

October 23, 2023

Dear Black Creek Village Board of Trustees,

The Board of Trustees of Black Creek Village Library is concerned about the cut of \$46,000 in library funding proposed by the Finance Committee for the 2024 Budget. (As a point of reference, Village funding averaged \$80,429 per year for the years 2019-2023.) The reduction of municipal funding to \$30,000 is only 17.2% of the proposed \$174,044 budget. The cut will negatively affect every aspect of library services, including library hours, programming, collections, and staffing. One may question how this cut may affect so many aspects of library services. The library is being asked to take a 13% cut (\$26,191) compared to our 2023 operating budget at a time when inflation requires us to spend more funds to maintain the current level of service. Any cuts to our collection spending must be judicious so we can continue to meet the needs of our library patrons. Per our automation services agreement with OWLS, "All libraries participating in OWLSnet have a responsibility to develop their local materials collections to support the basic needs of their patrons. It is unfair for libraries to rely primarily on other members of the network to meet their patrons' basic needs."

The Library Board is also concerned about the negative impact this decision will have on County funding in the future, which may be significant. County reimbursement is dependent on three variables—the library's total expenditures are a central part of that equation. Though it is impossible to estimate the precise amount, the proposed cuts will negatively affect County reimbursement in 2026. If the village is not prepared to increase funding to the library to offset those losses, total library expenditures will decrease again, and the most likely outcome is that County reimbursement will shrink yet again in 2027.

The Board of Trustees of Black Creek Village Library is asking the Village Board of Trustees to reduce the cut to library funding proposed by the Finance Committee. As a first step, we are requesting an opportunity to discuss this issue with the Village Board, whether at a special meeting with an opportunity for the public to comment or as an addition to the agenda of the next regularly scheduled Library Board meeting on **November 7**. [updated to correct date]

We recognize that the Library Board must be prepared to absorb some cuts. The Library Board would like more information regarding the intentions of the Village and the long-term future of the library when determining how best to handle the proposed cuts to 2024 funding. Additional context is needed in order for the Library Board to establish budget priorities and make fiscally responsible decisions.

Clarification is required on a number of points:

- What portion of the cut in library funding is being allocated for the snowplow and the DoT project?
- What funds were cut from other departments to be reallocated for the snowplow and the DoT project?
- Is the Library Board being asked to weather one difficult year, or is the library to expect reduced funding from the Village going forward?
- Should the library expect a lower total annual budget that is similar to the proposed 2024 budget?
- Is the Village of Black Creek committed to supporting the library for the foreseeable future?

We look forward to discussing this matter with the Black Creek Village Board of Trustees.

Sincerely,

Black Creek Village Library Board of Trustees