

Talking points for 2022 WVLA Goals

1. Everyone is talking about inflation. Most items that we use every day, from our utilities to gasoline to paper and furniture, have increased in price. Grants-in-aid needs to increase to keep up with demands. This is the funding libraries depend on to provide for the essential day to day operation. Any increase would make a difference as there has not been one in more than a decade. *[good place to make it personal, what would .50 or 1.00 more per capita do your your library]*
2. The WV Library Commission is charged with assisting libraries and to ensure the continuing development of library services across the state. Their budget request to the Governor's Office includes an increase of the Services to Libraries line item by \$100,000 but the Library Association is asking that that line increase by \$200,000. Attracting and retaining professional librarians to West Virginia continues to be a challenge. The Services to Libraries system supports libraries with professional staff to support those libraries who can not hire Librarians. *[how does WVLC help your library?]*
3. Several counties in our state will lose funding this year because of their loss of population. This one-time \$200,000 appropriation would help them bridge the gap in the first year of implementing the 2020 census figures. *[share your situation, how will this help give you time to raise new funds if needed?]*
4. The Library Facilities Improvement Fund was established about five years ago, but it remains an empty bucket. We are asking that \$10,000,000 be put in the fund and libraries could draw from that fund for several years. When the Commission did a survey about five years ago, libraries reported needing about \$50,000,000 for needed repairs to their buildings. There has been no construction money from either the state or from federal sources for libraries for over 20 years. We need help other than from local sources fo repair roofs, HVAC systems, replace buildings, etc. This would be used as a match for local funds but probably would help in gaining local funding. *[what improvements does your library need? how would a matching grant help?]*
5. Library internet service has improved over the past year but it still needs improvement. 18 percent of homes in West Virginia have no internet access. Some of our areas cannot use hotspots because there is no cell service in the area. Library staff across the state help our patrons fill out job applications online because they have no access to the internet. Libraries are doing more and more online programming and we do not see that going away. *[thank the legislature for their continued attention to this issue, share stories of how staff help patrons, not just access, but assistance.]*

House Joint Resolution 3 will be on the ballot in the November election as a Constitutional Amendment giving WV residents an exemption from taxes for all personal property. Although it sounds good on the face, lowering taxes always sounds good, it will lower the income for libraries, boards of education, county commissions, park boards, or any other group that if funded from property taxes. There is no plan to replace these lost revenues. The Legislature has passed HJR 3 so the issue will be on the ballot in November and there is nothing to be done about that but the Legislators need to know we are not very happy with this. *[if you receive funding from a levy, talk to your County Assessor office. Ask them how much money the library could use if the inventory tax is repealed.]*

Long-term goals: Many libraries depend on the goodwill of the Board of Education or of the County Commission to keep their doors open. It works so much better if there was stable funding so long-term planning could be done. Many schools have lost their school librarians and libraries. We are in favor of every school having a school librarian and library. Also, we still support the idea of a simple majority for

approval of all excess levies instead of the 60 percent that is now required. Many library levies have failed because they “only” got 58 or 59 per cent of the vote.

If you have any questions about any of these or need more information, call me at_____.