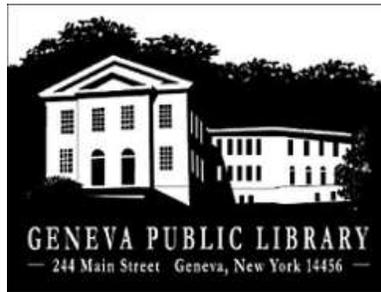


Geneva Public Library
Questions and Answers About the 2016 Tax Levy Vote



What is at stake for the May 2016 Library Tax vote?

<p style="text-align: center;">PLAN A -- YES vote to increase Tax levy From .59/\$1000 to .73/\$1000*</p> <p>A yes vote for the library tax means that the community is willing to accept the tax increase in order to maintain a robust and expanding library capable of providing all of the impactful services currently provided.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">PLAN B -- Defeated tax levy vote Tax rate remains at .59/\$1000</p> <p>A no vote means that the community prefers a scaled down version of the current library and a reduction of services instead of absorbing the tax increase.</p>
<p>Continue to be open 56 hours a week GPL's current schedule is to be open 6 days a week at 9am: Monday & Tuesday 9am-8pm Wednesday & Thursday 9am-7pm Friday 9am-6pm Saturday 9am-2pm Continue current level of computer and internet access, tutoring and meeting room space availability, library programs, children's story times.</p>	<p>A 10% reduction in open hours As of July 1, 2016, the Library will open at 12:00 PM on Thursdays and Fridays instead of 9:00 AM. The results of the cuts include: 10% less access to public computers for those without the Internet at home, fewer opportunities for Literacy Volunteers and school tutors to educate their students, and less time for a parent to introduce their child to a new book.</p>
<p>Purchase new materials to meet demand Continue to purchase new books for children, teens and adults; new DVDs, new music.</p>	<p>New books and other material purchases will decrease by 25% Readers will experience longer waits for popular new releases. The collection will gradually be reduced in breadth and depth.</p>
<p>Computer assistance, technology advice and support Continue regularly scheduled computer classes, training sessions on how to use various devices and general tech advice and support.</p>	<p>One-on-one training sessions and group computer classes will be eliminated. Scheduled training sessions on e-readers, tablets, and other devices will be eliminated due to lack of staff availability.</p>
<p>Library programs Continue to offer frequent programs for children, such as preschool story times, more baby lapsits, "1000 Books Before Kindergarten." Develop teen programming. Continue book groups. Offer Human Libraries again.</p>	<p>25-50% reduction in library programming Ground breaking programs like the Human Library, Ready, Set, Kindergarten, Library Haunted House, and Sock Snowman will be either eliminated or plans for additional programs will be scaled back.</p>

* Costs per assessed property value based on May 2015 estimates.

<p>Knowledgeable, helpful, welcoming staff Besides assisting patrons find and check-out material, staff want to continue working with community partners on programs and projects: Boys & Girls Club for joint teen programming, Geneva Reads, PAWS night at schools.</p>	<p>Staffing cuts Three positions will be eliminated by July 1, 2016 with the need to further reduce staffing costs through additional eliminations or benefit reductions. This will result in librarians and library assistants staffing the information desks instead of providing programs and doing community outreach. Security and safety will also be affected, as there will be fewer staff on duty to monitor patron well being in all parts of the Library.</p>
<p>Central Library of the Pioneer Library System Continue benefits of this status, which includes receiving state funds for non-fiction, a Library Assistant Position, leveraging more grant funding</p>	<p>Loss of the role as Central Library As Central Library, Geneva receives funds to buy materials and staff a Library Assistant to support all 42 libraries in the Pioneer Library system. These funds are the reason the Library has the largest non-fiction collection in the system and qualify the library for other grant opportunities. By cutting hours, GPL would fall below the threshold for open hours required.</p>

COMMUNITY INPUT & SUPPORT

Of course the Library believes it needs the tax increase. Have you asked the community?

During the month of January, the Library held five community forums and ran a community survey. Copies of the survey were available at the library as well as at City Hall, the YMCA, and the Community Center. Participants for each included library users of varying frequencies as well as community members who do not use the library.

