



Albany Public Library

VOTER INFORMATION GUIDE

Trustee Election & Budget Vote | May 20, 2025 | Polls Open 7 am to 9 pm

CANDIDATES FOR ALBANY PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

- **Five Albany residents are running** for two seats on the library board in the May 20, 2025, election.
- The library **board has two open positions**. They both carry full five-year terms that start on July 1.
- The library's nine-member **board is charged with ensuring that the library fulfills its mission in a fiscally and operationally responsible way**.
- The **candidates, listed in ballot order, are:**

1. Aidan Hennessey



2. Christina Wiggins



3. Shaniqua Jackson



4. Michele Greenblatt



5. Rachael Vonada



TRUSTEE CANDIDATE STATEMENTS

The following statements were provided by the candidates. The trustee candidates are listed in ballot order.

1. Aidan Hennessey

Grand St., 12202

Aidan Hennessey currently serves as an Analyst for the State Assembly, rest assured he's well versed in assisting a legislative body in the preparation of legislation and a budget.

Aidan Hennessey (26) moved to Albany in 2019 where he attended college at UA to pursue a degree in Urban Planning. Aidan remained in the area after getting his job with the Assembly. He is currently helping co-parent a 4 year old and we frequent the library regularly. Aidan is heavily involved in the local arts scene and is a huge supporter of

local theatre and comedy. Aidan is also an advocate for cycling and public transportation.

Aidan Hennessey is steadfast in his dedication to the protection of one of our city's most essential services to our youth, homeless, elderly, and immigrant populations. He would also push to make it easier for the community to submit ideas/proposals for library sponsored events. He would also like to change how the board communicates with the community and make sure board business is posted on library socials using simple language.



2. Christina Wiggins

State St., 12203

Christina Wiggins brings over a decade of experience in finance and education to her candidacy for Library Trustee. As a seasoned tax preparer and educator, she has helped hundreds of families navigate budgeting, tax law, and financial planning. Her background also includes training and mentoring as a board-certified teacher and community educator, empowering individuals with the tools they need to succeed.

Christina is deeply committed to maintaining accountability in public institutions and ensuring diversity and equitable access to educational resources. She believes libraries are vital community spaces that must remain inclusive, transparent, and responsive to the public's needs. If elected, she will advocate for responsible budgeting, expanded programming, and open communication with the community to ensure that the library continues to serve all residents effectively.



3. Shaniqua Jackson

Patroon Creek Blvd., 12206

I'm currently the City Clerk for the City of Albany. I have experience in developing and implementing policy, budget management, public engagement, and Nonprofit management.

As an Albany native and graduate of the City School District, I am a passionate literacy advocate. I hold a B.A. in Organizational Management and an MBA with a concentration in Public Administration. I have extensive experience in human services, mental health, and public service. With over 20 years of

leadership experience and as the current City Clerk of Albany, I believe in promoting transparency and ensuring that resources are accessible to everyone.



I am running for the board because APL is vital to our community, and I want to ensure each resident has access to the services APL offers. I am passionate about supporting education, access to resources, and strengthening partnerships to ensure the library remains a vital asset for all residents.

4. Michele Greenblatt

South Main Ave., 12208

Fifteen years ago my family and I moved to the Helderberg neighborhood. Bringing my young children to the Bach branch gave them a sense of continuity between our old and new communities. I would tell my children we can "go to the library" in any town we visited; it was a constant that brought them comfort.

I have always been committed to strengthening community through my volunteer work:

- Interfaith and community-building workshops as a teen.
- Creating educational events for Holocaust Remembrance Week as an undergraduate.
- PTA

- Board Member community Sunday school
- Board of Trustees of the VAAD HaKashrut of the Capital District, a non-profit organization responsible for providing kosher certification



Professional experience :

- ◆ Medical technologist: cultivate my communication skills
- ◆ Occupation: Property manager- skills include experience in facility maintenance.

