Improving Your Library's Bottom Line
Securing Needed Local Government Funding

Chuck Sherrill
State Librarian and Archivist
Tennessee State Library and Archives
Secretary of State Tre Hargett

What Makes a Library Board Valuable?

Tennessee Code Annotated 10-3-103
The board has the authority to direct all the affairs of the library, including the authority to appoint a library administrator. The administrator shall direct the internal affairs of the library...

How Healthy is Your Budget?

Review the Ability to Pay chart
Review the budget growth chart
Consider how your library compares to the Standards
How Healthy is Your Budget?

From 2013 - 2018
- The Consumer Price Index rose 9%
- The average Tenn. library budget rose 15%

What Can Boards do to Help?

#1. Know your local officials. (And know who can talk to them!)
- Finance Committee members are the priority
- Discuss who on the Board knows these members
- Determine whether they or family are library users
- Track whether members are library supporters or not
- Use connections to call and discuss library issues or to get use meetings for a Board Member and the Director to meet with them

Know Your Officials

Local government web page will have list of commissioners, and sometimes of committees.
What Can Boards do to Help?

#2. Promote the library to local leaders.
- Newsletters/Emails
- Press Releases
- Speak at Meetings
- Use Your Connections

At each board meeting, select one or two talking points.
Commissioners' time to each commissioner by personal email or from a board member.
A monthly/quarterly newsletter can be simple, send one to each commissioner.
Library Board members should take turns attending commissioners meetings, short talking points at each meeting.
Be brief, thank them for their support, boost the library.

Promote the Library

Attractive newsletter from Denver. Use same layout each time, change the words and images.

Promote the Library

Even a one-page newsletter is a good tool for small libraries.
As readers remember names of library's value.
What Can Boards do to Help?

#3. Manage Your Money Well
- Board Treasurer position
- Reviewing Reports
- Following Local Procedures

Know the date when budget requests are due, and back up from that date to begin planning early.
Know what the budget approval process is for your local government. If you need permission to move money between line items, request it in a timely manner so they can’t say ‘no’.

What Can Boards do to Help?

#2. Elect a Capable Treasurer to:
- Review list of income and expenditures each month. Note any unusual items.
- Review line-item budget report showing year-to-date expenditures, noting where the library is over- or under-spent.
- Compare librarian’s report with local government report of account balances.
- Review this information briefly with the full board.

Developing Your Budget Request

Do Your Research

1. Use your library’s data
2. Compare to other, similar libraries
3. Use related data from national sources
4. Use the Standards
5. Build your Case
6. Find your Partners
Developing Your Budget Request

- Solicit input from staff, board, public
- Tie in to community and library goals
- Do your research

Every library’s data is on the State Library’s website,
Your Regional staff can help you find and interpret
statistics to help make your case for budget
improvement.

Developing Your Budget Request

- Build your case
- Find your partners

If at First You Don’t Succeed...

IF AT FIRST YOU DON'T SUCCEED, RELOAD AND TRY AGAIN