

**James Blackstone Memorial Library**  
**Budget Request (Summary)**  
July 2024 through June 2025

	Actual 2022-2023	Budget 2023-2024	Requested 2024-2025	Change Amount	Change Percent	Percent of Budget
<b>Operations Income/Expense</b>						
<b>Income</b>						
Total 41000 · Town of Bfd Operating Grant	1,650,816	1,700,340	1,743,500	43,160	2.54%	89.21%
Total 42000 · Program Operations	14,795	20,500	17,500	-3,000	-14.63%	0.90%
Total 43000 · Contributions	79,556	60,000	64,000	4,000	6.67%	3.27%
Total 43500 · Development & Fundraising	25,142	25,500	29,000	3,500	13.73%	1.48%
Total 44000 · Other Grants	47,359	9,000	8,000	-1,000	-11.11%	0.41%
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>1,817,667</b>	<b>1,815,340</b>	<b>1,862,000</b>	<b>46,660</b>	<b>2.57%</b>	<b>95.27%</b>
<b>Expense</b>						
Total 60000 · Salaries	943,970	1,023,078	1,046,777	23,699	2.32%	53.56%
Total 60200 · Payroll Taxes	74,331	83,697	85,528	1,831	2.34%	4.38%
Total 60300 · Employee Benefits & Insurance	324,033	412,737	396,688	-16,049	-3.89%	20.30%
Total 61000 · Materials of the Collection	112,751	105,000	112,000	7,000	6.67%	5.73%
Total 62100 · Utilities	52,124	59,164	61,027	1,863	3.15%	3.12%
Total 62200 · Repairs/Maintenance	64,635	62,000	79,000	17,000	27.42%	4.04%
Total 63100 · Automation/Technology	75,793	75,000	77,250	2,250	3.0%	3.95%
Total 63200 · Development/Fundraising	6,149	9,700	9,200	-500	-5.16%	0.47%
Total 63300 · Insurance	33,383	34,000	40,000	6,000	17.65%	2.05%
Total 63500 · Supplies/Postage/Copying	15,373	16,750	17,450	700	4.18%	0.89%
Total 63700 · Professional Fees	10,910	11,000	12,000	1,000	9.09%	0.61%
Total 63800 · Memberships/Cont.Ed	946	1,000	2,000	1,000	100.0%	0.10%
Total 63900 · Telephone	1,355	1,600	1,600	0	0.0%	0.08%
Total 64000 · Other Program Expenses	7,781	6,000	9,900	3,900	65.0%	0.51%
Total 65500 · Funded Program Expenses	45,307	5,000	4,000	-1,000	-20.0%	0.20%
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>1,768,840</b>	<b>1,905,726</b>	<b>1,954,420</b>	<b>48,694</b>	<b>2.56%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>
<b>Net Operations Income</b>	<b>48,828</b>	<b>-90,386</b>	<b>-92,420</b>	<b>-2,034</b>	<b>2.25%</b>	<b>-4.73%</b>
47010 · Transfer from L/T Investments	0	90,386	92,420	2,034	2.25%	4.73%
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>48,828</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>

**February 6, 2024**

**To: First Selectman, Board of Finance, RTM Education Committee, RTM**

**From: James Blackstone Memorial Library Treasurer—Janice Kochanowski**

**Highlights of 2022 – 2023 (Last completed FY)**

In the fall of 2022, the Blackstone Library finalized its new Strategic Plan for the coming years. The plan contains eight strategic initiatives that emerged from community outreach:

- Inspire a love of learning, innovative thinking & creativity
- Provide access to expert minds
- Promote personal empowerment
- Support economic wellbeing
- Facilitate community connections around shared interests
- Be a community information hub
- Advance volunteerism
- Celebrate diversity & understanding one another

Following our Strategic Plan implementation plan that was approved last year, the Blackstone Library has been focused on a number of initiatives, from supporting staff in their professional development, improving the quality and diversity of program offerings, expanding our Library of Things, strengthening community partnerships, and improving communications and outreach. We also continued to strengthen our relationship with the Town, maintaining open lines of communication.

As a result of these combined efforts, the Blackstone Library saw an increase of 31% more people coming through our doors over last year, with 111,677 total visits to the library. We are still not quite at pre-pandemic levels, but we are getting closer as foot traffic continues to increase.

