**By Byron Higgin,**

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Friends of the Minneota Library asked the city for help Monday night. The response: “We’ll check it out.”
Dave Dovre (left), representing the library group asked the Minneota City Council to use it’s “revolving” fund money to speed the renovation of the Big Store in to a public library.
“We’re looking for a monetary allocation to keep this project moving forward,” said Dovre.
He requested $160,000 from the city with $53,333 required immediately, $53,333 in April 2011 and the remaining balance in August, 2011.

“We have an estimate of $164,000 to finish the restoration work and provide a space of 5,000 square feet,” said Dovre.
He was backed by a contingent of about 30 people, all of whom were conected to or interested in the project.
Mayor Tony Esping indicated the large crowd impressed him and may even have changed his opinion about the project.
“Those funds, coupled with other monies will allow the completition of the building restoration and create a finished space, owned by the city, which can be immediately used,” said Dovre.
“If we use this money we could be open by Bug Days next year. We’d still have a $100,000 funding cap but that’s do-able by writing grants and fundraising,” said Dovre.
“Every grant we’ve asked for, we got. The state likes this project,” Dovre added.

“I don’t feel this project is going to get any cheaper for the city,” Dovre told the council.
The council’s reaction was first and foremost to study the implications of the use of this money on the city budget and to contact DSI concerning potential use of the rotating funds for the

library project.
The fund was set up to use for commercial and residential development. Fund users repay the funds at a lower rate, thus creating the revolving nature of the fund.
The subject of using the revolving funds (about $95,000) for the library project came up when DSI suggested the current fund should be earmarked or moved to another account in an effort to attract more funds for rehabilitation projects.
“It’s unbelieveable what you’ve done,” said Mayor Esping, regarding the fact the Friends of the Library have raised over $339,000 for this project.
They’ve already restored the structure of the basement and have installed a HVAC heating and cooling system with some of the raised funds.
“The work completed with this money will include restoration of the pressed tin ceiling, plater repairs, refinishing of all wood surfaces within the building, refinishing and restoration of the hardwood floor, insulation between the first and second floor and interior doors between the big store and the senior center,” said Dovre.
He reminded the council about the need for the library by saying, “As the economy goes down, the library use goes up.” He also said 75 percent of the patrons of the library are Minneota residents.
“Nothing can be dropped that quickly on us,” said Councilman Todd Bretschneider. “If the money can be used for that, we’ll look at it,” He said.
Councilman Lyall Gislason said, “If at all possible, if we can allocate the money for it, without putting another project in jeopardy, I’m all for it.”
Dovre pressed the council for an immediate decision, but Bretschneider added, “We need to make sure everything’s kosher. It’s not a simple yes or no at this time.”
Gislason responded, “We need to investigate this.”
Mayor Esping was concerned about the budget, which needs to be certified and he wasn’t willing to make a commitment until he knew the impact this financial plan would make on the budget.
“My fear is if we don’t get a buy-in from the city, it’s going to hurt the project,” said Dovre.
The council indicated an answer would be given to the Friends of the Library at the November 1 city council meeting.

IN ANOTHER matter, the council approved the removal of about 25 boxes of books stored in the Big Store basement.
Rains on September 23 resulted in water in the basement.
The boxes are damp and the books are moldy and need to be carried to the trash.
Councilman Gislason volunteered to find a group of people to assist in removing the books and the council agreed.