My skills and experience are a good foundation to support my passion for keeping the APL a safe and inclusive resource for every resident.

5. Rachael Vonada

Mountainview Ave., 12208

Chief Biomedical Engineer at the Albany Stratton VA Medical Center

Rachael moved from Ohio to NY and fell in love with the Capital District (and their spouse) while at RPI. After a few years in Boston, they came back and settled into a life here with their two cats, Pita and Nova. They enjoy teaching people to garden in their 200sqft of raised beds, hiking and doing DIY projects. Rachael also enjoys participating in the

vibrant queer community as a proud queer and nonbinary person.



Libraries are critical community resources that need to be safe and welcoming to people of all ages and backgrounds. These spaces are being attacked for their commitment to education and diversity. Rachael felt compelled to bring their perspective to ensure our Albany libraries remain as welcoming and inclusive as possible.

2025-26 LIBRARY BUDGET FACTS

- The Board of Trustees approved the 2025-26 library tax levy in March.
 - The tax levy for the library's **operating budget is \$8,257,997.**
 - The total tax levy includes annual debt service for the Branch Improvement Plan, approved by voters in February 2007.
 - Due to a debt service credit announced in early May, the 2025-26 overall tax levy decreased by \$45,000. This results in slightly lower tax rates than previously announced.
- The 2025-26 **operating budget tax levy reflects a 5% increase** over last year's operating budget tax levy.
 - 5% is **under the NYS tax cap limit for the library.**
 - Since 2011, when the tax cap was instituted by the NYS Comptroller, the library's taxes have increased an average of less than 2% per year.
- The **library continues to deal with rising operating costs, including contractual increases** in staff salaries, plus increases to benefits and NYS retirement contributions.
 - The 5% increase helps address rising costs, and an unanticipated loss in non-tax revenue.
- An Albany resident with a home assessed at \$250,000 will **pay an extra \$11.44 in library taxes next year.**
 - The estimated homestead tax rate for 2025-26 is \$1.15 per \$1,000 of assessed value.
- **Polls are open Tuesday, May 20, from 7 am until 9 pm.**

LIBRARY SERVICES SUPPORTED BY THE TAX LEVY

- Access to a **large and diverse collection of books and DVDs, audiobooks and music CDs, eBooks and eMagazines**, as well as **databases, and museum and performance passes.**
- Public **computers, laptops, WiFi hotspots, and WiFi access** at all library branches.
- **Educational and entertainment programs for all ages and interests** including: story times, computer classes, financial workshops, music performances, book reviews, movies, tax assistance, arts and crafts activities, science and technology programs, and health and wellness classes.
- Access to **professional librarians and staff who assist** with information and research needs, downloading library items to devices, and reader's advisory service to support and encourage literacy and a love of reading.
- Use of **community meeting rooms and study spaces** for local organizations and individuals.
- **24/7 online (and mobile app) access** to the collections and databases of all 29 libraries in the Upper Hudson Library System, which covers Albany and Rensselaer counties.

BUDGET VOTE FAQ

How does the budget question appear on the ballot?

“Shall the sum of \$8,257,997 be raised by annual levy of a tax upon the taxable real property within the City School District of Albany for the purpose of funding the operating budget of the Albany Public Library?”

Yes No

When is the vote?

The vote is on Tuesday, May 20, 2025, from 7 am to 9 pm. The city school district runs the voting process, and the library’s tax levy and trustee election appear on the same ballot as the school budget.

Why is my polling place in a different location than the general election polling place?

Polling places for the school and library budget votes are different than the polling locations used for citywide elections. The polling places are determined by the school district and can be found at albanyschools.org/business/budget/.

Who is eligible to vote?

Anyone registered to vote in the city of Albany general election is eligible to vote in the library election.

Will people be allowed to vote by absentee ballot or participate in early voting?

Yes, early voting and absentee ballots are available this year. Information is available through the school district at albanyschools.org/business/budget/.

