



COMMUNITY LIBRARY

We would like to thank those that supported the library by approving our budget and voting in the trustee election.

The approved budget includes the first increase in four years and is within the New York State mandated property tax cap legislation. The average assessed home will see an increase of just \$28 annually, which will allow us to address many concerns and issues at the library while continuing to provide the educational and community programs that our residents want and deserve. The request for additional funds in this year's budget include equipment, materials, supplies, staff, operating costs and rent for a new branch in Mastic Beach.

Importantly, the budget will likely allow us to open the branch in Mastic Beach in the former Village Hall without necessitating a bond referendum to borrow additional monies. We are presently in negotiations that we expect will result in a short-term lease to include renovations by the property owner and a purchase option at today's market value of the building. Over a year ago, the board responded to numerous community requests and committed to opening a branch in Mastic Beach, including ordering an appraisal of the building, which was received less than a month ago. After months of investigation, we have started negotiations with the property owner and are confident that the terms will be favorable to the community and offer a unique opportunity to provide necessary library services in our most populous and under-served area of the community. We intend to keep the community informed as more details are available.

As we stated publicly, much of the operating budget increase was for the explicit purpose of opening a small branch in Mastic Beach without bonding that cost over many years. It is our plan to have the building expanded and renovated by the current owner, which will result in a 7,000-square-foot facility to serve our community. The plan is to lease the building for the next five years with an option to purchase the building at the end of the lease if the community wants us to stay. As mentioned, we would be able to purchase the building at today's market value out of existing reserves without asking the community for more funding for this purpose, thereby protecting the taxpayers from a tax increase or interest payments.

Now that the budget is passed, it will be our intention to hold numerous community forums about the future renovations and or construction needs at the main 40,000-square-foot library facility. The facility needs of the main library have reached a breaking point, and as a community we must all come together to find an affordable plan that works for everyone.

Despite the deficiencies of the main building, the Mastics-Moriches-Shirley Community Library provides the leading and innovation programs that our residents deserve. We take pride in being a community center that is there for you on a daily basis, and particularly in times of need.

Continue to visit our website for further updates. If you have any questions, please contact Kerri Rosalia, Library Director, at 631-399-1511, ext. 200, or via email at krosalia@communitylibrary.org.