As of January 25, the Library had received more than 200 completed surveys and the responses align with staff assessment about the needs of the community. For transparency though, all non-personal data collected from the surveys will be made available at www.genevapubliclibrary.net/community-survey.

The focus group and community survey data the Library collected this January revealed that the Geneva community identifies books, computer access, library programs, and meeting spaces as the most important services a library provides. Equally importantly, every focus group identified library staff as an important service that adds value to a building filled with books and computers. There are no options to reduce expenses without negatively impacting these essential services.

Recently, Geneva’s community group called Tools For Social Change published a report that included widespread support of library services. The report noted, “Many research participants considered the public library to be the most accessible space in Geneva.” A copy of the report, Big Talk in the Little City: Findings and Analysis is available [online](#) or at the library.

COMMUNITY USE

I rarely or never use the library. Why support the library with an additional tax increase? The cost of food, electricity, taxes and insurance for my family is up 13% from 2010 – I just can’t afford to pay more taxes.

Infrequent users may not realize how quickly or even when they are getting their money's worth from the library. Based on the median household value in the zip code 14456, the average home owner would expect to pay roughly \$80 in library taxes in 2016.

If you simply come in to check out an average of one book per month instead of buying it, you would save an average of \$112 during the year. If your family comes to one Musical Moments concert at the library instead of paying for a concert or rents one movie from us instead of going to the local theater, the tax will have paid for itself.

Some benefits are harder to calculate or see but are perhaps even more important. Maybe your son or daughter attended a free summer reading program instead of lying on the couch, or a great new employee applied to your company because of computer help they got at the library.

Even if you never personally directly benefited from the library, Geneva and other local areas did as a whole. People in need rely on your public support for access to resources they cannot afford and connections with community members they would have otherwise never met. Children in poverty may hear 30 million fewer words by their 4th birthday leading to a gap in vocabulary, reading, and test scores that is hard to overcome. The Geneva Public Library helps to fill that gap and make a difference for the future of Geneva's children. For many adults, free use of the Library's computers and the internet is an extremely important, if not essential library service.

I pay property taxes as a business. How does the library benefit me as a business owner? The library supports businesses both directly and indirectly. The Library has developed a number of initiatives to connect library users with local businesses:

- The Library has the largest collection of Civil Service and employment study guides in the Pioneer Library System and offers books on its shelves for small business marketing, accounting, and other critical business skills.
- Library card holders received discounts at local businesses when presenting their library card, which means more repeat customers.
- Resume and budgeting courses, job application assistance, and computer training provide skilled labor to fill job opportunities.
- Programs led by local businesses, including the Wine Appreciation Series and Pizza Taste Off provide great advertising opportunities at little to no cost to businesses.

Equally importantly, a robust library means an educated and informed community. An educated and informed community is a growing community, which means greater demand for local businesses of all kinds. An excellent public library is an asset that brings in new residents to the community, visitors into downtown Geneva for programs, and even tourists in from other areas.

If libraries are that important why don't you go after the businesses for a special appeal – after all they are hiring local people and the library supports these same people – they should contribute as well.

Business owners with property in the school district pay taxes to the library. Their contributions are very much appreciated and there is a committed effort to purchase materials, hold job skills classes, and partner with local businesses for programs.

Geneva is a blue-collar community that needs the library especially for their children. However they are the least likely to be able to afford additional taxes. Even if they rent, new taxes will result in their rent being increased.

The Library understands how much the children and parents of Geneva need their Library and its role in providing education, entertainment, and cultural opportunities to children. In 2015, the Library offered 154 programs for children or teens. GPL brought back the Ready, Set, Kindergarten program which prepares children entering into kindergarten for the rigors of the classroom, initiated the *1000 Books before Kindergarten* program that inspires parents to read to their children, and established new classic programs like Pajama Dance Party. Likewise, the free internet access and free use of computers the Library provides is essential to many in Geneva who cannot afford their own.

