



## THE VOTES ARE IN!

Seven libraries in the system had tax levy budget votes during the school district votes on May 19th.

**CONGRATULATIONS!**

- Amsterdam Free Library
- The Community Library
- Frothingham Free Library
- Fort Plain Free Library
- Gloversville Public Library
- Northville Public Library
- Schoharie Free Library

**All had votes that passed convincingly!**

Congratulations also go out to Middleburgh Library for their successful trustee elections, filling two open positions.

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## Niche Academy

Looking for some good self-paced tutorials on a variety of topics?

Take some time to explore our Niche Academy when you receive your invite.

### Questions?

Contact Mary Carrier  
mcarrier@mvls.info

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**Late Budget. Little Change.**

Nearly two months after it was due, the New York State budget was finally passed in late May. According to media reports, it is the latest the budget has been in 16 years.

For libraries, it is underwhelming.

Essentially, library funding remained flat as compared to last year. Library Operating Aid increased by \$70,000, but that is a miniscule bump in funding. Library Construction Aid stayed the same, and the investment in NOVELny remained flat. (See the sidebar for more details.)



The highlight for libraries was the addition of \$12 million for the Cultural Education Stabilization Fund which includes funding for the New York State Library. Given the uncertainties in recent years about federal funding for libraries, these funds should provide more assurance for the State Library and support the important work they do for libraries across the state.

Additionally, there is also significant uncertainty related to changes made to Tier 6 of the state’s retirement system. These changes could substantially increase costs for municipalities and other organizations, including many libraries. Right now, the fiscal impact to libraries is not clear, and it is a topic that bears watching.

While there may not be much to celebrate in this budget, a flat budget is still better than a decrease in funding. It is also a reminder of the importance of ongoing advocacy: locally, statewide, and nationally.

Thank you for your advocacy!

**NY STATE BUDGET  
AT A GLANCE**

Total NY State Budget

**\$268 billion**

(\$14 billion increase from last year)

Library Operating Aid

**\$106.395 million**

(\$70,000 increase from last year)

Library Construction Aid

**\$44 million**

(Same as last year)

NOVELny

**\$3 million**

(Same as last year)

Cultural Education Stabilization

**\$12 million**

(New this year)

*Continued from page 1*

The percentage of voters, across all seven libraries, who voted in favor of the tax levy changes was over 70 percent. It was a positive sign to see voters remain consistently strong in supporting their libraries. In many cases, the percentages of favorable votes increased from previous years.

This indicates that libraries within the system continue to build support by sharing their vision for the future along with their accomplishments and the impact on the communities they serve.

Sharing such messages is critical. For example, even though they do not hold a public tax levy vote, Schenectady County Public Library recently provided a comprehensive presentation to the County Legislature, the body that approves their budget. It could make a difference as the library and the county move through their budget process in the upcoming months.

In addition to the tax levy votes that have already taken place, Johnstown Public Library has a vote later this month, and Sharon Springs Free library has a tax levy vote in November.

Tax levy votes in particular, and the budget process in general, are very stressful. These successes should certainly be celebrated!

## Staff Picks What are you reading?

Kate: *Exhalation*  
by Ted Chiang

Eric: *Small-Town America*  
by Robert Wuthnow

Beth: *The House of Hidden Letters*  
by Izzy Broom

Wade: *Night Fighter*  
by William H. Hamilton, Jr.



## Storytime Smarts!

*click images for inspiration &  
resources*

Pollinators



Bath time



## Save the Dates!

**Reader's Advisory:  
Booktalk Your Way to the  
Friendliest Library  
in Town**  
6/10, 2pm via Zoom



This summer, we're taking our system-wide collaborative Summer Reading Program online!

Simply scan the QR code to play and follow the directions. When you complete the scavenger hunt successfully, you can enter a raffle for a \$25 gift card to a local bookstore!

