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Aram Public Library

Press Release

For Immediate Release

June 2, 2025

City of Delavan Awards Library Contract to Corporate Contractors, Inc.

Recommended by the Aram Public Library Board of Trustees, and approved by City of Delavan Common Council by vote, Corporate Contractors, Inc. (CCI) was awarded the Aram Public Library expansion/renovation project on Thursday, May 30th. Six contract bids were submitted at the beginning of May and CCI was awarded the project.

CCI is a general contracting firm out of Beloit, WI with over four decades of experience. CCI has completed projects locally and throughout the U.S. including the current Imagination Center at Reindahl Park in Madison, the first new library in more than 25 years. Other projects include the St. Charles Catholic Parish Expansion and the Grain Mass Timber Development, a multi-use facility in Delafield, WI. CCI was awarded the ABC Excellence in Construction award, an honor hosted by the Associated Builders and Contractors. The award is the “pinnacle of achievement” in construction, recognizing remarkable buildings and accomplishments throughout the country.”

“I am very proud of all the work that has been accomplished regarding the Aram Public Library project, especially by the Common Council, the Library Board of Trustees, the Delavan Aram Public Library Foundation, the Friends of the Aram Public Library, and most especially, our donors! While we are working with many industry experts, it is and continues to be a grassroots, community led project.”

“No matter background or economic level, the expanded library will continue to provide resources and services for current and future residents along with visitors to our city,” continued the Mayor. “The expanded and renovated library will benefit our community for many years to come. I look forward to hearing stories from people who will experience the library firsthand along with their children and grandchildren,” shared Mayor Ryan Schroeder.

Aram Public Library’s building, located in downtown Delavan, was completed in 1908 and later expanded in 1991 for a total of 12,112 square feet. As the City’s community population grew and diversified so did the needs for new, varied resources and materials, and services. Prior to 2018, Library trustees and library staff began the first steps for addressing growing community needs for the Aram Public Library. Technology and space usage had changed over the years with the community requesting additional space, study rooms, computer/remote workspace, and flexible meeting rooms. With forward-thinking energy, library trustees and staff began to plan. In 2018, library trustees hired McDonald Schaefer (Madison, WI) to create and complete a feasibility study which demonstrated strong public support. Data, community discussions, and conceptual designs followed with public viewings and the FEH Design (Milwaukee, WI) drawings were selected. The COVID pandemic slowed progress for a

bit but momentum soon grew and in 2021, the City Council approved planning for the library expansion, followed by a Capital Campaign through the Delavan Aram Public Library Foundation (DAPLF). The design phase followed in 2022 with FEH Design as lead architects.

“This is such an exciting time for Delavan and its residents. The city has awarded a contract for the library expansion and soon there will be action on the site at Walworth Avenue. Thank you to all who have helped make this project a reality.” shared President, Bob Betzer and Vice President, Linda Zell of the Aram Public Library trustees.

The immediate next step includes site preparation. Last summer, a few trees were removed, perennial plants were re-homed, utilities shut off and the demolition of the City-purchased house at 121 S. Fourth Street, Delavan completed.

The expanded/renovated library will total a net 21,028 square feet will include:

- Single floor, energy-efficient floorplan
- Updated mechanicals including new HVAC and solar roof panels
- Flexible programming space with totaling 140 seats
- Maker Space and Discover Area for youth, families, caregivers, and individuals
- Four study rooms
- Computer Area including remote workspace
- Larger teen area and a patio for outdoor programming

Katherine Schoofs, Assistant Director/Youth Librarian was excited to share, “the new space will be an inviting, inclusive place where all folks will be welcomed, celebrated, and heard.”

The final 2024 project cost estimate by FEH Design is \$11.2 million which includes design, construction, furnishings, decor, construction financing costs, and contingency funds. The City of Delavan capital funds and DAPLF fundraising commitments total approximately \$2 million leaving a balance of up to \$9.2 million needed from other funding sources. The City of Delavan has been awarded a USDA Rural Development Community Facilities Loan that has an interest rate not to exceed 2.5%, locked-in. This will finance the remaining costs and will be closed after completion of the project.

"This project has come a long way during the last several years and illustrates what a community can accomplish when it has a clear vision and commitment," said Brian Wilson, City Administrator. "The community has exceeded preliminary fundraising expectations and we were very fortunate to obtain the USDA loan when we did before interest rates more than doubled. I want to acknowledge and thank all of the donors and volunteers who have worked so hard to make this project a reality. The renovation and expansion of the library has been a goal of the City for the past two decades and we are finally nearing the finish line. I believe that the people of our community will be very pleased with the finished product and I can't wait until we are standing at the front door and having a ribbon cutting sometime late next year."

In early January, library staff and the city's streets department moved the library to a temporary location at 830 E. Geneva Street, Suite B, Delavan. About 1/6th of the library's collection is at the temporary facility with the remaining held in storage on the main floor at the E. Walworth address. The library needed a temporary location for project efficiency and timing including public and staff safety during construction.

“This summer, we will be hosting a celebratory groundbreaking once details can be organized with the city, contractor, and various stakeholders,” explained Library Director, Michelle Carter. “Work is going to start happening quite rapidly with ongoing updates on our website and social media. A community supported library project of this scale and magnitude is rare and to be a part of it, is a very special privilege,” shared Ms. Carter.

Donations towards the expansion are still needed and accepted. DAPLF is working on Phase II - \$500,000 in grants, pledges, and donations. Do you have any suggestions for us to explore - business partnerships, available grants? Your continued interest and support for this project is gratefully appreciated. Gifts can be made through aramlibrary.org or mailed to: Delavan Aram Public Library Foundation, 404 W. Walworth, Delavan.

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