

----- Original Message -----

Subject: Agreement for Public Library System Funding (2020-2021)

From: "Rebekkah Smith Aldrich" <[rsmith@midhudson.org](mailto:rsmith@midhudson.org)>

Date: 5/24/19 11:47 am

To: "[jjwelsh7@yahoo.com](mailto:jjwelsh7@yahoo.com)" <[jjwelsh7@yahoo.com](mailto:jjwelsh7@yahoo.com)>, "[corrinakelley2015@gmail.com](mailto:corrinakelley2015@gmail.com)" <[corrinakelley2015@gmail.com](mailto:corrinakelley2015@gmail.com)>, "[mcmorris.uvny@gmail.com](mailto:mcmorris.uvny@gmail.com)" <[mcmorris.uvny@gmail.com](mailto:mcmorris.uvny@gmail.com)>, "[councilmanfrazier@gmail.com](mailto:councilmanfrazier@gmail.com)" <[councilmanfrazier@gmail.com](mailto:councilmanfrazier@gmail.com)>, "[supervisor@unionvaleny.us](mailto:supervisor@unionvaleny.us)" <[supervisor@unionvaleny.us](mailto:supervisor@unionvaleny.us)>

Cc: "C Fortier" <[cfortier@beekmanlibrary.org](mailto:cfortier@beekmanlibrary.org)>, "Library Director" <[director@millbrooklibrary.org](mailto:director@millbrooklibrary.org)>, "M DeBellis" <[mdebellis@laglib.org](mailto:mdebellis@laglib.org)>, "Library Director" <[director@doverlib.org](mailto:director@doverlib.org)>

Good morning,

I am writing to you today on behalf of the Beekman, Millbrook, LaGrange and Dover Plains Libraries.

We thank you for the partnership that has been formed over the past years between the Town and your four neighborhood libraries. As a result, the residents of Union Vale have enjoyed unrestricted access to library services and programs including more than 3 million items held in MHLS' 66 member libraries, early literacy classes for families, broadband connectivity to the Internet and a host of educational classes and resources for all ages that contribute to the economic vitality and social cohesion of our region.

As the budget-planning season picks up the pace for our libraries and your Town, we want to ensure lines of communication are open regarding the "*Agreement for Public Library System Funding*" currently in place which will expire at the end of this calendar year. **The respective libraries have agreed that the current agreement is working well and are willing to extend the current terms of the existing "*Agreement for Public Library System Funding*" for years 2020 and 2021.**

To that end, I have provided an updated document for your consideration, which is attached to this email. The parameters of the attached agreement are **unchanged** with the exception of the start and end dates and the amount for 2020, which reflects the 2.25% increase over the 2019 amount which is in line with the 2019 inflations factor used by the Office of the State Comptroller in the Property Tax Cap calculations . The libraries are proposing flat funding, meaning no increase requested, for 2021, the second year of the contract.

We would appreciate an update on your timeline for the consideration of this agreement, and welcome you to contact me with that information. I will serve as the libraries' contact person for this topic.

Thank you for your review of this important service matter, we look forward to hearing from you.

**From:** [supervisor@unionvaleny.us](mailto:supervisor@unionvaleny.us) <[supervisor@unionvaleny.us](mailto:supervisor@unionvaleny.us)>

**Sent:** Friday, May 24, 2019 6:00 PM

**To:** Rebekkah Smith Aldrich <[rsmith@midhudson.org](mailto:rsmith@midhudson.org)>; [jjwelsh7@yahoo.com](mailto:jjwelsh7@yahoo.com);

[corrinakelley2015@gmail.com](mailto:corrinakelley2015@gmail.com); [mcmorris.uvny@gmail.com](mailto:mcmorris.uvny@gmail.com); [councilmanfrazier@gmail.com](mailto:councilmanfrazier@gmail.com)

**Cc:** C Fortier <[cfortier@beekmanlibrary.org](mailto:cfortier@beekmanlibrary.org)>; Library Director <[director@millbrooklibrary.org](mailto:director@millbrooklibrary.org)>; M

DeBellis <[mdebells@laglib.org](mailto:mdebells@laglib.org)>; Library Director <[director@doverlib.org](mailto:director@doverlib.org)>

**Subject:** RE: Agreement for Public Library System Funding (2020-2021)

Dear Rebekkah:

Thank you for this email. Regarding the timeline, I will have to get back to you as it will take us awhile, but I promise to let you know as soon as I have a good handle on it after conferring with the Board and the residents.

We would request that you not use your email list to ask Union Vale residents to lobby the Board by sending the identical email to all of us asking that we support library services.

Someone in your organization may think that it is effective but it is a little troubling since our entire Town Board is very pro-library services for our residents. The lobbying is not helpful as it looks like you are attempting to portray us in an unfavorable light that is just not accurate, and I would hope that is not your intention.

Thank you again for emailing. We will respond in due time.

Regards and Happy Memorial Day!

Betsy

P.S. You are sending the email correspondence to John Welsh's personal email, could you change his email in your address book to:

[councilmanjohnwelsh@gmail.com](mailto:councilmanjohnwelsh@gmail.com)?

Many thanks - Betsy

**From:** Rebekkah Smith Aldrich [<mailto:rsmith@midhudson.org>]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 28, 2019 12:24 PM  
**To:** [supervisor@unionvaleny.us](mailto:supervisor@unionvaleny.us); [corrinakelley2015@gmail.com](mailto:corrinakelley2015@gmail.com); [mcmorris.uvny@gmail.com](mailto:mcmorris.uvny@gmail.com);  
[councilmanfrazier@gmail.com](mailto:councilmanfrazier@gmail.com); [councilmanjohnwelsh@gmail.com](mailto:councilmanjohnwelsh@gmail.com)  
**Cc:** C Fortier <[cfortier@beekmanlibrary.org](mailto:cfortier@beekmanlibrary.org)>; Library Director <[director@millbrooklibrary.org](mailto:director@millbrooklibrary.org)>; M  
DeBellis <[mdebells@laglib.org](mailto:mdebells@laglib.org)>; Library Director <[director@doverlib.org](mailto:director@doverlib.org)>  
**Subject:** RE: Agreement for Public Library System Funding (2020-2021)

Thank you Betsy,  
We look forward to getting a better sense of your board's timeline.

