



Trustee Update

Library News You Can Use

Either way, refocus your budget efforts for 2010

Did you get the local appropriation you requested?

Who hasn't been talking about the economy this fall? With all the attention on investments, taxes, bank bailouts, home foreclosures and other unsettling financial news, it's no surprise many public libraries, and county library boards, have struggled to obtain the 2009 funding they need in order to thrive.

Wisconsin municipalities and counties usually pass budgets in November, so it's time to review how your library did. If you got the 2009 funding you requested, you're very lucky, and probably very skillful at advocating for and documenting your needs. If not, you're not alone—but that provides little comfort.

As always, once the budget is passed it's important to thank your local municipality and county (whether or not you got the amount requested). But you may be asking, if we didn't get what we need, what do we do now? There are several possibilities.

Investigate ways to make up the difference between what you need and what you will get. Do you have a Friends organization with available funds to help

balance the budget? While you don't want to rely on them for operating funds every year, they may be just what you need to get through a particularly tough budget year. If you don't have a Friends group, or they don't have the necessary resources, you might consider a concentrated fundraising effort to obtain help

from residents, organizations, businesses, etc. This is also not something you want to do every year, but in a budget crunch it may save your library from having to reduce services. If you can't make up the difference, it's time to make difficult decisions about how to real-

locate the available funds. For example, will you spend less on materials, or a certain part of the collection? Will you reduce a service, or hours, or not fill a vacant position?

When your municipality or county passed its 2009 budget, it may have indicated that the reduction should come from a certain line, such as salaries, or in the case of a county, reimbursements to libraries. Remember that it is the li-

brary board's responsibility to decide where to apply any reduction(s). In the case of a county, libraries within the county (and adjacent counties) **must** receive at least the amount prescribed by Wisconsin Statutes 43.12. The library board's "exclusive control" over the budget and how it is spent are described in Wisconsin Statutes 43.58.

After you decide how you will manage with the reduced allocation, evaluate what you learned. Were there questions or challenges for which you didn't have good answers? Make notes about everything you need to do differently next year, and begin planning early. ♦

From awareness to funding

A recent study explored attitudes and perceptions about library funding, and evaluated the potential of a large-scale marketing and advocacy campaign to increase public library funding in the U.S.

Two primary findings are that "passionate librarians" who are involved in the community make the biggest difference, and increasing support for libraries may not necessarily mean a trade-off of financial support for other public services.

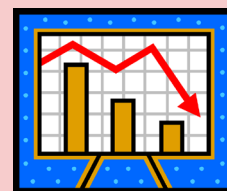
The full report is available at www.oclc.org/reports/funding/. ♦



Slow economy leads to increased library usage

When you presented your budget, you may have heard something like "Times are tough. We all have to tighten our belts." When you hear such arguments, you may want to remind both funders and residents that in tough times libraries get busier.

You can probably support this with your own library's statistics! But it may be useful to provide additional support. For example, consider sharing the press release "Slow Economy Fuels Surge in Library Visits" from the American Library Association at <http://tinyurl.com/6ychno>. ♦



Your library board's role in bill paying

This seems a good time to remind you of the library board's role in the bill paying process. Wisconsin Statutes 43.58 gives the library board exclusive control of the expenditure of all money appropriated for the library and details the proper steps in financial procedures:

- ✓ The library director makes purchases within the budget and according to board-approved purchasing policies.
- ✓ The library director prepares vouchers for expenditures, a monthly list of all library expenditures, and a monthly financial statement.
- ✓ At the monthly board meeting, the library board audits and approves payment of the expenditures, and reviews

and approves the financial statement.

- ✓ The board secretary, or other designee of the board, signs the vouchers and they are forwarded to the municipal clerk for payment.



- ✓ The municipality pays the bills.

The only exception is that regular wages or salary or other recurring payments may be paid by the appropriate official by the date due (or, in the case of salaries, by the regular pay day). These may then be approved by the library board at its next regular meeting. ❖

SCLS staff contacts:

Do you have questions about preparing library budgets, or library board powers and duties? If so, contact Cheryl Becker at (608) 246-7973 or cbecker@scls.lib.wi.us.

If you have questions about marketing, advocacy and funding, contact Mark Ibach at (608) 246-5612 or mibach@scls.lib.wi.us. ❖

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