

LIBRARY FUNDING 2022: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is a Chapter 414 Referendum?

In 1995, New York state passed a law designed to help public libraries receive more support from their communities. This law allows libraries to petition to place a proposition on the ballot and to designate the amount that their towns will contribute toward library operations. The law is unique in that it enables voters – rather than town governments – to determine their town’s level of library support.

Why is the Claverack Free Library (CFL) seeking an increase in funding?

The Claverack Library is more than book lending. It’s also a vibrant social center and technology hub, with extensive and varied free programming offerings for all ages. Today’s library serves a growing number of patrons who rely upon Wi-Fi access to manage and enhance their personal, educational, cultural, and professional lives.

How does the Chapter 414 Referendum work?

Providing enough Claverack voters sign the petition, a proposition will appear on the ballot on Election Day, November 8, 2022, for voters to then decide. If the proposition passes, the town of Claverack’s support for the CFL will be fixed at \$86,000 per year – an increase of \$12,500 – which cannot be increased without future approval from voters.

How much local tax money does the CFL now receive?

The town of Claverack now provides \$73,500 per year to the library. In addition, in 2021, the CFL received \$1,000 from the town of Taghkanic, and \$3,674 from Columbia County.

How does CFL funding compare with other libraries in Columbia County?

Per capita, the CFL receives the fewest local tax dollars of all 11 county libraries.

Local Funding for Libraries in Columbia County (2020)

Library	Chartered Pop.	Local Funding Per Capita	Town/City/Special District**	Village	School District	County	Total
North Chatham	997	\$68.20	\$ 65,000	\$0	\$0	\$ 3,000	\$ 68,000
New Lebanon	2,305	\$59.87	\$135,000	\$0	\$0	\$ 3,000	\$138,000
Germantown	1,954	\$46.06	\$ 90,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$ 90,000
Kinderhook	6,486	\$43.76	\$280,830	\$0	\$0	\$ 3,000	\$283,830
Chatham*	9,459	\$39.62	\$0	\$0	\$374,738	\$0	\$374,738
Livingston	352	\$46.11	\$ 13,000	\$0	\$0	\$ 3,229	\$ 16,229
Philmont	1,379	\$36.62	\$ 31,500	\$16,000	\$0	\$ 3,000	\$ 50,500
Hudson	10,878	\$25.83	\$258,700	\$0	\$0	\$22,252	\$280,952
Valatie	4,344	\$19.11	\$ 70,850	\$0	\$0	\$ 3,000	\$ 83,000
Roe-Jan	7,115	\$17.12	\$105,500	\$0	\$0	\$ 5,815	\$121,816
Claverack	4,642	\$16.84	\$ 74,500	\$0	\$0	\$ 3,674	\$ 78,174
County Total	49,911	\$31.76	\$1,144,531	\$16,000	\$374,738	\$49,970	\$1,585,239

*School District Library

**Town/City/Special District funding is determined by chartered service area.

Source: Mid-Hudson Library System, www.midhudson.org

What will this proposed increase mean to the residents of Claverack?

If the entire cost of this proposition is passed on to property owners – which will not necessarily happen – the increase adds \$1.62 per \$100,000 of assessed value for property owners per year. For most homeowners it comes to less than the price of a single movie ticket. The town may find other sources of revenue (from a surplus, for example), which will result in a smaller increase for taxpayers.

How was the amount of increase determined?

The library has only sought an increase five times since 2003, while the operating budget has risen significantly to meet additional costs associated with salaries, benefits, utilities and building maintenance, and technology. These costs are in direct response to patrons' needs and the number of free services and programs provided.

For comparison, the CFL's operating budget was \$103,060 in 2013. The 2022 budget is set at \$197,435, with total tax receipts currently making up only 37.2% of the annual costs.

A couple numbers to change: $73,500/197,435$ equals **37.2** percent of the library budget. And the remaining amount to be raised would be $197,435$ minus $73,500$ or **123,935**.

What have other libraries in New York done?

The Mid-Hudson Library System recommends that libraries go to voters every few years to approve regular increases to keep pace with rising costs of operating effective libraries. In 2021 voters approved 100 percent of the 33-member library votes.

Is this a new tax?

No. Voters are asked to approve a line item that already exists in the town budget. The Town Board could decide to raise taxes if it is unable to find room in the budget for the approved library funding.

When and if approved, does it mean the CFL can stop private fundraising?

Absolutely not. The requested budget increase does not reflect the library's need. In order to keep the budget as modest as possible, the library will continue to rely on voluntary donations from individuals, foundations, and local businesses, as well as proceeds from book sales and other special fundraising events.

What if the proposition is defeated?

The Claverack Library will have little choice but to come back next year and ask again, for the library cannot sustain, much less improve, vital services without an increase in funding.

Please contact the library for more information. The library's staff, Friends, and trustees will be happy to tell you more.

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