**THE SCAVENGER HUNT GOES LIVE  
JULY 1 AND CLOSSES AUGUST 31.**

Thank You to the following MVLS member library staff for helping create this project:

Sarah Carbone, Sonny Duross,  
Whitney Hubbard, Caroline Metzger,  
and Jennie Mosher.

## Picture This!

### The Power of Picture Books with Joyce Laiosa, MLS



**Session 1: Between the Covers**

Tuesday, 9/29 via Zoom

History & structure of picture books

**Session 2: What's in a Picture?**

Tuesday, 10/13 via Zoom

Understanding the art and artists behind picture books

**Session 3: Picture Book Palooza**

Tuesday, 11/10 in-person at MVLS

Authors to know, sharing favorite titles and more!

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS!**

## StoryTime Skills: PLAYING

Did you know there are five interactive practices that experts recommend to make the most of your library storytime's potential and build early literacy skills? Those skills are: Talking, Writing, Reading, Playing, and Singing!



This month, we're talking about the importance of unstructured and open-ended play for young children.

Unstructured play means, "the kids decide how the play works, without adult intervention." This includes imaginative pretend play, building structures, sensory play, nature exploration, and more. Open-ended play refers more to the materials used in play. Cardboard boxes, blankets and pillows, magna-tiles, peg people, silk scarves, and art materials are all examples of open-ended materials. In open-ended play, there is no predetermined outcome. Children are allowed to determine if the box is a race car or a play house. They can paint a picture or make a collage. The focus is on exploration and experience.



## HOW CAN LIBRARIES HELP?

Make playtime a part of every storytime program! Borrow a Big Play kit from MVLS to make it easy!

Consider having play stations that kids can rotate through to try different things! You can have stations for sensory play, building with blocks or magna-tiles, dress-up, art activities, or loose parts. Did you know our foam dinosaur bones are considered loose parts?

### RESOURCES

[Loose parts play for preschool](#)

[Pretend Play Ideas for toddlers & Preschoolers](#)

[Open-ended toys](#)

[Fun & easy process art ideas](#)



# ZOOM TIPS



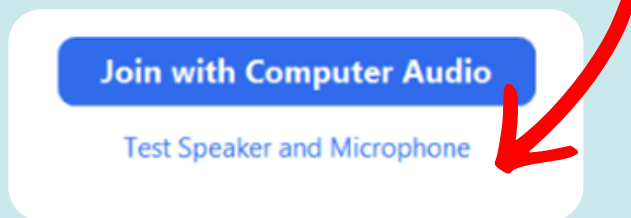
*From the Tech Tutor*

When it is time to use Zoom, do you love it or dread it?

Here are some tips for a better experience:

### Participants:

- Sign in early and test your microphone and speakers when the prompt displays.



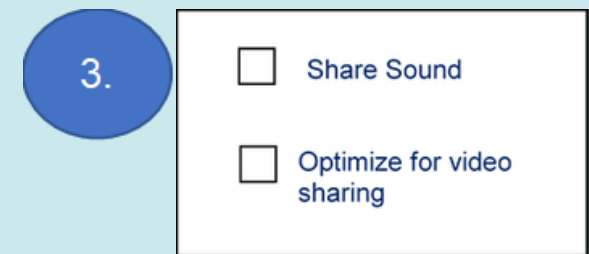
- If you are having audio or connection trouble, leave the meeting and try using the link again.
- While you are waiting, review the icons on the black floating controls bar.
- Stay muted unless speaking.

*Zoom takes patience and practice.  
Virtual programs are great for quick meetings, educational webinars, and even interactive exercise programs.  
It offers an opportunity for people to join who may not be able to participate otherwise.*



### Presenters:

- Sign in early and test everything, you'll thank yourself later!
- Follow these tips if you plan to share your screen. It is important to Click the share sound, if you are showing a video clip.



Select Entire screen

Click on Share Sound and Optimize for video sharing

Watch this video for pro tips on sharing your screen

- If possible, have a second person monitor the chat and assist with technical difficulties.