How many votes are needed for the passage of the library tax levy proposal?

A majority of those cast in the election.

What other sources of revenue does the library have?

The 2025-26 budget includes supplemental sources of revenue from PILOT payments (payments in lieu of taxes), federal and state grants, fees and rental income, interest income, plus contributions from the Friends and Foundation of APL 501(c)(3).

Does STAR apply to the library tax?

No, STAR does not apply to the library tax.

Why can’t you just charge a fee to anyone who uses the library?

It is against the NYS Education Law, which requires that public library service must be “forever free.”

What will happen if the voters do not approve the tax levy increase?

If the tax levy increase fails, the library would receive the same funding level as for fiscal year 2024-2025, and some services would need to be restricted or cut.

APL FISCAL YEAR 2025-26 LINE ITEM BUDGET



Albany Public Library

www.albanypubliclibrary.org

Public Vote on 2025-26 Operating Tax Levy
Tuesday, May 20, 2025

	2024-25 Current Budget	2025-26 PROPOSED Budget
SUPPORT AND REVENUE		
Tax Levy - Library Operations	\$7,864,740	\$8,257,997
Tax Levy - Branch Improvement Plan	\$1,654,894	\$1,607,144
<u>TOTAL TAX LEVY</u>	<u>\$9,519,634</u>	<u>\$9,865,141</u>
OTHER REVENUE		
PILOT Payment	\$391,315	\$191,432
NYS Grants	\$288,501	\$302,030
Federal Grants	\$35,640	\$35,640
Other Grants/Construction Grant	\$0	\$0
Fees and Sales	\$50,000	\$55,000
Interest Income	\$60,000	\$100,000
Rent Income	\$58,575	\$58,575
<u>SUBTOTAL OTHER REVENUE</u>	<u>\$884,031</u>	<u>\$742,677</u>
<u>TOTAL SUPPORT AND REVENUE</u>	<u>\$10,403,665</u>	<u>\$10,607,818</u>
EXPENDITURES		
PAYROLL AND RELATED COSTS		
FT Salaries	\$4,115,000	\$4,226,583
PT Salaries	\$848,000	\$940,000
NYS Retirement System	\$562,762	\$655,264
Payroll Taxes & Processing Fees	\$399,822	\$415,244
Employee Benefits	\$1,100,000	\$1,200,000
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>\$7,025,584</u>	<u>\$7,437,091</u>
OCCUPANCY COSTS		
North Albany Services	\$0	\$33,098
Utilities & Telephone	\$200,000	\$200,000
Building Repairs & Maintenance	\$215,000	\$215,000
Maintenance Service Contracts	\$190,000	\$195,000
Custodial Supplies	\$50,000	\$50,000
Vehicle Maintenance	\$12,000	\$12,000
Furniture/Building Improvements	\$40,000	\$40,000
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>\$707,000</u>	<u>\$745,098</u>
MATERIALS AND SERVICES		
Books & Audio/Visual Materials	\$388,000	\$390,000
Periodicals	\$55,000	\$57,000
Central Library Development	\$157,973	\$167,599
Digital Content	\$136,774	\$139,760
Programming & Community Engagement	\$80,000	\$80,000
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>\$817,747</u>	<u>\$834,359</u>
ADMINISTRATIVE AND MISC.		
Office & Library Supplies	\$60,000	\$70,000
Bank Fees	\$10,000	\$25,000
Memberships	\$3,000	\$3,000
Postage	\$3,500	\$4,500
Publicity & Printing	\$27,000	\$27,000
Training/Travel	\$17,000	\$17,000
Professional Services	\$136,000	\$150,000
Tax Cert. Payments	\$50,000	\$50,000
UHLAN Fees	\$63,126	\$65,000
Liability Insurance	\$90,000	\$95,000
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>\$459,626</u>	<u>\$506,500</u>
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY		
Information Technology Services	\$190,000	\$190,000
Information Technology Software	\$35,000	\$35,000
Information Technology Hardware	\$75,000	\$75,000
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>\$300,000</u>	<u>\$300,000</u>
<u>TOTAL EXPENDITURES - LIBRARY OPERATIONS</u>	<u>\$9,309,957</u>	<u>\$9,823,048</u>
DEBT SERVICE		
Total Debt Service Payment on Branch Improvement Plan	\$1,654,894	\$1,607,144
<u>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</u>	<u>\$10,964,851</u>	<u>\$11,430,192</u>
Projected Operating Deficit	\$561,186	\$822,374

