



Castleton Public Library

Enriching Lives, Empowering Our Community, Encouraging Exploration

Castleton Public Library Funding Proposition to Voters in the Schodack Central School District – Q&A

What is the library asking the community to decide in the May 2023 vote?

Castleton Public Library's Board of Trustees is asking voters in the Schodack Central School District to consider approving a tax to be paid by property owners in the district to fund a portion of the operating expenses of the library.

What is the date and location of the vote?

The proposition will appear on the ballot at the Schodack Central School District School Budget Vote & Board Election, held in the Maple Hill High School Gym on Tuesday, May 16, from 6:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m. Maple Hill is located at 1216 Maple Hill Road, Castleton, NY 12033.

What is the library funding proposition that will appear on the May 2023 Schodack Central School District ballot?

The language of the funding proposition that will appear on the ballot is as follows:

“Pursuant to Education Law, Section 259, shall the Board of Education of the Schodack Central School District be authorized to levy and collect an annual tax, separate and apart from the annual school district budget, in the amount of one hundred fifty-nine thousand dollars (\$159,000), which shall be paid to the Castleton Public Library for the support and maintenance of the library; with this appropriated amount to be the annual appropriation until thereafter modified by a future vote of the electors of the Schodack Central School District?”

What changes will be made if the vote is passed?

If the proposition is approved, services offered to the community would include:

- Addition of Sunday hours (to begin January 2024)
- Addition of a full-time Programming and Outreach Librarian (to begin January 2024).
- Expansion of library classes and events for children, teens, and adults
- Expansion of outreach services in the community
- These changes would be in addition to the library's continuing commitment to provide numerous services including: collections (physical and electronic), public computers and WiFi access, technology help, reference and research assistance, meeting room space, and copy/print/fax services.

How would the library's funding change if the vote is passed?

If the vote passes, \$159,000 of the library's budget would come from taxes paid by property owners in the Schodack Central School District. The library would reduce our request for an allocation from the Town of Schodack (this would be a reduction from \$176,000 for 2023 to \$88,000 for 2024). Funding and in-kind services from the Village of Castleton-on-Hudson would remain the same. The library would continue to receive small amounts of income from New York State, Rensselaer County, the Friends of the Castleton Public Library, grants, and donations.

Why is the library pursuing a vote?

Shifting our funding model to voter-approved measures increases transparency, awareness, and community control over the cost of public library services. Under a NYS Board of Regents directive, public libraries are urged to shift tax support from general appropriations by municipalities to a direct public vote. This shift would reduce the Town of Schodack's appropriations for library services and provide taxpayers with the ability to determine the desired level of public library services.

How is the library currently funded?

The library's budget is primarily funded by an appropriation from the Town of Schodack, which is allocated by the Town Board to the Castleton Public Library (for 2023, this amount is \$176,000 - 84.2% of our budget). Our other current public funding source is the Village of Castleton-on-Hudson (\$14,000 - 6.7% of our 2023 budget). The Village also provides a number of in-kind services to the library, including space, utilities, and administration of payroll and benefits). The library also receives small amounts of income from New York State, Rensselaer County, the Friends of the Castleton Public Library, grants, and donations.

Why is the library's funding proposition appearing on the school district ballot?

Castleton Public Library is pursuing a vote on the Schodack Central School District ballot because the majority of our users reside in the school district.

If the vote is approved, would the library be funded or operated by the school district?

No. The school district would not fund, operate, or govern the library in any way. The school district, in compliance with NYS law, provides the mechanism for the vote to occur. If the vote is approved, the school district will levy and collect the library tax and pay those funds to the library.

How will this affect school taxes?

The vote deals with a proposed library tax that, if approved, would appear on the school tax bill. The vote does not impact school taxes. The school tax funds the school district, while the library tax funds the library. They would appear separately on the same bill and would be paid at the same time, but the school district and the library would remain two separate entities.

If approved, how will this affect my tax rate in future years?

Any future change in the library tax rate would require voter approval at that time.

Who is eligible to vote?

Voters must be at least 18 years old and a U.S. citizen. Advance registration is not required. However, voters will be asked to swear or affirm that they are residents of the Schodack Central School District and have been for at least 30 days prior to the vote.

For more information, visit <https://tinyurl.com/CPL-2023Vote>. If you have questions, contact CPL Director Melissa Tacke (518-732-0879 or director@castletonpubliclibrary.org).