The email campaign was a communication method used to ensure residents who are regular library users knew the discussion was taking place. Our message to them was timed to raise their awareness that the negotiations had begun and they were welcome to contact you, their elected officials, as to their opinion on the matter. We did not indicate your board's stance on the matter, just that if they wanted the chance to be heard, that was the time to speak up.

I have updated John's email address. FYI: I simply copied the email from your town's web site. It looks like while the text reflects his preferred gmail address that the "mailto" code behind it is his yahoo account info which you can see if you hover over it or right-click and choose "Copy Email Address" which is what I did.

Thanks again, we look forward to working with you.  
Rebekkah

**From:** Betsy Maas <[supervisor@unionvaleny.us](mailto:supervisor@unionvaleny.us)>

**Sent:** Monday, July 1, 2019 7:04 PM

**To:** Rebekkah Smith Aldrich <[rsmith@midhudson.org](mailto:rsmith@midhudson.org)>

**Cc:** C Fortier <[cfortier@beekmanlibrary.org](mailto:cfortier@beekmanlibrary.org)>; Library Director <[director@millbrooklibrary.org](mailto:director@millbrooklibrary.org)>; M DeBellis <[mdebells@laglib.org](mailto:mdebells@laglib.org)>; Library Director <[director@doverlib.org](mailto:director@doverlib.org)>; [corrinakelley2015@gmail.com](mailto:corrinakelley2015@gmail.com); [mcmorris.uvny@gmail.com](mailto:mcmorris.uvny@gmail.com); [councilmanfrazier@gmail.com](mailto:councilmanfrazier@gmail.com); [councilmanjohnwelsh@gmail.com](mailto:councilmanjohnwelsh@gmail.com)

**Subject:** RE: Agreement for Public Library System Funding (2020-2021)

Hello Rebekkah,

We have been thinking about Union Vale's future and how we might approach it. While we are all very interested in library services, the current set up is not ideal for us and we need to discuss it with you and/or the various libraries.

We have compiled our thoughts in the letter attached. Please take a look and let us know if a meeting is in order.

Many thanks for your assistance. We look forward to working on our future together with you and the broader team.

Regards,

Betsy

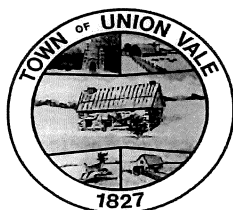
Supervisor Betsy Maas  
(845) 724-5600 ext. 110 (office)  
(845) 223-7335 (mobile)  
Town of Union Vale

## TOWN OF UNION VALE

### SUPERVISOR

Betsy C. Maas

249 Duncan Road  
LaGrangeville, NY, 12540  
(845) 724-5600



### TOWN BOARD

Steve Frazier  
Corrina Kelley  
Dave McMorris  
John Welsh

Rebekkah Smith Aldrich  
Executive Director  
Mid-Hudson Library System  
103 Market Street, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601

July 1, 2019

Dear Rebekkah:

Speaking on behalf of the Town of Union Vale, we would like to say that we appreciate your earnest efforts to lock-in an agreement between our town and the four libraries that surround us geographically. Our residents should have access to library services and programs and we believe that those who utilize our surrounding libraries, enjoy and depend on that access. The libraries are thriving and they provide substantive programming and interesting events. We applaud and appreciate their success.

For various reasons however, which we will try to lay out here, we feel that the Town of Union Vale must change the nature of our Agreement. As we explore alternatives with our residents, it has become apparent that Union Vale needs and deserves its own library or at least a more customized access, tailored to our town's identity and financial capabilities.

Some of the shortcomings in our relationship that influence our opinion to make a change are as follows:

1. There is no relationship, nor has an attempt been made to forge one, between the library boards and the Union Vale Town Board. That lack of a relationship means there is no town board representation on the library boards. More important than board representation would be a liaison between the multiple boards of trustees and our town board which would mean our opinions would have a voice. To this date, no trustee has ever contacted us to “weigh in” given the funding we provide. We recognize that you could argue, “that is each library board’s prerogative”, and we could not disagree.
2. The lack of a relationship, we feel, has resulted in the libraries being tone deaf to our financial concerns. Last year, we expressed upcoming budget pressures as a reason not to want to see an increase of 2% in the annual payment Union Vale provides. This year the libraries propose a 2.25% increase using a new metric, without a discussion or regard for our previous comments.
3. All the surrounding libraries, in an effort to stay viable have become “community centers”. “Our” libraries, especially Beekman (the closest to Tymor Park) have ventured over into offering events and programs that many of our taxpayers consider “recreation department territory”. Given that our town provides recreation events that are funded by taxpayer money, it is concerning to see libraries go head-to-head with recreation departments, presumably using some percentage of our funding, without ever acknowledging they could be hurting their neighbors’ attendance (and therefore, financial results). There has been no offer of coordination or notice of upcoming events before they are booked so duplication can be avoided.

These are not criticisms, as each library wants to be successful and must direct its own course. It is, perhaps more obvious than they would like though, for us to see that a relationship with Union Vale is of secondary importance given their primary responsibilities of servicing their own towns; but we recognize their priorities and hope that the libraries recognize our priorities too.