The majority of the Library’s programming resources are directed towards programs for children and children of any age can receive library cards. The Library is also developing a plan to eliminate fines for overdue books for juvenile library cards. Through these efforts, which will only be possible through the proposed funding, the Library is ensuring that taxpayers with children receive a return on their tax investment in the library that is greater than for any other group.

With the prevalence of the Internet, eBooks and digital media, aren’t libraries becoming obsolete?

No, your Library is not becoming obsolete – in fact in many ways it is busier than ever before. However, like many libraries it cannot simply turn to its circulation statistics to show how what the actual total usage is.

The Library still has a core group of patrons who use the library specifically to check out books and other physical materials. However, many other patrons use their library card to access digital materials from home, attend programs at the library, use the library’s computers and other services, or simply use different spaces within the building. A closer look at all of the data reveals that the Geneva Public Library is slowing in total circulations but growing greatly in programming , digital services, and the circulation of children’s materials.

	2015	2014	2010
Children’s Book Circulation	29,571	33,119	21,900
Children/Teen program attendance	2,777	2,555	1831
Adult program attendance	4,176	3,611	1367
Total Programs Offered	428	358	231
Total Circulations	126,716	117,460	157,760
OWWL2Go Circulation	7,661	5,879	750
Public Computer Use (sessions)	20,509	19,591	21,973

What are your library’s goals? How do you know you have reached them?

The Library is required to file a five year plan of service with the State Department of Education, in order to comply with state law. The plan includes goals, objectives and measurable outcomes. The Library’s 2011-2016 Strategic Plan is available at <http://www.genevapubliclibrary.net/strategic-plan.html>. The Board of Trustees evaluates the Strategic Plan as part of the annual budget process. During the evaluation, the Board:

- Establishes objectives to be accomplished during the coming fiscal year, recognizing priorities and fiscal constraints.
- Assesses progress in accomplishing objectives during the prior fiscal year.

- Maintains a dynamic planning process by adjusting objectives to reflect completed objectives and new projects. During the summer, GPL will develop a new Strategic Plan based on the feedback obtained through recent Focus Groups and Community Surveys, review the goals and progress made on the 2011-2016 plan, and develop new goals.

Why does the library allow people outside of the school district to obtain library cards and use its services? Why should my tax dollars be used to support this outside use?

As a member of the Pioneer Library System (PLS), Geneva shares services and collections with 41 libraries in Ontario, Wayne, Wyoming and Livingston County. By participating in this shared consortium, every library, including Geneva, has access to more materials, vital services including the OWWL online catalog and the OWWL2G digital collection, cheaper genealogy and language databases, and free holds on materials from other libraries.

Use of Geneva Public Library materials by cardholders outside of the service areas of any Pioneer Library System library represents a tiny fraction of the Library's total circulations and does not hinder access to library programs and computers for local residents. The staffing time necessary to restrict outside use of materials would lead to less spending on materials, negating any savings to Geneva taxpayers. In addition, all but one other library in PLS provides free library cards for residents outside of their service area. If Geneva did not allow outside residents to obtain cards, they would simply gain access to Geneva Public Library materials by registering at a neighboring library.

LIBRARY & THE SCHOOL DISTRICT

What is the relationship between the library and the school district?

The two are completely separate entities, each with its own board, budget, administration, and staff. The state gives the school district the authority to run library votes and holding the vote along with the school budget vote saves the Library time and money. The school district collects the approved tax levy funding and distributes it to the Library. This is not part of the school budget.

The school district's Board of Education decides whether to request a tax increase for their own school budget.

Who can vote?

Registered voters of the Geneva City School District. School District residents 18 years of age or older may register vote. Qualified persons can register to vote on the Library tax levy by registering in the following manners:

- By mail or in person with the Ontario County Board of Elections at 20 Ontario St, Canandaigua. Phone 585-396-4005.
- **Voter registration day is May 3, 2016, from 12:00 Noon to 4:00 PM at the offices of the Board of Education, 400 W. North Street (North Street School), Geneva, NY.**

How can someone learn more about this vote and the increase proposed?

