



Questions and Answers Regarding the April 28 Town Ballot Vote

(prepared by the Friends of the Library)

Why does the Town need an override?

At the Special Town Meeting on March 10, two residents proposed from the meeting floor, an amended article regarding the additional funding the NMRSD would need from Townsend in FY26. This amended article was a proposal to fund the \$611,000 needed by the schools through the Town's free cash (\$200,000) and general operating fund (\$411,000). Thereby eliminating the need for a separate override vote for the schools. The Town's budget cannot fund the \$611,000 without a Prop 2.5 override vote.

What portion of the Town's overall budget is the library?

The library is 1.7% of the total town budget.

What costs does the Town pay for as regards library operations?

The Town pays for the salaries/benefits of all library staff in addition to all facility costs and books/materials costs. In addition the Town also pays the CWMARS membership fees, the online library event calendar costs and the library internet fees.

How are the many library programs and museum passes funded?

All Library programs and museum passes are funded by The Friends of the Library, The Library Endowment, the Amanda Dwight fund and grants from the Massachusetts Cultural Council. The town does not contribute any funding toward the costs of these programs.

How are the library computers/monitors and copiers/printers funded?

The computers/monitors and public copiers/printers are funded through the TPL Endowment and grants from the Community Foundation.

The library is certified by the MA Board of Library Commissioners. Why is that important?

A certified library that meets the standards stipulated by the state of MA receives annual state funding. In Townsend's case this amounts to approximately \$30,000/year. Our library receives state grant money (\$2500) through the Small Libraries in Networks Program (town population less than 10,000). This grant saves the town on network membership costs. We

also are eligible to apply for grants under the Library Services and Technology Act through the state. A certified library may apply for funds under the Public Library Construction Program if its building is no longer sufficient for the community's needs.

If our library does not meet standards for certification, we could lose access to interlibrary loans. CWMARS is the network that Townsend belongs to. If a Townsend resident is looking for a particular book or item not within the Townsend collection, that resident may request transfer (known as an interlibrary loan) of the book/item to Townsend from another CWMARS library for borrowing. As a certified library, Townsend has access to over 150 member libraries primarily located in central and western Massachusetts. If decertified, Townsend patrons would only be able to use the Townsend library. All borrowing privileges at surrounding town libraries would cease.

What does the state require of a library to maintain certification?

The state wants a community to value its library as a community resource instrumental to quality of life in a town. When a town needs to make cuts to balance its budget, if the library is cut disproportionately to other town departments, the state will not certify the library for the year. The FY26 municipal appropriation requirement for our library to maintain its certification is \$441,349. The materials expenditure requirement for FY26 is \$70,616 (16% of the municipal appropriation requirement). To maintain certification the state also sets a minimum number of hours and days the library must be open to the public.

What if a library can't meet the state requirements for certification?

The state has a procedure for a library to apply for a waiver for 1-2 years. This waiver might not be granted if the town has disproportionately made cuts to the library budget versus other town departments. In the event a waiver is granted the library risks falling further behind in its requirements to eventually regain full certification. It is very difficult to catch up.

What can I do to support the library?

Please vote YES on the override ballot vote on Monday, April 28. Please encourage your friends/neighbors to vote YES. If you know you cannot get to the polls on April 28, please consider early voting by mail. The Town Clerk's office can assist you with voting by mail.