

Mid-Hudson Library Statement Regarding the Town of Union Vale | October 29, 2024

The Mid-Hudson Library System respects the rights of the residents of the Town of Union Vale to determine a path forward to access library services locally.

Since 2020, when the Town of Union Vale ended a long-standing contract for library services with the member libraries of the Mid-Hudson Library System, thereby contributing no funds to support cooperative library services for their residents from that point forward, the member libraries of the Mid-Hudson Library System have continued to serve the residents of the Town with few exceptions.

Recently it has come to our attention that there is some misinformation about the previous and current relationship between the Town of Union Vale and the Mid-Hudson Library System. We would like to provide some clarification.

- Since 2020 when the town ended the contract for library services, all town residents have had uninterrupted access to member library print and digital collections with unrestricted access to in-house book collections, and the popular ebook/downloadable audiobook collection accessed through the vendor OverDrive on their popular Libby app. Residents have been able to use the online catalog, requesting books from any of the 66 member libraries of the Mid-Hudson Library System to be delivered to the member library of their choice for pick up. They have been welcomed to programs at all member libraries and have had access to public access computers and high-speed broadband connectivity. These services have been underwritten by the taxpayers of the towns supporting their own public library.
- In January 2024, the current town supervisor reopened the opportunity for a contract to be put in place. The libraries proposed a number that was based on the previous contract that had been in place but increased the dollar amount by the cost of inflation in the intervening years since the previous contract had ended. The total amount in that [proposed contract](#) was \$93,787. The [proposed contract](#) also clearly stated that should the town start their own library this contract would be null and void. The town board declined to enter into a new contract. Service to Town of Union Vale residents remained as described above.
- As per state regulation, the member libraries of the Mid-Hudson Library System had the right to request up to the average per capita amount spent on library services in Dutchess County through a contract with a town unserved by their own library. At the time, that was \$50.26 per capita. This would have meant a contract of \$245,118 was allowable in the eyes of New York State at that time. The amount proposed in January 2024, \$93,787, was 38% of that amount, a significant reduction by anyone's calculations.

- As was clarified [in a letter to the Town of Union Vale Board in 2020](#), paying per active cardholder would have cost them more than the proposed contract amount at that time.
- As was clarified in [a letter to the Town of Union Vale Board in 2020](#), the numbers they have used to compare the contract amount to in other areas of the state are not reflective of the cost of providing library services in Dutchess County.

The member libraries of the Mid-Hudson Library System have always served the residents of the Town of Union Vale, despite the past five years without a contract in place. The restrictions that are in place are relatively minor, blocking access to AV materials such as DVDs and video games and special collections such as museum passes that are again, all paid for with local tax dollars in the respective towns. All other services have been offered, at no charge, to residents of a town that is not financially contributing to the provision of cooperative library services.

We welcome any questions residents may have about this situation. Please feel free to contact the Executive Director of the Mid-Hudson Library System, Rebekkah Smith Aldrich at rsmith@midhudson.org