

# Kilton library project funding at halfway mark

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**WEST LEBANON** — The Kilton Public Library fundraising project is nearing 50 percent of its \$5.2 million target, and organizers are optimistic they will reach their goal and begin construction next year.

Officials told the Lebanon City

Council Wednesday night that they have raised \$2.3 million so far, which includes a \$1.3 million gift from James and Willena Kilton, who started the project in 1998.

Project organizers are looking to raise another \$1.3 million this summer and are hoping to have the city put up the remaining \$1.5 million when they come before the council in the fall.

“Last time I stood before you, I was optimistic. I still am, despite the economy,” Walter Paine, treasurer of the Lebanon Public Library Foundation, told the council, emphasizing that the economy will turn around. “Call me the eternal optimist,” he said.

He informed councilors that there are still nearly 30 donor solicitations remaining, and he believes

that all goals laid out are attainable. He told councilors that the average corporate donation has been \$67,000.

Organizers said \$60,000 in engineering services have also been pledged by Lebanon-based Bonhag Associates, to help receive LEED (Leadership in Energy and

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stay,” Paine said.

Library Director Lou Ungarelli said he too is optimistic the project will be funded adequately to begin construction in the spring and complete it in 2010, while hoping the city will back the project financially.

Councilor Stephen Wood echoed similar sentiments. “I hope the council will see it fit to help,” Woods said.

Cornelia Purcell, the library’s capital campaign coordinator, expressed hope that the council will match the \$1.5 million gift from the Kiltons.

Assistant Mayor Georgia Tuttle asked if there was an option where the money could be paid out over the course of five years. Purcell indicated that could be an option.

The fundraisers also fielded other questions from the council, including how they would cope with rising construction costs. They said they were told that inflation is built into the budget as long as they stay on course.

Ungarelli said they decided not to include a basement in the building because in the long-run, it would be more cost-effective and energy-efficient to build on a slab.

The library will be built on the former site of the Red Cross Pharmacy, a 1.24-acre property which was owned by the Kiltons, and was purchased for \$500,000.

The couple died in 1998.

The new library is proposed to be a 15,000-square-foot facility built on one story across from the current West Lebanon Library. It will include a reading garden, children and adults’ sections, meeting room, art gallery, playground, and parking area.