Official public hearings about the tax levy increase will be held at the Library on:

- Wednesday, March 9, 6:00 pm
- Saturday, April 9, 1:00 pm
- Monday, April 11, 11:00 am
- Wednesday, April 29, 5:00 pm
- Wednesday, April 27- 6:00 pm

In addition, representatives from the Library will be holding numerous information meetings for the community through the months of March, April, and May. If you would like to schedule a representative from the Library to speak to your group, contact Library Director Chris Finger at 315-789-5303, ext.106.

Information about the library tax and the Library's proposed budget is available at the library and on the Library's website at www.genevapubliclibrary.net/vote.

In 2010 the Board request for a 24% increase was defeated – Why are you doing the same thing again?

The Library is not doing or asking the same thing. While the size of the request is the same, there are major differences between the context of the 2010 vote and the current vote as well as differences between how the two campaigns were run.

In 2010, there was no alternative to the proposed budget in the wake of a defeated vote. Also at the time of the 2010 vote, the Library maintained nearly twice the level of reserve funds that it does now. Without a plan of cuts in the wake of the budget defeat and with the safety net of large reserves looming over the vote, the 2010 became a referendum on the question of increasing taxes or drawing down reserves but with the same end result in a library. The 2016 vote is a referendum on two different libraries and the stakes are much greater.

The 2016 campaign will include more outreach to the community stakeholders, clearer information about the stakes, and a generally more comprehensive approach than the 2010 campaign. The Geneva community has shown their need for a library that provides accessible hours, expanded children's services and community outreach, robust materials, welcoming staff, and all of the other services that cannot be continued without additional support. The proposed tax funding is the only option for those services to continue without changes in 2016.

In 2010 the number of people voting was double normal years with negative votes nearly 2 to 1. Why don't you think the same thing will happen again?

The number of people voting in 2010 was in line with the turnout for votes in the following five years. 813 people voted on the 2010 proposal and the average voter turnout over the past six years is 912

If indeed there was a large percentage increase needed, why didn't you increase taxes by 5% each year since the last no vote – you would have made up the 24% by now?

The Library is focused on the current needs of the Geneva community as well as the future needs of the Library so as to best serve the Geneva community. GPL is committed to the idea that Geneva needs a library that offers all of the services that are planned for 2016 including computer classes, frequent children story times, Human Libraries, and community outreach. Anything less than the proposed increase will make providing all of these services impossible. Accumulating the increases over the next 5 years will also result in the reduction of reserves below their necessary levels.

How many other libraries have attempted an increase this large and how well did they do?

Since 2012, there have been 17 different proposed increases for 10% or more taxpayer funding from libraries in the Pioneer Library System. In each instance the proposed vote was successful. In 2015, 26 different libraries proposed funding increases directly from taxpayers. 25 of those 26 votes were successful.

What community becomes Central Library if Geneva loses the title?

The designation of Central Library is not up to GPL or Geneva taxpayers. It is based on Pioneer Library System's recommendation as to which library would be best suited to meet the responsibilities of being Central Library, which include a strong non-fiction collection, 55 hours of service per week, staff who can answer reference questions from other Pioneer system libraries.

It is however in Geneva's best interest to maintain its status as Central Library. The status provides a number of benefits to Geneva. The Library leverages Central Library funding for receiving other grant funds, including recent grants to provide new technology, programming, and safety measures for patrons. In addition, because of Central Library purchases, Geneva residents have access to the largest collection of non-fiction materials of any library within the OWWL system.

TAX RATE

How is my library tax calculated? How much am I paying in library taxes? How much are you asking for?

The tax appears on the school tax bill for all those paying property taxes in the Geneva School District. The tax, based on 2015 property assessments, is currently 59 cents \$1000 in assessed property value. GPL is proposing an increase to 73 cents per \$1000. If your property is assessed at \$100,000, the result is a \$14 yearly increase in library taxes, or \$1.16 a month. The cost is per property.

The Library tax is applied uniformly across the entire School District, which incorporates both City and Town of Geneva properties. Unlike school taxes, the library tax is not eligible for STAR reductions. Questions concerning the calculation of school district taxes should be directed to the Geneva City School District.

Is it true that as tax assessments increase, the library tax increases?

