

**Report and Recommendations of the
Advisory and Finance Committee**



Town of Nahant, Massachusetts

Special Town Meeting

Tuesday, October 20th, 2026 6:30pm

Artwork courtesy of Johnson School students led by Heidi Fiore, Library Teacher



Wells Sherman
Grade 1



Harlon Phillips
Grade 1

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There is 1 Article for this Special Town Meeting. We present the text of the Article as adopted by the Select Board, followed by the Advisory and Finance Committee's Recommendation. Also included is a supporting statement from the Trustees of the Nahant Public Library.

Once the Select Board votes on the final Warrant, no further changes can be made to the Warrant, including: grammar, formatting, or otherwise.

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**Town Of Nahant
Special Town Meeting Warrant
October 20, 2026 6:30 PM
Nahant Town Hall**

ARTICLE 1. (Library Restoration) To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate and/or appropriate from available funds in the treasury, or transfer from available funds, a sum not to exceed \$1,000,000, for the restoration and rehabilitation of the Library, including fire safety, plumbing, electrical, and HVAC upgrades, as well as interior refurbishment, including the payment of all incidental or related costs, or take any other action relative thereto.

Recommendation from the Advisory and Finance Committee

Introduction

This Article will invest \$1 million of Town funds to restore the Nahant Public Library's aging and neglected interior and bring it up to modern standards. The Town's investment would be matched by \$3 million in private, donated funds, effectively turning \$1 million into \$4 million, a 3 to 1 return on the Town's investment. This can be done without any new taxes by appropriating the Town's share from the currently available proceeds of the Coast Guard housing lot sales. \$1.3 million of the Coast Guard Housing proceeds plus additional proceeds from sale of the remaining lot will remain for other purposes. This is a rare opportunity to earn a 3 to 1 return with no direct impact to the taxpayer.

The Advisory and Finance Committee thanks the Friends of the Library and the generous donors for their extraordinary efforts, their civic spirit and their donations.

Focus on Restoration and Upgrades to the Interior

The \$4 million will complete a comprehensive restoration of the Library building. During the 1980s, 1990s and early 2000's very little long-term maintenance was done to the Library. Building systems, such as electrical, HVAC, security system, fire detection, fire suppression and data connections remained antiquated or nonexistent. Beginning in the early 2000's, the Library Trustees and Friends began a comprehensive restoration and renovation of the building's exterior, guided by a professionally prepared master plan. Exterior work is now complete, funded largely through Community Preservation grants plus other Town funding totaling \$1.5 million. The remaining work addresses the interior's neglected infrastructure and building systems.

For additional details see Master Plan: <https://nahant.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/10/NPL-Master-Plan-update-2025-3-31.pdf>

Benefits of the Interior Work

The proposed project is a comprehensive renovation and restoration of the Library interior at an estimated cost of \$4 million. The estimates were prepared by a professional architect and a professional estimator who are familiar with the Library from their work during the exterior renovation. This work is ready to begin immediately and is estimated to take 2 years. The work includes:

- Upgrading electrical systems to modern standards
- Upgrading plumbing and sewerage systems to modern standards
- A fire alarm system and a fire suppression system; without these there is the potential for a catastrophic loss
- A security system
- Upgrading telephone and data systems
- Climate control
- Interior refinishing and restoration
- Project management, administration and contingencies

Library interior renovation and restoration estimate: <https://nahant.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/10/Nahant-Public-Library-Updated-Master-Cost-Estimates-September-2026.pdf>

Financing

The proposed project will be financed as follows:

Source of funds	Amount
Town appropriation from Coast Guard housing proceeds	\$ 1,000,000
Challenge grant from a generous donor through the Friends of the Library	2,000,000
Donations from generous citizens through the Friends of the Library	1,000,000
Total	\$ 4,000,000

The Library Trustees and the Friends of the Library recently conducted a very successful campaign to raise funds to complete the interior work. One generous donor provided a \$2 million challenge grant and a group of donors provided an additional \$1 million for a total of \$3 million. This, plus \$1 million from the town, will fund completing the Library renovation and restoration. Again, the Advisory and Finance Committee thanks all involved.

