

## Community Conversation FAQ's

In 2016, the City of Jamestown collected \$350,000 from local taxes to help support the James Prendergast Library. In 2017, the City cut the amount of library support from those local taxes from \$350,000 to \$100,000 without reducing the amount of taxes assessed to local homeowners. In 2018, again without reducing taxes to homeowners, library support was cut again from \$100,000 to \$50,000. As a direct result of these cuts, per Library Law, Prendergast Library's 2020 State Aid will be cut by 25%. In 2020, the library will lose all its State Aid, which is a loss of over \$111,000 each year.

1. Why can't the library do more fundraising? The library currently does do fundraising; a direct mail campaign twice a year, the book sale that is open every day, the annual 5K Run for Literacy and smaller fundraisers such as Mike Randall as Charles Dickens, which will be held at the Spire Theater on Dec. 15th. The issue is not with fundraising, it is about losing State Aid as a result of the loss of community support through taxes
2. Can't the library cut staff to save money? The library has cut staffing from 36 positions to 14. A loss of 61%. Due to safety concerns, the library cannot cut any more staff.
3. Can't volunteers run the library? Librarians go to school to get Master's degrees in Library Science. They are trained to build a well-rounded collection of library materials that meet the information needs of the users in a timely and economical manner using information resources locally held, as well as from other organizations. Collection development is at the heart of librarianship. It's what we do. They are also trained to develop programming based on the needs of the local community and businesses. They protect your personal information and your reading interests. By law, librarians cannot share your reading history or use of library resources.
4. Can't you use the money from the sale of the art collection? No. Those funds were deposited into the library's endowment to help support the library into the future. The endowment (investments) will provide 50% of the library's 2020 budget. Only community support in the form of a library tax can restore the library's annual State Aid.
5. Can't you cut the library board's salaries? The library board does not get paid. They are all volunteers and working for the good of the library and the community without any pay.
6. The library recently remodeled and got new windows. Where did that money come from? NYS libraries who meet Minimum Standards defined by the State Library are eligible to apply for NYS Construction grants. These grants will provide up to 75% of library construction projects. The library must come up with a 25% match and Prendergast applies

for grants to supply that matching 25%. None of these funds come out of the library's operating budget.

7. Who needs the library anymore – you can find anything on the Internet? “Google can give you 1,000,000 answers – your local librarian can give you the right one” – Neil Gaiman, author. Many people cannot afford Internet access, and/or need help to navigate the Internet. They rely on the library for access and education. In 2018, the library's computers were used over 40,000 times.
8. Why doesn't the library apply for grants? The library does apply for grants every year and they are part of the library's budget as they have been for decades. The library applies for between \$150,000-\$200,000 per year. Again, the issue here is not about grants, it is about losing State Aid as a result of the loss of community support through taxes.
9. Why don't the foundations make the library a priority? They do. The library applies to all or most of the local foundations every single year for support. Grants should be used to provide programs to benefit the community but without local tax support, they are now filling the deficit in the library's annual budget. In 2020, the deficit is \$140,000.
10. We hear people talking about transparency - what does the library do to be transparent? Library board meetings are advertised in advance and all meetings are open to the public. Library Board minutes are available on the library's website and within the library. Library board member names are listed on the library's website. The library's budget is also listed on the website. Each year the library publishes an Annual Report to the Community.