

Putnam Valley Library

Information about the 414 Proposition on the Ballot in November 2019

Please vote on Proposition #1 on Election Day, Tuesday, November 5, 2019.

Remember to flip the ballot to vote!

If you believe in the public's right to access information in their own community, please vote on November 5th!

You may have heard the terms by now... 414... sustainable funding... library tax... ballot proposition. What does it all mean for the Putnam Valley Library, for the town, for your taxes, and for you and your family?

What is a 414 Vote?

Chapter 414 of the NYS Education Law allows libraries to put their budget amounts up for a *public vote* on Election Day, to establish how much a town will appropriate — and pay from taxes — for library services.

The Putnam Valley Library is chartered by the Board of Regents of the University of the State of New York as a not-for-profit educational corporation. It is categorized as an association library, and is part of the formal education infrastructure in New York State. New York State considers a library to be a public service, which should be supported with public funds.

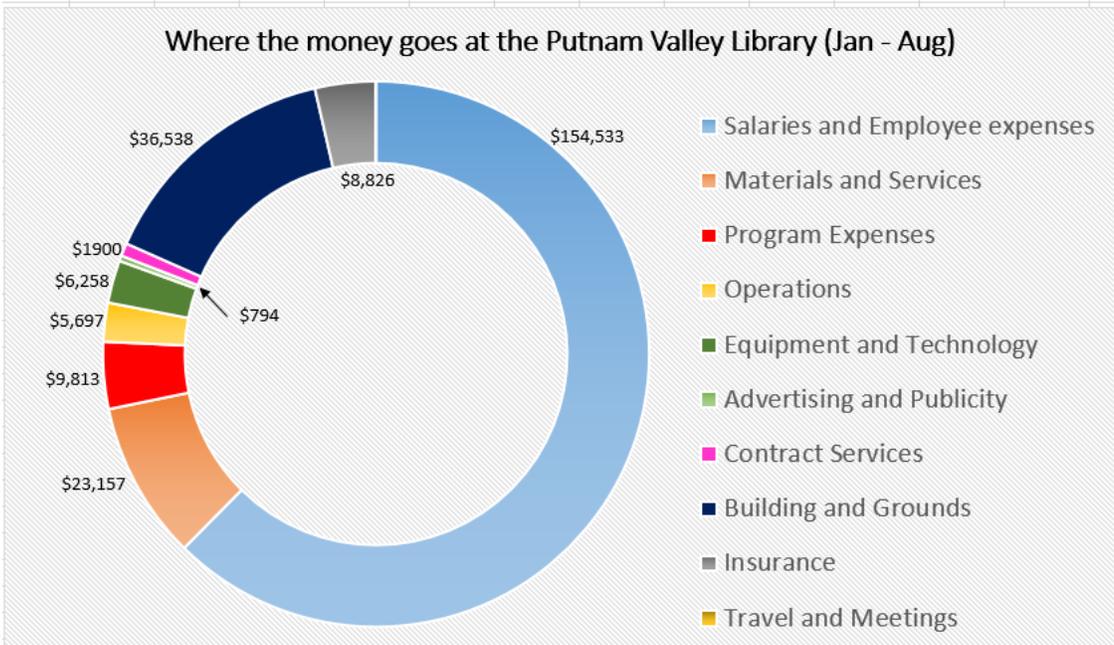
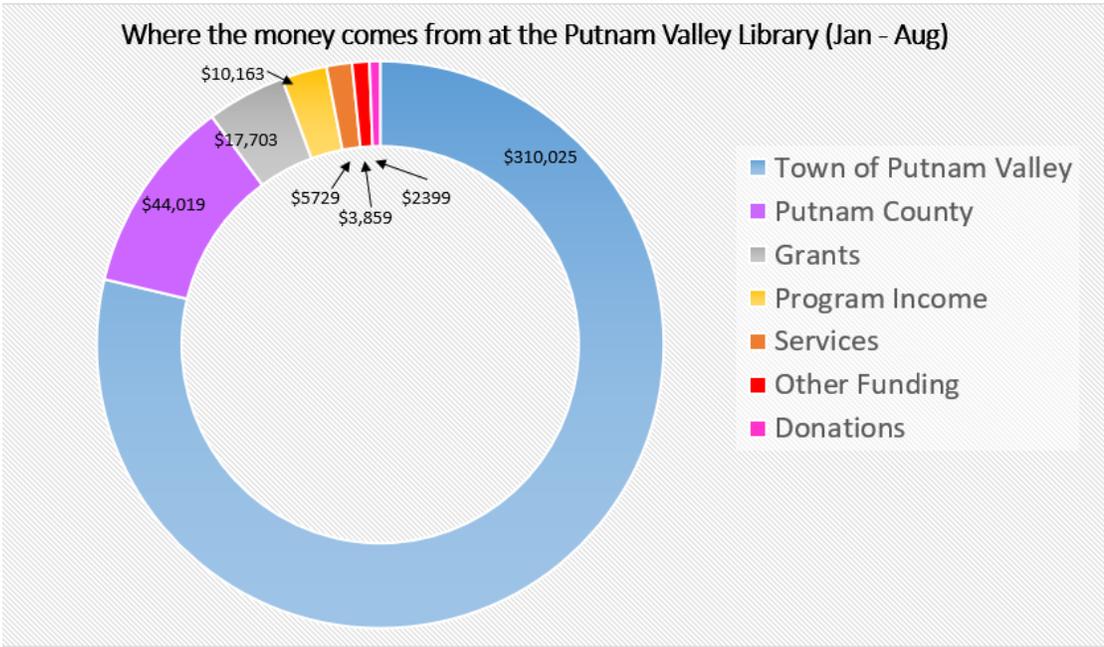
The Library currently receives funds from the Town... However...