State law requires using the Coast Guard housing sales proceeds for capital projects, not for operating expenses such as salaries. The proposed Library restoration project meets the criteria of the State Law. There is currently a \$2.3 million balance in the Coast Guard housing account and after the proposed Library project \$1.3 million would remain for other town projects.

Grants and other outside funding are increasingly hard to obtain in today's financial environment and the 3:1 match presents an extremely rare opportunity to bring our Library up to modern standards without burdening the taxpayers of Nahant.

Source of Town Funds

The Town Administrator, the Select Board, the Friends of the Library, the Library Trustees, the Community Preservation Committee and the Advisory and Finance Committee evaluated two possible sources of Town funds for this project, Coast Guard housing proceeds and/or Community Preservation funds. As the analysis below demonstrates, use of the Coast Guard Housing proceeds is recommended.

Criteria	Coast Guard Housing Proceeds	Community Preservation Funds
Availability	Available immediately	- Requires CPC recommendation and future Town Meeting approval - Likely not available until next Annual Town Meeting in May 2027
Impact on other projects	\$1.3 million of the Coast Guard Housing proceeds plus additional proceeds from sale of the remaining lot will remain for other purposes	- Would consume a significant portion of limited CPC funds, reducing amount available for other CPC eligible projects - CPC has already funded approximately \$1.5 million of the Library exterior renovations.
Borrowing	No borrowing necessary. No interest or financing costs to increase project costs	Requires borrowing, adding to project cost

Details Matter

The Town and the Friends of the Library anticipate a signed Gift Agreement prior to the Special Town Meeting. No Town funds will be disbursed until the agreement is signed. This Gift Agreement will protect the interests of the Town, the Friends of the Library and the donors. The Gift Agreement will contain provisions that:

- Certify that donations will be available when needed.
- Specify disbursement arrangements. Funds will be disbursed in blocks of \$250,000, as needed, and supported by appropriate invoices, approvals and documentation. Funds will be disbursed by the Town and the Library at the 1 to 3 ratio described above.
- Establish project management and administration arrangements.

Click here to view the Gift Agreement: https://nahant.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/10/2026.09.30.Gift_agreement_signed.pdf

Learn More

See the Town website for details regarding this Article and the Library renovation/restoration project, or you may scan the following QR code:



If you want help viewing these documents, please visit the Library who can provide a computer and assistance.

We look forward to seeing you at the Special Town Meeting on October 20, 2026 at 6:30 PM at the Town Hall.

Advisory and Finance Committee

Barbara Beatty

Tim Bell

Melanie Drayton

Alex Kent

Dan McMackin

Josie Reis

Dana Sheehan

Robert Vanderslice

Deborah Warren

APPENDIX 1

Supporting Statement from the Trustees of the Nahant Public Library

TRUSTEES OF THE NAHANT PUBLIC LIBRARY
STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF FUNDING FOR THE NAHANT PUBLIC LIBRARY
PROJECT

On June 1, 1895, the citizens of Nahant opened the doors to a Tudor-style granite library designed by the distinguished Boston firm of Ball and Dabney. As the first electrified building in town, it stood as a symbol of civic pride and progress. The original 1819 books donated by William Wood have evolved into all that we enjoy today. Original artwork adorns the walls. In 1991, this remarkable structure was added to the State and National Registers of Historic Places for its architectural and cultural significance. For 131 years, it has served as a beacon of learning, belonging, and imagination.

The Nahant Public Library is a free and welcoming place for all. It offers hardbound books and e-books, audio and visual materials, games, jigsaw puzzles, computers, free streaming of movies and music, and museum passes. Programs for all ages have multiplied with storytelling for children and workshops for adults. There is a mystery book club, a crafting circle, author talks, literacy training, and a memory care program. A new Mahjong club has begun. In 2025 a record number of 4,531 people attended programs at the library.

