

Advocacy happens every day! Here is a look at the timeline of certain advocacy events that work for Porter Memorial Library.

1. January

- a. Share year end statistics over the course of the month on social media
- b. Brag about how many books you patrons (residents) read in the past year -social media and in print on a poster in the library
- c. People are thinking about New Year's resolutions - talk about how much money specifically people using your library saved through using the library vs buying
- d. Finance committee will be sending out budget requests, prepare them for your increases. Start to gather the statistics to back up your needs with the data showing your successes and growth.

2. February

- a. I Love My Library month is the perfect time to share (with permission) why community members love the library - make sure to get this information to people who do not use the library, so they know that others do! This narrative and personalizing is important.

3. March

- a. Really focus on salary and staff pay: My library staff are paid far less than they should be, and I suspect that almost all library workers are. I have real conversations with staff about being open with people about what we are paid, especially in context of our education and training. My staff know this and I make sure that every person in town knows this as well, it is literally public information. Now they all have that information and can do what they want with it. My phrase is "The value of the work they do is far greater than the pay they receive. We need to bridge this massive gap." When it comes time to advocate for our budget to the finance committee everyone at the table knows that I will be asking for more money to pay staff every year and expressing how shameful and against the values and ethics of our community it is that the town is not providing an appropriate wage. I wag my moral finger. Be prepared to negotiate, know what you will be willing to sacrifice to get what is important. Personally I will sacrifice anything to get my staff paid more. I want them to be happy and make a living wage!

4. April

- a. Town meeting is coming up in June - now is the time for a very HARD PUSH for telling the story of how much money your town saves by fully funding the library's requested budget. Make sure those infographics are out and educate the desk staff about how to discuss them with patrons. Shamelessly BRAG about how awesome your library is and how important it is for the townspeople to have the services you provide.

5. May

- a. Continue above, but even more passionately. Put up posts weekly on social media with facts about how much money the library saves compared to the

budget it had last year. The value of materials owned by the library. The foot traffic. Etc..

- b. Really listen to what the people are saying about their thoughts on the budget etc. It is best to be prepared.
6. June
  - a. Town meeting. Show up to everything. Bring printouts of information.
7. July
  - a. Celebrate (hopefully) a properly funded library budget and prepare your “asks” for next year. If you did not get what you wanted, discuss what was not funded with finance comm./ selectboard/TA and ask why not. Find out what they would need to provide that funding.
8. August
  - a. Make sure to collect those summer reading statistics and document the work you are doing so you can use it to get more funding for SRP next budget! Share your summer reading successes! Tell people how little you spent on all this amazingness, share the grants that made it possible! Brag about your awesome staff!
9. September
  - a. Library Card Month - Really promote all the things that your library does beyond the books - do you print for people? Tech help? Make sure to promote and advertise the database access, homework and research help, technology, and after school programs. This is when you remind everyone about how important libraries are for continuing the education after kids get out of their school day.
  - b. Advocate by posting how many people in the community have library cards! (check with your board if this is a privacy concern, we are fine in my town sharing just the number of cardholders who have a Blandford Home Library account)
10. October
  - a. Share about your state aid and what you are doing with it and WHY your library gets it - because the town funds the MAR! Share about the importance of that and the required 20% for materials. Educate your taxpayers.
  - b. Send a PDF of the Financial Report to your finance committee and Town Administrator and let them know about the state aid funding that the library will receive for meeting the requirement.
11. November
  - a. Gather stories about how thankful people are for the library and SHARE that narrative. Promote those stories! This balances out all those statistics and numbers you just shared in October.
12. December
  - a. Get ready to get those negotiating and bargaining pants on! Start warming up your finance committee with what your unmet needs are and how the budget will have to support them. Go to their meetings, invite them to the library if they are not in there regularly already.
  - b. Have some good staff meeting time dedicated to asking and listening to staff about what they would like to see the library budget cover that currently is a

struggle and also let them know that you are advocating fiercely for them to get more money. And then do that.