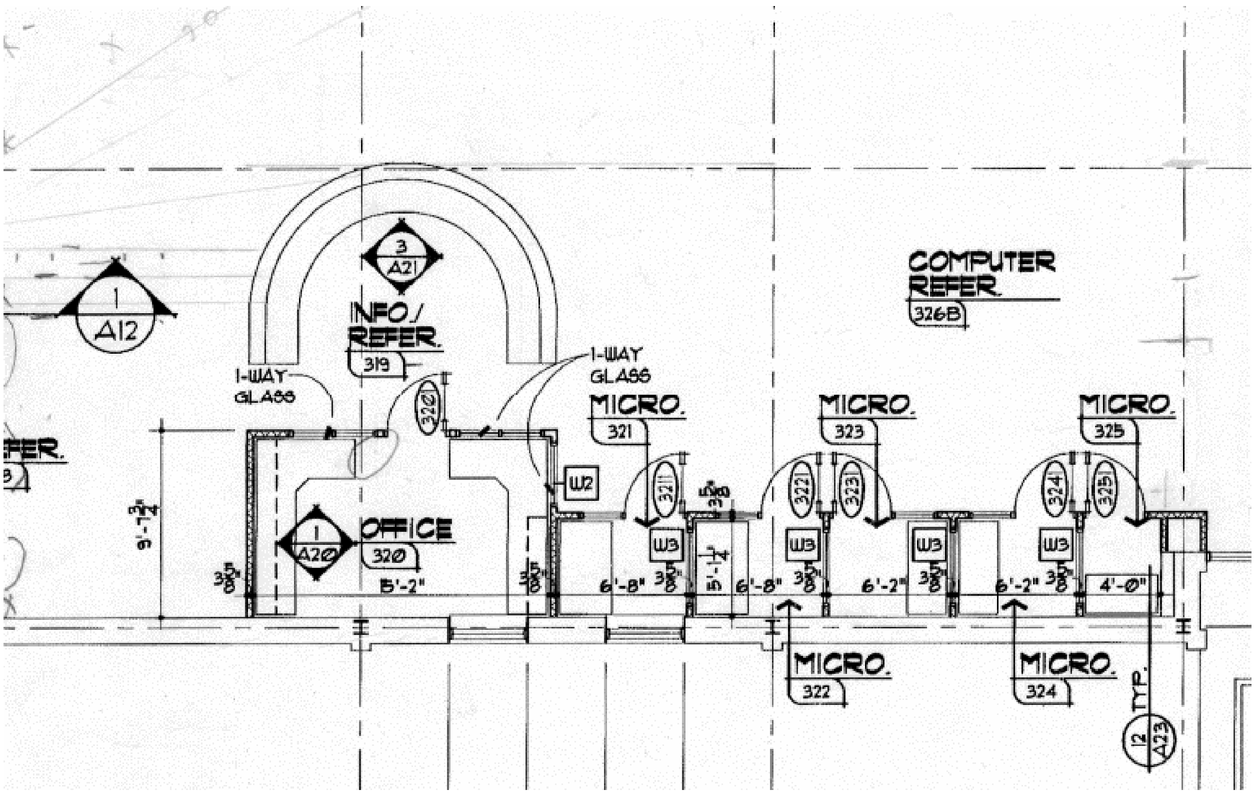


**Figure 11.** The area currently occupied by the reference desk could be reconfigured for additional desks or offices to accommodate the merged staff. Additionally, the area on the south wall of the MPL currently occupied by the microfilm booths could be reconfigured into offices. It is possible that the microfilm booths could be relocated to other areas of the MPL.

***Meeting Rooms***

The meeting room spaces in the MPL are currently underutilized. Janet can provide statistics on usage of each room and the average size of the meetings that are held in the rooms. The south meeting room is approximately 730 square feet and the north meeting room is approximately 1,410 square feet. The south meeting room could be reconfigured into a multi-use room that could house the Friends of the Library book sales as well as the MPL board room. It is possible that the entrance into the south meeting room from the exterior could be enhanced to include signage advertising the Friends of the Library book sales in a fashion that would allow them more continuous sales and better exposure.