Our belief is that we need to begin exploring the steps involved with establishing our own library so that we can control our own fate, recreation events, financials and future. If we are successful, we hope to join the Library System and be a self-sufficient partner within the broader community. Until that time, we are

advocating changes, which will also enable us to prepare for setting up our own library.

In regards to your 2020 Agreement we have some thoughts. From a financial perspective, the \$78,317 you propose is a much larger number than the state-wide average paid by towns our size, which in 2018 was approximately \$42,000 per year. Your logic, as stated in an older email "you can't put a price on library services" is rejected by us out of hand. The town Fire Department calculates tax payments for our Fire and Emergency services based on departmental cost estimates and we should be able to use a metric to calculate library services as well. It is the only responsible way to handle taxpayer money.

Therefore, we propose the following:

1. The Town of Union Vale is currently paying four neighboring libraries. We have been unable to find one town in the state of New York that pays more than two. The towns that pay two seem to do that when they cross over into two Library Systems. The other towns, without their own libraries pay one library. In addition,  
  
Mid-Hudson Library System's Plan of Service, states that "excessive borrowing" by a town unserved by its own library is 5% or more of the neighboring library's circulation. So we cannot agree with payments going to four libraries, given we are not a hardship to four. Without justification, we do not agree that payments to Dover and LaGrange continue. We will continue to pay Beekman and Millbrook as our use exceeds 10% of their circulation and a majority of the library using residents truly enjoy access to these two.
2. A metric to calculate future payments must be agreed upon. We are advocating using library cards, assuming they are purged when appropriate and reflect current users.
3. We are advocating that we pay, on behalf of all our library users, the per capita amount taxpayers in the towns of Beekman and Millbrook pay. The per capita amount is frequently used in library discussions, so for lack of a better way to "pay our fair share" in each community, we will calculate using their respective per capita amount.

4. We would like to have a direct relationship and agreement with these two libraries without Mid-Hudson Library System in the middle. We have found no advantage to the "middle man" approach and if anything, it has kept us from developing a genuine understanding of each other's concerns.
5. An annual August registration card report could be used to calculate the following January's payments. Current per capita amounts will use current amounts raised by taxes and population numbers from the most recent full census (2010). For example:


Millbrook –  $\$184,000 / 4741 = \$38.81 \times 606$  UV cardholders =  
\$23,519.09

Beekman -  $\$405,000/14,621 = \$27.70 \times 678$  UV cardholders =  
\$18,780.60

We have a town attorney who could draw up a new agreement so as not to force the libraries to expend money on legal costs. We offer that because we understand that the Mid-Hudson Library System may have funded that in the past, and we would truly like to prepare, negotiate and complete an agreement directly with our two "anchor" libraries.

We hope you understand this is a practical approach on behalf of Union Vale, as none of us have unlimited resources. We want better relationships, reasonable financials and control of our own destiny. Hopefully, you will all embrace our potential new "mission" and advise us along the way. In that case, we look forward to many years of cooperation and mutual success!

Sincerely,



Betsy Maas



Steve Frazier



Dave McMorris



John Welsh



**From:** Rebekkah Smith Aldrich [<mailto:rsmith@midhudson.org>]

**Sent:** Tuesday, July 02, 2019 8:50 AM

**To:** Betsy Maas <[supervisor@unionvaleny.us](mailto:supervisor@unionvaleny.us)>

**Cc:** C Fortier <[cfortier@beekmanlibrary.org](mailto:cfortier@beekmanlibrary.org)>; Library Director <[director@millbrooklibrary.org](mailto:director@millbrooklibrary.org)>; M DeBellis <[mdebellis@laglib.org](mailto:mdebellis@laglib.org)>; Library Director <[director@doverlib.org](mailto:director@doverlib.org)>; [corrinakelley2015@gmail.com](mailto:corrinakelley2015@gmail.com); [mcmorris.uvny@gmail.com](mailto:mcmorris.uvny@gmail.com); [councilmanfrazier@gmail.com](mailto:councilmanfrazier@gmail.com); [councilmanjohnwelsh@gmail.com](mailto:councilmanjohnwelsh@gmail.com)

**Subject:** RE: Agreement for Public Library System Funding (2020-2021)

Good morning Betsy,

I received your additional email on Monday asking for more information about starting a library in your town. I am available to help you explore that option.

We will convene a meeting with the four impacted libraries to discuss the content of the communication you've provided this morning and respond once the group has reached a consensus.

Rebekkah

**From:** Betsy Maas <[supervisor@unionvaleny.us](mailto:supervisor@unionvaleny.us)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, July 2, 2019 11:42 AM

**To:** Rebekkah Smith Aldrich <[rsmith@midhudson.org](mailto:rsmith@midhudson.org)>

**Cc:** C Fortier <[cfortier@beekmanlibrary.org](mailto:cfortier@beekmanlibrary.org)>; Library Director <[director@millbrooklibrary.org](mailto:director@millbrooklibrary.org)>; M DeBellis <[mdebellis@laglib.org](mailto:mdebellis@laglib.org)>; Library Director <[director@doverlib.org](mailto:director@doverlib.org)>; [corrinakelley2015@gmail.com](mailto:corrinakelley2015@gmail.com); [mcmorris.uvny@gmail.com](mailto:mcmorris.uvny@gmail.com); [councilmanfrazier@gmail.com](mailto:councilmanfrazier@gmail.com); [councilmanjohnwelsh@gmail.com](mailto:councilmanjohnwelsh@gmail.com)

**Subject:** RE: Agreement for Public Library System Funding (2020-2021)

Thank you, Rebekkah.

