

In this tough economy, Amherst's libraries are more critical than ever!

One Jones Library patron reports:

“Cuts? You must be kidding. **The library is the only internet access I have. I use it to look for a job.** I may soon be homeless. The state can spend the money now or spend more later.”

Why Should Town Meeting Approve the Library's MAR Budget, a budget that is \$81,000 less than level services?

Because the Library's MAR (Municipal Appropriation Requirement) budget is the **bare minimum** needed by law to maintain Amherst's public library State **Certification** with the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners.

The **Finance Committee's Recommendation** (\$35,000 less) could **LOSE** Amherst's State **Certification**.

When a Mass. public library loses certification¹....

1. The noncertified municipality and its library will **receive NO State Aid to Public Libraries monies** (M.G.L. c.78, s.19A). For Amherst, this could mean a **loss of almost \$70,000 in State Aid**. The libraries are counting on that state aid to arrive on March 1, 2010. The elimination of that money would result in an immediate cut from next year's budget.
2. **Libraries in certified municipalities need not lend library materials** to the library in the noncertified municipality (605 CMR 4.01 (6a)). The Library's MAR budget already proposes cutting \$76,000 for new acquisitions. With the MAR budget, therefore, our need for interlibrary loans will doubtless rise significantly. If Amherst's libraries are decertified, Amherst residents would lose their interlibrary loan privileges.
3. **Libraries in certified municipalities need not extend reciprocal library services**, beyond in-library use of their materials, to residents of the noncertified municipality (605 CMR 4.01 (6b)). Amherst residents would be unable to borrow materials free of charge from public libraries in Northampton, Greenfield, or Springfield.
4. **The library is not eligible to apply for grants under the federal Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) program**. Amherst would lose \$11,250 of its grant money for ESL and Spanish programs.

¹ This information, minus the Amherst specific information, is from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners website: http://mblc.state.ma.us/grants/state_aid/faqs/sa_denial_of_cert.php. A community may apply for a waiver of the MAR. Yet there is no certainty that Amherst would receive one. Even more important, staff levels at the Jones, Munson, and North Amherst Libraries are already at barebones. More severe cuts, especially in these times of increasing demand, would gravely impair the libraries' ability to meet our community's needs. (Note: The total appropriation for the Library under the Library's budget is \$2,128,288 (approximately 70% of which is requested from Town tax funds) compared to the Finance Committee's amount of \$2,093,594.)

MAR Budget is almost \$81,000 less than level services!



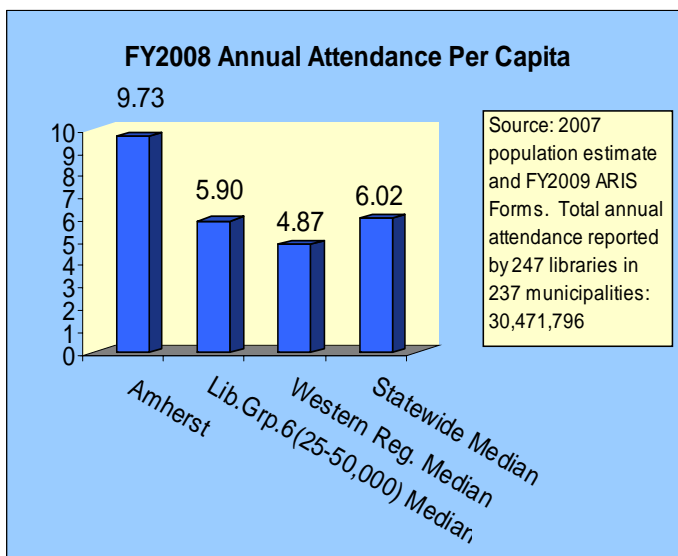
A Change in Book, DVD, etc. Acquisition Law Will Permit FY2010 Cuts

A change in state regulation will allow Amherst to cut \$76,000 for new materials while maintaining state certification. Another cut, almost \$5,000, is to a part-time position.

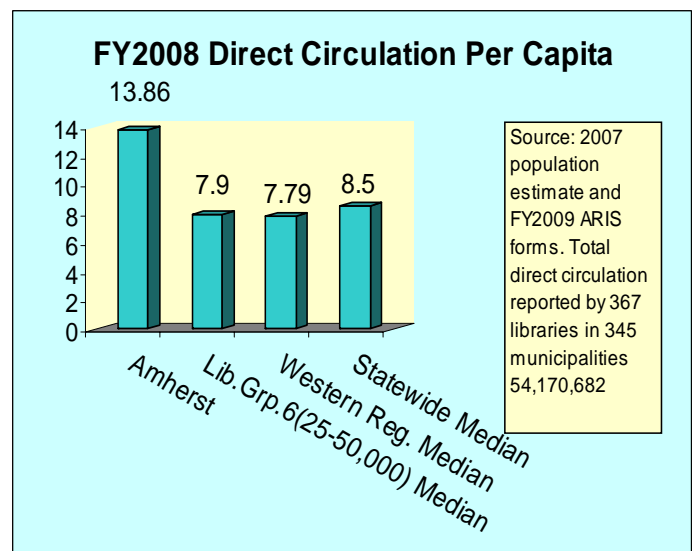
FY2010 MAR Budget Retains Previous Years' Cuts

- **Branch library hours remain reduced** by one afternoon a week
- The **full time position from Circulation** remains **eliminated**
- **Special Collections** (Amherst History) remains **closed on Saturday mornings**
- **Jones Library** remains **closed on Monday mornings, plus Sundays & evenings in summer**
- English as a Second Language (ESL) **Coordinator will not work in July and August**
- **Staffing cuts** mitigated by an **automated phone system** remain in effect
- **Staffing reductions for children's activities** remain in effect
- **Computer technician remains at 30 hours a week** rather than full-time
- **2 full time staff positions already reduced to part-time** remain part-time

Yet -- Amherst library use is up! Amherst Libraries have **26,287** cardholders. Overall **FY2009 borrowing is up 2%** - 7,624 higher than last year. FY2008 **public computer use signups** were **44,659**. **FY2009 computer signups are up 5.5%**, 2,447 more than last year.



Amherst libraries have significantly more visits per capita than most Mass. libraries.



Amherst has significantly greater circulation per capita than most Mass. towns.

Amherst's Libraries Boost Amherst's Economy!

- **\$1.00 in public library taxes = \$5.50 in economic benefit** (includes **libraries serving as anchors for nearby businesses** and patrons' **personal savings** from use of libraries.) 2006 Univ. of N.C. study of Pennsylvania Public Libraries
- **Only about 3.5 cents of every General Fund dollar** goes to operate Amherst's libraries.

Thank You for Supporting YOUR Amherst Libraries!

Questions? Contact Library Director Bonnie Isman at 259-3090 or Patricia Holland, Trustee President, at 549-1503. (printed 6/1/09)