



School Ballot Referendum FAQ

The Massena Public Library helps people of all ages in our community succeed in their educational, professional and personal lives. Our services meet community needs by encouraging literacy, supplementing education, providing cultural opportunities and tools for lifelong learning.

Q: What is a school district public library?

A school district public library is organized to serve residents who live within a given school district's boundaries. The library board is elected, and the budget is approved by the district voters. The library and library board are independent of the school district and school board.

Q: What is the library asking for with this referendum?

The library is appealing to our community for funding in the amount of \$679,990 for all library operations during 2024-2025, including materials, facility maintenance, staff, and more. This amount replaces the current operating budget and services in kind received from the Town of Massena, and does not reflect an increase or expansion.

Following in the footsteps of other libraries across the North Country and New York state, we are also proposing a transition to a school district library. This model of library provides stable and predictable funding, more accountability and transparency, more autonomy, an expanded service area to the school district that is more indicative of our users, publicly elected trustees, and more.

Q: How will the funding be used?

We seek sustainable funding to continue to serve our community with the levels of service and support they have come to expect from the Library. This amount will stabilize our funding, allow a restoration of up-to-date computer equipment, and ensure no more services or hours of operation are lost to the community as a result of funding cuts.

Q: Why now?

The library is operating under flat municipal funding, currently receiving the same funding from the Town of Massena in 2024 as we did in 2001. The library is no longer able to provide the level of service the community needs. By appealing to voters

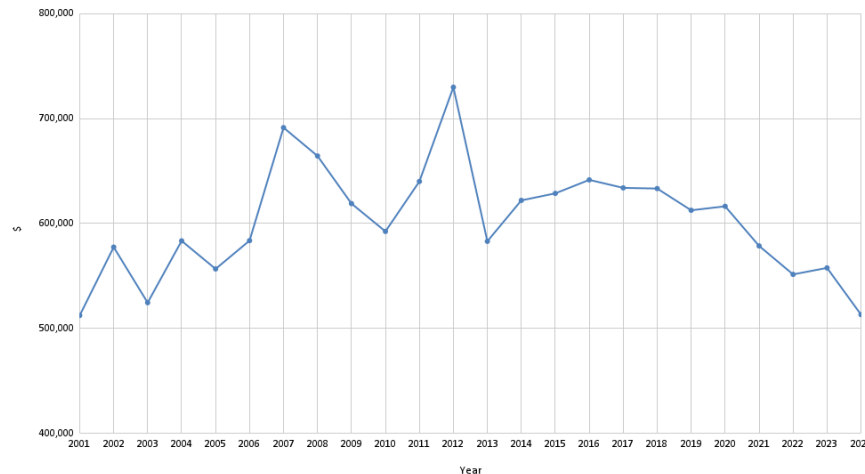


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directly, the Library will be able to continue to sustain operations and services, while having the flexibility to adapt to the changing needs of the community.

Total Local Public Funding Sources



Q: Why are you asking for more than the town gave you this year?

The library is asking for more than the towns of Massena and Louisville contributed specifically in 2024, but it is less total funding than we saw in 2007 and other years, and from a much larger tax base. With 20 years of stagnant funding levels and inflation, we've cut staff, hours, and services and are seeking an amount that prevents a further decline in services. With our autonomy, we will also take on some additional expenses such as bookkeeping and insurance, but many of those expenses will result in additional savings for the town.

Q: Why a referendum instead of a loan or a grant?

Placing a referendum on the school ballot is a sustainable way for the Library to ensure it has the means to provide high-quality service to our community. It allows the voters a direct voice in the funding process, and once approved, it is funding the Library can rely on year after year.

In fact, the Library has applied for and received \$199,346 in New York State Library Construction grants just in the past ten years, bringing that money into the community. The Library will continue to apply for grants whenever available, but grant funding cannot be relied upon for general operating expenses, and loans must be repaid with interest.



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Q: Are there alternative funding sources available to the library?

Currently, the Library is primarily funded by the Town of Massena. Budget constraints for the Town have resulted in a decrease in its contribution over the years. Annual funding from the Town of Louisville is a very small portion of the Library's revenue. Likewise, a smaller portion of funding comes from the State. This funding is completely discretionary and is never guaranteed.

The Library receives a tax levy of \$9,000 from the Town of Louisville. If the Library's proposition to transition to a school district public library is approved, then the municipal library status is dissolved and the annual appropriation of \$9,000 in municipal ballot funding from the town of Louisville will also be terminated.

Q: How much will this tax levy cost me as a homeowner?

A levy of \$679,990 will mean an approximate \$0.839629 per \$1,000 of assessed value. Homeowners with property assessed for \$100,000 will see a tax of approximately \$84.

ESTIMATED IMPACT TO PROPERTY TAXES BASED ON 2024 TAX LEVY										
	\$50,000 Property		\$75,000 Property		\$100,000 Property		\$150,000 Property		\$200,000 Property	
Town	Without Referendum	With Referendum	Without Referendum	With Referendum	Without Referendum	With Referendum	Without Referendum	With Referendum	Without Referendum	With Referendum
Brasher	\$-	\$41	\$-	\$61	\$-	\$81	\$-	\$122	\$-	\$162
Louisville	\$3	\$53	\$4	\$79	\$6	\$106	\$9	\$159	\$12	\$212
Massena	\$44	\$42	\$67	\$63	\$89	\$84	\$133	\$126	\$178	\$168
Norfolk	\$-	\$50	\$-	\$75	\$-	\$100	\$-	\$150	\$-	\$200

Q: What is the library's portion of the latest property tax bill?

Library funding is not currently a separate line item on the Massena Town tax bills. The Town allocates funding to the Library as it deems necessary. The funds allocated to the Library from Town taxes are discretionary and change from year to year.

After a successful referendum, the library tax will be a separate line item on your school tax bill, and will not change unless voters approve a change. The tax will be separate from the school tax and will not be part of the school district budget. All money collected from the library tax will go directly to the Library.



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Q: Why does the Massena Public Library want to change its name to "Henry H. Warren Memorial Public Library"?

As a result of this referendum, a new library will be formed and the current Massena Public Library will be dissolved. The Massena name is associated with the current municipal library and doesn't reflect the changed service area of the entire school district. Henry H. Warren's son's estate donated nearly a half a million dollars to build the library. The library was limited to a single room in the town hall and might still be there without the Warren donation. Henry Warren had a major influence on the economic development of the entire area, advocating for the construction of the power canal which led to the arrival of Alcoa, a major employer for residents across the region. The name "Henry H. Warren Memorial Library" was placed on the building upon opening in 1962 to honor his memory.

Q: What will happen if the referendum does not pass?

The Library will continue to be funded through the Town of Massena tax levy, at the funding level determined by the Town Council. Based on current trends, we project the following changes will be required:

Reduction in hours

- Without the proposed funding, a reduction in service hours will be necessary. Effective January 01, 2025, the library may no longer be open Saturdays.

Reduction in service

- Without the proposed funding, a reduction in services will be necessary. Effective January 01, 2025, the library will reduce the available public access computers by 2-3 units.

Q: When will the vote be held?

The library's school ballot referendum vote will be held on **May 21, 2024** at the **Massena Community Center**.

Q: Who can vote?

Voters participating in the school ballot must be qualified voters of the Massena Central School District. To find out more about voter eligibility, [visit http://tinyurl.com/mryur2ya](http://tinyurl.com/mryur2ya).