Supervisor Betsy Maas

(845) 724-5600 ext. 110 (office)

(845) 223-7335 (mobile)

Town of Union Vale

**From:** Rebekkah Smith Aldrich [<mailto:rsmith@midhudson.org>]

**Sent:** Monday, July 15, 2019 2:23 PM

**To:** Betsy Maas <[supervisor@unionvaleny.us](mailto:supervisor@unionvaleny.us)>

**Cc:** C Fortier <[cfortier@beekmanlibrary.org](mailto:cfortier@beekmanlibrary.org)>; Library Director <[director@millbrooklibrary.org](mailto:director@millbrooklibrary.org)>; M DeBellis <[mdebellis@laglib.org](mailto:mdebellis@laglib.org)>; Library Director <[director@doverlib.org](mailto:director@doverlib.org)>; [corrinakelley2015@gmail.com](mailto:corrinakelley2015@gmail.com); [mcmorris.uvny@gmail.com](mailto:mcmorris.uvny@gmail.com); [councilmanfrazier@gmail.com](mailto:councilmanfrazier@gmail.com); [councilmanjohnwelsh@gmail.com](mailto:councilmanjohnwelsh@gmail.com)

**Subject:** RE: Agreement for Public Library System Funding (2020-2021)

Betsy,

Thank you for the acknowledgement that your residents have a right to access library services.

After conferring with the four libraries impacted by your latest communication, they have directed me to continue to act on their behalf in the negotiations with your town to put in place a contract to ensure unfettered access to library services for your residents.

There is, in fact, a price on library services and it is the metric we have used consistently through our negotiations with your town's board over the last several years as defined in the state approved Direct Access Plan: the average per capita funding provided by local public sources for library services in Dutchess County. The directors are in agreement that the draft contract offered in May 2019, modeled on the contract that has been in place for several years, is more than fair given the amount your town has agreed to provide in recent years is *less than a third* of the average per capita expenditure for library services in Dutchess County.

- Average per capita spending on library services in Dutchess County: \$50.26
- Population of the Town of Union Vale: 4,877 x average per capita = \$245,118
- Current contract amount: \$76,407
- **A 69% savings** over what other towns in the county are providing for library services.

That being said, the directors, acting on behalf of their boards, are in agreement to respect the recent announcement made on July 11<sup>th</sup> by the Office of the State Comptroller and **hold this contract to a 2% increase** rather than the initially proposed 2.25% which was in line with the inflation factor issued by the same office earlier this year when the draft was first put together. The directors feel this is reasonable and respectful of your town's financial situation.

As to your claim that your town's interests in this situation are not being represented at the local library board level: we are compelled to point out that the two libraries most impacted by this issue – Beekman and Millbrook – have deliberately appointed residents from your town to their libraries' boards which has been the case for several years now. This reflects the common practice among library boards in New York State to involve taxpayers in the decision making about their local public library. The impacted libraries have also provided their annual reports to the community directly to your town board and invited Union Vale town board members to events such as their annual meetings and programs.

Libraries are educational institutions chartered by the New York State Board of Regents. As educators, library staff utilize programs, collections, and technology to aid in the lifelong learning pursuits of their community. Offering programming is not a departure from the common role public libraries have played in our communities for decades. Any perceived competition with your recreation department was certainly not intended and all libraries welcome the opportunity to work in partnership with your recreation department to maximize the availability of programming relevant to the community and to the respective missions of the libraries and the recreations departments in the region.

We, of course, respect your right to explore the potential for creating your own library for the town and I reiterate my offer to help you explore that option. However, in the interim, we will still need to address creating an equitable solution that ensures continued access to library services for the residents of your town. Should you decide to establish your own town library we can add a clause to the new contract that terminates the agreement once your library is chartered and registered with the Board of Regents should that happen within the duration of the negotiated contract.

Respectfully,

Rebekkah

**From:** Betsy Maas <[supervisor@unionvaleny.us](mailto:supervisor@unionvaleny.us)>

**Sent:** Wednesday, July 17, 2019 2:59 PM

**To:** Rebekkah Smith Aldrich <[rsmith@midhudson.org](mailto:rsmith@midhudson.org)>

**Cc:** C Fortier <[cfortier@beekmanlibrary.org](mailto:cfortier@beekmanlibrary.org)>; Library Director <[director@millbrooklibrary.org](mailto:director@millbrooklibrary.org)>; M DeBellis <[mdebellis@laglib.org](mailto:mdebellis@laglib.org)>; Library Director <[director@doverlib.org](mailto:director@doverlib.org)>; [corrinakelley2015@gmail.com](mailto:corrinakelley2015@gmail.com) <[corrinakelley2015@gmail.com](mailto:corrinakelley2015@gmail.com)>; [mcmorris.uvny@gmail.com](mailto:mcmorris.uvny@gmail.com) <[mcmorris.uvny@gmail.com](mailto:mcmorris.uvny@gmail.com)>; [councilmanfrazier@gmail.com](mailto:councilmanfrazier@gmail.com) <[councilmanfrazier@gmail.com](mailto:councilmanfrazier@gmail.com)>; [councilmanjohnwelsh@gmail.com](mailto:councilmanjohnwelsh@gmail.com) <[councilmanjohnwelsh@gmail.com](mailto:councilmanjohnwelsh@gmail.com)>; Betsy Maas <[Supervisor@unionvaleny.us](mailto:Supervisor@unionvaleny.us)>

**Subject:** RE: Follow UP to Agreement / Invitation to Come to Town Board Meeting

Hello Rebekkah,

Please see my response attached. We hope you can attend our meeting in September.

I will look forward to hearing from you.

