



## **Grand County Library District**

### **FAQs for Library Customers**

**Revised as of June 21, 2016**

#### **Q 1. How is Grand County Library District (GCLD) organized and governed?**

Grand County Library District was established in 1994 under Colorado Library Law (CRS 24-90-101 et seq.) A property tax mil levy of 2.41 was approved by the voters of Grand County to establish funds for the Library District to provide free access to library services. According to Library Law, this access may be provided through a single main library or branch library or a combination of both.

GCLD operates under a governing board of seven trustees, appointed by the County Commissioners. Trustee appointments in Grand County are chosen to reflect the three voting districts: East, Central and West, providing a voice and representation for each area. The Board's duty involves governing and directing from a district-wide vantage point, with particular responsibility for the adoption and implementation of library policies, ensuring library properties are managed appropriately, employing a library director and directing the responsible fiscal management of library funds through the budgetary process.

#### **Q 2. What are GCLD's sources of funding?**

Although 95% of GCLD's funding is through property taxes, other sources of revenue include: grants, donations from the Friends of Grand County Library and the Grand County Library Foundation, private donations and library fines and fees.

#### **Q 3. What library services does GCLD provide?**

- GCLD serves all residents of Grand County. The libraries provide many resources at [www.gclid.org](http://www.gclid.org): books, magazines, and audiobooks on CD; 24/7 access to online resources such as e-books, e-audiobooks, e-magazines, and online learning; public computers with Internet access, Wi-Fi, office services, public meeting rooms, quiet study spaces, assistance from library staff, free library cards, and even musical instruments. Providing a great space and resources to elevate learning and enrich the lives of our community and guests is the purpose of GCLD.
- While providing community space and meeting rooms is important to the mission of GCLD, the library is much more than a community center. Our core purpose is to elevate learning and enrich the lives of our community by providing information, literature, online access, and assistance for those needing help locating or processing information.
- The Library District provides some after-school programming, but is not an "after-school center." Libraries are not staffed, nor are they legally set-up to provide childcare services as a daycare center would be. Libraries serve a very different function in the community.

- The Library District provides access to a diverse collection of materials, expressing a variety of viewpoints and value systems. This diversity is critical to a library's mission.
- The Library District provides programming which adds value to the lives of citizens of all ages. From *1,000 Books before Kindergarten* to the *Senior Book Club*, opportunities are available for all ages and types of individuals.

#### **Q 4. Why is the Library District forced to cut back on library services?**

There has been no increase to the Library District's mil levy since its inception twenty-one years ago. Things have changed significantly over the years including property tax values, rising costs, and the overall expectation of traditional and contemporary library services. The hourly wage for librarians in 1995 was \$5.50 per hour, internet and wi-fi usage was unheard of inside library buildings and library books and materials were rarely shared outside the County. The idea of an online library user was unimaginable.

The economic recession, beginning in 2008, quickly impacted property values in Grand County with the consequent loss to library revenues. Anticipating that property taxes would continue to fall, the Library Board approved a rainy day fund of \$600,000 called the Economic Stabilization Fund (ESF). The ESF was created from savings realized in the 2010 - 2011 budget year. It was anticipated that the economy would begin to recover by 2015 and the Fund would be sufficient to maintain District operations for four years, 2012 - 2015.

From 2010 - 2013 reduced library revenues were offset by downsizing and streamlining library staff and services. Predictions of an additional loss of property tax revenues for 2014 prompted the GCLD Board to seek voter approval of a 2013 ballot measure for an increased mil levy. The mil levy proposal failed.

In 2014, with the ESF running low and chances of a revenue increase through the mil levy out of the question, the Library District was forced to reduce spending by cutting library staff by 35% and administrative staff by 51%. Adult, youth and early education programming, customer service and open hours in all the branches were negatively impacted.

The ESF was supplemented in 2014 - 2015 through the restructuring of the debt on the Granby and Grand Lake libraries and the settlement of a legal action. Although property tax revenues were still declining, the Board estimated that the injections of funds into the ESF would supplement GCLD spending until 2019. The 2016 budget draws \$200,000 from the ESF.

**The news from the Henderson Mill in March 2016 forced the Library Board to reconsider their financial plans.**

#### **Q 5. How has the downturn at the Henderson Mill affected GCLD funding?**

Henderson Mill is the largest property tax payer in the county, making up 14% of the property tax revenues for the Library District in 2016. Recent information from the Henderson mining and milling

production owner Freeport-McMoRan indicates that operations will be curtailed and production will cease entirely in three to five years.

