



everylibrary

Building voter support for libraries

Campaigning for Your Warrant Article

Or, How to Run Against Your Own Library and Win

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About EveryLibrary

Set up as a 501c4 Social Welfare Organization chartered to support local library ballot measures like bonds, referendum, parcel taxes, levies and mills.

Includes our support for legislation that impacts the ability of libraries to function as districts.

About EveryLibrary

EveryLibrary works with Info-Only and Vote YES campaigns

- Pre-planning and polling
- Technical assistance with campaigns
- Staff, Trustee and Friends roles
- Timing issues in the public trust

Data that Frames Our Discussions

“From Awareness to Funding” says...

Voter Attitudes

Nationwide, of all voters:

37% will Definitely vote yes for the library

37% will Probably vote yes for the library

26% will Probably or Definitely vote no or
may vote either way.

Voter Education Challenge

“The [New Hampshire] state municipal association examined 27 towns and found that an average of 2.4% of registered voters attended the deliberative sessions in 2010 and 25.5% of registered voters voted on the budget at the polls.”

Union Leader 16 Feb 2013
<http://www.newhampshire.com/article/20130217/NEWS0612/130219241/0/news01>

Who Supports Libraries?

“From Awareness to Funding” says...

Library Use Does Not Matter

A voter's willingness to support increased library funding is not driven, or limited, by library use.

- OCLC "From Awareness to Funding" p. 7-2

Library as Transformative Force

[T]he library is not perceived as just a provider of practical answers and information; the most committed supporters hold the belief that the library is a transformational force.

- OCLC "From Awareness to Funding" p. 7-4

Attitude - Not Demographics

The factors that determine residents' willingness to increase their taxes to support their local library are their perceptions and attitudes about **the library** and **the librarian**.

- OCLC "From Awareness to Funding" p. 7-3

Activate in Either Context

VOTERS:

1. A Reason to Vote
2. Mobilization
3. *Personal Contact with Candidate**
4. *Culture/Tradition/Habit of Voting**
5. Trust in Government (pro or con)
6. Decided to Vote
7. Weather/Access to Polls

ADVOCATES:

1. An Identified Need
2. Personal Motivation
3. *Experience of the Issue**
4. *Prior Success as Advocate**
5. Institutional Reputation
6. Made a Pledge
7. Ease of Access to Tools

What Activates Voters for the Library?

The Librarian is the “Candidate”

The Library is the “Incumbent”

Library = Librarians + Community

Why Libraries Lose

- The day of the vote is the first time enough people see the budget
- Zero-Sum Games
- Any tax is a bad tax

Why Libraries Lose

- The day of the vote is the first time enough people see the budget
 - Communications Campaign
- Zero-Sum Games
 - Early work in the Ecosystem
- Any tax is a bad tax
 - Engage the Debate

Community Inventories

Know the Political Landscape

Inventory Your Allies

1. Educational Partners
2. Social Welfare and Religious Partners
3. Governmental Partners
4. Civic Partners
5. Business Partners
6. Politicians
7. Media

Ask for Endorsements

- Your allies...
 - Become your endorsers
 - Become your funders
 - Become your volunteers
- The person who asks is the individual “closest to” the potential endorser.
- Ask early. Ask often.
- Plan to Publicize

Inventory Your Ecosystem

1. Who else is has a Warrant / is on the ballot / is before the body?
 2. Who are your champions?
 3. Who is your opposition...?
 4. What do they want?
-
1. What are your potential asks?

Inventory Your Ecosystem

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1. What are your potential asks?
 2. If you are not 'at risk' this season, who is?

Messaging that Works

To see if...

Data v. Stories

Data is a “Good Economy” Ask

Stories are a “Bad Economy” Ask

“To see if.....”

Warrant Message 'Frames'

We have a plan that...

- Is basic - needs stability
- Is aspirational - needs growth
- Is integral - advances several missions

Warrant Message 'Frames'

The community needs our library to....

- Partner
- Incubate
- Leverage

Voter See the Library as a “Transformative Force”

The Library as...

- Educational Partner
- Economic Development Engine
- Social Leveler
- Place of Discovery
- Personal Refuge

“Transformative Force”

The Library as Incubator

- Businesses
- The Arts
- Community Identity

The Library as Leverage

- Retail Anchor
- Grants and Capacity
- Access to Tech

Remember – “User Status” Does Not Matter

To Library Users:

- “As you know...”
- Personal Value Proposition
- Value for Other
- Activation for the library

To Non-Users:

- “As you can imagine...”
- Value to/for “the other”
- Satisfaction/Activation

“Perception of the Librarian”

Nothing Impacts Voter Behavior More than Their Perception of the Librarian and the Library as Institution.

The Meeting

Prepare the Room

Public Education about Spending Authority

“Raise and Appropriate”

“Accept and Expend”

“Anticipating Funds”

More than the Annual Report....

Information-Only Team

Who:

Public Employees on Public Time or Representatives of the organization acting in an official capacity.

Why:

On public time, with public money, we have a responsibility to inform the public about what the appropriation is going to do.

Staff: Information-Only

- Are the candidate
- Neutral - but enthusiastic
- Need training and guidance
 - In the building and at events
 - Line between work and personal time
- In a position to share their personal stories

Trustees: Information-Only

- Are able to serve multiple functions
- When functioning in an official capacity
 - Neutral - but enthusiastic
 - Need training and guidance
 - In the building and at events
 - With the media and endorsers
- On personal time
- Share their personal stories

Friends: Information-Only

- Are a candidate representative
- Engage from a personal perspective
- Need training and guidance
 - In the building and at events
- On personal time can do different things

Talking to your “Appropriate Agency”

- City Council
- Budget Committee
- Board of Selectmen or Town Council

“Appropriate Agencies”?

1. Educational Partners
2. Social Welfare and Religious Partners
3. Governmental Partners
4. Civic Partners
5. Business Partners
6. Politicians
7. Media
- 8. The Moderator**

The Meeting

Work the Room

Who is in the Room?

- Discuss and Debate
 - Who will Speak to the Facts
 - Who will Speak to the Impacts
- Amendments
 - Who is in charge for the library
 - Who will “address” the Room
 - Who will “speak to” the Moderator

Dates and Considerations

- Voter Registration and Qualifications
- Zoning and Historic Districts
- Annual Report
- Default Budget
- Recounts

Getting to Election Day

Anticipating a Vote YES Committee

Types of Library Campaigns

Information-Only Campaign

- Public Employees in the Public Trust
- Active and Engaged but Neutral
- Supported by Friends and Trustees

Vote Yes Campaign

- Citizen Lead and Filed
- Raise and Expend Funds to GOTV
- Actively Campaigns for "Vote Yes"

Vote Yes Committee

- Not the Library
- Not the Friends
- Not Governance

Dedicated to helping Get Out the Vote (GOTV) for the library measure - as citizens, neighbors, and stakeholders - with a defined role for the campaign season

Vote Yes Committee

- ◆ Independent of the library
- ◆ Not coordinated with the library
- ◆ Needs own communications infrastructure
- ◆ Sets own campaign calendar
- ◆ Does its own campaign events and activities
- ◆ Sets own expenditures
- ◆ Asks people to Vote YES

What You Can Do Starting Tomorrow

Days | Weeks | Months | Years

Start Educating the Public about Why You Spend

“Raise and Appropriate”

“Accept and Expend”

“Anticipating Funds”

More than the Annual Report....

Thank You

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EveryLibrary

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