Through generous contributions from patrons and funding from the Friends of the Blackstone Library, the library installed a beautiful new mural in the Children's Department, and added book display furniture and outdoor lawn furniture, all of which help make the spaces inviting and welcoming, and support more outdoor usage of the library lawn.

Program attendance has swelled and we are seeing numbers comparable to pre-renovation and pre-pandemic numbers with 13,713 adults, teens and children attending programs. A total of 199,446 items were loaned, including 47,499 digital items, which accounted for 24% of total circulation. Our public computers were used 8,144 times, and people accessed the internet through our WIFI 44,012 times, and our meeting rooms were used 1,363 times – all increases over last year's totals.

The Library's fundraising efforts earned \$25,142; \$8,401 in grants, and program operations, direct appeals and donations generated \$94,353 in FY 2023. The Friends of the Library contributed \$38,958, which continues to supplement the cost of HOOPLA and Kanopy digital ebooks, audiobooks and streaming music and movies; equipment; staff development; and special programs celebrating the arts and culture.

Thanks to a special gift from the Friends, the library was able to greatly expand its Library of Things, which began as the library's MakerLab, with equipment for use within the building and had shifted to a lending model, with items and equipment patrons can borrow. The Library of Things now includes lawn games, such as corn hole and croquet, a metal detector, a Nintendo Switch™, digital film scanner, electric guitar and amp, a basic tool kit, cake pans and much more. We have also received donations from the Branford Conservation and Environmental Commission and individuals to further expand this unique collection.

**FY 2023 – 2024 (Current FY)**

The Blackstone Library continues to provide a full range of services to the community and has seen increasing levels of circulating materials and rising average daily foot traffic, plus increased attendance at our many programs. Our contactless Express Pickup service continues to be very popular.

This year, our focus is on re-connecting with schools to strengthen ties to students and teachers. We conduct outreach to various schools around

town, offering storytimes and library card sign-ups. We continue to refine our adult program offerings, aligning their impact with the stated community needs from the strategic plan research. We also are working to identify and implement strategic partnerships with local organizations so we can broaden our reach and our service offerings. We continue to maintain a strong relationship with the Friends of the Blackstone Library, who work year-round to raise additional enrichment funds to support special programs and projects at the library.

Thanks to gifts from the Friends, we were able to upgrade the 20+ year-old sound system, and purchase new display units to highlight parts of the collection. We have updated our 20+ year-old phone system with paging capabilities, and the Board of Trustees approved a comprehensive Emergency Management Plan for staff to follow.

The Blackstone building is iconic and an architectural gem in Branford, and we take our role of stewards of this building seriously, and as extreme weather events have been occurring more frequently, we continually monitor the building for necessary repairs and maintenance.

### **Operating Budget 2024-2025 (Next FY)**

In accordance with all unaffiliated Town employees, the Library is proposing a salary increase of 2.5% for full-time staff and 2% for part-time staff in FY 2025. The budget for Sunday staffing and vacation replacement hours remains at \$25,000 and the library's contribution toward the employees defined contribution plan remains at 4% of eligible salaries. Due to changes in staffing, we are seeing a decrease in the medical insurance cost, despite an anticipated rate increase of 10%. The proposed budget for materials of the collection has been flat-funded since FY2022, and we are requesting a modest increase of \$7,000 (+6.7%) to \$112,000, to help support the continually growing demand for digital ebooks and audiobooks. This amount is often supplemented by the Friends of the Library.

For FY 2025, the proposed withdrawal from the endowment is \$92,420. Continuing with the commitment by the Town Administration, the BoF, the RTM, and the Library to sustain the library's endowment, this year's withdrawal is commensurate with the 2.25% assumed inflation factor. The

proposed budget also includes direct revenue from program operations, donations and direct appeals for a total of \$81,500, a fundraising goal for special events projected at \$29,000 and other grants estimated at \$8,000. This income brings the total library contribution to \$210,920, which reflects an increase of 2.69% and makes up 10.79% of the operating budget.

***The requested Town contribution to the Blackstone Library is budgeted at \$1,743,500—an increase of \$43,160 or 2.54%, reflecting 89.21% of the library's total operating budget.***

The Library's budget, unlike regular town departments that you review, is the organization's **total budget**.