



## CLINTON COMMUNITY LIBRARY

### BOARD OF TRUSTEES QUARTERLY REPORT TO THE TOWN OF CLINTON

September 30, 2017

#### **Your Community. Your Library. Your Vote.**

Usually we take this opportunity to report to you on all the past quarter's happenings at our Library. But today we need to take a different tack. On the November General Election ballot you will see a proposition put forth by Clinton Community Library. It concerns our annual operating budget. It asks you to earmark \$115,000 from our property taxes for the Library each year. My fellow Library Trustees and I, after much deliberation, are forced to take this forward step because the cost of our current level of Library service, reflecting the demands of our Clinton community, is **once again higher, a good deal higher, than our income from all possible sources**. Information that spells out the specifics of the Library ballot proposition is attached. Here is a little more background.

**Almost all of the Library's income currently comes from grants.** Grants serve an organization best when they are add-ons, used to bulk up the organization's service to a particular community. **Grants are not a sustainable way to finance an organization.**

(1) Because they usually are too small. Our current Town of Clinton grant of \$54,844, which has been held flat for six years, **barely covers half of the Library's operating budget.**

(2) Because they **never automatically renew**. Each year the Director and Trustees must pre-justify the purpose, scope and effectiveness of a grant. The preparation of grant applications is so time consuming that, while it may help the Library survive for one more year, it diverts our focus from planning and working for the Library's future.

(3) Because there are **no guarantees**. Grants typically go down or stay flat, or they can go away entirely. The grant amount itself is unpredictable. Our competition for every grant is all the other non-profit groups similarly seeking critical funding.

(4) Because grants typically are **donor earmarked for specific purposes**. The grant donor identifies and specifies the activities for which the grant may be used. In almost all instances, the grants are not able to be applied to basic items in the Library's operating budget.

Currently the Library has **two other sources for income: donations and fundraisers**. Although the Clinton Community has generously responded to our Annual Appeal and has supported our many fundraiser activities, the Library still anticipates and then experiences a shortfall each year.

Clinton may benefit by looking at how other Town libraries function. The majority of community libraries in the Mid-Hudson Library System, including *16 of the 19 towns in Dutchess County, are supported by similarly earmarked taxes approved by voters*. This vote will **NOT** create a new tax district. The Library will retain its legal status as an association library chartered by the NYS Department of Education and governed by the standards of its Board of Regents. The amount **will remain the same each year**. It can only be raised by a majority vote in a town-wide election.

**Community Is Our Middle Name.** Yet the Town of Clinton currently spends the *least amount per capita on its Library of all towns in Dutchess County*. Library income at the present time is a **precarious patchwork structure that puts our Library at risk**. Your vote is your voice. Please remember to turn your ballot over; our Library proposition is on the reverse side.

Barbara Burns, President  
Board of Trustees

Attachment: Library Proposition FAQ