



A Message from Your Board of Trustees

As explained last year, the Library has a decades-long successful history of saving funds from operating budgets to take on future capital projects. Fiscal planning allows the Library Board to foresee building needs years in advance, and the practice of setting funds aside comes with the added benefit of enabling the Board to avoid floating expensive bonds.

Over the course of the current fiscal year, the Board tackled several capital improvements with monies on hand. Renovations of the Library's heating and cooling system were successfully completed, and the 1950s slate roof was reinforced and replaced. Additionally, three public restroom remodels were planned and will hopefully be completed before the end of June. New café area tables and seating were ordered and are scheduled to arrive in May. Finally, the Teen Room received a complete facelift, and if attendance is any indication, the teens are thrilled.

In the upcoming 2026-27 fiscal year, the Board will turn its attention back to the remaining asphalt shingled roof, which is well out of warranty and has sprouted nagging leaks. Additionally, the atrium area of the Children's Department will be fully remodeled as a first step to undertaking a complete renovation of that Department, which has not seen any meaningful upgrades in a generation. The children who visited that newly-designed space in 2001 are now parents themselves!

These building improvements are a function of expected wear-and-tear in any public space, but they are also reflective of the role that your Library now plays as a busy community gathering place. Public libraries have evolved into multi-use vital hubs that foster social connection, civic engagement, and community and personal well-being through all stages of life. The physical building, the equipment, and the fixtures require constant upkeep, for reasons of economy but also to ensure the Library stands as a source of community pride – an environment that feels welcoming and that positively impacts guests.

With the proposed budget, a sizeable increase has therefore been earmarked for capital building improvements, but funds are augmented in other areas as well. For example, while we continue to support strong print book budgets, the interest in digital books cannot be understated. It now represents a large percentage of overall circulation, and funds have been earmarked accordingly. As evidenced by our registration sessions, there is a near bottomless well of interest in library programs, and the proposed budget ensures that offerings will remain vibrant for children, teens, and adults. Fuel and utilities are also areas of concern given recent events, and the proposed budget assures additional funds to meet higher costs.

The Board respectfully asks residents to support the proposed 2026-27 budget, which preserves the Library as a central, responsive, and hospitable community anchor. The Trustees pledge to be good stewards of the Library's facility, finances and material resources and are requesting an estimated modest increase of only \$16.85 more *per year* for the average homeowner. Please feel free to contact the Director at 631-581-5933 if you have any questions and thank you for taking the time to read this important message.

