

# A Guide to Your Libraries' 2018 Budget Vote

## Lakewood Memorial Library & Hazeltine Public Library



### *Strong Communities Have Strong Libraries*

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The Hazeltine Public Library and Lakewood Memorial Library have served their local residents for decades. Both are constantly evolving to meet the changing needs of the people they serve. Here are some of the essential services our libraries offer:



Free Wireless & High Speed Internet



Computers, Copiers and scanners



Books for All Ages



New Release DVDs



Downloadable Books & Audiobooks

Free Databases



Meeting Space



Interlibrary Loan



Preschool Story Hour



Summer Reading Programs



STEM Programs



Clubs & Activities



Special Events



Knowledgeable Staff



Job Skill Classes



Art Gallery... & more!

## How are our libraries being funded now?



Public libraries are public services, and secure, reliable public funding is the most appropriate way to pay for them. Currently, the Town of Busti and Village of Lakewood include library funding in their budgets. But, over the past several years, municipal allocations to our libraries have declined, making it difficult to meet the demands of the public or to plan ahead for future needs.

## Is there another way to fund our libraries?

New York Education Law §259 allows libraries to seek funding directly from school district voters. On Tuesday, May 15, all residents of the Southwestern Central School District will vote on a **259 referendum** to provide support for both Hazeltine and Lakewood libraries. If the referendum is approved, both libraries will receive funding directly through the school district. The funding level will remain stable every year. This direct funding mechanism is used extensively throughout the state. **More than 75% of all libraries in New York State are funded through a public referendum.** In fact, residents in nearby school districts have recently voted in favor of 259 funding, including Ripley, Dunkirk, and Cattaraugus Little Valley.

## Is this another tax I have to pay?

Funding through the 259 process is simply a **DIFFERENT** way of collecting the tax dollars that **already** go to both libraries. It transfers the responsibility for funding library budgets from the municipalities to the voters, allowing voters to directly support their libraries. It also makes the libraries subject to the same laws that govern the school district, including that of the tax cap.

The library levy will now apply to **all** property owners in Southwestern Central School District. Therefore, *homeowners in the Village of Lakewood and the Town of Busti will pay slightly less* for their libraries than is now the case. However, residents of SWCSD whose municipalities have never supported a library will see a slight increase.

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## So, how much is this going to cost?

The proposed budget includes a library tax levy of \$204,000. This total encompasses funding for both libraries: \$65,000 for Hazeltine and \$139,000 for Lakewood.

Examples of the approximate annual library levy for households in the Southwestern Central School District:

Home assessment	Annual tax levy
\$ 50,000	\$16.11
\$100,000	\$32.22
\$150,000	\$48.33

### Did You Know?

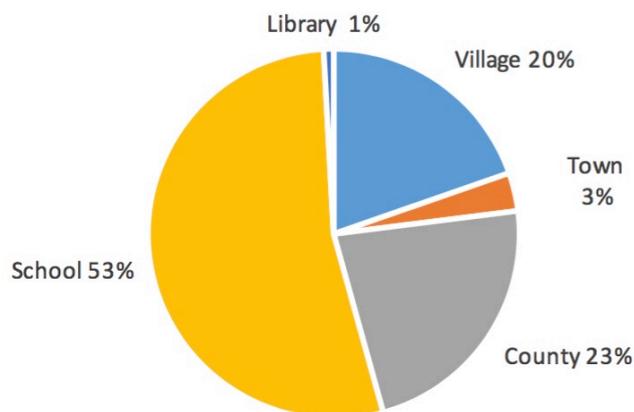
A home assessed at \$50,000 would pay **only** \$16.11 a year for library services!

## What happens to the funds that Town and Village now allocate annually to the libraries?

The library line items in the Town of Busti and Village of Lakewood annual budgets will be eliminated. Both municipal boards will then have the option to either reduce their annual budgets or to re-allocate the funds to other priorities. Their decision-making process is open to the public at municipal board meetings, and taxpayers are free to state their opinions as to which course should be pursued.