The County's decision to change the averaging of property tax revenues from the Henderson Mine production from five years to three years, has compounded the revenue losses for the Library District.

In 2017, GCLD is anticipating a \$47,000 loss from the decreased Henderson revenues, with steeper cuts following in 2018 and 2019. Instead of the recovery of residential property taxes and the planned return to a balanced budget forecast for 2017, the news from Henderson will mean a permanent loss of revenues and a dramatic change to District revenues. Consequently, the Library Board has taken action to immediately reduce the dependency on the ESF with the approval of a \$100,000 reduction to the 2017 budget.

**Q 6. I have heard that property taxes are starting to rebound. Will this compensate for the losses at the Henderson Mill?**

No. There have been some signs of property taxes rebounding. However, with current assessment rates it will require a 30-40% increase in residential property taxes to compensate for the losses from Henderson. With the small population base of 14,500, the complete loss of the county's major industry, and the level of increase expected in residential property taxes, the current structure of the Library District cannot be supported and changes need to happen.

**Q 7. I live in Grand Lake. Can you tell me how my taxes benefit the Juniper branch?**

GCLD was established so that all revenues are collected in a general GCLD fund. This is stated in the 1994 agreement to establish the Library District in Grand County. Taxes are raised from Grand County property owners to provide for the operation and maintenance of library services for everyone living within the geographic area. The GCLD budget and accounting is also based on this premise. Costs are not allocated to a particular branch. This offers considerable advantages to all library card holders who access resources far outside those of a single branch.

Together as a District, there are significant savings and great opportunities for all the branches. Contracts, grants and consortium agreements which underpin many library services are possible and would not apply to individual branches. As an approach to management, it allows for great efficiencies. Many of the library services customers enjoy are initiated and managed through Central Services rather than duplicated in each branch. To name a few: finances and bookkeeping, collection development and the ordering and processing of the library materials you see on the shelves, children and adult programming, the maintenance and development of technology and online resources, human resources and facilities.

Although library buildings are significant as civic spaces and community centers, GCLD library customers are also county-wide and state-wide users. For instance, those who call Juniper Library branch their "home library" are savvy and looking for convenience. They will use a GCLD branch

close to work, shopping or schools to pick up or drop off their library materials. They may also use their Grand County card in any Colorado library, request books and DVDs from across Colorado or use their card entirely from home, downloading their materials to a device or taking online courses. These statistics of library checkouts tell the tale. *(See Appendix A)*

### **Q 8. What can citizens of Grand County do to help the Library District?**

- Volunteer! The libraries depend upon volunteers to supplement staffing. They provide help with shelving books, create displays and bulletin boards, assist with set-up for programs, and often provide programs on a variety of subjects. In May, 2016, volunteers worked 106.5 hours in our libraries.
- Donate! Cash and monetary donations are accepted and are used by the district for program needs, purchase of specialized items on wish lists, and supplies for children’s programs.
- Support an increase in tax revenues for the Library District! The library depends upon property tax revenues for operating funds. The mil levy has not changed since 1994 when the Library District was created. Unless the mil levy is increased—or property values rise an estimated 30 – 40% soon -- and stay high, the Library District must find ways to cut expenditures.
- Focus on a strong Library District for all of Grand County! Many of us may have to drive a bit to reach a library branch, however, we need strong libraries in the county providing relevant, current, effective and sustainable services to all.

### **Q 9. Can we gather donations to help keep libraries open?**

The Library District benefits from the generous donations, financial gifts and grants which provide funding for District-wide and branch programs. They also support specific purchases in the branches. Each branch has a wish list of items to choose from. The Grand County Library Foundation is pleased to receive donations and bequests on behalf of the Library District. The goal of the Foundation is to enhance and not replace traditional tax-based support for the libraries. However, the core library operations such as personnel, building maintenance, internet services, library consortium expenses, materials budget and other ongoing expenses are covered by a consistent, dependable revenue source. This stability is provided by property tax revenues.

