

Thayer Public Library

Thayer Public Library is currently open to the public Monday – Thursday from 10am-7pm and Friday 9am-5pm.

Effective May 17th the library will be open to the public Monday –Thursday from 9:00am-8:00pm and Friday 9:00am-5:00pm. Saturday hours will resume in September. Traditionally, the Thayer Public Library is open 64 hours per week during most of the year; 6 days per week and 4 evenings per week.

The library's FY22 budget meets every requirement for continued certification and for the State Aid Award Program; Municipal Appropriation Requirement (MAR), materials expenditure, hours and personnel. I am very proud to announce that the Thayer Public Library was fully certified in FY21 without the need to apply for a waiver and will continue to be certified in FY22.

I am very grateful to the town for its generosity during this challenging time. I recognize our library's operating budget is far better off than many of the surrounding towns.

Increases to the FY22 budget are contractual only. The most significant decrease has been the schedule G employee salary line.

Questions and Answers

- **Division 610 (Library, pg. 82 - 88):** Asst Depart Heads increased from \$71K to \$80K, were these tied to raises or stipends?

The budgeted amount includes a step increase and the cost of living increase effective FY22 for the total salary cost for 52.2 weeks.

Dear Members of the Ways and Means Committee:

Thank you for taking the time to read through the requirements for Certification and State Aid for Library Programs.

To keep our state accreditation we need a minimum municipal appropriation of \$1,559,146. This figure is based on a formula provided by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC). The formula takes the average of the last 3 years' appropriations and adds 2.5%. This becomes the minimum appropriation for the coming year and averages to about a 1.25% increase each year. It is one of the many requirements necessary to meet minimum standards for State Aid to Public Libraries.

The Municipal Appropriation Requirement (MAR) waiver process as set by the MBLC is competitive. If the library suffers a cut disproportionate to other town departments, the waiver will not be allowed.

In response to the pandemic, the MBLC allowed a policy change in FY20 and FY21 for hours and materials expenditure, however, policy regarding minimum municipal appropriation did not change.

Certification Requirements for the Thayer Public Library are:

1. The Library must receive a current municipal appropriation for public library services that is equal to the average municipal appropriations for the previous three fiscal years increased by 2.5 %. Capital and revolving appropriations are excluded. (The Municipal Appropriations Requirement is set in M.G. L. 78 s. 19A.)
2. The Library must submit an Annual Report Information Survey (ARIS) and a Financial Report and State Aid Compliance Form.
3. The Library must have complied in the prior fiscal year with the following minimum set of standards:
 - A. Be open to all residents of the commonwealth;
 - B. make no charges for normal library services;
 - C. be open a minimum of 60 hours per week;
 - D. employ trained personnel in accordance with regulations promulgated by the Board of Library Commissioners;
 - E. expend 13% of the library's total budget on materials;
 - F. lend books to other libraries in the commonwealth and extend privileges to the holders of cards issued by other public libraries in the commonwealth on a reciprocal basis; and
 - G. report on the ARIS the total amount of nonresident circulation.

The consequences of being decertified for State Aid to Public Libraries are as follows:

1. The Thayer Public Library card may not be honored at other libraries in the commonwealth; Braintree residents may lose reciprocal borrowing privileges.
2. Braintree residents may lose services such as interlibrary loan and access to certain Internet based reference databases.
3. The Town will lose direct state aid funds (for reference, the FY21 award was \$62,598.69).
4. The Library will lose the ability to apply for any grants administered by the MBLC. In the past, we have applied for and received an LSTA (federal) grant for \$20,000 to serve older children and teens and a Customer Service grant of \$10,000.
5. Once lost, the process to regain certification requires two years to become reestablished. Thus, State Aid, as well as the benefits to the residents, will be lost for at least two years.

It is a delicate balance for the library to reduce areas of spending and meet all State certification requirements. The library has relatively few areas available for discretionary reduction.

Personnel accounts for roughly 74% of the budget. Minimum staffing requirements at Public Service Desks means that personnel reductions might necessitate reductions in hours that the library building could be open to the public. State certification requires that the library be open 60 hours per week. Traditionally the library is open 64 hours per week.

In addition to the consequences detailed above that could result from decertification, a reduction in hours contrasts with the full utilization of the first capital investment of the construction of this beautiful building and the continued capital investments made over the years.

Materials must account for 13% of the budget to qualify for certification. Although programs, meetings, computer usage, and seeking information account for much of the increased activity at the library, materials (digital, print, newspapers, streaming databases) remain the core of the library and its primary reason for being. Building a well-balanced collection that meets the needs of the residents of Braintree takes time and careful consideration. Decreasing the materials line would negatively impact children and families at a time when demand for resources is high.

Old Colony Library Network (OCLN) membership accounts for about 4% of the budget and is fixed by the network. The Thayer Public Library is completely dependent on OCLN for its catalog, circulation, and technical service functions. It is not an option to lower that line item cost.

These items total about 97% of the library's budget, leaving general expenses and several smaller line items as possible discretionary areas. However, the FY22 budget request is just a few hundred dollars above the MAR. In sum, any reduction in the library budget would be destructive to both short and long term library services.

Thank you. I am happy to provide additional information if you need it.

Sincerely,

Terri Stano,
Library Director