



Why Vote YES for Article I on March 3

Make Pawlet Library Safely Accessible for All — Year-round

A modern rural library wears many hats. The Pawlet Public Library typically has 4,800 visitors per year — serving 800 card holders and hosting 277 community meetings.

Most meetings, classes and events are held in rooms on the main floor. During open hours, meetings can block access to library collections. During off hours, they are a security concern, as the whole building must remain open.

The finished room downstairs – the Matt Waite Room, with a 50 person capacity – is perfect

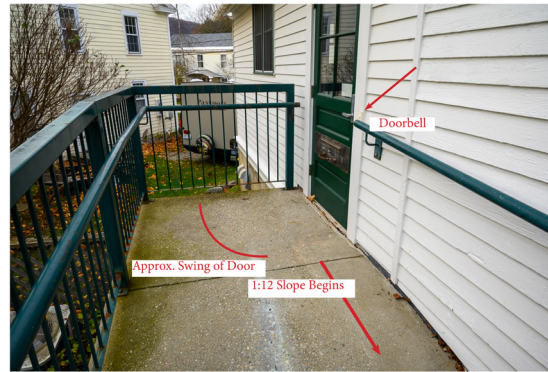
for small and mid-sized community groups. But, because it is not accessible under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), it cannot

be booked for events open to the public. There is also no restroom on the lower level.

In developing its 2020-2024 Strategic Plan, the Library team conducted 8 months of interviews with individuals and community groups. They learned that people want the library to serve as a community gathering place, to host community discussions and engagement programs, and to offer the Town and community groups ways to work together. *The library needs access to all usable space.* For more information visit PawletPublicLibrary.Wordpress.com



Current accessibility is inadequate. The only access for those with mobility issues is a 65-foot long ramp at the rear of the building. While the ramp is ADA-compliant, it has the steepest incline the law allows. Many find it difficult to use.



Once someone using a wheelchair, walker or crutches gets to the top, they must buzz to be let in, then wait on the ramp slope for someone inside to come open the door.



The ramp is exposed to the elements. Falling snow and ice are real dangers. A contractor clears snow after major snow events, and there are embedded heating elements. Still, much of the winter it is unusable.

The ramp goes *only* to the main floor. The lower level Matt Waite room is not served.

Article I Solution: *New Side Entry providing ADA-compliant accessibility to the whole library:*

- hydraulic ADA lift and stairs to both floors
- addition is a 1-hour rated fire exit enclosure
- plan also adds a lower level ADA restroom

This gives easy access to those with mobility issues – from bum knees to wheelchairs to baby strollers. It makes the Matt Waite Room



accessible for small and mid-sized meetings and exhibits. After hours, the main floor can be locked, enhancing security. The plan has been reviewed and approved by: VT Division of Fire Safety, Pawlet Fire Chief, Select Board, Library Trustees, and Preservation Trust of Vermont.

What will this cost? The professionally estimated cost is \$295,000, minus \$135,000 in expected grants. Five grantors have reviewed the plan favorably. Applications can move forward *once the town votes its support.* With a low-cost 20-year loan, estimated annual property tax increase will be:

- \$9.15, for a home valued at \$150,000
- \$18.30, for a home valued at \$300,000