### **Q 10. What approach does the Board of Trustees take to reducing library services?**

The Board of Trustees has been examining data and discussing alternatives since February 2016. In the face of irreversible revenues losses and the resizing of GCLD, the Board asked, “How can Grand County be cost effective in maintaining quality library services for the greatest number within the parameters of Library Law and the Colorado Library Standards” Given that service outlets of public libraries are required to:

- Be open for at least 20 hours per week
- Have paid staff present during all hours of service
- Provide public computers with access to the internet
- Be engaged in resource sharing with other Colorado libraries.

*Appendix B* contains a comparison of GCLD services to similar Districts in the mountain west region. Typically, Library Districts serving populations of 9,000 – 20,000 maintain 1-3 branches. GCLD spends disproportionately on facilities (30% of the budget) and the duplication of services in multiple locations.

In an effort to balance the budget the Board is planning to cut \$100,000 in 2017. The idea of broad based, across-the-board cuts were considered and then rejected. Although comprehensive cutting seems fairer at first glance, the failure to differentiate and prioritize services for reduction results in an overall gutting of existing branches: reducing open hours across the District and cutting programming, technology and collections. For example, across the board cuts to programming would threaten the popular Summer Reading program and negatively impact literacy and reading support for 700 Grand County children who sign-up every year.

The alternative approach is a series of planned reductions which are expected to occur over the next two to three years. It is the hope of the Board, that through thoughtful planning, the Library District can continue to provide quality services for all people of Grand County. This will serve the needs of the whole county and all demographic groups into the future.

For more information on Grand County Library District and the Board of Trustees: meetings, financials and minutes, please visit the website at [www.gclid.org/trustees](http://www.gclid.org/trustees).

---

Stephanie Ralph, Executive Director, Grand County Library District

(970) 887 9411 ext. 101 [sralph@gclid.org](mailto:sralph@gclid.org)

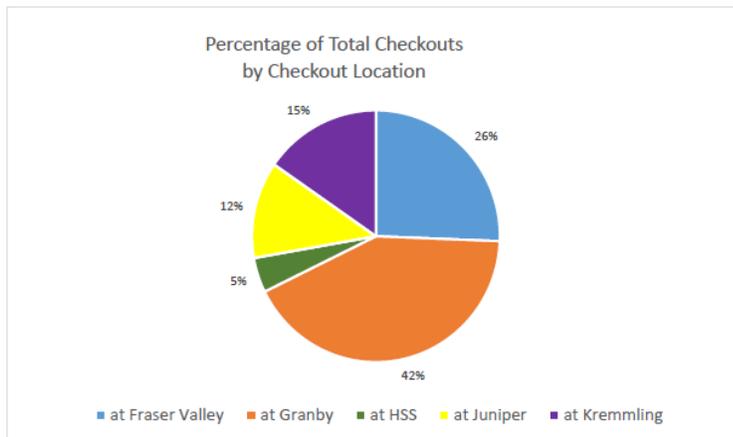
Grand County Library District Board of Trustees

[www.gclid.org/trustees](http://www.gclid.org/trustees)

Appendix A

YTD 2016-06-07 Checkouts (not renewals) by Checkout Location

Checkout Location	Home Lib F	Home Lib G	Home Lib H	Home Lib J	Home Lib K	Total Checkouts at Location
at Fraser Valley	9,465	987	36	198	27	10,713
at Granby	3,025	11,773	987	1,596	218	17,599
at HSS	13	332	1,340	23	163	1,871
at Juniper	384	751	96	3,968	-	5,199
at Kremmling	18	141	94	26	6,133	6,412
Total Checkouts by Patrons with Home Library of	12,905	13,984	2,553	5,811	6,541	41,794



\*Checkout Location indicates the primary branch for the GCLD library cardholder

Appendix B

Library/Library District	Population	# of Branches	Square footage/capita	Operating expenditures/capita
Clear Creek County Library District	9,029	2	1.2	112.61
Estes Valley Public Library District	12,120	1	1.5	119.82
Moffat County Libraries	13,090	3	1.3	43.43
Grand County Library District	14,287	5	2.0	103.48
East Routt Bud Werner Steamboat	17,456	1	2.0	115.94
Summit County Library	28,637	3	0.8	42.13
Delta County Public Library District	30,334	5	1.3	46.68
Montrose Regional Library District	40,053	3	0.8	48.79
Eagle Valley Library District	41,818	3	1.0	101.43
Durango Public Library	53,446	3	1.0	37.85
Garfield County Public Library District	57,298	6	1.6	72.80