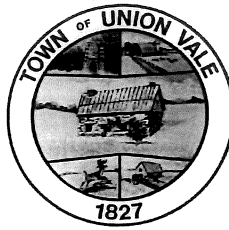
- Betsy

Supervisor Betsy Maas

(845) 724-5600 ext. 110 (office)

(845) 223-7335 (mobile)

Town of Union Vale



**Betsy C. Maas**  
Town Supervisor

**Town of Union Vale**  
249 Duncan Road  
Lagrangeville, NY 12540  
(845) 724-5600 ~ Supervisor@unionvaleny.us

July 17, 2019

Dear Rebekkah:

Thank you for your response to our recent letter. We did notice your thanking us for our acknowledgement that residents have a right to access library services as if that has ever been in question. From our perspective we have always known that to be true, so let's agree that we all come to this discussion with that same belief. With that as a basic tenant, our negotiation and disagreement is not whether to have or not have library services, it is all about the cost associated with those services. To that end, I'd like to respond to the some of the points you made in your email dated July 15.

First, let me point out that only member libraries in Dutchess County have signed on to your definition of "equitable funding" <sup>(1)</sup>. We would never agree to multiplying the average per capita amount spent in Dutchess County by our entire population as our entire population is not utilizing your services. Also, a "60% savings" or the % discount off an arbitrary sum is totally irrelevant. It's an "apples to oranges" comparison. We will discuss payment for services used only, because that makes the most sense if we do not have our own library.

In regards to your resident board members, let me refer you back to our recent letter in which we specifically mentioned that good communication should involve elected officials who are in touch with constituents in a way that affects their voting. Having residents on your boards, that no Town Board member was aware of, does not reflect close communication ties and actually underscores the point we made.

Your comment about coordinating calendars is self-evident but does not reflect an understanding of the way we suggested coordinating.... amongst friends. Point missed, but as we acknowledged in our July 1 letter, the libraries are free to create their own activities and calendars. It would be better for everyone if there was actual coordination, but it is not mandatory and not really worth discussing. Relationships must develop naturally....they just haven't yet. An opportunity missed is all we are saying.

Finally, let me request, that since the libraries have “directed you to continue to act on their behalf”, it is apparent that you will not be able to advise us about starting our own library as your advice could be considered questionable and not free from bias. That may not be the case, but we would like to avoid all improprieties where our residents are concerned. You can represent the libraries or let Beekman and Millbrook represent themselves while you advise us as to how to start our own library. You cannot objectively represent everyone.

Once you decide, please let us know who we can turn to for advice within MHLS. If you choose to continue representing the libraries, it will be important for you to attend a Town Board meeting during which you can fully represent the libraries to our residents, who have questions. Our next available Town Board meeting is Thursday, September 19<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 p.m. We really hope you will be able to attend. When you confirm your attendance I will place you at the top of the Agenda, so as not to waste your time.

Finally, when you come to our Town Board meeting, if you could please bring examples of other unserved communities in the State whose costs are calculated in a similar manner to those that you want to apply to Union Vale, it would greatly enhance the discussion. We look forward to seeing you in September, unless the libraries choose to represent themselves from now on. In which case we will contact them directly (or vice versa).

Most sincerely,



Betsy C. Maas

- (1) From the MHLS Free Direct Access Plan: “*Equitable funding* of library services is defined as the average Total Local Public Funds per capita for all MHLS member libraries within the county they are located, based on the average of the last three years, as reported by MHLS member libraries in their Annual Report for Public and Association Libraries to the State of New York.”

**From:** Rebekkah Smith Aldrich [<mailto:rsmith@midhudson.org>]  
**Sent:** Friday, July 26, 2019 10:38 AM  
**To:** Betsy Maas <[supervisor@unionvaleny.us](mailto:supervisor@unionvaleny.us)>; [corrinakelley2015@gmail.com](mailto:corrinakelley2015@gmail.com);  
[mcmorris.uvny@gmail.com](mailto:mcmorris.uvny@gmail.com); [councilmanfrazier@gmail.com](mailto:councilmanfrazier@gmail.com); [councilmanjohnwelsh@gmail.com](mailto:councilmanjohnwelsh@gmail.com)  
**Cc:** C Fortier <[cfortier@beekmanlibrary.org](mailto:cfortier@beekmanlibrary.org)>; Library Director <[director@millbrooklibrary.org](mailto:director@millbrooklibrary.org)>; M  
DeBellis <[mdebellis@laglib.org](mailto:mdebellis@laglib.org)>; Library Director <[director@doverlib.org](mailto:director@doverlib.org)>  
**Subject:** Re: Follow UP to Agreement / Invitation to Come to Town Board Meeting

Town of Union Vale Board Members,

As we have previously discussed, the sum is not arbitrary. It is based on the per capita average in the county as stipulated in our state approved free direct access plan. This plan was vetted by all 66 member libraries of the Mid-Hudson Library System, our 15 member board of trustees and the New York State Division of Library Development – as is required by state regulation.

The impacted libraries have negotiated in good faith, agreeing to an amount that is two-thirds less than the average per capita, which is the stated definition of equitable funding for our region. They have agreed to an amount that equates to a third of what the residents in other towns in the county are providing to underwrite library services. As agreed upon in the negotiations with your town's board five years ago, to go any lower will trigger restrictions such as those that were put into place in 2015.

As to my role in contract negotiations and discussions to provide information to your board to start your own library, the New York State Division of Library Development has agreed that this is not a conflict. My role as the executive director of the public library system in this region is to ensure equitable access to library services which are to be underwritten with equitable funding. Whether that be through a contract or the formation of an adequately funded library to serve a currently unchartered area – that is up to the impacted parties. My job is to facilitate an equitable solution.

As I have consistently stated, I am more than willing to answer any questions you have about starting your own library.

If you would please send me the questions you are getting from your residents that I have not already provided answers for, I would be happy to address them at your September 19<sup>th</sup> board meeting. I would ask that those be sent to me via email by September 13<sup>th</sup>.

