



ohio library council

Promoting our libraries. Inventing our future.

Ballot Issues Handbook Volume I

Campaigns 101: The Nuts and Bolts

**Ohio Library Council
1105 Schrock Road
Suite 440
Columbus, Ohio 43229-1174
Phone: 614.410.8092
Fax: 614.410.8098
www.olc.org**

Copyright © 2008 Ohio Library Council

07/21/09

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 1 BACKGROUND AND DEFINITIONS	3
Taxing Authority	3
The Difference Between a Bond Issue and an Operating Levy	3
Resolutions Required	5
Taxing Authority Transmission of Ballot Request	5
Writing the Ballot Issue	6
Procedure Timetable for Operating Levy and Bond Issue Legal Documents	6
CHAPTER 2 CAMPAIGN FINANCE REPORTING	8
Ballot Issue Committee	8
Contributions	9
Expenditures	10
Reporting Requirements	11
Closing a Ballot Issue Committee	13
Conclusion	13
CHAPTER 3 THE CAMPAIGN TEAM	14
The Lonely Director	14
The Role of the Board of Trustees	15
The Campaign Committee	15
Volunteer Recruitment and Training	16
Volunteer Retention (Appreciation)	17
Conclusion	18
CHAPTER 4 MENU OF CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES	19
Essential Tasks for the Library	20
Essential Tasks for the Citizen Campaign Committee/PAC	23
CONCLUSION	27
APPENDICES	28
APPENDIX A FIRST RESOLUTION TEMPLATE AUDITOR RESOLUTION	28
APPENDIX B SECOND RESOLUTION TEMPLATE LIBRARY TO TAXING AUTHORITY RESOLUTION	31
APPENDIX C THIRD RESOLUTION TEMPLATE TAXING AUTHORITY RESOLUTION	35
APPENDIX D POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE (PAC) FORMS	39

INTRODUCTION

Election Night is too late for changing campaign strategy. While victors celebrate, losers are left to ponder the “what ifs” and “should haves.” This scenario applies to individuals seeking public office as well as to governmental entities requesting voter support for ballot issues.

Public libraries in Ohio are not immune to this scenario when they seek voter support for an operating levy or bond issue. At the outset, it may appear that election-related activities are an overwhelming or daunting proposition, but with preparation and planning, libraries both big and small can improve their chances of success at the polls while simultaneously improving their community profile. Without extensive forethought and groundwork, however, campaigns can appear disorganized or even contradictory, sometimes damaging the library’s reputation and credibility.

As more and more Ohio public libraries find it necessary to seek local property tax funds, either for operating purposes or for buildings, the Ohio Library Council’s Government Relations Committee is here to help. This *Ballot Issues Handbook, Volumes I and II* is designed to provide succinct and detailed information for library directors and trustees before, during, and after a campaign effort.

Volume I answers such questions as: What is the library allowed to do? Do we need to establish a citizen committee? Who do we contact first? Where do we obtain legal advice? It provides information about the legal context of ballot issues, along with practical advice about how to prepare and run an effective campaign, including recruiting the volunteer help library directors need for the enormous task at hand. The appendix to Volume I contains many of the legal resolutions and campaign finance filing forms that library boards or campaign committee treasurers are required to submit.

For more in-depth information about the various parts of a strong campaign organization, please refer to Volume II. Topics ranging from campaign planning to literature development to fundraising are covered in individual sections there. The appendix to Volume II contains a series of sample documents for the fictitious Anytown Public Library, including a campaign plan, phone scripts, literature, press release, and more.

The Ballot Issues Handbook, Volumes I and II is meant to assist library directors and trustees plan for and execute legal, effective, and successful campaigns for operating levies or bond issues. We urge all users of this *Handbook* to work closely with legal counsel throughout the process. In addition, we urge libraries considering a ballot issue to review OLC’s *Community Connections*, a manual describing the kinds of public engagement efforts that will yield information about how your library is perceived in the community, your likelihood of electoral success, and what kinds of communication are likely to be persuasive to the voters in your particular district.

As always, Ohio Library Council staff and consultants are always available to provide additional guidance or feedback. Please feel free call on us anytime.

SIX FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT BALLOT ISSUES

1. How much money is my Friends group allowed to contribute to the library ballot campaign?

If your Friends group is a 501(c) (3) organization, it may contribute up to 10% of its assets to the campaign Political Action Committee (PAC). Make sure to file the contribution correctly on the finance reporting forms.

2. Is my staff allowed work on the campaign?

Certainly library staff may volunteer to work on the campaign; however, they cannot be required to volunteer and volunteering cannot be tied in any way to their work. No staff, including the library director, may participate in any campaign activities during their work hours or on library premises.

3. May I place yard signs on library property?

No.

4. May I distribute literature at the circulation desk of the library?

If your library has a board-approved policy that allows you to distribute campaign literature at the circulation desk, you may do so, but any opposition should be treated likewise. Make sure you are willing and able to distribute any literature if you are asked. Many libraries have adopted policies that allow for the distribution of ballot issue literature but not literature supporting individual candidates.

5. May I use library funds for mailings supporting the levy?

You may not use public dollars for any activity that urges people to vote for the levy. Library money may be used for materials that are purely informational in nature.

6. Do I have to form a Political Action Committee (PAC) in order to receive contributions to the campaign?

Yes.



1

Chapter 1 BACKGROUND AND DEFINITIONS

TAXING AUTHORITY

Taxing authorities are those government entities or political subdivisions that have the authority to place a tax issue—bond or levy—on the ballot for a vote by the people. In most cases, taxing authority is granted to those government entities or political subdivisions that are run by boards that are elected by the general public; e.g., county commissioners, school boards, township trustees, city or village councils.

Public libraries in Ohio are not taxing authorities; that is, they do not have the direct power to levy taxes. Libraries are not taxing authorities because library boards are appointed, not elected. Taxing authorities for public libraries have three duties:

1. appointment of trustees;
2. receipt of the proposed annual operating budget and subsequent transmittal to the county budget commission, along with any comment which may have been received through a public hearing; and
3. transmission of a levy or bond issue request to the county board of elections.

In neither of the last two instances may the taxing authority change the request. It should be noted that association libraries do not have a corresponding tax authority.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A BOND ISSUE AND AN OPERATING LEVY

Both a bond issue (for the issuance of general obligation debt) and an operating levy require that the voters of the library district approve a levy. Procedures are complex and it is important that proper language and procedures be followed. Your prosecuting attorney or private legal counsel should be involved from the beginning through the end of the process.

Operating Levy

An operating levy is a property tax passed by the electorate, which can be used for any legal expenditure, such as operating expenses (salaries, books, supplies, and equipment) or permanent improvements (sidewalks, parking lots, other capital improvements). An operating levy is enacted for a specific number of years **or** for a continuing, unstated period of time. The county auditor calculates millage and revenues. The taxes collected from this type of levy are normally placed in the library's general fund, or can be placed in a board-approved levy fund to better track receipts and expenses.

Replacement vs. Renewal Operating Levy

A replacement operating levy may be used to replace all or part of an existing levy. A renewal operating levy may be used when the board wants to renew an existing levy in the same amount or increase or decrease an existing levy. Your legal counsel should be asked to provide you with the actual wording.

Calculating Millage

The key to calculating millage for a library operating levy is good, long-range financial planning. Long range plans may include worksheets on (1) capital project costs, (2) debt service amortization schedule, (3) salary and benefits long-range projections, (4) additions to the authorized positions, (5) library materials (including electronic resources). Once you know how much you need in order to accomplish your capital and associated operating plans, and you know how much you already have by doing financial projections of your current incomes and expenses, the difference is how much you need. Your county auditor will help you calculate your millage based on your taxing district's property valuation and the income that one mill of general property tax will generate.

Bond Issue

By passing a bond issue, the electorate agrees to tax itself to pay for bonds, which are sold to raise funds for capital improvements. The length of the bond issue can vary depending on the type of improvement. The board needs to consider the length of the term of the bond issue in relation to the actual yearly cost to the voter. The longer the time span, the lower the yearly cost per property owner. A shorter time span creates a higher tax, but a quicker payoff is accomplished. Once a tax levy for issuance of bonds (bond issue) is approved by the voters of the library district, bonds (and in some cases notes) will be sold to finance the construction of a library building or some other type of permanent library improvement. The proceeds from this bond sale (except for accrued interest which is to be placed in the Bond Retirement Fund) will be placed in the Capital Projects Fund (separate from the Building and Repair Fund). These monies will then be used to pay all expenditures associated with the construction or permanent improvement.

The county auditor, usually during the following year, will commence collecting the tax levy for the retirement of the bonds. Sufficient taxes will be collected each year to retire the principal and interest payments due as they become payable. The collection of these taxes will continue until such time as the bonds and interest on the bonds have been paid in full.

The voted bond issue is at an average millage rate. In the early years of the bond levy, the tax millage rate will be higher than the average, and during the final years of the levy the millage rate will be lower than the average. This is due to the bond amortization schedule, which will normally require higher cash outlays in the earlier years. The proceeds received from the bond issue (each year) during the life of the bond issue are restricted in that these proceeds must be placed in the Bond Retirement Fund for payment of the bond principal and interest payments due as they become payable.

RESOLUTIONS REQUIRED

All tax levies require two library board meetings to implement—one to request the county auditor’s certification and one to vote to proceed with the levy.

