



2012 Library Budget Proposal FAQs

Q. What is the Library's Proposed Budget for 2012? What portion comes from taxes?

A. The total proposed budget is \$3,954,181, a 2.45% increase over 2011. The tax levy portion of the budget is \$3,651,139, a 2.94% increase. Historically about 92% of Library revenues come from the annual tax levy as is the case with the proposed 2012 budget.

Q. What is the impact on tax rates and individual taxpayers?

A. The Library District is comprised of Clifton Park and most of Halfmoon. The 2012 budget proposal calls for the Clifton Park library tax rate to increase by 3.29% and the Halfmoon rate to *decrease* by 1.26% due to a change in equalization rates. The impact on a home in Clifton Park assessed at \$235,000 is approximately \$8.00 annually while a similarly assessed house in Halfmoon would see an approximate \$3.00 decline in their annual library tax.

Q. What were the main challenges impacting the 2012 Budget?

A. The Board's two main goals were to produce a zero impact budget for 2012 while protecting the ability of the Library to meet the current demand for services and programs. But a dramatic increase in state retirement obligations (34%) coupled with a significant loss in interest revenues (89%) presented a difficult challenge. Additionally the growth in the tax base has slowed these last few years as a direct result of the poor economy. All of these factors contributed to the budget increase. We were however, able to mitigate a portion of the increase by applying previously appropriated funds, enacting a pay freeze, reducing costs and holding the line on other costs.

Q. What is the largest category of Library expenses?

A. As in any service organization, staff salaries and benefits are the largest single category of cost, about 52% of the total proposed budget. That's why absorbing a 34% increase amounting to \$110,000 in additional dollars for state retirement system obligations is a substantial hurdle for us.

Q. How does the economic downturn affect the Library?

A. Historically low interest rates have substantially eroded interest revenue. In 2008, for instance, we had \$74,000 in interest revenues. We expect 2012 interest revenue to be about \$5,000 or less. The dramatic increase in state retirement obligations is a direct result of the lack of growth in the State's Retirement System impacting every participating organization and the limited growth of our tax base is a result of the difficult economy and high unemployment.

Q. Is the Library subject to the recent tax cap legislation?

A. Yes, the Library budget is subject to the recent tax legislation that caps property tax increases at 2%. However, the law provides exemptions for certain costs and allows overriding the cap with a resolution passed by 60% of the members of a governing body. In our case the exemptions allowed were minor compared to the total budget. Faced with the only other alternative of reducing services, the Library Board of Trustees unanimously passed an override resolution at its regularly scheduled board meeting of August 15, 2011.

2012 Library Budget Proposal FAQs (Cont'd)

Q. Why are there no Trustee candidates?

A. As of the legislated deadline of 5pm 30 days prior to the scheduled CPH Budget and Trustee vote, no eligible candidates had filed a petition to run for either the two Halfmoon trustee positions or the one Clifton Park position which will become vacant at year end. Consequently, the sitting Trustees will proceed to appoint Trustees to fill those vacant positions for the next year, until the next election, all in accordance with its bylaws. Additional information will be forthcoming for any persons interested in interviewing with the Board of Trustees for appointment to those positions.

Q. Is the Library fully utilized?

A. Active card-carrying patrons now total over 45,000 a 40% increase since the new Library opened and new cards continue to be issued at a record pace. Our records also show we had 500,000 people come through our doors in 2010 and our website had an additional 350,000 visits. A record 22,000 individuals attended 850 programs in 2010.

Q. How do you measure the value of the Library to the community?

A. We find value is often unique to each user. For instance parents see great value in introducing their children to literature and a host of subjects through attending library programs. Others like job seekers use the library for job search assistance. On a bottom-line basis, we can calculate the Library delivers a 3x return on its annual cost when Library volume is compared to the cost of widely accepted commercial alternatives. It's clear the Library fulfills a wide range of needs based on the growth in the demand for all types of library services and programs from borrowing books, DVDs, audio books, attending programs, or simply using the library as a place to read or meet a friend.

Q. When is the Library Budget Vote and where is it held?

A. The Annual Library Budget Vote will be held on Thursday, September 15, 2011 as prescribed in our legislated charter and will be held at the Library at 475 Moe Road between 7am and 9pm. Registered voters, both renters and property owners, living in the Library District are eligible to vote after showing proof of address. Voters must be registered at least 30 days prior to the vote. Absentee ballot applications are available online at www.chlibrary.org or at library services desks for those unable to vote at the library on September 15th.

Q. How do I get more information?

A. The *Voter Information Brochure* will be mailed to Library District residents after Labor Day, at www.cphlibrary.org, attend an **Information Meeting** at the Library on Thursday, September 8 at 7pm or contact Alex Gutelius, Director at 371-8622.