

# Councilors Back Kilton Library

WEST LEBANON — Despite the economic downturn, Lebanon will maintain its \$2.6 million commitment to the construction of Kilton Library in West Lebanon, city councilors decided unanimously at their work session yesterday for the city's annual budget.

The councilors did approve cuts to two proposed items in the city's capital budget: the \$250,000 development of the Lower Meadows Playing Field Complex, and \$1.4 million for street rehabilitation and reconstruction. A permit is pending for the playing fields, they reasoned, and all street reconstruction should be done in conjunction with the separation of the combined sewer overflow, a \$2.3 million line item that is required by the federal government.

Taxpayers would have been expected to shoulder roughly \$5.6 million of the proposed \$11.6 million capital budget proposal, a cost that would have resulted in a tax rate increase of around 27 cents per \$1,000 in assessed value in 2010. The cuts would reduce that increase to roughly 18 cents, or \$43 on a house assessed at \$240,000.

Building the new Kilton Library in West Lebanon is worth that and more, councilors said. The city has committed to contributing \$1.5 million to the estimated \$4.7 million construction project. It will also extend a \$1.1 million line of credit to the library with the expectation that it would ultimately be paid back through donations.

"This is one of the most important projects that the city could do in this economy as a stimulus," said Mayor Karen Liot Hill.

The bid documents have been written in such a way that subcontractors based in the Upper Valley would get preference, said Lou Ungarelli, director of city libraries. Bids are due back within the month and increased competition among contractors for work may mean lower costs, he said.

The library will have a "multiplier effect" on the West Lebanon area both by putting a vacant lot to work and drawing people to the neighborhood, councilors said.

"This to me is a catalyst type of project," said Nicole Cormen.

— *Kristen Fountain*