The library board should adopt a resolution which requests the county auditor to certify to the library board the following elements:

- (A) the total current tax valuation of the subdivision and,
- (B) the number of mills required to generate a specified amount of revenue, or the dollar amount of revenue that would be generated by a specified number of mills.

Once the library board has received this certification, the board must pass a second resolution which includes the certification provided by the county auditor and states the purpose of the tax, whether the tax is an additional levy or a renewal or a replacement of an existing tax, and the section of the Ohio Revised Code authorizing submission of the question of the tax to the library’s taxing authority.

Appendices A, B, and C are sample resolutions. Your auditor may have templates of their own.

TAXING AUTHORITY TRANSMISSION OF BALLOT REQUEST

The Ohio Attorney General has issued an opinion that the taxing authority does not have the authority to block a library board’s request to place a tax issue on the ballot. The library’s taxing authority is required to place the issue on the ballot for the library district. Because association libraries do not have taxing authorities, they may not go directly on the ballot.

There may be one exception to this general rule: some legal commentators are of the opinion that a school board may validly refuse to place a school district public library’s bond levy on the ballot. However, this line of thinking would not apply to an operating levy requested by a school district public library.

Note that local political conditions may require diplomacy to insure the proper timing and wording of a tax issue. The library board does not want to be in conflict with other important tax issues which may be on the ballot at the same time and which may split the vote of likely supporters.

WRITING THE BALLOT ISSUE

When it comes to the language of the actual ballot, the library board must work closely with its legal counsel to ensure that the proper wording is used at each point of the legal procedures. The legislature periodically changes ballot language and procedures, so advice of counsel is important. Your county prosecutor may have someone on staff who is assigned to assist with ballot language.

Ultimately, ballot language is approved by the county board of elections, and by the secretary of state, but you can influence it by working cooperatively with them before and during drafting. While formats are generally prescribed by state law and rule, they are not as rigid as some elections boards hold them out to be. Do your best to include words like “for the benefit of” and “children” and “senior citizens” into the first few lines and count on your attorney for assistance.

Another consideration is the name of the library itself, especially when the service district, and therefore electorate, falls far outside the town in which the library is located. Depending upon your particular situation, it may be possible within legal guidelines to refer to the library district or taxing authority upfront, with a “for the benefit of” the library farther down in the language.

Finally, if your library district falls into two counties, the two boards of elections may issue separate issue numbers, requiring you to have two different sets of yard signs, literature, etc. Ask them politely to work together to assign the same number if possible. If they do, it can reduce costs, time, and confusion during the campaign itself.

PROCEDURE TIMETABLE FOR OPERATING LEVY AND BOND ISSUE LEGAL DOCUMENTS

The library board, the taxing authority, and the board of elections must act by certain dates in order to place an operating levy or bond issue on the ballot. The board, its counsel, and the library administration must work closely with the board of elections to ensure that all voters who live within the library district, and no voters who live outside the district, have the opportunity to vote on the tax issue. If the wrong election districts are offered the issue, the results of the election could be invalidated. In places where the library's service district lines are unclear, it is even more important to work with the board of elections to get all of the appropriate precincts included.

Please note that the following timetable is for placing an operating levy or bond issue on the November general election ballot. The timetable for tax issues being placed on special election ballots can be obtained from the county board of elections.

- Prior to March** Contact your taxing authority for their meeting schedules and deadlines for getting on their agenda.
- Work with county auditor to learn which potential millage rate will yield the revenue you need.
- March Board Meeting** Library board instructs fiscal officer to have prosecuting or private attorney prepare the necessary tax levy resolutions for adoption by library board.
- (Note: If a bond issue is to be placed on the ballot, the library board will need to have private bond counsel prepare the necessary resolutions.)
- April** Board adopts resolution requesting levy certification from county auditor.
- May Board Meeting** Library board adopts resolution requesting issuance of bonds and/or placement of operating levy on the ballot. Fiscal officer forwards resolution to the library's taxing authority.

To place a **bond issue** on the general election ballot, the following **additional** steps are necessary and have mandatory dates per statute.

- By July 7** Taxing authority adopts resolution of necessity.
- By July 17** Taxing authority certifies resolution of necessity to the county auditor.
- By July 27** County auditor calculates average annual levy.

- August** Taxing authority adopts necessary resolution authorizing the issue(s) to be placed on the general election ballot.
- By 75th day prior to General Election** Taxing authority certifies resolution to proceed to county board of elections. Resolutions due to board of elections by this mandatory date.
- First Tuesday after the first Monday in November** General Election.

Remember that this calendar applies to November elections only. Please consult your county board of elections for a calendar pertaining to primary or special elections.

2 Chapter 2 CAMPAIGN FINANCE REPORTING

BALLOT ISSUE COMMITTEE

Description of a Ballot Issue Committee

A ballot issue committee is comprised of two or more persons whose primary or major purpose is to support or oppose an issue to be voted on by the electorate. There is no maximum number of permissible members for a ballot issue committee. In addition, there is no requirement under Ohio law for the members of a ballot issue committee to be eligible to vote on the issue or question the committee is advocating for or against. So, a library ballot issue Political Action Committee (PAC) will need at least two members.

Organizing a Ballot Issue Committee

The first step in organizing a ballot issue committee is to select a name. The organizers of the PAC may choose any name for the ballot issue committee that is not currently being used by another entity. Next, while not required, OLC legal counsel recommends that a ballot issue committee prepare organizational documents, such as Articles of Incorporation or a Constitution and Code of Regulations, to specify the purposes of the committee and to govern the internal administration of the committee. Additionally, ballot issue committees should apply for a Federal Employer Identification Number ("EIN"), which will be required by a banking institution to establish the committee's bank account, and may be required by donors for their records.

Registering a Ballot Issue Committee with the State of Ohio

A ballot issue committee must file the Ohio Secretary of State's Form 30-D, "Designation of Treasurer," prior to receiving any contributions or making any expenditures. This form is considered a "registration" form for a new committee, and is also used to report subsequent changes of names and contact information for the committee. Form 30-D requires basic information including the name and address of the ballot issue committee, and the name of the person designated by the committee to serve as treasurer. Appointment of a deputy treasurer or treasurers for the committee is optional. The box in the lower right-hand corner of the form's fields that is labeled "Ballot Issue PAC?" needs to be marked "Yes" to indicate that the committee is being formed to support or oppose a ballot issue. The Form 30-D may be signed by the designated treasurer, or by any other authorized signer for the committee. A ballot issue committee created to support a local issue (such as a library tax levy) on the ballot must file its Form 30-D registering the committee with the county board of elections. If the issue affects more than one county, the Form 30-D should be filed in the county with the greatest population. A ballot issue committee created to support a state issue on the ballot must file its Form 30-D registering the committee with the Ohio Secretary of State. In addition, the committee must open a separate checking account in the name of the ballot issue committee.

Treasurer Duties and Liability

The treasurer of a ballot issue committee is legally responsible for keeping detailed financial records of contributions to the committee and expenditures made by the committee. The cover page of every campaign finance report filed must be signed by the treasurer or by a deputy treasurer if one has been designated for the committee. Similar to the above discussion with respect to members of the committee in general, there is no requirement under Ohio law for a ballot issue committee's treasurer to be eligible to vote on the issue or question the committee is advocating for or against. There is also no requirement that the person designated as treasurer necessarily be, or not be, a member or officer of the committee, except that upon appointment the treasurer automatically becomes a representative of the committee. Furthermore, there are no particular skills or certifications required for a person to serve as a ballot issue committee treasurer, although a good working knowledge of Ohio's campaign finance laws and reporting requirements is obviously important to ensuring the committee's ongoing compliance.

Federal Tax-Exempt Status

If the ballot issue committee desires to formally incorporate and conduct significant fundraising, advocacy and public education efforts, we recommend formation of a non-profit corporation that applies for recognition of federal tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)(4). Unlike a Section 501(c)(3) charitable organization, a Section 501(c)(4) organization is generally not limited in terms of the type and extent of public policy and lobbying activities it can engage in as part of its organizational mission, so long as the organization does not conduct any activities on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for public office. The trade-off for this additional flexibility is that monetary donations to a Section 501(c)(4) non-profit corporation are not tax-deductible charitable donations by donors.

The PAC should confirm its exemption under Section 501(c)(4) by filing Form 1024, Application for Recognition of Exemption Under Section 501(a). A user fee and Form 8718, User Fee for Exempt Organization Determination Letter Request, must be submitted with the Form 1024. The fee currently is \$750, unless the organization anticipates that its annual gross receipts will average less than \$10,000 during the first four years, in which case the fee is \$300.

Regardless of the PAC's decision on whether to seek recognition of exemption from federal income taxation, however, the PAC will have a duty to file an income tax return (see below, paragraph D, Ongoing Federal Tax Filing Requirements).