TAX IMPACT OF PROPOSED 2025-26 LIBRARY BUDGET WITH 5% INCREASE

Home Property Assessed Value	2025-26 Projected Tax Amount (Homestead) \$1.155596 per \$1,000 Assessed Value	Total \$ Increase Over 2024-25 Budget
\$100,000	\$115.56	\$4.57
\$125,000	\$144.45	\$5.72
\$150,000	\$173.34	\$6.86
\$175,000	\$202.23	\$8.01
\$200,000	\$231.12	\$9.15
\$225,000	\$260.01	\$10.29
\$250,000	\$288.90	\$11.44
\$275,000	\$317.79	\$12.58
\$300,000	\$346.68	\$13.72
\$325,000	\$375.57	\$14.87
\$350,000	\$404.46	\$16.01
\$375,000	\$433.35	\$17.16
\$400,000	\$462.24	\$18.30
\$425,000	\$491.13	\$19.44
\$450,000	\$520.02	\$20.58
\$475,000	\$548.91	\$21.73
\$500,000	\$577.80	\$22.87

VOTING LOCATIONS FOR MAY 20

ALBANY PUBLIC LIBRARY VOTE

◀ Polls open 7 am to 9 pm | Library vote held in conjunction with school district ▶

<p>1st WARD: All Districts New Hope Church 334 Second Ave.</p>	<p>7th WARD: Districts 1-5 Delaware Community School 43 Bertha St.</p>	<p>11th WARD: All Districts Abrookin Career & Technical Center 99 Kent St.</p>
<p>2nd WARD: All Districts Giffen Memorial Elementary School 274 South Pearl St.</p>	<p>7th WARD: Districts 6-8 Hackett Middle School 45 Delaware Ave.</p>	<p>12th WARD: Districts 1-3 Italian American Community Center 257 Washington Ave. Ext.</p>
<p>3rd WARD: All Districts Sheridan Preparatory Academy 400 Sheridan Ave.</p>	<p>8th WARD: Districts 1-4 <i>NEW LOCATION</i> Bethany Reformed Church 760 New Scotland Ave.</p>	<p>12th WARD: Districts 4-9 Montessori Magnet School 45 Tremont St.</p>
<p>4th WARD: All Districts North Albany Middle School 570 North Pearl St.</p>	<p>8th WARD: Districts 5-9 Albany School of Humanities 108 Whitehall Rd.</p>	<p>13th WARD: All Districts Pine Hills Elementary School 41 North Allen St.</p>
<p>5th WARD: All Districts Arbor Hill/West Hill Branch Library 148 Henry Johnson Blvd.</p>	<p>9th WARD: All Districts New Scotland Elementary School 369 New Scotland Ave.</p>	<p>14th WARD: All Districts <i>NEW LOCATION</i> Bethany Reformed Church 760 New Scotland Ave.</p>
<p>6th WARD: All Districts Hackett Middle School 45 Delaware Ave.</p>	<p>10th WARD: All Districts Pine Hills Elementary School 41 North Allen St.</p>	<p>15th WARD: All Districts Eagle Point Elementary School 1044 Western Ave.</p>



Info about the library's budget:

albanypubliclibrary.org/about/budget/

Info about early voting, absentee ballots, and polling places:

albanyschools.org/business/budget/