## CHECKING OUT LIBBY

Heading into summer vacation season, now is the perfect time to get familiar with Libby, the library reading app! Libby enables you to borrow ebooks, digital audiobooks, and even magazines using your library card.

**Here's how to get started:** **First**, you'll download the Libby app to your device from the Apple App Store, Google Play Store, Amazon App Store, or go to Libbyapp.com on a computer. **Next**, open the app to search for your library or library system and add your library card. **Then** it's time to get borrowing! Use the search button to look up a title or author, or browse your library's offerings.



## What do these Libby icons mean?

At the bottom of the screen in your Libby app, you'll see a line of icons like the ones pictured above. Confused about what they each mean? No problem, check this out!



**SEARCH:** Use this to search for a title or an author



**LIBRARY:** Use this to browse your library's catalog



**HOME:** Use this to add a library card, adjust your settings, or access the Libby help page



**SHELF:** Use this to access the items you currently have on loan, or to view your holds and notices



**TAGS:** Use this to view any wish lists or tags you have created

## Additional Resources

Questions? Need a little extra help?

Check out these websites for more Libby guidance!

[Getting Started with Libby](#) Step-by-step instructions for getting your Libby app set up

[Mid-Hudson Library System: How to add additional library cards](#) Instructions (with pictures!) on how to add any of our partner library systems (Mid-Hudson Library System, Southern Adirondack Library System, and Upper Hudson Library System) to your Libby app

[Libby Help: Troubleshooting](#) Experiencing technical difficulties? Check out this page for common fixes

## 2026-2027 OUTREACH MINI-GRANTS AWARDED!

**The Amsterdam Free Library is awarded \$1500 for The Community-Based Tough Topics Resources Initiative**, which will provide free, physical resources on tough topics for adult and teen patrons to keep. Per, Assistant Director Leah Fitzgerald, the project seeks to remove barriers to access, especially potential anxiety and fear of judgement on the part of users. Tough topics include addiction, mental health, domestic violence, and more.

**The Fort Hunter Free Library is awarded \$750 for Social Work: Cognitive Engagement with our Senior Patrons.** According to Board President Bev Osborne, this project aims to “create a welcoming, structured, and enjoyable series of sessions at the library that promote cognitive engagement, social connection, and functional coordination skills among community members who experience limited social interaction.”

**The Schenectady County Public Library is awarded \$1500 to create The Nourish & Navigate Food Pantry & Resource Hub.** Per Librarian Jen Malave, “the overall goal of the project is to reduce food insecurity and improve access to essential community resources by establishing a small-scale food pantry and creating a centralized, accessible hub of up-to-date community resource information.”

## LIBRARIES CARE KITS

MVLS has Libraries Care Kits available for our members! A Care Kit contains both hygiene and comfort items for library users who are unhoused or experiencing other hardships.

This project was identified as a system-wide need because the majority of our libraries have seen a significant increase in unhoused and struggling library users in the last year. The kits were created in consultation with SAFE, Inc. of Schenectady’s Street Outreach Team, one of our Outreach Council partners.

**Interested libraries should contact Beth for more information.**

# CAUGHT BEING CLEVERLY CREATIVE

~New Program Highlight~

## Storytime for Grown-Ups at The Community Library



This is a great alternative to a traditional book club.

The Storytime for Grown-Ups launched at The Community Library in March 2026 and had a second meeting, recently in May. This unique program created by Adult Services Librarian, Don LaPlant includes local volunteers reading (performing) short stories and classics, followed by a moderated talk.

Don's goals and inspiration for this program include, an outlet for community members to meet new people, a space for engaged discussions on literary works, and finding readings that can be promoted through a theme. The theme for March was Women's History Month and the theme for May was Parenting.

Don stated, "We provide an important social function by bringing people together for civil conversations." "This program has room to grow and change, according to audience interest."

### CONTACT US

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Not sure who to contact?  
Check out [MVLS Staff At a Glance](#)

