

Abington Public Library

September 17, 2009

FY10 Further Budget Reduction Impact Statement

Reducing the Library budget by an additional \$16,664.09 from the already reduced budget of \$393,021 voted at the Annual Town Meeting will dramatically impact the provision of library services to the residents of Abington.

The budget voted at Town Meeting has necessitated applying for a waiver of the Municipal Appropriation Requirement for public libraries which is set by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners. If the waiver is not approved, the library will lose State Aid funds, estimated at \$15,806. Abington residents will not be allowed to borrow books and other materials from most other Massachusetts libraries, as almost all municipalities suspend the borrowing privileges of residents of towns with uncertified libraries. A further budget reduction may impact the waiver process.

The budget voted at Town Meeting forced the Board of Library Trustees to reduce hours of library service during July and August. A \$10,232.73 reduction in the library salary line will result in further limiting library hours. Decreasing library hours will result in a further loss of State Aid funds. Residents may reasonably expect that the Abington Public Library will be closed on Fridays, will almost certainly reduce evening hours (5:00 – 8:30 PM) from three to two evenings per week, and may close earlier on Saturdays. There will also likely be a corresponding decrease in programs, such as public school class visits, story hour, and informational sessions for adults, offered by the library. The hours worked by the part-time Reference Librarian and a part-time Library Assistant will be greatly reduced. The present budget resulted in the loss of town funding for two part-time Library Assistants. The library has also had an unfilled part-time position since November 2008. The final determination of library hours will be made by the Board of Library Trustees.

15% of the library budget must be spent on books and other library materials. The present budget underfunds this necessary expenditure. Reducing the library expense line by an additional \$6431.36 will result in fewer resources for residents, at a time when library use is increasing rapidly. The number of materials borrowed by library users increased by 12% in July/August 2009 as compared to July/August 2008. During July and August of 2009 21,032 items were borrowed and 12,605 library visits were recorded. Public Internet usage increased by 23% during the same period.

As summarized above, budget cuts of this magnitude will have a direct impact on services, staffing, materials acquisitions and state funding at a time when citizens are using the Library more than ever.

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Abington Public Library