

## TOWN OF UNION VALE

### SUPERVISOR

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### TOWN BOARD

Steve Frazier  
Kevin Durland  
Kevin McGivney  
John Welsh

February 5, 2020

Dear Board Presidents, Library Directors and Rebekkah Smith Aldrich:

It was a pleasure meeting with all of you last Wednesday evening in order to discuss the library contract and where we all are with regard to coming to terms. It was helpful to hear your personal explanations behind the months of emails. We appreciate Erin Hawks' and Kerry Wellers' articulation of the group's position and respect their dedication to their financial responsibilities. In short, John and I liked both those ladies very much and wished this issue were resolved so we could be on the same team, helping and promoting the local libraries.

After the complicated discussions about quantifying payments based on cardholders (yours and ours), non-cardholders or paying on a per capita basis by taxing the entire population we respectfully decline all of them in favor of a simpler pay-for-service model. Under Education Law 256 (1) we can contract using any terms that are mutually acceptable. We are not sure where the original calculation came from but to us it is unreasonable and therefore, unacceptable.

**If, as a Town Board, we know these things to be true:**

1. We are not underspending.
  - a. The *per capita spending amount and library expenditures as a % of total expenditures* by "unserved" towns such as Union Vale, shows we pay more per capita than any other town without a library in NY State (\$16.20).

- b. Our library expenditures are 4.2% of our tax levy which is more than double the average expenditures statewide, according to the NY Comptroller's Office.

2018 Statewide Reported Expenditures	Average	Median
Library Expenditures, dollars	\$150,406.06	\$16,250.00
Library Expenditures, as Percentage of Total	1.55%	0.63%
Library Expenditures, Per Capita	\$13.14	\$4.45

2. Your terms are completely arbitrary and expensive. You want us to spend more because it is "your System" and you can dictate the terms, but you are totally outside the market in what you charge.
- There is no other town in NY State or in the MHLS that pays four libraries.
  - Our residents do not borrow from two of the four libraries enough to even be considered a hardship, by your own definition.
  - There are no other cost models around NY State that are similar to the calculations you four use to demand payment from us.
  - You expect that dollar amount to increase until it gets to a level you think is "appropriate".
3. When we give you our taxpayers' money, our residents have no vote on your budgets and we have no say in your spending and no say where the money goes.
- Some of you run labor costs at over 62% of your total budget.
  - Some of you push for 2% tax increases every other year and the Mid-Hudson Library System encourages you to pursue increases on a regular basis (the System has been relentlessly pushing us to pay more for five years!).
  - The trajectory of library spending has been excessive over the last few years and is simply unsustainable, especially in an economic downturn.
  - Philosophically, we differ in our approach to prudent financial management using taxpayers' money.

**Then, agreeing to your terms would be an abdication of responsibility.**

We would also never stop arguing because you understand our position and still are not flexible about any of your original positions.

Will you just let us finalize this process by agreeing to a blend of what you four are getting per capita (\$35.03 last year) to be paid to the libraries for our active users? We will also invest in some services (computers & internet access, for one) to entice our residents to come to Tymor Park when they want to take advantage of free services. This might eliminate any Union Vale "non-cardholder users" from coming into your libraries, as you mentioned last week.

If we keep communicating, we can do more to help reduce some of the financial burdens you described but we will need your help in reducing ours. Please consider this final offer seriously so we can put this behind us once and for all.

Most sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jesse". The signature is written in a cursive, somewhat stylized font with a large initial "J".