Respectfully,

Rebekkah

---



**From:** Betsy Maas <supervisor@unionvaleny.us>

**Sent:** Monday, July 29, 2019 5:32 PM

**To:** Rebekkah Smith Aldrich <rsmith@midhudson.org>

**Cc:** C Fortier <cfortier@beekmanlibrary.org>; Library Director <director@millbrooklibrary.org>; M DeBellis <mdebells@laglib.org>; Library Director <director@doverlib.org>; Laurie Shedrick <lshedrick@midhudson.org>; corrinakelley2015@gmail.com; mcmorris.uvny@gmail.com; councilmanfrazier@gmail.com; councilmanjohnwelsh@gmail.com

**Subject:** RE: Follow UP to Agreement / Invitation to Come to Town Board Meeting

Dear Rebekkah:

In regards to your email below (dated July 26<sup>th</sup>) interestingly, we see things very differently. The Direct Access Plan is a plan mandated by the state which is agreed to by the State Education Department's Division of Library Development and the MHLS. The Town of Union Vale is **not** a signatory to that document. By constantly using this document as a reference it gives credence to our assertion that much of what is dictated by the libraries is "arbitrary". The number of libraries we pay is arbitrary, the % "discount" is arbitrary, the amount we pay is also arbitrary in that the formula was never negotiated. The details of our agreement are indeed "arbitrary". None of these items mentioned here are contained in the Direct Access Plan.

Having spoken with other town board members over this weekend, I can share with you that we are frustrated. It does not appear as if we are being heard. While your job is to "facilitate a solution" you do not seem to be in a position to negotiate - your emails simply reiterate the libraries' previous position. To threaten to put the Town of Union Vale on restriction is a demonstration of inflexibility and is very disappointing given we have voiced concerns that no one is listening to. We need to negotiate and can either do that with the library directors / trustees or can have our attorney do it with them on our behalf, if it will help get our points across.

We sympathize with your position Rebekkah, but it just isn't effective in this case. It also isn't effective to negotiate by email. If we keep doing this back and forth, we will continue to waste our time and not make any progress.

To review the way we see things, in hopes of furthering a discussion with the libraries:

1. We are 100% dedicated to supporting library services for the residents of Union Vale.
2. We will not be paying four libraries for library services.
3. It is permitted by the NY State Dept. of Education's Division of Library Development that individual libraries negotiate an amount with neighboring unserved towns that will satisfy them both. We choose to negotiate a sum that both sides can agree to.
4. We want to pay our fair share.
5. We do not perceive any benefits from having MHLS in the middle of our discussions with libraries as it has done nothing to further our communication or relationships over the last four years. We need to deal directly with the decision makers.

If you would see to it that this information is passed on, we would be most appreciative. Our contract is not up until December 31st 2019, so there is time for substantive discussions with the libraries. Many thanks for your efforts these last few years.

Regards,

Betsy

Supervisor Betsy Maas  
(845) 724-5600 ext. 110 (office)  
(845) 223-7335 (mobile)  
Town of Union Vale

**From:** Rebekkah Smith Aldrich [mailto:[rsmith@midhudson.org](mailto:rsmith@midhudson.org)]

**Sent:** Tuesday, August 13, 2019 4:52 PM

**To:** Betsy Maas <[supervisor@unionvaleny.us](mailto:supervisor@unionvaleny.us)>

**Cc:** C Fortier <[cfortier@beekmanlibrary.org](mailto:cfortier@beekmanlibrary.org)>; Library Director <[director@millbrooklibrary.org](mailto:director@millbrooklibrary.org)>; M DeBellis <[mdebells@laglib.org](mailto:mdebells@laglib.org)>; Library Director <[director@doverlib.org](mailto:director@doverlib.org)>; [corrinakelley2015@gmail.com](mailto:corrinakelley2015@gmail.com); [mcmorris.uvny@gmail.com](mailto:mcmorris.uvny@gmail.com); [councilmanfrazier@gmail.com](mailto:councilmanfrazier@gmail.com); [councilmanjohnwelsh@gmail.com](mailto:councilmanjohnwelsh@gmail.com)

**Subject:** RE: Follow UP to Agreement / Invitation to Come to Town Board Meeting

Betsy,

My apologies for the delayed response, I have been out of the country on vacation.

To address your points below:

1. That is great to hear.
2. The Town of Union Vale's contract is with the Mid-Hudson Library System, not with four libraries. This contract enables free direct access to all libraries in the system, including e-resources shared throughout the system, just as the residents of towns with chartered libraries do. The issue is creating a financially equitable situation to enable your residents to access library services as residents from other areas, that do live within chartered library service areas do, given that there are multiple libraries impacted by this situation.
3. Regulation also provides for public library systems to contract with unserved towns, which is the path we are on given that more than one library is impacted by this situation. As stated, the libraries have requested MHLS be the contracted organization which is their prerogative.
4. That is great to hear. The negotiations up to this point have provided a definition of your town's fair share as two-thirds less than others in the county are paying. The per capita amount in local funding is a defined metric that is documented, hardly arbitrary. The impacted libraries have already compromised quite a bit by agreeing to the amount currently being provided by your town. *They have a responsibility to the taxpayers of their chartered service areas to hold other town's users accountable*, which is where we find ourselves today. While everyone in this situation appreciates that funding is tight on both sides of the equation, asking for your town to pay less than what you are paying now is indefensible as you are asking for other towns' taxpayers to subsidize your resident's use of their libraries. I do not believe that anyone in the impacted towns would define that as paying your fair share. I think that is where the line has been drawn, you have been heard, however we are unwilling to compromise further.
5. As stated multiple times, and evidenced by action, we are open to working with you on building a stronger relationship with the impacted libraries. Setting expectations as to what this can look like in the future can certainly be discussed further, just as we did last year. The libraries have routinely communicated with Union Vale cardholders to ensure they are aware of services and programs, just as they do the residents of their chartered service areas. The libraries most impacted have welcomed residents of your town onto their governing boards and invited you and your fellow town board members to their annual meetings. Last year you requested annual reports from the libraries, which were provided to your board earlier this year. Most recently,

you have noted your recreation department would appreciate more coordination with the libraries, which the libraries are open to.