## What portion of my tax bill will support the libraries?

Property Tax Breakdown



*\*Based on resident of Lakewood Village 2016*

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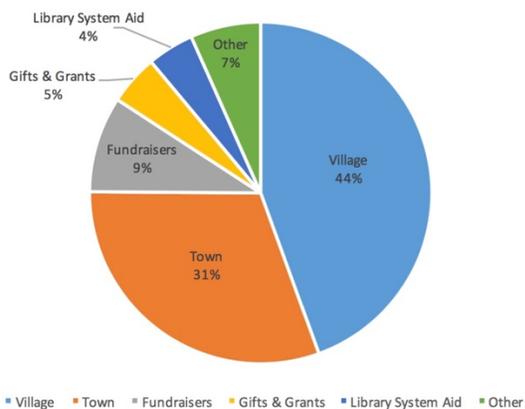
## Don't the libraries have other sources of income?

If approved, the 259 referendum will fund about 2/3 of the libraries' operating costs. That is the same proportion they currently receive from the Town and the Village. To bridge this gap, both libraries will continue to receive memorial donations and hold annual **fundraisers**, as they have always done.

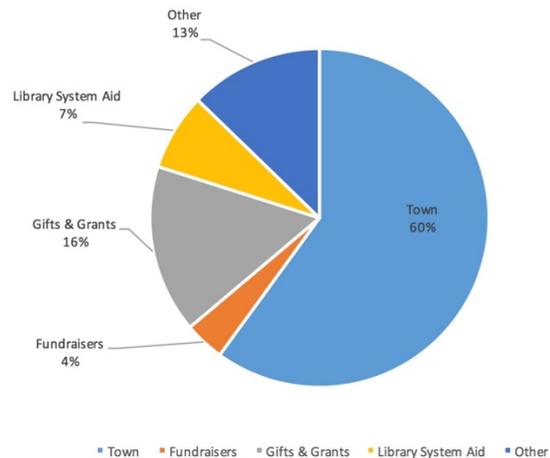
In addition, both libraries regularly seek out **grants**. State construction grants have financed building improvements at both libraries, and local foundations have supported several of our programs and services, such as the summer reading programs. However, in most cases, grants cannot be used to provide operating funds and often require a matching amount.

### CURRENT SOURCES OF LIBRARY FUNDING

#### Lakewood Memorial Library



#### Hazeltine Public Library



## Is it possible for the libraries to get more state aid?

Public library funding in New York is unlike funding provided to public schools. Local Library Services Aid (LLSA) is the only consistent form of state funding for operating expenses to local public libraries.

In 2016 Hazeltine received \$1,404 and Lakewood received \$2,334 in LLSA funding. In New York, the vast majority of operating funds come from local municipalities, **not** the state. In fact, New York State LLSA amounts to just one-tenth of 1% of the budget, **and this funding may be cut in 2018.**

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## Why don't the libraries just tighten their budgets?

Starting in 2013, both Hazeltine and Lakewood libraries saw their municipal budget allocations decrease for four straight years and tightened their already lean budgets accordingly. While funding started to trend upward in 2016, it has been an ongoing struggle to maintain the services required of public libraries by New York State. For example, libraries must be open a certain number of hours, be adequately staffed, and have materials available for patrons. And of course, they must also pay utility costs, insurance, and other fixed expenses.

Moreover, as seen in the following table, both libraries **operate on well below the average per capita income** compared to other libraries in our region, and a fraction of the state average.

