



Library Expansion History

Three Goals

1. Increase tax revenue
2. Increase size of library building
3. Increase service area

Challenging because all three of these work together,
but create competing messages

1990

- * First ballot initiative in November 1990
- * Chaired by Jane Austin and Suzette Brumleve and included Audra Schultz, Christopher Kade, Pat Bolin, Sharon Sehy, and Sharon Voss
- * Ballot question was to raise library tax from .15% to .27%
- * Lost with a total of 1,956 YES and 2,093 NO
- * Campaign slogans and themes included: “You Need Your Library, Now Your Library Needs You!” and “Your Vote is Due!”

March 19, 2002

- * Request was for .28% increase from .15%
- * Failed by 98 votes 1,014 YES and 916 NO

November 5, 2002

- * Hours were cut by 13/week and materials budget slashed by \$10,000 after March 2002 failed referendum
- * Continued to be plagued with rumors that the increase was to pay for construction of new library
- * Ramped up information campaign around the effects that the low budget revenues were having on services
- * Failed 1,921 YES and 2,353 NO

April 1, 2003

- * Brought request down to .25%
- * Failed by 164 votes

March 16, 2004

- * Again requesting .25%
- * Failed by 138 votes with 1,076 YES and 1,212 NO

February 19, 2008

- * Requested an increase up to .27%
- * Hired a public relations consultant to assist with campaign
- * Formed a PAC called Effingham Citizens for Lifelong Learning
- * Up against Sports Complex at same time
- * Passed with 1,833 YES and 1,366 NO

Final Assessment

- * All of the failed campaigns failed because of lack of awareness and education of potential voters.
- * Did not work with an attorney on any of these efforts.
- * Successful campaign did enlist outside support.

Current Work

- * With new tax revenues, focus shifted to increasing the size of the building
- * Spring 2011—5/3 Bank site purchased by City for the new library
- * Fall 2015—Renovation of library building completed and moved in

2016

- * Staff began exploring the next project of expanding the service area
- * Internal discussions
- * Discussions with the board
- * Not really sure how to tackle this project

Summer 2018

- * Connected with John Chrastka from EveryLibrary
- * September 2018—Convened a small group of non-residents and non-users to talk about expansion with John Chrastka
- * 14 attendees plus two staff, two board, and John
- * Group concluded that the potential is there if the tax is low enough, awareness for the library must grow, and that customer satisfaction needs to be very high

August 2019

- * Public poll to gauge interest
- * Over 800 responses
- * 550 lived in Effingham County, but outside of city limits
- * Of those 550, 290 said that YES they would pay a library tax; 190 said that they wouldn't
- * Most comments centered around keeping the tax rate fair/low

September 2019

- * Board Retreat
- * Board agreed to move forward towards a possible expansion
- * Explored different avenues, but need more information
- * Want to talk to a lot of stakeholders and understand where community is at

Summer 2019 – Present

- * Amanda and Johnna have been meeting with a few stakeholders each month to understand what they are hearing in the community and seeing how the library might help
- * Generated a lot of good connections and opportunities, such as the daycare challenge, etc.
- * January 2021—Board Retreat