

Remarks to Board of Selectmen on January 29, 2008:

In his presentation last week, the new Town Administrator, Karl Kilduff had to give you a number for the Library budget before he had the opportunity to review our material and the background relating to our request this year.

We are asking the Board of Selectmen to consider the Library's request as presented in our budget book, not the number in your Town book, and consider it on its own merits.

The number that Karl put into his presentation last week is approximately \$93,000 lower than our request, and is not enough for us to maintain our EXISTING hours.

Karl mentioned in his presentation last week that there were no "nice to haves" in the Town budget. There are no "nice to haves" in the Library operating budget, either. Although the New Library building will *certainly* be an asset to the entire community and "very nice to have," we have only budgeted what we absolutely need to operate the new library in our request to you this year.

Highlights:

Staffing: I remind you that the new library is twice as large as our current building and has four service levels, compared to the 1 ½ levels in the current building. We need to *supervise* all levels 69 hours a week. (Considering public safety concerns and liability) While we do expect more services from our staff, we have budgeted only what we absolutely need to staff the public service points in an expanded facility. Staff is up only 15% in a building that is increasing 100%. (In our discussions over the last two years with all of you about this, our understanding was that this was considered "reasonable.")

Teen Services: the only “new” functional position in the new library is a Head of Teen Services, but it’s not a new service. This was the number one “neglected area of service” identified in our Long Range Plan in 2001. The children’s room is currently stretching to provide what programs we do provide. And we definitely already have the teens using the library. (Handed out photos of every square inch of space in Library, occupied by students during exam week, including studying on the floor in the stacks.)

Training: We are asking for an increase in training because we have a LOT of training to do. New systems and new models of service, new job responsibilities, and a few more staff to provide training to. It’s important that we increase training so staff can continue to be efficient. Long term, this saves in salary costs and is a big return on investment. \$4,500 of the increase is a one time expense... to learn the new systems in the new library.)

In my 29 years as Director of the Darien Library, I have never seen so much enthusiastic community involvement in the Library.

- Long Range Plan and focus groups
- Capital Campaign committee and trustees
- Road shows, meeting with organizations
- Talking to hundreds of citizens, donors and potential donors
- People of all ages, seniors, children, young families
- Library has universal support

Comments on the pledge cards: We have given donors an opportunity on the pledge cards to tell us why they are giving to the new library. (Attached is a sample of the many comments.) It's been very gratifying to see how the community treasures its library. We even had a 12 year girl donate her communion gifts to the new building. One of my favorite comments: "I gave to the new Darien Library because it's the right thing to do."

Darien citizens have voted for this new library with their charitable contributions.

They are counting on you to approve the operating budget to run it.

We have never brought you a budget that was padded. And we have not done that now. Please support our request.