The offer on the table still stands, as vetted by the decision makers, with the adjusted reduction in the annual increase to respect the NYS Property Tax Cap. If your continued position is that this is not acceptable then, as noted in our last response, the next steps are clear for 2020 and the libraries have the right to request that restrictions be put back in place.

In light of where we find ourselves after this exchange, please let me know if it still makes sense to have me attend your September 19<sup>th</sup> board meeting.

Respectfully,  
Rebekkah

**From:** Betsy Maas <[supervisor@unionvaleny.us](mailto:supervisor@unionvaleny.us)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, August 13, 2019 6:56 PM

**To:** Rebekkah Smith Aldrich <[rsmith@midhudson.org](mailto:rsmith@midhudson.org)>

**Cc:** C Fortier <[cfortier@beekmanlibrary.org](mailto:cfortier@beekmanlibrary.org)>; Library Director <[director@millbrooklibrary.org](mailto:director@millbrooklibrary.org)>; M DeBellis <[mdebellis@laglib.org](mailto:mdebellis@laglib.org)>; Library Director <[director@doverlib.org](mailto:director@doverlib.org)>; [corrinakelley2015@gmail.com](mailto:corrinakelley2015@gmail.com); [mcmorris.uvny@gmail.com](mailto:mcmorris.uvny@gmail.com); [councilmanfrazier@gmail.com](mailto:councilmanfrazier@gmail.com); [councilmanjohnwelsh@gmail.com](mailto:councilmanjohnwelsh@gmail.com)

**Subject:** RE: Follow UP to Agreement / Invitation to Come to Town Board Meeting

Rebekkah,

I am not litigating this with you on email any longer. I apologize but I just do not have the time. Let's talk soon and we can set up an appointment for you to come here and share these thoughts in person. First, I think it makes sense for us to speak with the respective Boards of the Beekman and Millbrook Libraries or at least their Presidents or Officers. We need to have a frank conversation with our neighbors and stop going around and around with MHLS. My previous comments stand. Let's see if we can move this forward as opposed to stalling here, shall we?

Most sincerely,

Betsy

Supervisor Betsy Maas  
(845) 724-5600 ext. 110 (office)  
(845) 223-7335 (mobile)  
Town of Union Vale

**From:** Rebekkah Smith Aldrich

**Sent:** Friday, August 16, 2019 1:32 PM

**To:** Betsy Maas <[supervisor@unionvaleny.us](mailto:supervisor@unionvaleny.us)>

**Cc:** C Fortier <[cfortier@beekmanlibrary.org](mailto:cfortier@beekmanlibrary.org)>; Library Director <[director@millbrooklibrary.org](mailto:director@millbrooklibrary.org)>; M DeBellis <[mdebellis@laglib.org](mailto:mdebellis@laglib.org)>; Library Director <[director@doverlib.org](mailto:director@doverlib.org)>; [corrinakelley2015@gmail.com](mailto:corrinakelley2015@gmail.com) <[corrinakelley2015@gmail.com](mailto:corrinakelley2015@gmail.com)>; [mcmorris.uvny@gmail.com](mailto:mcmorris.uvny@gmail.com) <[mcmorris.uvny@gmail.com](mailto:mcmorris.uvny@gmail.com)>; [councilmanfrazier@gmail.com](mailto:councilmanfrazier@gmail.com) <[councilmanfrazier@gmail.com](mailto:councilmanfrazier@gmail.com)>; [councilmanjohnwelsh@gmail.com](mailto:councilmanjohnwelsh@gmail.com) <[councilmanjohnwelsh@gmail.com](mailto:councilmanjohnwelsh@gmail.com)>

**Subject:** RE: Follow UP to Agreement / Invitation to Come to Town Board Meeting

Betsy,

It is certainly your choice to cut off this line of communication. However, as we have consistently shared with you, the leadership of the two libraries you note below will not be meeting with you as part of this process. This contract is between your town and the Mid-Hudson Library System.

We refer you back to our last message: The offer on the table still stands, as vetted by the decision makers, with the adjusted reduction in the annual increase to respect the NYS Property Tax Cap. If your continued position is that this is not acceptable then, as noted in our last response, the next steps are clear for 2020 and the libraries have the right to request that restrictions be put back in place.

Please let me know if it still makes sense to have me attend your September 19<sup>th</sup> board meeting.

Respectfully,  
Rebekkah

**From:** Rebekkah Smith Aldrich [<mailto:rsmith@midhudson.org>]

**Sent:** Friday, September 13, 2019 4:19 PM

**To:** Betsy Maas <[supervisor@unionvaleny.us](mailto:supervisor@unionvaleny.us)>

**Cc:** C Fortier <[cfortier@beekmanlibrary.org](mailto:cfortier@beekmanlibrary.org)>; Library Director <[director@millbrooklibrary.org](mailto:director@millbrooklibrary.org)>; M DeBellis <[mdebells@laglib.org](mailto:mdebells@laglib.org)>; Library Director <[director@doverlib.org](mailto:director@doverlib.org)>; [corrinakelley2015@gmail.com](mailto:corrinakelley2015@gmail.com); [mcmorris.uvny@gmail.com](mailto:mcmorris.uvny@gmail.com); [councilmanfrazier@gmail.com](mailto:councilmanfrazier@gmail.com); [councilmanjohnwelsh@gmail.com](mailto:councilmanjohnwelsh@gmail.com)

**Subject:** Re: Follow UP to Agreement / Invitation to Come to Town Board Meeting

Hi Betsy,

Looking to finalize my schedule for next week and noted that you haven't responded to my last two requests to confirm whether or not my presence is still requested for your meeting on the 19th. Please let me know, I've reserved that date for this purpose but have two other requests for my time that evening so would like to confirm whether or not I'm still booked.