CONTRIBUTIONS

Permissible Sources of Contributions

In addition to receiving contributions from individuals, political action committees, campaign committees and political parties, ballot issue committees may accept direct corporate and labor organization contributions. However, in addition to the periodic reporting requirements applicable to the ballot issue committee, corporate and labor organization contributors are required to disclose their activity by filing the Ohio Secretary of State's Form 30-B-1, "Contributions from a Corporation or Labor Organization Supporting or Opposing Ballot Issues" (See Attached Form 30-B-1). The corporation or labor organization must file the

Form 30-B-1 at the same filing location as the ballot committee, and by the same filing deadline that the ballot issue committee is required to report that it received the contribution from the corporation or labor organization. The ballot issue committee should ensure that corporations and labor organizations that make contributions to the committee file the Form 30-B-1 in a timely manner so that the corporation or labor organization does not receive a notice of violation from the Ohio Elections Commission subsequent to the election.

No Contribution Limits

Unlike candidate committees and other PACs and political entities that receive contributions and make expenditures to influence candidate elections, ballot issue committees are not subject to contribution limits in Ohio. However, it is important to note that because ballot issue committees may accept direct corporate and labor organization contributions, and are not subject to any contributions limits, any contributions received by the ballot issue committee may not be used to support any candidate, political party, non-ballot-issue PAC, political contributing entity or legislative campaign fund. A ballot issue committee is, however, permitted to make an expenditure to another ballot issue committee for the purpose of making a contribution.

Limit on Cash Contributions

Although there is no limit on the amount that an individual or entity may contribute to a ballot issue committee, a contributor may not give a ballot issue committee more than one hundred dollars (\$100.00) per election in cash. The term “cash” includes only paper currency and coins.

Anonymous Contributions are Prohibited

Ballot issue committees are required to report the sources of contributions received by the committee; therefore, a contributor to a ballot issue committee may not remain anonymous by request. If a donor does not want to be identified, the committee should not accept the contribution. However, if an anonymous contribution is received, then efforts must be made by the committee to identify the donor. If the efforts are unsuccessful, the committee must explain the circumstances that caused the contribution to be anonymous and describe the efforts made to determine the donor’s identity when it files its campaign finance report.

Deposits of Income

All income must be deposited in the committee’s bank account within thirty (30) days of receipt or returned to the donor without having been deposited.

EXPENDITURES

Permissive Use of Funds

A ballot issue committee may make expenditures to influence the results of an election regarding a ballot issue or question. The committee may also make contributions to other ballot issue committees and to charitable organizations. Under Ohio Election Law, “charitable organizations” include any organizations that have been designated as exempt from federal income taxation under Section 501(a) and are described in Sections 501(c)(3),

501(c)(4), 501(c)(8), 501(c)(10) or 501(c)(19), or any other charitable organization approved by advisory opinion of the Ohio Elections Commission. Thus, contributions may be made to a political subdivision of the State of Ohio (such as governmental libraries) if such organization satisfies such criteria and therefore may be described as a “charitable organization” under Ohio Election Law. And, in addition, this means that the PAC may also contribute to a library foundation or friends group (provided they are 501(c)(3) organizations) that support the library.

Again, as discussed previously, due to the fact that a ballot issue committee may accept contributions that other types of committees are prohibited from accepting, a ballot issue committee may not make a contribution to a candidate’s campaign committee, a political party, legislative campaign fund or a non-ballot-issue PAC.

Checks

Any check that a ballot issue committee uses to make expenditures must contain the full name and address of the committee.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

A list of important campaign finance reporting forms (PAC forms) are provided in Appendix D. The most current version of these forms must be downloaded from the Web. Filers may choose to create their own forms as long as they are substantially similar to the forms prescribed by the Secretary of State’s office.

**Report forms and additional information are available at the
Ohio Secretary of State’s Web site:
<http://www.sos.state.oh.us>**

Campaign Finance Reports Required by Ohio Election Law

Ballot issue committees must file periodic reports of contributions received and expenditures made in connection with the issue. The forms are the same as those used by candidates and other PACs. For example, for the 2008 general election time period, the following reports and reporting deadlines are applicable:

- **Pre-election report** – due 12 days before the election [October 23, 2008], to report on activities through the 20th day before the election [October 15, 2008].
- **Post-election report** – due 38 days after the election [December 12, 2008], to report on activities between the time the last report was filed and the 31st day after the election [December 5, 2008].
- **Annual report** – due on the last business day of January [January 30, 2009]. This report is optional if the ballot issue committee filed a post-election report after the immediately preceding general election. The annual report must cover the time period since the last report through the last day of December [December 31, 2008]. The report should reflect only activity that occurred since the last previous report was filed.

-
- **Additional Reporting Requirements** – If the ballot issue committee engages in a primary election or other special election ballot issue in 2009, a pre-election report and post-election report will be due along the same reporting guidelines as described above. In addition, a semi-annual report is due on the last business day of July [July 31, 2009]. This report is optional if the ballot committee filed a post-election report after the immediately preceding primary election.

Receipts

For every expenditure in excess of twenty-five dollars (\$25.00), the committee must attach a copy of the corresponding canceled check or paid receipt to its report. A paid receipt is one that has been marked "PAID" by the vendor. If canceled checks are not returned or provided by the committee's banking institution, a copy or printout of the ballot issue committee's bank statement will satisfy the receipt requirement if the name of the vendor, date of transaction and amount of the expenditure appear on the statement.

Record Retention

Ballot issue committees must retain detailed records of their contributions and expenditures for six years. The boards of election must also retain all reports filed with them for six years.

Ongoing Federal Tax Filing Requirements

A PAC – whether organized as a corporation or unincorporated association, which is not tax-exempt – must annually report its income on Form 1120, U.S. Corporation Income Tax Return. An organization is subject to tax until it establishes that it qualifies for exemption.

If the PAC has received recognition of exemption from federal income taxation as an organization described in Section 501(c)(4), then it has a duty to file one or another version of Form 990. Generally, Section 501(c)(4) organizations with gross receipts which are normally \$25,000 or less must annually electronically file a Form 990-N, a one-page notice also known as the e-Postcard. Section 501(c)(4) organizations with gross receipts which normally exceed \$25,000 are required to annually file Form 990 or 990-EZ.

The IRS recently redesigned the Form 990 and significantly increased the reporting and disclosure requirements. The redesigned form is effective for the 2008 tax year, for which tax returns will be filed in 2009. Because such significant changes have been made to the form, however, a plan of transition relief increases the thresholds for the Form 990-EZ, which has not undergone significant changes. For the 2008 tax year, organizations with gross receipts under \$1,000,000 and assets under \$2,500,000 may file the Form 990-EZ; for the 2009 tax year, organizations with gross receipts under \$500,000 and assets under \$1,250,000 may file the Form 990-EZ; and for the 2010 tax year and thereafter, organizations with gross receipts under \$200,000 and assets under \$500,000 may file the Form 990-EZ.

CLOSING A BALLOT ISSUE COMMITTEE

A ballot issue committee must have a zero balance, no outstanding debts and no outstanding loans before it can terminate. In order to spend down to a zero balance, a ballot issue committee may make any expenditure that fits the permissive use of funds criteria discussed above. When these criteria have been met, Ohio Election Law requires that the committee file a final report. The final report must list all activity, if any, that has occurred since the previous report. There is no separate form required to terminate the committee, but the box labeled "Termination" must be marked on the campaign finance report cover page when the committee files its final zero balance report.

A ballot issue committee that has previously filed Form 990 or 990-EZ must file a final Form 990 or 990-EZ by the fifteenth day of the fifth month after the committee has terminated. A ballot issue committee which is not tax-exempt must file a final Form 1120 by the fifteenth day of the third month after the committee is dissolved.

CONCLUSION

The responsibilities taken on by a campaign committee, especially the treasurer, may seem tedious or even daunting, but every community has people with a sincere interest in helping campaigns function legally. Refer regularly to the training materials on the Ohio Secretary of State's Web site and do not be shy about asking questions at the board of elections. They are there to help. If a question comes up that makes you uncomfortable, check with your county prosecutor or your regular legal counsel. Taking care to play by the rules on the front is much, much easier than handling a public relations crisis on the back end because some reporter or opponent chose to make an issue of your campaign finance filings.

3 Chapter 3 THE CAMPAIGN TEAM

THE LONELY DIRECTOR

Only a few of the biggest library systems are likely to have the resources to pay special staff for a campaign effort, so in reality everyone associated with a library levy campaign is a volunteer. Many library directors, usually *de facto* campaign managers as well, have reported a sense of isolation during levy time, with hardly a soul to rely upon for solid help. While many such intrepid warriors have successfully passed their levy, this is no way to live. Being the director of a library is already a full-time job. By law, campaign activities cannot be conducted on public time. So how in the world is the director of a small town library supposed to organize a campaign, too?

Step one is to develop an early focus on getting help.

The longer you wait to begin this effort, the more difficult it will be in the end. As soon as your board decides to move forward with a ballot issue, you must set a campaign committee meeting and begin recruiting members. Ask two of your board members to serve as co-chairs. Ask another to serve as treasurer, and a fourth to head up your fundraising efforts. If you are unable to recruit that much help from your board members, it may be time to ask them to reconsider whether they really wish to put the levy on the ballot.

Step two is to delegate, delegate, delegate.

Beginning from the first campaign committee meeting, the library director/campaign manager must assign tasks to others and create ways to ensure accountability. In fact, there are so many people needed on a campaign that you might think about designating a reliable friend to function specifically as a volunteer coordinator. Look for someone who is well-organized, friendly, and welcoming to help identify volunteer needs well in advance and make sure people who might want to help are given a job to do while they are still enthusiastic.

