

Public Vote for Library Funding 2024-2025: May 21, 2024

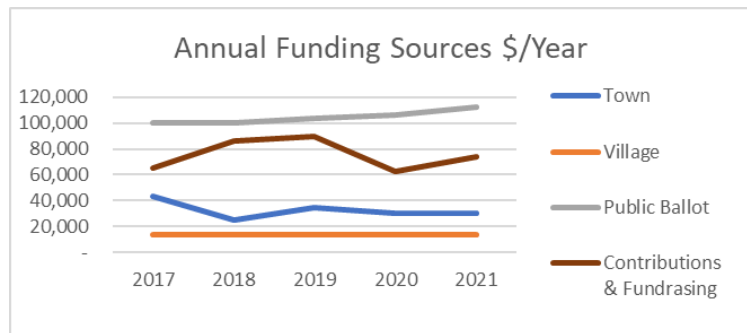


In January 2024, the Board of Trustees unanimously agreed to consolidate taxpayer support from residents within the Greenwich Central School District and seek an increase in funding on the public ballot.

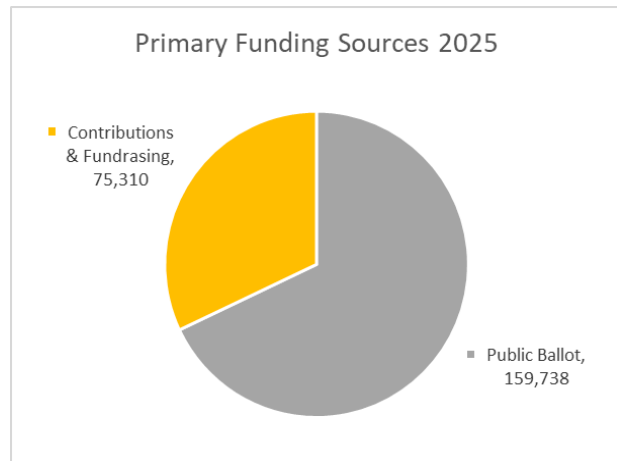
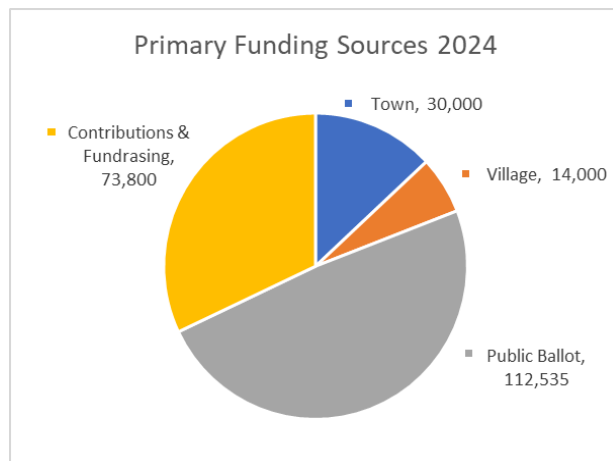
Shall the Board of Education be authorized to increase the appropriation to support the Greenwich Free Library from \$112,535 annually to \$159,738 annually?

More than 90% of the expenses for Library annual operations are funded through local taxes and contributions/fundraising. Other sources include government and private grants, Friends' Book Sales, and fees for miscellaneous library services. Community taxpayers currently support library operations through appropriations by the Village and Town, and through the annual public ballot for the library and central school district funding.

Over the past five years, Village funding has remained steady at \$14,000, while the Town funding has decreased from \$43,350 to \$30,000. Funding from residents in the school district has increased approximately 3% each year.



Approval of the proposition will consolidate all local tax-based funding for the library through the annual public ballot. While this proposition may appear like a large jump in funding, it actually represents a 2% increase (\$3,203) in tax-based funding for Greenwich Free Library. The approximate increase in school taxes for a home valued at \$250,000 will be \$16.



This library proposition aims to stabilize future funding and allow the Library to grow at a sustainable rate.

Public Vote for Library Funding 2024-2025

When and where will the public vote occur?

This vote will occur at Greenwich Central School District on Tuesday May 21, from 8:00 AM - 8:00 PM.

Why make this change now?

Over the last several years, Town and Village administrators have suggested the Library seek all of its public funding through the annual public vote with the school district. This would free up Town and Village funding for other priorities and create a source of funding for the library that could keep up with annual growth in expenses. The change benefits some taxpayers who are currently taxed two or three times for library support, and provides all taxpayers the opportunity to vote directly on public funding for the library. All the public funding will be equally shared by all residents in the community.

How much is the library's total projected 2024 budget, and what percentage comes from public funding?

Our total projected budget for 2024 is \$251,000. Approximately 62% is projected to come from public, tax-funded sources. The remainder comes from private, individual, and corporate donations and contributions; private and government grants, proceeds from Friends' book sales, and fees for miscellaneous services.

Why increase the library budget at all?

Between 2022 and 2023, our circulation rose by 13%; our number of visitors rose by 29%, and the number of program participants rose by 227%. These statistics show that Greenwich Free Library is an increasingly vital and well-utilized community resource.

- More residents are taking advantage of the library's materials. Meeting that increased demand requires expanding collections.
- A 29% jump in visitors shows that the library's physical space and facilities are being heavily used. More foot traffic can accelerate maintenance/upkeep needs.
- The massive 227% growth in program participants highlights how valuable and popular the library's educational and cultural programming is for the community. Continuing to offer high-quality programs requires funding for materials, instructors, event space, etc.

Overall, these statistics paint a picture of a library straining to keep up with rapidly intensifying community demand and usage. Increased funding is critically needed to ensure service levels can be maintained and enhanced to meet those growing needs.

As with every organization and household, the library's regular operating costs rise every year.

What if the proposition doesn't pass?

If the proposition does not get over 50% approval, our appropriation through the school vote will stay at the 2024 level (\$112,535), and we will continue to seek funding from the Town and Village.

What will this mean in real dollar amounts and percentage increase to residents?

The approximate increase in school taxes for a home valued at \$250,000 will be \$16.

Will the village and town tax rates decrease?

We have notified the Town and Village that, if this proposition passes, we will no longer ask to be a line item on their budgets. We can't speak to what the Town and Village will do, but we will no longer be competing for those limited tax dollars.

The projected 2% overall increase (\$3,203) in tax-based funding seems reasonable, but how will those extra funds be allocated?

This amount would cover approximately 85% of the expected increase in operating expenses projected this year. The remainder will be covered by fundraising and individual and corporate donations.

What is Greenwich Free Library's responsibility to the Village and Town governments?

Greenwich Free Library is an Association Library, separate from town and village municipalities. We have traditionally delivered a yearly report to both town and village boards to ensure confidence in how we spend public funds, and we will continue to do so regardless of our tax-based funding source.