



# HUDSON LIBRARY & HISTORICAL SOCIETY

96 LIBRARY STREET · HUDSON, OHIO · 44236

## **Hudson Library & Historical Society Executive Summary**

**The Library's Request:** The Hudson Library & Historical Society (the “Library”) respectfully requests Hudson City Council take the simple step of placing its proposed operating levy on the ballot for the spring of 2021.

The Library is an independent Section 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and is not an arm of the City government. However, in 1993 the Library entered into an agreement with the City of Hudson to serve as its taxing authority and to place funding initiatives on the ballot for the Library. In accordance with this agreement, the City provides the ministerial mechanism for placing these initiatives on the ballot, but neither it nor City Council plays a role in assessing the merits of ballot initiatives, leaving that role to the voters. The City of Hudson has placed Library operating levies on the ballot in 1993, 1997, 2002, 2006, 2011, and 2016. It has also placed Library bond issues on the ballot in 1993 and 1999.

**The Proposed Levy:** The Library proposes a ballot initiative to simply renew its current operating levy of 2.9 mils for a two-year time period. It does not seek to increase its operating levy at this point.

Typically, at this juncture the Library would seek a five-year operating levy with a modest increase in millage to account for projected cost of living increases, projected growth and operating costs. Recognizing the economic strain created by the COVID-19 crisis, however, the Library has chosen not to ask the Hudson community for an increase at this time. Out of sensitivity to the economic uncertainty facing our taxpayers, and also as a vital community entity that works hard to enhance Hudson’s economic growth through its Morgan Business and Entrepreneurship Center, the Library feels it important to also support Hudson residents in this way at this uncertain moment.

**Historical Context:** The history of public library funding in Ohio reflects the commitment of its citizens to lifelong learning. The Hudson Library & Historical Society was created in 1910 as an association library by like-minded Hudson residents who wanted to enhance the intellectual life of our community. The Library was first supported through a nominal subscription membership.

This changed on September 4, 1947 when the Library began to receive state funding through a tax levied on intangible personal property. This system of state funding changed in 1983 when the intangible tax was repealed based on recommendations from a bi-partisan study of the state's entire tax system. The new Library and Local Government Support Fund (LLGSF) was then established by the state to preserve excellence in existing library services while improving access for underserved communities. Over the years, however, state funding now known as the Public Library Fund (PLF) has fluctuated with periods of reductions necessitating greater reliance on local community support. State funding, which was greatly reduced in 2009, only recovered to 2008 levels recently in 2017. The Library anticipates the current national health emergency will further reduce state funding by at least 20 to 30 percent.

The renewed millage of 2.9 the Library seeks will generate approximately \$2,647,000 per year. The cost to Hudson taxpayers will be approximately 80 dollars for each \$100,000 of home value. With a mere renewal levy and with the reduction of state funding, the library will be operating on an austerity budget which has a lower revenue level than at any time during the current 5 year levy cycle, despite the significant additional costs associated with protecting patrons from the COVID-19 virus. Nonetheless, the Library seeks to be sensitive to our community's economic pressures.

Respectfully submitted,

E. Leslie Polott

Executive Director/Curator

The following library board/staff members would like to attend the workshop:

- Basil J. Musnuff (Board President): [bmusnuff@gmail.com](mailto:bmusnuff@gmail.com)
- Becky Thompson (Board Vice President): [thompsonfive24@gmail.com](mailto:thompsonfive24@gmail.com)
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