Just as it is difficult for people who do not have a strong personal cash flow to ask others to contribute money to a cause, it can be difficult for busy people to ask others to help with a gift of time. That is why we must keep in mind that people have all kinds of different reasons for volunteering and often even the busiest of people would rather be involved in a cause they care about than sit on the sidelines. If you can identify what motivates another person, you can address ourselves directly to that and thereby gain his or her assistance.

THE ROLE OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Plain and simple, every board member who votes to put a ballot issue before the voters should be willing to do something to help with the campaign effort. The fiscal health of the organization is fundamentally the responsibility of the board of trustees. If they believe a levy or bond issue is necessary for financial health, then the campaign effort is also their responsibility. This does not mean that every member of the board should be available to make speeches, raise money, and telephone voters, but it does mean that every trustee should do what they can. A campaign that is not fully backed by the board has little chance of success. More information about the role of the board of trustees is in the OLC's *Trustees' Handbook*.

THE CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE

As we said above, the library director is often the campaign manager, responsible for the implementation of the campaign plan and making all day-to-day campaign decisions in consultation with the campaign chair and committee. The next chapter outlines a number of tasks that can legally be done by the library itself, but most campaign tasks must be performed after hours and off library property. Every campaign manager, therefore, needs an active committee planning the campaign, dividing up the work, and recruiting others to help. Outlined below are some of the basic roles:

- **Campaign Chair or Co-Chairs:** Usually someone who is well known in the community, or who is a member of the library board. The chair runs the committee meetings and serves as the chief campaign spokesperson. Most campaign communications are signed by the chair or are issued in his or her name.
- **Campaign Treasurer:** One of the first people recruited for the campaign, the treasurer is legally responsible for keeping track of all incoming and outgoing cash, and completes all required campaign finance reporting in a timely manner. It is possible to have a deputy treasurer as well.
- **Database Manager:** Recruited for knowledge of at least one computer database system and willingness to spend tedious hours sorting data and generating lists, the database manager will be the person who obtains the voter file from the board of elections or Secretary of State. The database manager will keep track of supporter and opponent information, updating phone numbers and addresses as the campaign makes contact with voters. The database manager will provide all needed lists for phoning, walking, and mailing.
- **Fundraising Chair:** Not shy about asking potential donors for their financial support, the chair of the fundraising committee works to bring in sufficient resources to fund the budget. Often a board member, the chair implements the fundraising parts of the campaign plan including appeal letters, dialing for dollars, and events.
- **Volunteer Coordinator:** Often the busiest person on a campaign team, the volunteer coordinator works to recruit and prepare sufficient volunteers to perform tasks associated with the campaign plan.

-
- **Event Chairs:** If the plan calls for campaign events like a town hall meeting, or a fundraiser, it can be helpful to designate a specific volunteer to head that up. This is often a good task for someone who does not want to make an open-ended commitment but does want to help.

VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING

During the campaign planning phase, take time to analyze the tasks ahead to determine how much time each will take, what the deadlines are, what skill sets are needed, and whether people can work from home or will need to come to another location. Better yet, recruit a volunteer coordinator to do all that! By approaching volunteer recruitment systematically, you ensure that you have enough volunteers for a task, have the right people for the job, are prepared for their arrival, and don't waste their time.

The most effective means of asking for volunteer time is in person or on the phone, rather than with a letter or e-mail. Sign-up sheets at events are helpful, but only to the extent that they allow us to phone someone later to ask them for something specific.

A passionate interest in the success of the library is only one reason people might be willing to volunteer for the campaign. Others might be looking for:

- A social or professional networking opportunity or a chance to enjoy the company of others.
- An opportunity to gain marketable experiences, build their resume, and develop references as they prepare to enter the workforce.
- Public recognition for community service.
- A sense of personal expression or achievement, or a chance to learn something new.
- The challenge of doing something difficult.

Whatever the reason for their interest, all potential volunteers should be directly asked to do something specific, be given a clear description of the task and time commitment, and be engaged very soon after they commit. Campaign leaders can look for volunteer recruits among their staff, board, and Friends groups. Other places to look for volunteers include:

- Teachers' groups;
- Personal friends and family of board, staff, and Friends; and
- People already active in other organizations, such as unions, neighborhood organizations, churches, political parties, social or civic groups, senior citizens organizations, and business and professional groups.

Sufficient training is key. The Gallup Organization has reported that the number one predictor of employee happiness is whether they agree with the statement, “I know what is expected of me on a daily basis.” This must go double for volunteers. People need to know what is expected of them. As campaign leaders, we must define the tasks we are assigning to others, being clear about the deadline and time commitment. We must provide written instructions where possible, explain to whom the volunteer is to report, and provide contact information for someone who can answer questions or make decisions. Even simple things, such as how the phone system works, or what the dress code is, should be explained.

Many campaigns use a volunteer card or sheet that potential volunteers can sign at events. When asking people to volunteer, specific information to get includes:

- When are you available? (Weekdays, evenings, weekends, etc.)
- How much time can you contribute?
- What kinds of tasks are you interested in helping with? Phoning? Door to door canvassing? Setting up yard signs? Etc.
- What neighborhood or precinct do you live in?

When organizing activities that require many volunteers, like a door-to-door canvas or a yard sign pickup posse, an important rule of thumb is to recruit twice as many volunteers as you need. For example, if you have ten phone lines for an evening phone bank, you need to recruit 20 people who promise to be there at the appointed time. Even if you are able to call all 20 the night before to confirm, you will still have about 50% who do not show up for one reason or another. (Try not to take it personally—it happens to everybody!) Go ahead and prepare additional work just in case more than 10 people do arrive, but that happens only rarely. Figure out how many you need and recruit double.

VOLUNTEER RETENTION (APPRECIATION)

Every person who agrees to do something for the campaign should be thanked right away, verbally and with a note if possible, and also put to work without delay. Sending someone a note that says “Thank you for agreeing to help with our door-to-door canvas” can make a big difference in terms of the volunteer’s enthusiasm and willingness to sign up for another task. In addition to showing appreciation at every opportunity, the following ideas can help retain volunteers throughout the entire campaign:

- **Make the tasks manageable**, or break them up into manageable pieces. Asking a volunteer to “raise money” is not nearly as appealing as asking them to help throw an event, or send a letter to their personal list. Whenever possible, allow each volunteer to develop a sense of ownership for the task.
- **Respect their time**. Plan ahead, have materials ready, be clear with instructions, start on time, and end when you say you will.
- **Respect their talent**. Honor initiative, involve them in planning where you can, ask their opinions, give credit where credit is due, put them on “insider” e-mail distribution lists, and comp them to events.

-
- **Insulate volunteers from internal squabbling.** Do not argue in front of volunteers or vent to them about others. If the work cannot be satisfying and fun (and sometimes it isn't!) at least make sure that the atmosphere is enjoyable.
 - **All volunteers are not created equal.** Protect the morale of hard working volunteers by reassigning or speaking with those whose work is substandard or who do not cast the campaign in the best light.
 - **Feed them!** Make sure there are refreshments available whenever volunteers are around. This does not have to cost a lot. Many restaurants and others will make an in-kind donation of food for an effort like this, and keeping volunteers fed can be a volunteer project all its own.
 - **Provide comfortable work space.** Make sure the work space is comfortable and safe, has adequate parking, clean bathrooms, wheelchair accessibility, is well-lit, and kept to the right temperature. Don't risk losing volunteers because the headquarters are too cramped or too hot or because there is no running water in the bathroom.
 - **Express personal appreciation.** If the campaign is a sure winner or a sure loser, make sure the volunteers know how important their effort is to you personally. If they are able to trust that you believe what you are doing together matters, they will have a reason to follow your lead.
 - **Recognize achievement visibly.** If you have a wall, consider hanging pictures of volunteers working, display a big map showing territory covered, or a big thermometer showing calls made or dollars raised—anything that visibly demonstrates progress toward a goal.
 - **Volunteers love Election Night parties.** Even as campaign leadership is exhausted and wanting to go home, you must organize and attend a get together for watching returns. You might need these people next time, so make sure you recognize their efforts during the gathering.

CONCLUSION

Successful campaign efforts are very people-intensive endeavors. We need people for voter contact, for research, for events, for fundraising, and more. Unless the people leading the campaign effort take the time to recruit a cadre of helpers, they will end up doing too much and burning out too quickly.

Here is another reason to not go it alone: an active, committed, diverse, and engaged corps of volunteers is a message unto itself. When you have many people out working on your campaign, you communicate that you have a vibrant effort, capable of victory, because so many people think that what you are doing is important. People are the campaign's most valuable asset. Put people to work right away, and take care to offer respect and courtesy to every potential volunteer. Do this early in the campaign and you will have many to whom to delegate in the last critical month when the amount of work threatens to overwhelm.

4 Chapter 4

MENU OF CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES

For library directors and trustees who like checklists, this chapter is for you. By creating our “Essential Tasks for the Library” and the “Essential Tasks for the Campaign Committee,” we are providing a bare-bones outline of the tasks involved in a campaign effort, which has three basic phases:

Phase 1: Planning and Preparation

Phase 2: Influencing Opinion Leaders and Media

Phase 3: Voter Contact and Visibility

Most of the voter contact activities of the last 30 days can only be performed by a legally-created ballot issues committee, or PAC, which solicits donations expressly for the purpose of influencing voters. Many of the earlier tasks, however, can legally be performed by the library itself in the course of normal activities. So long as care is taken to avoid giving a “please vote yes” message, the library may publish educational material, host informational meetings, send speakers to civic organizations, and more.