The proposed library tax is for the set dollar amount of \$623,734 for property owners in the Geneva City School District. For informational purposes only, the Library presents the community with the cost of the tax per \$1,000 in assessed property value. Whether total property tax assessments increase or decrease within the school district does not change the dollar amount of the library tax.

Why are you asking for this specific amount?

This is the amount needed to provide a sustainable balanced budget. The Library is asking only for what is needed; there is no "padding" in this amount. The Library does not want to tax the community beyond what is responsible. It is only asking for what is needed.

How does Geneva Public Library's tax levy compare to other libraries in the system?

For all libraries in the system that receive tax funding from a single source, the Library's per capita number of \$28.86 ranks 9th out of 16 libraries. Even with the proposed increase, the library would still rank just 7th.

Will the library keep asking for large increases in the future?

The Library has a long range plan that is based on fiscal sustainability. Any proposed tax increase will be based on careful consideration of the needs of the Geneva community, and, will be subject to voter approval.

The Library Promised to Never Raise Taxes When It Became a Public Library. What happened?

In 2005, the Vote Yes Committee pledged that the Library would not need to increase public taxes if the library was changed to the Geneva Public Library and funded by the tax referendum proposed during that year. The committee made that pledge in earnest with the best understanding of the service needs, financial costs, and regulations of the library at the time.

The pledge was based substantially on the expectation that the Library could support expense increases with interest from its reserve funds. However, in 2011, the Library was given a ruling that its reserve funds were considered public money and therefore could only be invested in risk free investments. As a result, the returns the Library received from its investments dropped significantly. The campaign organizers could not foresee the demand from the public for libraries to provide digital services, community outreach, new technology, and expanded library programs. Likewise, they could also not predict the rising costs of building expenses, minimum wage and benefits, materials, and other services.

Why the large tax increase?

The amount of additional funding the Library is seeking is the necessary amount to balance income and expenses. It is essential that the Library receive the increase as any significantly smaller amount in funding would require a significant decrease in expenses. A significant decrease in expenses would result in the immediate conclusion of vital services that the Geneva community needs. The Library is committed to maintaining the current balance in its reserve funds to meet the needs for capital projects and to ensure proper cash flow.

With the proposed funding, the Library is only 84% of the library it needs to be to completely support the community. In an ideal world, the Library would staff a Teen Librarian position and full-time marketing position, be open Sunday hours, return the materials budget to the levels of 2008-09, and allocate more funding to essential building repairs and services.

Even the slightest additional cut is a dramatic step further away from the library Geneva deserves.

LIBRARY GOVERNANCE

How are members of the Library's Board of Trustees elected?

The Geneva Public Library's governing Board of Trustees is comprised of 7 members. Trustees serve 5 year terms. The Library has two (2) seats on the Board vacant for terms starting on July 1, 2016. To qualify to fill the position, a candidate must meet the following criteria:

- A citizen of the United States;
- Eighteen (18) years of age;
- A legal resident of the state and of the city school district for at least one (1) year preceding the election

Qualified persons who wish to be nominated must complete a Nominating Petition, available at the library or online at www.genevapubliclibrary.net/vote, complete with 25 signatures no later than April 27, 2016.

LIBRARY BUDGET -- INCREASING REVENUES

Besides the tax levy, where does the library receive funding?

Excluding funding for public library construction grants and the recent one-time Public Computer Center Grant in 2010, an average of 69% of funding comes from the tax levy vote. As Central Library, Geneva receives about 10% of its funding from the state but these funds are used to provide services for the 42 libraries in the OWWL system.

GPL also receives funding from grants, fees for overdue materials and other services, donations, funding from the Foundation for Geneva Public Library and Friends of the Library, and interest on reserve funds. However, no single source among this group accounted for more than 3% of the funding in the 2015-16 budget.

Why not find grants or increase donations to raise more funding?

The Library has been very successful in applying for and receiving grants: 10 grants since 2014 to provide new technology, programming, and safety measures for patrons. Unfortunately, these grants cover new initiatives and do not cover staffing costs or most other expenses that would reduce the budget deficit.