Library	Service Area Population	Square Footage	Open Hours	Adult Books	Children's Books	Local Funding per Capita*
Bemus Point	364	3,277	2,184	7,821	4,064	\$42.58
Brocton	4,827	4,899	1,820	5,291	3,507	\$16.17
Falconer	2,420	5,200	2,548	18,239	7,166	\$33.68
Fredonia	11,230	7,701	2,808	35,989	13,344	\$10.51
<b>Hazeltine</b>	<b>4,349</b>	<b>2,088</b>	<b>1,976</b>	<b>7,918</b>	<b>7,457</b>	<b>\$10.69</b>
<b>Lakewood</b>	<b>7,351</b>	<b>5,500</b>	<b>2,236</b>	<b>18,500</b>	<b>10,740</b>	<b>\$15.84</b>
Mayville	4,464	3,726	2,392	11,185	5,036	\$17.70
Silver Creek	9,915	2,848	1,820	9,370	4,755	\$9.96
Westfield	4,896	17,000	2,808	30,471	15,210	\$19.35

Hazeltine's current local funding per capita is \$10.69. Lakewood's is \$15.84.

The 38 libraries in the Chautauqua Cattaraugus Library System have an average per capita funding of \$21.21. **The New York State library funding average is \$60.18 per capita.**

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## Why can't Lakewood's library use its endowment fund for operating expenses?

Lakewood Memorial Library received a bequest in 2016. The board used that bequest to establish a fund similar to an endowment fund. The fund is independent of the operating fund and has the purpose of not only providing supplemental revenue for the Library but also being available for larger future initiatives that would not typically be in an operating budget. The boards of both libraries are charged with the responsibility to follow financial best practices and New York State library policies to ensure careful stewardship of all funds.

## Do we really need two libraries?

Usage statistics for Hazeltine and Lakewood demonstrate that the numbers for circulation, patron visits, computer use, and programming are exploding. It's clear that local residents need our libraries and use them in many different ways. Both communities want – and deserve – their own libraries for economic strength, for quality of life, and for future generations to enjoy. Both libraries are anchors of their downtown areas and fill needs unique to their different communities -- needs are growing, not shrinking.

But most importantly, Libraries are tangible signs that communities value betterment through lifelong learning. What message does it send if library buildings stand vacant? Conversations with our local residents have made it clear: **They are proud of both of their libraries.**

## How will school district residents benefit if they approve the 259 referendum?

Recent surveys and discussions indicate clearly that residents want:

- Activities and resources for families and people of all ages
- Places to gather, share ideas, and inspire each other
- Opportunities for all community members to better themselves
- Community institutions that are strong, forward-thinking, sources of pride

Once approved, a 259 referendum will provide stable annual funding for the Hazeltine and Lakewood libraries, allowing them to achieve all of these goals and assuring their future strength. Strong communities have strong libraries.

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## **How will the budget vote language read on the day of the 259 referendum vote?**

*“Resolved, that pursuant to Education Law, Section 259, the Board of Education of the Southwestern Central School District is authorized to levy and collect an annual tax, year after year, separate and apart from the annual school district budget, in the amount of \$204,000, \$65,000 of which shall be paid to the Hazeltine Public Library for the support and maintenance of that library and \$139,000 of which shall be paid to the Lakewood Memorial Library for the support and maintenance of that library; with this appropriated amount to be the annual appropriation until thereafter modified by a future vote of the electors of the Southwestern Central School District.”*

## **Who can vote?**

Anyone 18 years or older whose legal residence is in the Southwestern Central School District is eligible to vote. No preregistration is necessary. If you have not voted in a school election before, be prepared to show proof of residency.

## **When and where will the vote take place?**

The vote is Tuesday, May 15, 2018. Voting takes place in the Southwestern Central School District High School lobby.

Polls are open from 7 am – 9 am and from 2 pm to 8 pm.

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**BE AN INFORMED VOTER!**

**LOOK INSIDE!**

You'll find the answers to all your questions about funding your local libraries through a 259 referendum.

**More questions?**

Visit Lakewood Memorial Library or  
Hazeltine Public Library to find out more.



Lakewood Memorial Library  
12 W. Summit St.  
Lakewood, NY 14750  
716-763-6234



Hazeltine Public Library  
891 Busti Sugargrove Rd.  
Jamestown NY 14701  
716-437-1281

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