The tasks summarized on the following page are in roughly chronological order and roughly priority order. All of these are described in greater detail elsewhere in this manual (Volume I) or in one of two other OLC publications:

- *Community Connections: A Toolkit for Public Libraries* which describes the kinds of public engagement activities libraries should be undertaking on an ongoing basis.
- *Ballot Issues Handbook, Volume II* which contains more detailed information for those involved in a ballot issue campaign.

ESSENTIAL TASKS FOR THE LIBRARY

Phase 1: Planning and Preparation

1. **Determine estimated amount of levy.** Using information gained from your budget process and your county auditor, the library determines and sets the amount of the bond issue or operating millage. In Ohio, there are numerous options and strategies for using bond issues or levies. Make sure you consider all possible options before deciding on the best methodology for increasing library support.
2. **Contact taxing authority.** It is helpful to consult with your taxing authority (e.g. school district libraries) to get a feel for how well they will receive your request for a levy or bond issue. Also, they may have bond counsel who can be consulted.
3. **Contact bond counsel and/or prosecutor.** A board resolution is required in order to proceed with a levy. Either the county prosecutor's office and/or legal counsel of the library or taxing authority routinely prepare this resolution. When proceeding with a bond issue, bond counsel must be involved with preparing resolutions.
4. **Adopt Board Resolution.** After seeking clarification from the county auditor, adopt the board resolution.
5. **Present resolution to taxing authority.** This official procedure follows the preparation of documents in the preceding steps. When requesting a bond issue, a resolution of necessity and a resolution to proceed are required. Each resolution is adopted at a separate meeting. In between these meetings, the auditor must certify the estimated millage amount of the bond issue.
6. **Obtain campaign documents.** Laws change on a regular basis and every library should receive and review current campaign regulations from your local board of elections. Additional training materials are available on the Ohio Secretary of State's Web site.
7. **Review pertinent points with legal counsel.** When in doubt or uncertain of the effect of the election laws and regulations, it is helpful to obtain legal interpretations. A legal review of library-prepared literature is also advisable.
8. **Train staff.** The library director takes the lead responsibility in making sure that staff is intimately aware of the facts related to the ballot issue. He or she may supplement the training process with assistance from legal professionals or consultants. Staff may state facts but not advocate a position by using library resources.
9. **Recruit Volunteers.** In conjunction with the citizen campaign, the library may allow display space to recruit patrons who may be interested in helping the library's campaign.
10. **Voter Registration drives.** Public libraries routinely register voters. During a campaign, it is advisable to take a more proactive approach by having public service staff ask patrons if they would like to register to vote.

Phase 2: Influencing Opinion Leaders and Media

11. **Visit with civic leaders.** Depending on level of comfort or expertise, the library director or a trustee may perform this task. County commissioners, the mayor(s), school superintendents, and any other local government officials should be extended the courtesy of a personal visit to describe the library's proposal(s).
12. **Conduct focus group interviews.** As part of the library's community engagement and long range planning processes, it is wise to gauge public opinion of current and proposed library services. This input mechanism is also useful in detecting any sensitive areas, vulnerabilities, or strengths of the library system and for determining which messages will resonate with your targeted voters.
13. **Prepare a fact sheet for public distribution.** Library staff may prepare a simple, one-page front and back fact sheet offering a succinct presentation of facts. Such a summary is often the most important printed material employed by the library so use pictures and graphics to tell your story. Facts about the issue such as budget or pledged improvements are the official position of the library board and may be stated as such. It is important that this document be informational only. You may not suggest that readers should vote for the library ballot issue.
14. **Schedule one-on-one visits with reporters.** Reporters, like government officials, should be invited to attend a personal meeting with the director, board president, or other trustees to review the facts related to the ballot issue. Their interest may be triggered by the adoption of the resolutions above, so take care to develop these relationships early. This often leads to greater understanding and hopefully to editorial endorsement near Election Day.
15. **Prepare and schedule group presentations.** The library is responsible for making sure that the information conveyed to constituents is accurate and uniform. It is advisable to have a prepared script, slide show, overhead transparencies, flip charts, or poster boards to help illustrate the textual message. Ask if you can speak to community and civic groups, churches, anybody who needs a program.
16. **Use the library newsletter or Web site.** If not already in place, a library should be considering a public newsletter to be mailed to all households in the service area. This is an excellent tool for tailoring information from the library's point of view and is particularly helpful during elections. Web sites are inexpensive and a great way to communicate with community leaders and reporters.
17. **Establish informational displays at service outlets.** The main library, branches, and any bookmobiles should be well stocked with informational materials about the library and its needs. If you display campaign material (please vote FOR issue X,) be prepared to display material for all ballot issue campaigns, for and against.
18. **Attend special events.** Any civic celebration, county fair, or public gathering should be thought of as an opportunity to share the library's message. Again, as long as the library sticks to the facts, work time may be used to inform the public at such events. Hard selling of the "vote yes" platform is not acceptable at these events.
19. **Community group newsletters.** Community groups such as associations or clubs often will allow the library to share information in their respective newsletters.

-
20. **Conduct a town meeting at the library.** The library may find it useful to schedule a public forum so that interested individuals can ask in-depth questions.
 21. **Announce the program.** This is typically accomplished with a press conference, news release and/or meeting with local media. The board president and library director are the chief participants in this process.
 22. **Library stickers.** Libraries frequently provide giveaways to patrons (especially children). Library stickers that use the international library symbol along with a nonpartisan phrase such as “your library—wise choice,” may raise visibility and do not violate election regulations.
 23. **Radio Talk Shows.** Try to schedule appointments with all local talk show hosts to reach constituents who use this medium as a primary source of information.

Phase 3: Voter Contact and Visibility

See “Essential Tasks for the Citizen Campaign Committee” on the following page.

Afterward

24. **Board of Elections reporting.** Even though it is not the responsibility of the library, for public relations reasons, it is advisable to check with the board of elections to make sure that all reporting requirements have been completed.
25. **Public thank you.** The library should write thank you notes to all volunteers and donors and may purchase a small newspaper advertisement to thank supporters.

ESSENTIAL TASKS FOR THE CITIZEN CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE/PAC

The main distinction between the work of the citizen group serving as a political action committee and the library is that the PAC actually advocates a position (e.g., “Vote YES”) while the library limits its information to facts surrounding the issue. This does not preclude the library director and interested staff from working on the campaign during non-work hours. The official position of the library board is contained in the bond issue or operating levy resolution and may be stated as such.

Phase 1 – Planning and Preparation

1. **File required campaign documents.** The first official step in forming a political action committee (PAC) is filing a form designating a treasurer and naming the PAC. No funds should be received prior to this filing with the local board of elections. You will also need a bank account.
2. **Select chairman and treasurer.** The legal and fiduciary responsibilities of the treasurer may narrow the potential list of candidates for this position. Both the chair and treasurer should have impeccable credentials, and be well respected members of the community.
3. **Hold first committee meeting.** It is a good idea to use the Friends of the Library members and trustees to network and invite potential volunteers to the first campaign committee meeting. This meeting must be upbeat and set the tone for the entire campaign! The “lonely director” needs to set expectations and delegate tasks from the beginning.
4. **Establish campaign plan and budget.** The PAC should document all of the needed tasks with associated costs. The budget may be amended as necessary depending upon revenue sources and other contingencies, but agreements should be reached early on about what forms of voter contact will be used, whether the campaign will be purchasing yard signs or newspaper ads or two mailings or four. Timelines and individual areas of responsibility should be agreed to in advance as well.
5. **Obtain voter registration lists.** Lists of registered voters can be very useful in numerous applications. The lists may be sorted in numerous ways (e.g., specific elections, precincts, alphabetical, etc.). The board of elections can provide a computer disk and lists can be downloaded from the Ohio Secretary of State’s Web site.
6. **Fundraising.** Good levy campaigns need solid financial backing, enough to pay for the activities you outline during planning. Set your budget first, and then write a fundraising plan. Take care with timelines. You will need to have certain amounts raised by certain specific dates (i.e. you will have to be able to pay for yard signs when you order them, which is likely to be two months before Election Day.)
7. **Staff Briefing.** A common communication danger is to assume that all people who work for an organization know about the organization. Make sure you go over levy talking points with staff, including what they are allowed to do and what they are not allowed to do while on library time.

-
8. **Determine campaign slogan (if any).** Sometimes there is an obvious slogan that the committee can adopt. But do not force the issue; “vote for the library” is sometimes the most effective slogan of all. Use information from community engagement work, including any focus groups.