The Library relies on support via donations from the community to supplement funding to add materials to the collections. In addition, the new outdoor sign was funded entirely from community donations. However, the annual fundraising appeal and the donations associated have been shifted to the Foundation for Geneva Public Library. The Foundation can grow the investments in ways the Library cannot and as such, directing donations to them will help make the Library more financially stable in the future.

The Library needs to be able to count on sustainable funding, which at this time, can only be provided through the increased tax.

Why can't you just charge a fee to anyone who uses the Library?

New York State Education Law does not allow the Library to charge for its core services. Patrons are charged for making photocopies and sending faxes. A free public Library is a fundamental cornerstone of American democracy. Many patrons would simply not be able to afford the most modest of fees.

Patrons of other libraries within the library system have access to GPL materials at no cost so that Geneva patrons can access their materials for free as well. In the past the Library has charged for patrons outside of the school district to obtain library cards. However, this brought it little revenue and a lot of bad will.

Why does the Library maintain reserve funds? Why not use them first instead of asking the public for more tax funding?

The Library maintains two separate reserve funds, a Board Designated Fund and a Capital Fund. Based on current trends, at the end of July there will be approximately \$450,000 in the Board Designated Fund and \$150,000 in the Capital Fund.

Based on budget estimates, without additional income or reduction in expenses, the Library's reserves would be fully depleted within six years. But the Library can no longer deplete the reserve funds as they are needed for other purposes.

Capital Fund -- The purpose of the Capital Fund is to provide funding for the necessary repairs and improvements of the Library's building, facilities, and grounds. The Library's recently replaced the entire HVAC System in the fall of 2014 and has several capital project under consideration including the expansion of the Library's parking lot as early as 2016.

Without access to Capital Fund reserves for necessary matching funds, the Library would not be able to receive state construction grants that cover as much as 75% of the costs of construction projects.

Board Designated Fund -- The balance, in the Board Designated Fund insures that the Library is able to provide the services this community depends on and provide the wage and benefits the staff depend on for a minimum of six months without relying on the receipt of the tax income. The balance held in the Board Designated Fund is based on recommended guidelines from the Pioneer Library System.

The Geneva School District collects the Library's tax funding and typically sends it to the Library in October or November. The Library must cover operating expenses from July until the receipt of the tax funds through reserve holdings. For example, in the 2015-16 fiscal year, GPL had approximately \$388,000 in non-capital expenses through the first six months of the year. In addition, the timing and amount of funding streams such as the Central Library funds, revenue from library fines, and grant funding are not guaranteed adding further need to maintain reserve funds.

Drawing down the funds in the Board Designated Fund in lieu of increasing the funding from local taxes would drop the amount of funds below the recommended minimum leaving the Library ill prepared for a financial setback.

The Library asked for the same size increase in 2010 and the referendum was voted down. Following the defeat, why did the Board choose to draw down reserve funds instead of cutting expenses?

There are three reasons why the Board of Trustees elected to draw down reserve funds instead of making an expansive cut to expenses.

- When reflecting on the vote, the Board of Trustees realized that the public would not be inclined to support a significant tax increase while the Board carried such large reserves.
- At the same time the Library was handed the ruling that the reserve funds could only be invested in risk free assets. As a result relying on higher rates of return on investments to meet budget deficits was no longer an option.
- Cuts to expenses would significantly change the service model of the Library, including its role as Central Library, and would mean undoing growth in library programming, patron services, and community outreach.

Each year I get a special appeal letter from the library – now you're asking me for a tax increase and a financial appeal campaign – I can't do both.

The annual appeal letters you receive are from the Foundation for Geneva Public Library, a separate 501c3 non-profit organization devoted towards providing a firm financial basis for the Library. Your contributions to the appeal are held by the Foundation and are used to build an endowment that will help the Library provide services without tax increases in the future. The tax increase on the ballot this May addresses the needs of the Geneva community and the Library today.

Both the appeal and the tax levy are vital causes and equally importantly, both of them allow you to make a choice whether to give.

REDUCING EXPENSES

Why are your expenses so high? What are your fixed expenses in comparison to your variable expenses?