The Putnam Valley Library is *not* a Town department. It is a not-for-profit education corporation chartered by the NYS Board of Regents to provide library services to the people of Putnam Valley. Currently, the Town contracts with us to provide library services to the Town. Over the years, the contract rate has been either level, a decrease, or a minor increase. In the past, even when we have gotten a 3% increase, the net gain is really a loss, as our expenses (books, salaries, overhead, etc.) go up each year well beyond that, and we must now budget for mandatory minimum wage increases. In order to plan for the future, the Library needs stable, predictable, voter directed – sustainable – funding.

If the taxpayers do not support this 414 vote, the Library will potentially have to adjust service offerings, including reducing the range of programs and events it offers, scaling back its hours of operation, and limiting purchasing of new materials and equipment. Reductions to reflect the level of funding supported by the taxpayers would take place annually based on the diminishing purchasing power of the same fixed tax revenue.

The Library's reserve funds

Currently we have less than \$150,000 in our reserve account. These funds are to assist with cash flow between the start of our fiscal year and when the town funds arrive, usually in the second quarter, and for emergencies such as the post-Hurricane Sandy demolition of 300 sq. ft. from the side of the Library and the replacements of both the pedestrian and vehicular bridges. We need to plan for the future, which involves not only infrastructure (HVAC, roofing, Community Room renovation, ADA compliance of the building) but also maintaining programs and our circulation materials.



Why do you need more money?

After years of stagnant funding, we can no longer keep up with community demand for library services. We actively pursue State Construction, Legislative, and other grants as much as possible. However, that money is far from assured – and, for example, many grants require we match the grant funding with Library money (that is one use of our reserve funds). Additionally, grants and donations are not predictable revenues. In 2019, for example, we did not receive State Construction or Legislative grants, despite our applications.

Free Isn't Free

Our name is the Putnam Valley *Free* Library because America's public libraries are built on the premise that everyone deserves access to information and education. Nevertheless, it is not free to operate a library. As a critical part of the town's education infrastructure, we have routine and rising costs – just like other organizations and businesses in town. From ensuring we comply with the unfunded mandate from New York State to keep up with the rising minimum wage to keeping up the rising costs of new formats like eBooks and downloadable audiobooks, we need to invest in our library to ensure it is around for future generations.

What Sustainable Funding Means for the Putnam Valley Library

We believe all residents have the right to access equitable library services without barriers. To that end, a successful vote will enable us to achieve our long-term goals:

- Improve the library's accessibility and services for all members of the community:
 - Bring the library into ADA compliance
 - Create a professional, accessible, and mobile-friendly website with 24/7 library resources
 - Remove the barrier of library fines
 - Expanded services and programs for people of all ages and abilities
 - Improve book, media, and digital collections
 - Expand technology and STEM programming
- Sustain the future of the library by dedicated investment in
 - Regular maintenance and repair of our building and grounds
 - HVAC
 - Renovate community room
 - Upgrade elevator
- Lowering our carbon footprint and offsetting future energy costs
- Upgrading and expanding technology to stay current with new developments and patron needs

The Consequences if the Referendum Does Not Pass

The library will not be able to sustain the level of service we currently offer. Residents will potentially experience:

- Cuts to library hours
- Further deterioration of buildings and grounds
- Cuts to critical digital literacy assistance
- Cuts to the book and media collection
- Cuts to programs for children, teens and adults

Will this tax go up every year?

Any future increase in funding must be approved by the voters of Putnam Valley. In order for an increase to be voted on, the same petition process will be followed.

More to Consider

The average cost of this request is \$19.00 per household (not per person) for a home with an assessed value of \$350,000 – less than the cost of a single book or a large pizza.

| Assessed Value of Home | Current Assessment (\$310,000) | New Assessment (\$398,000) | Per Year Difference (New vs Old Assessment) |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|---|
| \$150,000.00 | \$28.87 | \$37.07 | \$8.20 |
| \$200,000.00 | \$38.50 | \$49.42 | \$10.93 |
| \$250,000.00 | \$48.12 | \$61.78 | \$13.66 |
| \$300,000.00 | \$57.74 | \$74.14 | \$16.39 |
| \$350,000.00 | \$67.37 | \$86.49 | \$19.12 |
| \$400,000.00 | \$76.99 | \$98.85 | \$21.86 |
| \$450,000.00 | \$86.62 | \$111.20 | \$24.59 |
| \$500,000.00 | \$96.24 | \$123.56 | \$27.32 |
| \$550,000.00 | \$105.86 | \$135.91 | \$30.05 |
| \$600,000.00 | \$115.49 | \$148.27 | \$32.78 |
| \$650,000.00 | \$125.11 | \$160.63 | \$35.52 |
| \$700,000.00 | \$134.74 | \$172.98 | \$38.25 |
| \$750,000.00 | \$144.36 | \$185.34 | \$40.98 |
| \$800,000.00 | \$153.98 | \$197.69 | \$43.71 |

The Community Spoke and We Listened

Over the last two years, we held Community Conversations, during which residents talked about their hopes — not just for the library, but also our town. A consistent wish was for a central location for information and events. To that end, we’re applying for grants to help pay for an electronic billboard, on which we’ll display both town and library events. We also hope to expand our hours of operation to better fit the needs of our community.

There was a desire from the community to have input in the election of Library Trustees. This October marks our second public election, where all registered Putnam Valley voters can participate in this process.

The Putnam Valley Board of Trustees’ goal in seeking this amount of referendum support is to be good stewards of your money — to care for the building and grounds, and ensure the continuation of excellent library services.

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