Phase 2 – Influencing Opinion Leaders and Media

9. **Kick-off event.** Even though the levy campaign committee has been working for months and key volunteers are in place, a levy-kick-off event is a fun way to build solidarity among levy volunteers, get positive media attention, and officially begin the campaign.
10. **Speakers’ bureau.** Coordinating a speaker’s bureau is a big job and demands a lot of attention to detail. Board of trustee members who are willing to speak to their own volunteer organizations are very effective in communicating the library levy message. Accuracy is important. The library director should play an active role in the development of the presentation materials.
11. **Levy newsletter.** The levy campaign committee might have a volunteer compose a levy newsletter that is distributed to all library trustees and staff. It can also be available to other key levy volunteers and donors. The volunteer editor needs to be knowledgeable about the campaign, have a flexible schedule, and have desktop publishing capabilities.
12. **Seek organizational endorsements.** Some pre-planning and meetings are required for this task. Ask the chairs of any local government entities if their respective boards would consider endorsing the library’s issue. If yes, prepare an endorsement resolution (with the help of the various chairs).
13. **Seek individual endorsements.** A simple sheet of paper stating, “We, the undersigned, endorse the Anytown Public Library’s ballot issue,” can be placed at all library service outlets. Collected signatures can be developed into campaign literature or listed in a paid newspaper advertisement just prior to the election.
14. **Attend special events.** Again, like the library, try to have a presence at any public events that may occur during the campaign period.
15. **Letters to the editor.** Letters to the editor can be an effective levy campaign tool. Make sure you know the paper’s policies and deadlines. Ask a volunteer to coordinate the letter writing campaign, providing ghost-writers to compose on-message letters to be signed by popular representatives of key voter segments (i.e. seniors or women business leaders).
16. **Request editorial support.** The chairman and library director or trustee(s) should make an appointment with the local newspaper editors to make the best case for the library and to request editorial support. Even papers that do not make endorsements per se will often write editorials supporting (or opposing) levy efforts.
17. **Newspaper advertising.** A few well-crafted advertisements (such as the list of patrons signing the endorsement sheets) are more helpful than a regular diet of small reminder-type ads.

Phase 3 – Voter Contact and Visibility

18. **“Vote FOR Issue X” mailing(s).** At least one (and preferably three) well-timed “Vote FOR Issue X” mailing to targeted voters is highly recommended. Take advantage of bulk mailing permits and time these mailings within the ten days preceding the election.
19. **Personal postcards.** Using voter registration lists, volunteers can send personal messages to friends and acquaintances, informing them of their endorsement of the library’s issue. As opposed to mass mailings, this is a targeted marketing strategy. This is very effective, but it must be timed so that the postcards are received just prior to Election Day.
20. **Telephone campaign.** Using the voter registration lists, volunteers can call those most likely to vote and ask for their support of the library, while simultaneously getting an ID on whether they are a supporter. A business that uses a telephone bank (e.g., realtor’s office) is a good location to conduct this effort for a larger group.
21. **Door to door Canvassing.** This involves going out to the homes of targeted voters, knocking on their doors, and asking for their support while simultaneously trying to get an ID. Local conditions and practices may dictate the use of this campaign tactic. Ask friendly politicians for their advice if this task is considered.
22. **Door to door literature drops.** Even if volunteers do not “ring the doorbell,” they may just use doorknob hangers to leave “Please vote FOR Issue X” literature at each household.
23. **School news literature drop.** Most public libraries have established successful relations with area schools. Inquire about the possibility of sending campaign (or at least factual) information home with the students. Philosophies vary greatly between school districts; check for possibilities with the superintendent.
24. **Bookmarks.** This is a simple, practical and effective tool for the committee. Pre-printed bookmarks with the advocated position can be available for patrons to pick up at the checkout desk.
25. **Precinct literature distribution.** Make inquiries with precinct captains of each major political party about the possibility of including library literature with their distribution program. While better than having literature leftover the day after the election, this is not as effective as leaving your issue’s literature by itself.
26. **Absentee voters.** A list of citizens who have requested an absentee ballot may be obtained from the elections board for a small fee. Since it is relatively certain that these individuals will vote, a special telephone or direct-mail campaign is advisable. Absentees vote early and special attention is needed to make sure they do not miss library mailings.
27. **Business signs/marquees/announcements.** Many libraries have special relationships with local businesses such as banks. Inquire about displaying library literature or using electronic billboards to advertise the levy message.

-
28. **Radio advertising.** Although not as common as some other techniques, some libraries have local contacts that can make this a viable tactic. This tactic is generally market-driven. If the radio market matches the library's community it can be useful.
 29. **Cable TV advertising.** For those systems in large media markets and with larger budgets, this lesser used method should be explored for potential.
 30. **Lawn signs.** One of the most commonly-employed campaign techniques, placing signs in the lawns of supporters, announces favorability, demonstrates momentum, and points your supporters to the right place on the ballot. A good rule of thumb is to use enough to blanket the district or do none at all.
 31. **Car signs.** Car signs or bumper stickers are a very inexpensive way to advertise a library levy. They can be placed in the rear window of a car and not impair the driver's line of sight. Car signs have the most impact if distributed the same weekend as the lawn signs. All levy volunteers can distribute car signs. Patrons frequently will ask for car signs at the circulation and public service desks.
 32. **Billboards.** Although not as common as other tasks, in certain communities there may be a contact with an advertiser who might provide an avenue to billboards. A pro-library message that is not necessarily political in nature may be effective as well.
 33. **Button maker.** It is relatively easy to make political campaign buttons using manual or automatic button makers. The committee should not use the library's button maker (if owned) but should use another source in the community. Library stickers are often less expensive, less labor intensive, and offer wider distribution possibilities.
 34. **Election Day turnout activities.** Use Election Day volunteers (if available) to call supporters, wave signs within the legal distances at polling places (observe local traditions) or to drive seniors to the polls.

Afterward

35. **Election returns party.** As a way of thanking the volunteers, hold a party to watch the election returns.
36. **Thank you correspondence.** Send a thank you to all who assisted with the library campaign, regardless of the outcome. If there is any money left over in the levy PAC fund, consider purchasing thank you ads in the local paper.

CONCLUSION

The decision to ask voters to raise their own taxes in order to fund library operations or build a new facility should not be taken lightly. Placing a question on the ballot and moving forward with a legal and effective campaign is a serious undertaking; one that will take many people a great deal of time, energy, effort, and money. A thorough assessment of available resources and likelihood of success should be conducted before moving forward. More information about such public engagement efforts can be found in the OLC publication *Community Connections: A Toolkit for Public Libraries* available on the OLC Web site.

As state funding for libraries continues to decrease relative to costs, more and more library systems are finding it necessary to approach their voters for renewed or new support. At the Ohio Library Council, we are committed to assisting in any way we can. We wrote *The Ballot Issues Handbook, Volume I* to provide basic information about the steps necessary to place an issue on the ballot, the legal context of ballot issue campaigns, and elementary information about designing and running an effective campaign among the voters. The Appendices that follow are sample resolutions, and copies of the campaign finance filing forms prescribed by the Ohio Secretary of State.

The Ballot Issues Handbook, Volume II contains more detailed information about strategies and tactics for planning and implementing an effective ballot issue campaign, including chapters on message development, fundraising, voter contact programs, and more. A review of the strategies and tasks outlined there should give library directors and trustees contemplating a ballot campaign a good sense for the people resources and financing needed to proceed.

Best of luck as you proceed.

A Appendix A FIRST RESOLUTION Template Auditor Resolution

FIRST RESOLUTION -- TEMPLATE AUDITOR RESOLUTION¹

BOARD OF TRUSTEES
[Name of Library²]

The Board of Trustees (the "Board") of the [name of library] (the "Library"), a [type of library³] library of the [name of library taxing authority⁴], [name of county] County, Ohio met in [regular or special] session on [month and day], [year], at __: __ .m., at _____, with the following members present:

M. _____ introduced the following resolution and moved its passage:

RESOLUTION REQUESTING THE [name of county] AUDITOR TO CERTIFY THE TOTAL CURRENT TAX VALUATION OF THE [name of tax district⁵], [name of county], OHIO AND THE AMOUNT TO BE GENERATED DURING THE FIRST YEAR OF COLLECTION OF A [description of tax⁶] FOR [purpose of tax⁷] OF THE [name of library].⁸

(R.C. Sections 5705.03, 5705.23⁹)
[description of tax¹⁰]

WHEREAS, [optional description of existing taxes for renewal or replacement tax levies¹¹]; and

WHEREAS, this Board wishes to initiate proceedings for the submission to the electors of the [name of tax district¹²], at [type of election¹³] to be held [date of general, primary or special election], the question of a [description of tax¹⁴] for [purpose of tax¹⁵] of the Library;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Trustees of the [name of library], [name of county], Ohio, two-thirds of all of the members thereof concurring, that:

Section 1. It is necessary to [description of tax¹⁶] for [purpose of tax¹⁷] of the Library.

Section 2.¹⁸ The [name of county] Auditor is hereby requested to certify the total current tax valuation of the [name of tax district¹⁹] and the amount to be generated during the first year of collection of a [description of tax²⁰] for the benefit of the Library at a rate not exceeding [millage²¹] mills for each one dollar of valuation, which amounts to [millage converted to decimals, i.e. "twenty-five" for a 2.5 mill levy] cents (\$____) for each one hundred dollars of valuation, for [purpose of tax] of the Library.

⁴ The library's taxing authority. For county or county district public libraries, this could be merged directly with the reference to the county – e.g., a county district library of Wayne County, Ohio.

