



BUDGET CUTS WILL HIT: The Arlington Libraries

In this era of Kindles, iPads, and the Internet, you might think that the library wouldn't matter, but you'd be wrong. Last year, Arlington's libraries recorded their highest circulation ever. Arlington residents made 319,673 visits to Robbins Library and checked out 625,894 items, librarians answered 79,047 reference questions, and the Robbins and the Fox hosted 442 programs for children, teens, adults, and the elderly. These numbers provide hard evidence for what is immediately apparent when you enter the grand marble hallway of the Robbins or the cozy confines of the Fox: Arlington's libraries are a community hub. At all hours, you'll find people browsing the shelves, reading newspapers and magazines, and consulting with librarians. In the morning, the children's rooms overflow with toddlers and babies enjoying storytime and singalong. After school, high school and middle school students do their homework. The computers are always in use, as people look for information in databases and apply for jobs. Especially in these economic hard times, the library matters more than ever.

Impact of Budget Reductions without an override

Hours

- The Robbins will close at 6:00 instead of 9:00 one additional evening, leaving only three open nights a week.
- The town will only be able to staff the Fox one day a week (the Friends of the Fox hope to provide funds for the additional two days, but this will come at the expense of other enhancements they had planned).

People

- The library cut the equivalent of 1 fulltime position during this current fiscal year and will lose the equivalent of an additional 2.5 fulltime positions next fiscal year.

Materials

- An 18% reduction in the budget for books and periodicals, as well as online databases.
- Fewer new and high demand books will be available, leading to longer waits.

Life at the library

- Fewer evening hours will make the library less accessible for working adults, as well as less available for meetings and activities.
- Fewer materials will mean more interlibrary loan requests.
- Fewer staff members and more interlibrary loan requests will mean longer times for getting books out to patrons and checking books in.

The Town will be required to apply for a waiver to maintain state certification with or without an override. However, the increased funding created by an override will strengthen the Town's position in applying for a waiver. Possible loss of state certification would result in the following:

- Arlington residents could lose interlibrary loan borrowing privileges through the Minuteman Network.
- The library would lose its state aid.
- The library would not be eligible for federal and state library grants.

It's up to us. Vote Yes on June 7.