The Library's overall expenses have decreased on average by 1.19% each year since 2010, despite significant increases in required benefits costs and costs to maintain the building and stay in compliance with state and federal regulations. This year, expenses for materials, library programs and services, and facilities expenses are all below the expenses for the same categories in 2008-2009.

In fact, the budgeted expenses for the 2016-17 fiscal year are 2% below the average expenses for the Library over the past eight years. The Library has taken many efforts to reduce variable expenses. Office and processing supplies expenses and programming expenses are down 44% from 2010 and materials expenses (including Central Library materials) is down 37%. While many of the fixed costs associated with running the library including insurance, maintenance contracts, and required staff benefits are up, the Library has balanced those rising expenses by leaving vacant the Reference Librarian position and a Library Assistant II position, reducing spending on materials, and deferring building repairs.

Why not further reduce your expenses instead of increasing your income?

The focus group and community survey data the Library collected this January revealed that this community identifies books, computer access, library programs, and meeting spaces as the most important services a library provides. Equally importantly, every focus group identified library staff as an important service that adds value to a building filled with books and computers. There are no options to reduce expenses without negatively impacting these essential services.

In order to balance the budget without new tax funds, the Library will amend the proposed 2016-17 budget to absorb 14% in spending cuts.

Why didn't the board tighten its financial belt after the 2010 vote, if the board was running a business they would have been bankrupt – they should have reduced expenses, laid people off if necessary, until the budget was balanced?

The Board of Trustees was, in 2010 and currently is, primarily focused on the current needs of the Geneva community and the Library's and this community's future. The Library was in the financial situation in 2010 to be able to continue essential library services as well as expand digital technology and programming offerings instead of making those cuts. Although sharing many similarities with a business, a library is different in at least one key aspect: the demand for services does not guarantee an increase in income. GPL patrons demanded the services that would have been cut in 2010 and they expect even more of their library today. But today, without the funding increase, it will not be able to meet that demand.

Have you considered downsizing to a smaller building to save on facilities costs, building repairs, and capital projects?

The current building has a tremendous amount of benefits that would be hard to duplicate in another location. The location is central to all areas of Geneva. The building has an ample amount of community meeting space and the space is customized to meet the specific needs of a library. In addition, the original wing of the Library, which includes the historic Reading Room, is a hallmark of Geneva.

However, before seeking the tax increase this fall, the Library reached out to a real estate agent to assess the market for selling the building and moving to a new location. Two things became apparent: A necessary first step before selling would be to increase the size of the parking lot, and second, no existing properties in Geneva are a good match to move into. In order to move, GPL would first have to fix the most significant issue with the building, parking, anyway. To make matters worse, the Library would likely have to close or significantly reduce services for as much as a year while building a new library.

Is there no middle ground between a huge tax increase and laying people off and reducing hours?

Over the last five years the Library has made concerted efforts to keep the costs that it can control, like materials, programming expenses, and supplies down. In addition, the Board elected the middle ground option of reducing reserve funds. Unfortunately, there is no longer any middle ground left to make cuts to those variable expenses nor room to further draw down the reserves. The tax increase proposed or the alternative plan, including cuts to hours and staff, are the only sustainable solutions.

Isn't the reason for the increase that you are spending resources inefficiently? How do you compare to other libraries in efficiency? What is the cost of the library per person?

When compared to other libraries in New York State with similarly sized local funding support, the Library serves a population 42% larger, has 26% more patrons with library cards, staffs 50% more employees, circulates 20% more items, and offers 29% more programs than the average library. For all libraries in the system that receive tax funding from a single source, the Library's per capita number of \$28.86 ranks 9th out of 16 libraries. Even with the proposed increase, the library would still rank just 7th.

In 2015, with a decrease in staffing levels and no increases to the materials budget, the Library offered 20% more programs and circulated 8% more items than in the year before.

STAFFING**Why does the Library have so many staff members? How do your staff wages and salaries compare to other libraries in the area?**

The Geneva Public Library does have the highest number of staff among the libraries of Ontario, Wayne, Wyoming, and Livingston counties. The reasons for the high amount of staff are connected to both the logistical requirements of operating a big building and a purposeful strategy based on the needs of this community.

