



For Immediate Release

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New York State Library Construction Fund Awards Grant for Emergency Restoration Work on the Historic Cohoes Public Library Building

Cohoes, NY (September 9, 2021) – Work to restore and reopen the historic Cohoes Public Library building will soon get underway following today’s announcement of a New York State Library Construction Fund grant for required emergency restoration work, and other projects, at the historic building.

The \$116,127 grant, announced today by New York State Senator Neil Breslin and Assemblymember John T. McDonald III, was awarded to the Cohoes Public Library as part of the NYS Library Construction Fund’s FY2020 grant program. The total project cost is \$154,837, with the City of Cohoes providing \$38,710 in matching funds.

The Cohoes Public Library building has been closed since July after portions of the external bluestone façade fell onto the sidewalk. City officials, consulting with engineers and preservation architects, determined that emergency restoration work is required on three sections of the external wall of the historic former church at 169 Mohawk Street, which houses the Cohoes Public Library, Parsons Child and Family Center, Mary’s Corner, and a private medical practice.

“This New York State Library Construction funding is essential for us to do the emergency restoration work required to reopen our beautiful library to the public. We are firmly committed to ensuring the long term viability of our historic library building. This emergency phase of the restoration project is a critical step in that process,” said Cohoes Mayor Bill Keeler. “We are extremely grateful to Assemblymember John McDonald, Senator Neil Breslin, the State Education Department, DASNY, the Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, and all of those who worked with us and the Cohoes Library Board to secure this vital funding.”

Assemblymember John T. McDonald III said, “Securing the funding to ensure that the historic City of Cohoes Library remains a resource for our community members was of the utmost importance. All of the partners came together and were proactive and cooperative to prevent any undue delay in addressing the building façade issues and working toward a funding solution. Thank you to Mayor Keeler and my state partners who worked with me to facilitate this necessary funding commitment.”

Senator Neil Breslin said, “Libraries are a critical part of our community. I am glad the City of Cohoes Library has been able to tap into NYS Library Construction Funding which will provide the library with the resources necessary to preserve this City of Cohoes treasure.”

Cohoes Public Library Board President Carol Clingan said: “I am delighted to learn of the award of NYS Construction Funds for emergency restoration of our building facade. This marks the beginning of an exciting new chapter in the revitalization of the Cohoes Public Library. On behalf of the trustees and staff, I’d like to thank the City of Cohoes for its support, the Cohoes Senior Center for providing us with a temporary home, and the Upper Hudson Library System for their assistance. We look forward to the completion of this work and welcoming our community back into its library.”

The New York State LCF funding announced today, along with the city's matching funds, will make it possible to complete the necessary masonry and roof restoration work on two locations of the west façade and on the east face of the former bell tower of the building, according to City Engineer Garry Nathan. The emergency restoration work is estimated to cost approximately \$97,000 and will require approximately two to three months to complete, weather permitting. The additional awarded funding will be used to address the building's air conditioning system.

With guidance and support of Federal, State and local officials including State Senator Breslin, Assemblymember McDonald, Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation staff, and Upper Hudson Library Director Tim Burke, the City is continuing to pursue government, foundation, and philanthropic funding to complete a comprehensive restoration of the historic building and transform it into a 21st Century library, according to Mayor Keeler.

The Cohoes Public Library Building, built in 1895, is an historic award winning adaptive re-use of the former St. John's Episcopal Church, acquired by the City in the 1970's. The building, home to a replica of the Cohoes Mastodon, a historic clock, and much more, last underwent a comprehensive renovation in 1984. The building is a contributing structure to the designated Cohoes Downtown Historic District, listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Cohoes Public Library Temporary Remote Services in Cohoes Senior Center

The Cohoes Public Library is temporarily operating Monday thru Friday from 10 am until 2 pm in the Cohoes Senior Center at 10 Cayuga Plaza. Library patrons can email any time, call, or go to the temporary location to order, pick up, or return materials. Library users are also encouraged to use online services to request materials. On site, visitors to the temporary library can select from a limited collection of new books, DVDs, audiobooks, and a variety of books for both children and adults. Museum passes, funded by the Friends of the Cohoes Public Library, may also be borrowed, according to Clingan. The Cohoes Public Library website is <https://www.cohoespubliclibrary.org/>

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