The north meeting room could be reconfigured into two meeting spaces separated by a movable wall. This would allow the overall capacity of the room to remain the same but would also allow it to be reconfigured into smaller spaces that would better fit the requirements of the typical meetings held in the meeting rooms of the MPL. It is possible that the reconfigured Friends of the Library book sale room / library board room could be utilized for public meetings as well, thus providing three meeting rooms in lieu of the two that currently exist on the lower level.

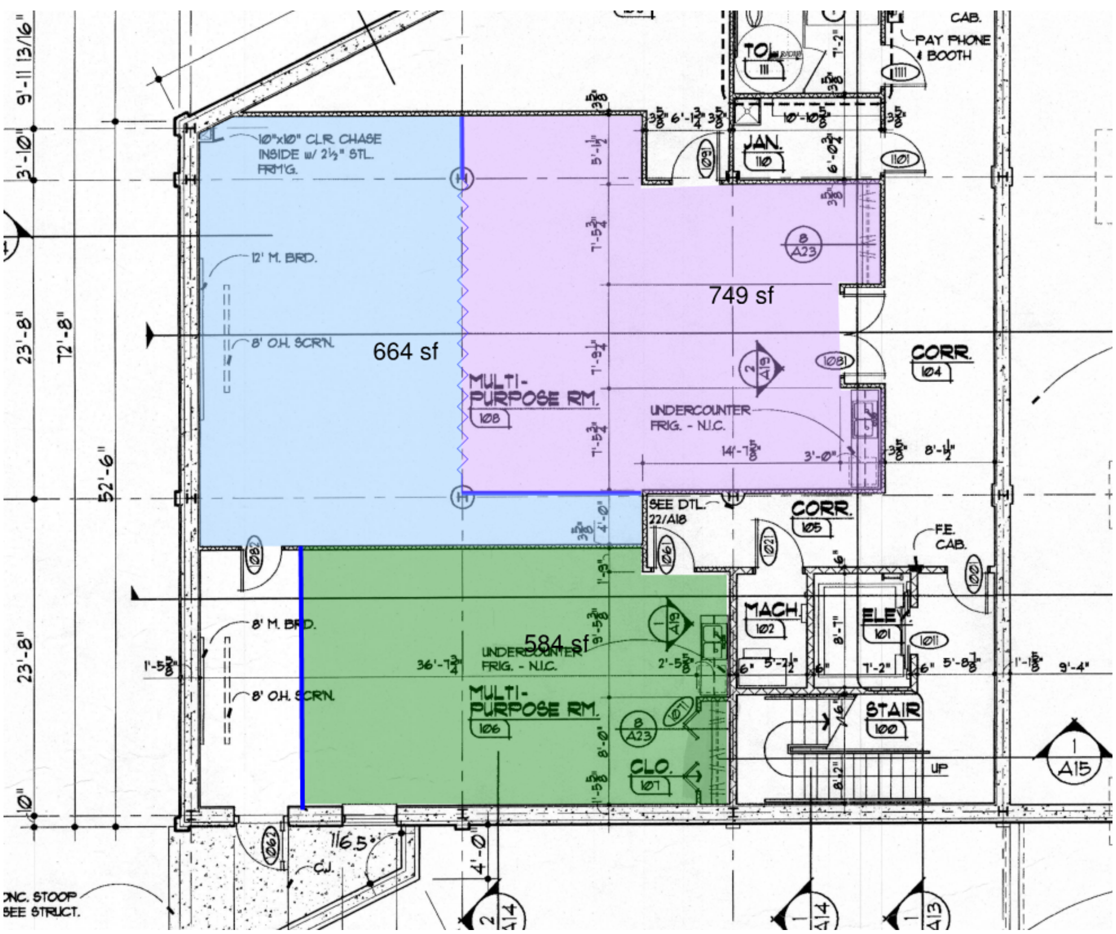


**Figure 12.** The area currently occupied by the north meeting room could be subdivided into two smaller meeting rooms separated by a movable wall as shown above in the blue and purple shading. The existing south meeting room could be reconfigured to accommodate the Friends of the Library book sale room and the board room, shown in green shading, which would be displaced by a coffee shop if implemented as shown in **Figure 6**. The unshaded area to the left of the green shading would serve as an egress corridor for the spaces.