GPL's staff is 7% larger than the next largest staff, the Wood Library in Canandaigua. However, the building is 24,000 square feet, which is 33% bigger than Wood Library. That is 33% more space for programming, books, meeting spaces, quiet reading

areas, and teen rooms. In order to safely and comfortably support the patrons and staff, GPL needs at least four staff members in the building at all times, which means more night and weekend staff than other libraries in the area.

More importantly, the Library maintains a large staff so that the librarians and Library Director can reach out to the community and develop and lead new programs and services. For example, in 2015, 74% of programs at the library were led directly by a staff member. This level of staff engagement means that the Library relies on support staff to serve on information desks, look for missing items, add books to the collection, and provide other essential services.

Although with the data available it is hard to control for variables like experience, GPL staffing costs are in line with libraries of similar size, such as Newark, Victor, and Canandaigua. For example, the average starting salary for a librarian in a similarly sized library is \$38,536. The starting salary for a librarian at Geneva is \$38,646. The starting wage for a Library Assistant in Geneva, \$13.04, is more than \$1.00 per hour lower than average

So if the budget fails, instead of closing the library why not recruit volunteers to help staff those off hours?

While the Library relies on volunteers for many essential jobs throughout the year, it is a violation of NYS Civil Service to ask a volunteer to do work that is also done by a paid position. By the same token, it can also not ask employees to volunteer to do work at the library.

Are you clinging to legacy services and jobs? How will additional funding promote innovative approaches and best practices?

The Library does continuously review its services and staffing. In fact, it has already reduced some full time positions to part time, and is down one full time librarian position. It will be undergoing a thorough evaluation and audit of staff positions this spring by outside experts to analyze job descriptions and services provided. The goal of the evaluation process will be to ensure that the additional funding the Library receives and the staff hours they employ are directed towards the specific services library patrons identified through recent focus groups and the community surveys.

Are you duplicating services that other resources provide?

The Library is always looking to partner with other organizations, such as the Boys and Girls Club, to reduce overlap and duplication of services. GPL has active partnerships with the Boys and Girls Club as well as Geneva Reads, Geneva Head Start, and Literacy Volunteers. Every non-profit is operating with limited resources, so is eager to collaborate with partners to meet the needs of its clientele.

At the same time, the Library's physical location and attraction to local populations without access to affordable transportation positions us to serve residents that may not have access to similar services at other Geneva locations. For example, this summer Geneva will serve as a site for the summer lunch program for children. Although this service is offered at other locations in the city, dozens of children are unable to get to the current summer lunch sites.

The outside evaluation of jobs and services this spring will help define the most effective library services and help the Library identify opportunities to consolidate services and expand outreach with other organizations.

LIBRARY FACILITIES

What is the Library doing to improve parking?

Many patrons have identified parking as their number one frustration with the Library. The Library is pursuing a construction project in the summer of 2017 to dramatically increase the size of the parking lot. There are two options to explore. The first is to purchase or arrange a shared use of the existing parking lot adjacent to the Library's lot. The other option is to expand into the grass section of the property off of Main St.

Both options will require the Library to tap into its Capital Fund. This further illustrates the importance of obtaining the tax increase in order to preserve reserve funds. Without the additional public funding, the Library would have to reduce the reserve funds below the minimum standards recommended by both the library system and the state.

Last year, I read about the vandalism of library staff property. What steps are being taken to address public safety incidents at the library?

The Library has worked diligently to make the library a comfortable space for users of all ages as well as for staff. The security system has been enhanced by adding 10 more cameras throughout the building and grounds and installing panic alarms for library staff.

The Library's Safety Policy was completely updated in October 2015 and the new policy includes clearer guidelines for suspending patrons for violations to the policy. In addition, the Library is working with the Boys and Girls Club on a grant funded program to increase programming for teen patrons while simultaneously establishing a clearer code of conduct for young adult users.

The clearest step to help insure safe use of the building is to maintain the current level of staffing. Without the proposed tax funding increase, the Library would have to reduce the staff by three positions.