Our Public Library is often considered everyone's favorite building in Nahant. People remember it as a place they used very often in their childhood. Although many adults may have not visited it in years, when they do cross its threshold, they are taken aback by the condition of the beautiful Library they have held in their memories.

Our Library has reached a critical juncture. The interior infrastructure is failing because its physical condition has been neglected for decades. Multi-year Community Preservation grants have completed the exterior building envelope projects to rebuild the wraparound porch, repoint exterior stone masonry, and repair the slate roof, flashing and gutters, but no funds have been appropriated for the interior. The building's functioning as a welcoming and comfortable public library, and the health and safety of users and staff, are threatened in numerous ways:

- The current 200-amp electrical service is insufficient for modern library operations. Our town electrician has recommended increasing the capacity to 800 amps. Lighting needs to be improved along with outlets. Aged electrical should be replaced with building code mandated panels and distribution.
- The building lacks fire sprinklers, a modern fire detection system, and there is no modern security system to protect books and artwork.

- The existing heating system is at its end. Lack of air conditioning creates an uncomfortable environment that is taxing to Library users and harder still on the books and artwork. A new system providing heat, air conditioning and ventilation preserves the books and artwork and will provide Library users with a pleasant environment.
- Original windows, while beautiful, are inefficient and old doors need constant attention due to weather and antique hardware. Plumbing pipes have corroded; flooring, plaster ceilings, walls and historic woodwork all require restoration after decades of deferred maintenance.

The need for investment in the Library is not new. The condition of the 131-year-old building has been studied and documented for many years. In 2019 Community Preservation funding supported preparation of a comprehensive master plan to address both the physical and programmatic needs of a building designed in 1895 for 21st century use. The 2019 Master Plan identified significant infrastructure, safety, and accessibility deficiencies and preservation needs that have remained largely unaddressed because of funding limitations. In 2025, the Library Trustees updated the Master Plan and worked with Community Preservation funding to address exterior needs, however, the interior conditions and future needs were not addressed. Our Library architect, Richard Smith, together with cost estimators A.M. Fogarty, provided the figure of \$4 million to complete the work on the interior of the Library.

The Board of Trustees and Friends of the Library began to explore avenues for funding for the major upgrades, understanding that Community Preservation funding alone was insufficient. Working together, we were able to secure a challenge grant of \$2 million from a very generous donor, who wishes to remain anonymous, if the town and community-at-large would match the grant. In the last year, we have raised another \$1 million privately from individual Nahant townspeople. We are pleased to be able to **offer the town a historic 3:1 match in requesting the final \$1 million** needed to complete the project.

Without requiring any borrowing or new taxes to the residents of Nahant, and with \$3 million of private funding in hand, we are asking the Town to approve a contribution of \$1 million, sourced from a portion of the excess proceeds of the Coast Guard housing lot-sales **in order to complete the renovation of our historic Library**. State law requires using the Coast Guard housing sale proceeds for capital projects (and not operating expenses). Should the vote pass, more than \$1 million would remain from the sale of the Coast Guard housing lots for other Town projects. The Library is a municipal building, owned by the Town of Nahant, for the benefit and enjoyment of Nahant's residents. The Town has the responsibility to maintain the building's infrastructure so that it offers a safe and secure environment.

If townspeople vote to approve the funding, the project timeline commences with the preparation of a bid set of plans and specifications, followed by bidding under State procurement laws.

Following the awarding of contracts, construction is expected to occur during fiscal years 2027 and 2028.

The Library has existed for more than 100 years with very little renovation. Now is the time to fix what is wrong, renovate what is obsolete, and implement what is necessary. Its future depends on this project, and we kindly ask for your support.

The Library is everybody's home away from home. It is a place to learn, to reflect, and to connect in a beautiful place that is open to all. By renovating our historic Library building, we will ensure that it remains a beacon of knowledge and a gathering place for our community for decades to come.



Lucas Cardas
Grade 1



Kensie Mills
Grade 1

**Nahant Town Hall
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