Thank you,

Rebekkah

---

**From:** Betsy Maas <[supervisor@unionvaleny.us](mailto:supervisor@unionvaleny.us)>  
**Sent:** Monday, September 16, 2019 10:19 AM  
**To:** Rebekkah Smith Aldrich <[rsmith@midhudson.org](mailto:rsmith@midhudson.org)>  
**Cc:** C Fortier <[cfortier@beekmanlibrary.org](mailto:cfortier@beekmanlibrary.org)>; Library Director <[director@millbrooklibrary.org](mailto:director@millbrooklibrary.org)>; M DeBellis <[mdebellis@laglib.org](mailto:mdebellis@laglib.org)>; Library Director <[director@doverlib.org](mailto:director@doverlib.org)>; [corrinakelley2015@gmail.com](mailto:corrinakelley2015@gmail.com); [mcmorris.uvny@gmail.com](mailto:mcmorris.uvny@gmail.com); [councilmanfrazier@gmail.com](mailto:councilmanfrazier@gmail.com); [councilmanjohnwelsh@gmail.com](mailto:councilmanjohnwelsh@gmail.com)  
**Subject:** RE: Follow UP to Agreement / Invitation to Come to Town Board Meeting

Good morning Rebekkah,

I had no idea that you had potential conflicts on Thursday, please feel free to accept another invitation.

Since you have made it clear that you can't really speak for the Libraries and since we have expressed an interest in a meeting with decision makers at these respective libraries in order to discuss our concerns directly, it makes no sense to waste your time. Initially, I was trying to be sensitive to your time by waiting to see how our Agenda developed and it is going to be packed on Thursday, so that is another reason to skip your visit – you would have been waiting for a long time. Thank you very much for agreeing to come though. We appreciate it.

Sincerely,

Betsy

Supervisor Betsy Maas  
(845) 724-5600 ext. 110 (office)  
(845) 223-7335 (mobile)  
Town of Union Vale



**From:** Rebekkah Smith Aldrich [<mailto:rsmith@midhudson.org>]  
**Sent:** Monday, September 16, 2019 11:02 AM  
**To:** Betsy Maas <[supervisor@unionvaleny.us](mailto:supervisor@unionvaleny.us)>  
**Cc:** C Fortier <[cfortier@beekmanlibrary.org](mailto:cfortier@beekmanlibrary.org)>; Library Director <[director@millbrooklibrary.org](mailto:director@millbrooklibrary.org)>; M DeBellis <[mdebellis@laglib.org](mailto:mdebellis@laglib.org)>; Library Director <[director@doverlib.org](mailto:director@doverlib.org)>; [corrinakelley2015@gmail.com](mailto:corrinakelley2015@gmail.com); [mcmorris.uvny@gmail.com](mailto:mcmorris.uvny@gmail.com); [councilmanfrazier@gmail.com](mailto:councilmanfrazier@gmail.com); [councilmanjohnwelsh@gmail.com](mailto:councilmanjohnwelsh@gmail.com)  
**Subject:** RE: Follow UP to Agreement / Invitation to Come to Town Board Meeting

Hi Betsy,

I do, in fact, speak for the impacted libraries and at no time have indicated otherwise. As was made clear earlier, the Beekman and Millbrook libraries are not interested in contracting individually with the town hence them declining your request to speak with them individually. This is an important issue and takes priority over the other pending issues on my calendar that evening, I remain willing and able to speak for the libraries in this matter.

Rebekkah

**From:** Betsy Maas <supervisor@unionvaleny.us>  
**Sent:** Monday, September 16, 2019 11:53 AM  
**To:** 'Rebekkah Smith Aldrich'  
**Cc:** 'C Fortier'; 'Library Director'; 'M DeBellis'; 'Library Director'; 'corrinakelley2015@gmail.com'; 'mcmorris.uvny@gmail.com'; 'councilmanfrazier@gmail.com'; 'councilmanjohnwelsh@gmail.com'  
**Subject:** RE: Follow UP to Agreement / Invitation to Come to Town Board Meeting

Sorry, Rebekkah. I misspoke. You speak for the libraries but you are unable to impart judgment on behalf of the libraries. I mentioned before that we are not litigating this on email. If you can organize a meeting with the various libraries' board members or trustees, we are interested in moving this discussion forward.

Thank you.

Betsy

Supervisor Betsy Maas  
(845) 724-5600 ext. 110 (office)  
(845) 223-7335 (mobile)  
Town of Union Vale

## Betsy Maas

---

**From:** Rebekkah Smith Aldrich <rsmith@midhudson.org>  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 19, 2019 3:48 PM  
**To:** Betsy Maas  
**Cc:** C Fortier; Library Director; M DeBellis; Library Director; corrinakelley2015@gmail.com; mcmorris.uvny@gmail.com; councilmanfrazier@gmail.com; councilmanjohnwelsh@gmail.com  
**Subject:** RE: Follow UP to Agreement / Invitation to Come to Town Board Meeting

Betsy,

As you have requested a direct line of communication with the library boards, shortly, you will receive a letter from the board presidents of the neighboring libraries. One of the items in the letter will be the reinforcement of the information provided in 2016, to the former town administration, that MHLS is the contracting agency in this situation at their request and therefore they will not entertain contracts negotiated with individual libraries.

If your refusal to deal with me means you will not contract with MHLS for 2020 then, as has been noted, the libraries will request that restrictions go into place January 1, 2020.

I plan to attend the meeting this evening should any issues arise that I can be helpful with. I will also reserve the dates of your upcoming October meetings which I understand are currently set for October 3<sup>rd</sup> and the 17<sup>th</sup>.

Thank you,  
Rebekkah