**Getting Unstuck: Help Your Board, Staff, and Town Talk about Library Funding - Learner Guide**

<https://www.webjunction.org/events/webjunction/getting-unstuck-library-funding.html>

**Event Description**: Library leaders have been trained to "do more with less" for so long that it’s become a virtue. Though talking about budgets is a challenge, library staff need better funding to provide the public with needed services and expertise. If your budget is stuck, and your board, staff and stakeholders are having a hard time talking about new taxes or levies, this webinar can help. Please join us for real-world, practical, actionable advice on how to overcome local political problems, negative feelings, and unmotivated stakeholders, to move your library toward a more financially secure future.

Presented by: John Chrastka, Executive Director, EveryLibrary; Lee Hallberg, Executive Director, Mancos Public Library, CO; and James Ochsner, Sutter County Library, CA

|  |
| --- |
| **What are your goals for viewing this webinar?** |
| **Personal Goals** |  |
| **Team Goals** |  |
| **Causes for Getting Stuck with Funding** |
| In reviewing the factors that hold teams back from discussing new or expanded funding, consider your own experience, and what you’ve seen happen in your community. Circle those factors that you think resonate the most. **External Factors:**1. Elected officials or ‘the powerful’ are opposed
2. Zero-Sum and local watchdogs are at work in town
3. There is an organized or vocal “Any tax is a bad tax” group
4. Residents are against the staff or the board, personally
5. Focused censorship or materials challenges, nuisance FOIA
6. No money available without significant change

**Internal Issues:**1. Low level of financial literacy among leaders
2. Poor political literacy about advocacy and library
3. Lack of trust among library staff for leadership / board
4. Friends or Foundation think they are ‘white knights’
5. Fear of failure leads to over-analysis inside, but low outside engagement
6. “We lack capacity” is a euphemism for we lack of talent
 |
| **Inventory and Reflection about External Factors** |
| 1) Elected Officials are opposed or ‘sit the campaign out’Have any current elected officials made statements against the measure?Have former office-holders or candidates made the library a part of their platform?Are elected officials avoiding the library?2) Zero-Sum and Local Watchdogs are at work in townWhy did recent previous initiatives for schools, police and fire, parks, or libraries fail?Was the opposition personality based or ideologically driven?Is the community changing rapidly - demographics or income?Is there an anti-immigrant or hate group in the community?3) There is an organized or vocal “Any tax is a bad tax” groupIs there a strong anti-tax group in the area?Is there a self-appointed watchdog group / individual?Is there a vocal opposition to tax measures?Is there organization against “waste”?Are there comments on online media or blogs in opposition?4) Residents are against the staff or the board, personallyIs there local outcry against the library staff or government employees?Does the community look unfavorably on the library leadership?Does the local political body support the board and staff?Are the staff unhappy with management or with the plan you are trying to implement?5) Focused censorship or materials challenges, nuisance FOIAAre there frequent materials challenges that come from an individual or group?Are there stories in local media about pornography or children’s safety at the library? 6) No funding without significant changesWhat current funding authority does your library have?Describe the legal area the library serves.What type of election / election cycle could be before the voters, or when does your municipal funding partner next decide on the annual budget?What will the impact of this ballot measure be on an average taxpayer? |
| **Inventory and Reflection about Internal Issues**  |
| Like in Mancos and Sutter County, understanding your own “why we are stuck” is key to moving forward. If the factors are internal rather than external, it is important to talk frankly with your leadership team, board, and staff to come to an understanding of your ‘sources of stuck’. Finding a path forward through training and skills building, teamwork, and consensus building takes time and courage. But it starts with a frank professional and personal assessment of your situation. Consider the following and add resources and approaches for each factor.1. Is there a low level of financial literacy among your library leaders?
* Trainings and outside consultants
1. Poor political literacy about advocacy and agency?
* Trainings and skills building
1. Lack of trust among library staff for leadership / board?
* Outside facilitation – in town or out of town
1. Friends or Foundation think they are ‘white knights’
* Deep discussion about role of money and support
1. Fear of failure leads to over-analysis inside but low outside engagement
* Survey non-users about perceptions and attitudes
1. “We lack capacity” is a euphemism for we lack of talent
* Training. hiring, interns, skilled volunteers and temp / contract work
 |
| **Action Plan:** (include next steps, who, when, etc.) |
|  |