⁵ This should be, based on the decision made by the library as to where to assess the tax, either (i) the taxing authority subdivision (e.g., "Orville City School District", "City of Wooster", etc.) or (ii) the library district, as defined by the state library board pursuant to section 3375.01 of the Revised Code (e.g., "Rittman Public Library District, as defined by the state library board pursuant to section 3375.01 of the Revised Code"). However, there is an Attorney General Opinion – 85-017 – that suggests that a library with a service area different from the taxing authority subdivision must submit its levy to the library's service area and that in such a case the library has no authority to submit the levy only to the subdivision's geographic area.

⁶ Description of the tax – e.g., for a new tax: "a tax levy"; a renewal of an existing tax: "a renewal of an existing tax"; a replacement of an existing tax: "a replacement of an existing tax".

⁷ The purpose of the tax. Pursuant to Revised Code Section 5705.23, library tax levies may be for (i) current expenses and/or (ii) "for the construction of any specific permanent improvement or class of permanent improvements which the board of library trustees is authorized to make or acquire and which could be included in a single issue of bonds." The library would not just quote the statute, it would have to describe the permanent improvement (e.g., "repairing and maintaining library buildings").

⁸ This is one of two options for the library. It can either ask the auditor how much money will be generated by a tax of a specified millage (which is what this preamble and Section 2 does), or it can ask the auditor what millage will be required to generate a specified amount of money. A preamble that does that would read as follows:

Resolution requesting the *[name of county]* auditor to certify the current tax valuation of the *[name of tax district]* and the number of mills necessary to produce \$_____ of revenue during the first year of collection of a *[description of tax]* for the benefit of the Library, for *[purpose of tax]*.

⁹ For a replacement levy, this listing would include a reference to Section 5705.192.

¹⁰ "Library Tax Levy"; "Renewal Library Tax Levy"; "Replacement Library Tax Levy"

¹¹ This paragraph is optional, but can be used to describe the background of any current levy being replaced or renewed. For example, when the original levy was passed, at what rate and for what term.

¹² See note 5.

¹³ Use this to designate the election selected by the library. E.g., "general election", "primary election" or a special election.

¹⁴ See note 6.

¹⁵ See note 7.

¹⁶ See note 6. Add a verb: "assess a tax", "renew all of the existing tax", "replace [all/a portion] of the existing tax".

¹⁷ See note 7.

¹⁸ This is one of two options for the library. It can either ask the auditor how much money will be generated by a tax of a specified millage (which is what Section 2 does), or it can ask the auditor what millage will be required to generate a specified amount of money. A Section 2 that does that would read as follows:

The *[name of county]* Auditor is hereby requested to certify the current tax valuation of the *[name of tax district]* and the number of mills necessary to produce \$_____ of revenue during the first year of collection of a *[description of tax]* for the benefit of the Library, for *[purpose of tax]*.

¹⁹ See note 5.

²⁰ See note 6.

²¹ Rate of millage.

B Appendix B

SECOND RESOLUTION

Template Library to Taxing Authority Resolution

SECOND RESOLUTION
TEMPLATE LIBRARY TO TAXING AUTHORITY RESOLUTION¹

BOARD OF TRUSTEES
[Name of Library²]

The Board of Trustees (the "Board") of the [name of library] (the "Library"), a [type of library³] library of the [name of library taxing authority⁴], [name of county], Ohio met in [regular or special] session on [month day], [year], at ___:___ m., at _____, with the following members present:

M. _____ introduced the following resolution and moved its passage:

RESOLUTION REQUESTING THE [name of taxing authority], [name of county], OHIO TO SUBMIT TO THE ELECTORS OF THE [name of tax district⁵] THE QUESTION OF A [description of tax⁶] FOR [purpose of tax⁷] OF THE [name of library].

(R.C. Sections 5705.03, 5705.23⁸)
[description of tax⁹]

WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees (the "Board") of the [name of library], [name of taxing authority], [name of county], Ohio (the "Library") is a board of library trustees appointed pursuant to Section [applicable organizing section of Chapter 3375, Revised Code], Ohio Revised Code, and is a board of library trustees described in Section 3375.32, Ohio Revised Code¹⁰; and

WHEREAS, the Board desires the [name of taxing authority] (the "Library Taxing Authority"¹¹) to [description of action desired¹²] under Section 5705.23, Ohio Revised Code, for [purpose of tax]; and

WHEREAS, the [name of county] Auditor has certified that the above-referenced tax will generate \$ _____ during the first year of collection, based on the current assessed valuation of the [name of tax district] of \$ _____.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Trustees of the [name of library], [name of taxing authority], [name of county], Ohio, two-thirds of all the members thereof concurring, that:

Section 1. It is hereby declared that the amount of taxes which may be raised within the ten-mill limitation by levies on the current tax duplicate will be insufficient to provide an adequate amount for the necessary requirements of the Library and that it is necessary to levy a [type of tax¹³] tax in excess of such limitation for [purpose of tax] of the Library [if a replacement, recite tax this is replacement of a specified tax – with amount in mills, and date of passage]. Accordingly, the [name of taxing authority], [name of county], Ohio (the "Library Taxing Authority"), the taxing authority to whose jurisdiction the Board is subject, is hereby requested to submit to the electors of the [name of tax district¹⁴] at the [type of election] to be held [date of general, primary or special election], the question of [description of tax¹⁵] for [purpose of tax¹⁶] of the Library.

Section 2. This Board hereby requests the [name of legislative body¹⁷] of the Library Taxing Authority adopt a resolution under Section [applicable Section of law¹⁸], Ohio Revised Code, and other applicable provisions of law, to submit to the electors of the [name of tax district] at an election to be held therein on [date of general, primary or special election], the question of such [description of tax] for [purpose of tax] of the Library.

Section 3. Such tax levy shall be for [term of levy¹⁹] at a rate not exceeding [millage rate] mills for each one dollar of valuation, which amounts to [decimal rate] (\$____) for each one hundred dollars of valuation.

Section 4. Such tax levy shall be placed upon the tax list and duplicate for the current tax year if a majority of the electors voting thereon vote in favor thereof.²⁰

Section 5. The Board finds, determines and declares that the levy of the tax, if approved by the electors, is necessary to the proper furnishing and rendering of free public library services in the [name of tax district] for the residents of the [name of tax district].

Section 6. The Clerk-Treasurer of the Board, acting on behalf of the Board, is hereby directed to certify a copy of this resolution to the [name of applicable fiscal officer] of the Library Taxing Authority.

Section 7. It is hereby found and determined that all formal actions of this Board concerning and relating to the adoption of this resolution were adopted in an open meeting of this Board, and that all deliberations of this Board and of any of its committees that resulted in such formal action, were in meetings open to the public, in compliance with all legal requirements including Section 121.11, Ohio Revised Code.

M_____ seconded the motion and, after discussion, a roll call vote was taken and the results were:

Ayes: _____

Nays: _____

The resolution was adopted.

Passed: *[month, day, year]* BOARD OF TRUSTEES,
[name of library],
[name of county], OHIO

Attest: _____
Clerk-Treasurer Board President

CERTIFICATE

The undersigned Clerk-Treasurer of the Board of Trustees of the *[name of library], [name of county], Ohio*, hereby certifies that the foregoing is a true copy of a resolution duly adopted by said Board on *[month day], [year]*, and that a certified copy thereof was filed in the office of the *[name of taxing authority][name of taxing authority legislative body]* on *[month day], [year]*.

Clerk-Treasurer
[name of library]

¹ This is a template, not a required form. There are other perfectly good ways to pass a resolution to achieve the objects of this one. All good resolutions will contain a common minimum of provisions, but other than those minimums, there is no requirement that every resolution read exactly the same.

² This is the legal name of the library.

³ The type of public library – municipal, county, county district, township or school district.

⁴ The library's taxing authority. For county or county district public libraries, this could be merged directly with the reference to the county – e.g., a county district library of Wayne County, Ohio.

⁵ This should be, based on the decision made by the library as to where to assess the tax, either (i) the taxing authority subdivision (e.g., "Orville City School District", "City of Wooster", etc.) or (ii) the library district, as defined by the state library board pursuant to section 3375.01 of the Revised Code (e.g., "Rittman Public Library District, as defined by the state library board pursuant to section 3375.01 of the Revised Code"). However, there is an Attorney General Opinion – 85-017 – that suggests that a library with a service area different from the taxing authority subdivision must submit its levy to the library's service area and that in such a case the library has no authority to submit the levy only to the subdivision's geographic area.

⁶ Description of the tax – e.g., for a new tax: "a tax levy"; a renewal of an existing tax: "a renewal of an existing tax"; a replacement of an existing tax: "a replacement of an existing tax".

⁷ The purpose of the tax. Pursuant to Revised Code Section 5705.23, library tax levies may be for (i) current expenses and/or (ii) "for the construction of any specific permanent improvement or class of permanent improvements which the board of library trustees is authorized to make or acquire and which could be included in a single issue of bonds." The library would not just quote the statute, it would have to describe the permanent improvement (e.g., "repairing and maintaining library buildings").

⁸ For a replacement levy, this listing would include a reference to Section 5705.192.

⁹ "Library Tax Levy"; "Renewal Library Tax Levy"; "Replacement Library Tax Levy"

¹⁰ This recital is an optional description of the library and its type of organization.

¹¹ The defined term "Library Taxing Authority" is used in this template only. In the actual resolution, it may be preferable to come up with a shorthand term for the taxing authority – "School District", "City", "Township", etc.

