

NEWS

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Study shows promise for library project

Commissioners and board pursue next chapter based on final report and land donation

PLATTSBURG, Mo., Nov. 8, 2025—The Clinton County Initiative (CCI) has completed a two-year feasibility study confirming that local library services are both needed and possible in Clinton County. The comprehensive report shows strong support for a smaller, multi-use modern facility designed to serve as both a library and community resource center of connection for all ages.

The 300-page final report, available at www.maximizenwmo.org/clinton-county, includes feedback from hundreds of residents, business owners, educators, and elected officials. Its findings reflect a growing understanding that today's libraries go far beyond books—serving as places for learning, connection, entrepreneurship, and local pride.

“Our nonprofit group put a lot of time and effort into inviting people in every community to participate,” said Joe Gagnon, president of CCI. “While the first attempt at a tax levy last April was disappointing, the results were close in several precincts. Since then, we’ve heard residents just need more information before saying yes, which is why we feel this project is possible. CCI will continue to be advocates as further communication and next steps are in the hands of the library district board, friends, and commissioners.”

Among the study's key recommendations are to begin with the legally required small property tax levy in the most supportive parts of the county and to establish online services as soon as possible to give residents immediate access to digital resources they would otherwise have to pay for out of pocket. The

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plan calls for a temporary facility to open first, while partnerships with other organizations and private donors grow support for a long-term multi-use center that blends the historical architecture of the county seat with modern features inspiring innovation. Land for the project—a 5-acre parcel in Plattsburg—has already been donated by the Hobbs Family, contingent on a successful levy.

A library district board of trustees and a separate Friends of the Clinton County Library group were both formed in Fall 2024 following early recommendations from the study. Board members, including President Christel Gollnick (Trimble), Treasurer Paul Pottier (Gower), and Member-At-Large Tony Stone (Plattsburg), met with county commissioners on November 4, 2025, to discuss next steps. All three county commissioners expressed support for continuing to pursue the library project and will decide within 30 days whether to proceed with the recommendation to subdivide the district per Missouri Revised Statute 182.015.2 starting with Concord and Hardin Townships and prepare for another levy vote in 2026.

“We may be living in the Digital Age, but human connections and learning from one another will never be replaced by computers,” said Gollnick. “The best public libraries today provide not only digital resources, books, and traditional services for children and adults, but also gathering spaces for remote workers, entrepreneurs, people in job transitions, students, retirees launching new projects, gardeners and farmers learning new skills, history buffs, artists, and makers of all kinds. We are committed to using tax dollars conservatively while leveraging outside funding to make this vision a reality.”

The library board has approved a motion from Vice-President Trey Talley (Plattsburg/Lathrop), to adopt the recommendations from CCI as an initial phased plan of action. Minutes from Secretary Jennifer Howerton (Lathrop), state the board will follow state laws and Missouri Public Library Standards regarding age-appropriate access to all reading materials and intends to follow responsible bidder and prevailing wage guidelines when the time comes to move forward with construction.

The feasibility study was funded through \$160,000 in cash and in-kind contributions from more than 150 volunteers, matched by a \$50,000 USDA-Rural Business Development Grant. It was inspired by the 2021-2022 *Dream Big Listening Project*, in which residents and other stakeholders identified job growth, high-speed broadband access, and a safe place to access library services and connect with each other as top priorities for improving quality of life in Clinton County.

The Clinton County Initiative’s mission statement is, **“We come together to create a growing economy, an inclusive and diverse countywide community, and a vibrant learning environment as the building blocks of a GREAT RURAL LIFE.”** For more information about this nonprofit organization, how to get involved, and the guidance they are using—*The Maximize [My Community] Journey™* through Maximize NWMO/The Community Foundation of Northwest Missouri, please visit <https://www.maximizenwmo.org/clinton-county> or contact CCI at connect@clintoncoinitiative.org.

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