¹² "to levy a tax" for a new tax; "to renew a tax levied" for a renewal; "to replace, pursuant to Ohio Revised Code Section 5705.192, a tax levied" for a replacement tax.

¹³ "a replacement tax" or "a renewal tax", if a replacement levy or renewal levy. Otherwise, leave out for a new tax.

¹⁴ See note 5.

¹⁵ Description of the tax – e.g., for a new tax: "a tax levy"; a renewal of an existing tax: "a renewal of an existing tax"; a replacement of an existing tax: "a replacement of an existing tax".

¹⁶ See note 7.

¹⁷ So, "Board of Education" for a school district, "Board of Township Trustees" of a township, "Board of County Commissioners" for a statutory county; and the appropriate name of the legislative body of an applicable municipal taxing authority.

¹⁸ Revised Code 5705.23 for a new or renewal levy. Revised Code 5705.192 for a replacement levy.

¹⁹ Library levies can be for a fixed number of years or for a continuing period of time.

²⁰ If the election for the levy is on or before the first Tuesday after the first Monday of November, it may be on the current tax list and duplicate. So, if this is the case, then for a levy passed at the general election in 2007, the first "year" would be 2007, and the second "year" would be 2008.

C Appendix C THIRD RESOLUTION Template Taxing Authority Resolution

THIRD RESOLUTION TEMPLATE TAXING AUTHORITY RESOLUTION¹

[name of taxing authority legislative body²]
[name of taxing authority]
[name of county], OHIO

The *[name of taxing authority legislative body]* (the "Legislative Body"³) of the *[name of taxing authority]* (the "Library Taxing Authority"⁴) met in *[regular or special]* session on *[month day], [year]*, at *__*:*__* p.m. at _____, with the following members present:

M. _____ introduced the following resolution and moved its passage:

RESOLUTION DECLARING IT NECESSARY TO
LEVY A TAX IN EXCESS OF THE TEN MILL
LIMITATION FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE *[name of library]*.

(R.C. Sections 5705.03, 5705.23⁵)
[description of tax⁶]

WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees of the *[name of library]*, *[name of county]*, Ohio (the "Library"), a *[type of library⁷]* library subject to the jurisdiction of *[name of taxing authority]*, *[name of county]*, Ohio (the "Library Taxing Authority"⁸), has passed a resolution requesting this Legislative Body, as the taxing authority for said Library, to place the question of a *[description of tax⁹]* for *[purpose of tax¹⁰]* of the Library on the ballot at the *[date of general, primary or special election]* *[type of election]*;

WHEREAS, the *[name of county]* Auditor has certified that such tax will generate \$ _____ during the first year of collection, based on the current assessed valuation of the *[name of tax district¹¹]* of \$ _____;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the *[name of legislative body]* of the *[name of taxing authority]*, *[name of county]*, Ohio, that, two-thirds of all of the members elected thereto concurring:

Section 1. The amount of taxes which may be raised within the ten-mill limitation by levies on the current tax duplicate will be insufficient to provide an adequate amount

for the necessary requirements of the Library and it is necessary to levy a *[type of tax¹²]* tax in excess of such limitation for *[purpose of tax]* of the Library.

Section 2. The question of such tax levy shall be submitted to the electors of the *[name of tax district]* at the election to be held therein on *[date of general, primary or special election]*.

Section 3. Such tax levy shall be for a *[term of levy¹³]* and at a rate not exceeding *[millage rate]* mills for each one dollar of valuation, which amounts to *[decimal rate]* (\$_____) for each one hundred dollars of valuation.

Section 4. Such tax levy shall be placed upon the tax list and duplicate for the current tax year, beginning *[year]*, first due in calendar year *[year]*, if a majority of the electors voting thereon vote in favor thereof.¹⁴

Section 5. This Legislative Body finds, determines and declares that the levy of the tax, if approved by the electors, is necessary to the proper furnishing and rendering of free public library services in the *[name of tax district]* and for the residents of the *[name of tax district]*.¹⁵

Section 6. The *[name of fiscal officer]* of the School District shall and is hereby directed to certify a copy of this resolution to the Board of Elections of *[name of county]*, Ohio, not later than *[deadline¹⁶]*.

Section 7. It is hereby found and determined that all formal actions of this Legislative Body concerning and relating to the passage of this resolution were taken in an open meeting of this Legislative Body, and that all deliberations of this Legislative Body and of any of its committees that resulted in such formal action were in meetings open to the public, in compliance with all legal requirements, including Section 121.22 of the Ohio Revised Code.

M_____ seconded the motion and, after discussion, a roll call vote was taken and the results were:

Ayes: _____

Nays: _____

The resolution passed.

Passed: *[month day]*, *[year]*

[name of taxing authority],
[name of county], OHIO

Attest: _____
[title of fiscal officer] [title of head of legislative body]

CERTIFICATE

The undersigned [title of fiscal officer] of the [name of taxing authority], [name of county], Ohio, hereby certifies that the foregoing is a true copy of a resolution duly passed by the Legislative Body of said Library Taxing Authority on [month day], [year], and that a true copy thereof was certified to the Board of Elections of [name of county], Ohio, on [month day], [year].

[title of fiscal officer]
[name of taxing authority],
[name of county], Ohio

¹ This is a template, not a required form. There are other perfectly good ways to pass a resolution to achieve the objects of this one. All good resolutions will contain a common minimum of provisions, but other than those minimums, there is no requirement that every resolution read exactly the same.

² So, "Board of Education" for a school district, "Board of Township Trustees" of a township, "Board of County Commissioners" for a statutory county; and the appropriate name of the legislative body of an applicable municipal taxing authority.

³ For this template resolution, "Legislative Body" is used. For the actual resolution, better form would be to use a shorthand for the name of the actual body – "Board" for school board or board of township trustees, "Council" for a city council, etc.

⁴ The defined term "Library Taxing Authority" is used in this template only. In the actual resolution, it may be preferable to come up with a shorthand term for the taxing authority – "School District", "City", "Township", etc.

⁵ For a replacement levy, this listing would include a reference to Section 5705.192.

⁶ "Library Tax Levy"; "Renewal Library Tax Levy"; "Replacement Library Tax Levy"

⁷ The type of public library – municipal, county, county district, township or school district.

⁸ The defined term "Library Taxing Authority" is used in this template only. In the actual resolution, it may be preferable to come up with a shorthand term for the taxing authority – "School District", "City", "Township", etc.

⁹ Description of the tax – e.g., for a new tax: "a tax levy"; a renewal of an existing tax: "a renewal of an existing tax"; a replacement of an existing tax: "a replacement of an existing tax".

¹⁰ The purpose of the tax. Pursuant to Revised Code Section 5705.23, library tax levies may be for (i) current expenses and/or (ii) "for the construction of any specific permanent improvement or class of permanent improvements which the board of library trustees is authorized to make or acquire and which could be included in a single issue of bonds." The library would not just quote the statute, it would have to describe the permanent improvement (e.g., "repairing and maintaining library buildings").

¹¹ This should be, based on the decision made by the library as to where to assess the tax, either (i) the taxing authority subdivision (e.g., "Orrville City School District", "City of Wooster", etc.) or (ii) the library district, as defined by the state library board pursuant to section 3375.01 of the Revised Code (e.g., "Rittman Public Library District, as defined by the state library board pursuant to section 3375.01 of the Revised Code"). However, there is an Attorney General Opinion – 85-017 – that suggests that a library with a service area different from the taxing authority subdivision must submit its levy to the library's service area and that in such a case the library has no authority to submit the levy only to the subdivision's geographic area.

¹² "a replacement tax" or "a renewal tax", if a replacement levy or renewal levy. Otherwise, leave out for a new tax.

¹³ Library levies can be for a fixed number of years or for a continuing period of time.

¹⁴ If the election for the levy is on or before the first Tuesday after the first Monday of November, it may be on the current tax list and duplicate. So, if this is the case, then for a levy passed at the general election in 2007, the first "year" would be 2007, and the second "year" would be 2008.

¹⁵ Some drafters of taxing authority resolutions will include, at this point in the resolution, the form of ballot to be used at the election, tracking the language of Revised Code Section 5705.25 for the ballot language.

¹⁶ Some libraries will do the math, and state a date before the applicable filing deadline. Some simply state something "not less than seventy-five (75) days prior to the [name of election] to be held on [date of election]".

D Appendix D **POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE (PAC) FORMS**

**ALWAYS USE THE MOST CURRENT PAC FORMS FROM THE
OHIO SECRETARY OF STATE'S WEB SITE (<http://www.sos.state.oh.us>)**

Current Political Action Committee (PAC) forms are located in interactive PDF and Excel formats in the Ohio Campaign Finance section of the Ohio Secretary of State's Web site (<http://www.sos.state.oh.us/SOS/Campaign%20Finance/CFForms.aspx>). Instructions for all forms are contained within the PDF version of the forms.

The list of available forms includes:

- Ohio Campaign Finance Report (Cover Page)
- Statement of Contributions Received
- State of Other Income
- Contributions from a Corporation or Labor Organization Supporting or Opposing Ballot Issues
- Statement of Loans Received
- Statement of Contributions Received at a Social or Fundraising Event
- In-Kind Contributions Received
- Statement of Expenditures
- Statement of Expenditures for Social or Fundraising Event
- Statement of Outstanding Debts