

# Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) about the Wheatland Township Library Millage

## How is the Library funded?

The Wheatland Township Library receives funding from local property taxes, state aid, penal fines, and donations. **Property tax contributes 86% of the library's revenue. The upcoming May 6th millage proposal of 0.7887 mills accounts for two-thirds of the property tax that supports the library's daily operations.**

## What is the Library asking for?

The library is requesting voters to renew its four-year operating millage of 0.7887 mills, which expired in November 2024. This renewal is not a new tax or an increase; it simply continues the current level of support

## Why is the Library even needed, don't people just buy books from Amazon?

The Wheatland Township Library offers more than just books. Yes, the library is about literacy and supporting education and lifelong learning. The Library is often the only place for a community member to have access to the internet.

According to the Michigan Department of Labor & Economic opportunity, 31% of households in Mecosta County Michigan lack a reliable internet connection, which can significantly impact residents access to information, education, and other essential services. This divide is particularly true for seniors, who may face additional challenges such as internet affordability, lack of tech skills, and limited access to devices.

More than 500 residents used Wheatland Township Library wifi or computers in the last year. Many residents library computers to file for unemployment or apply for social services.

The Wheatland Township Library is also a hub for community programs and events. From storytime to our VERY popular tax assistance program, the Library offers something for everyone. It's a place where people of all ages can come together to learn and connect.

Additionally, the Library supports local schools by providing resources and study spaces for students. During the summer, we offer programs to help prevent the 'summer slide,' ensuring that children continue to learn and thrive even when school is out.

The Library is an essential part of our community, offering vital services and opportunities that go far beyond books

### Why is the Library on the ballot, weren't you just on the ballot in November?

The Wheatland Township Library is committed to providing the best possible resources and services to our community. While we had two millage renewals on the ballot in November, only the .4 millage renewal was approved. The .8 millage renewal missed approval by just one vote. Without this additional funding, our library may face significant challenges and may not be able to remain open. This renewal is vital for the sustainability of our library and to ensure we can meet the growing needs of our patrons.

### How much will the millage cost tax payers?

**Cost to Taxpayers:** If the 0.7887 mill renewal is approved, the cost to property owners will remain the same. For example, an owner of a property with a taxable value of \$50,000 (\$100,000 market value) will continue to pay \$39.44 per year to support library services. A mill is equal to \$1 for every \$1,000 of a property's taxable value, generally equivalent to half the property's market value.

Market Value	Taxable Value	Annual Cost
\$75,000	\$37,500	\$29.58
\$100,000	\$50,000	\$39.44
\$150,000	\$75,000	\$59.17
\$200,000	\$100,000	\$78.87

### When is the election?

The library millage renewal will be on the ballot May 6, 2025.

### What is the actual millage language on the May 6 ballot?

#### **LIBRARY MILLAGE PROPOSAL**

Shall the previously authorized increase in the tax limitation on all taxable property in Wheatland Township, Mecosta County, that expired in 2024, be renewed and the Township be authorized to levy annually an amount not to exceed .7887 mill (\$0.7887 per each \$1,000 of taxable value) against all taxable property in the Township for a period of four years (4) years, 2025 through 2028, inclusive, to provide funds for operating, maintaining and equipping the Wheatland Township Library, and for all library purposes

authorized by law? The estimate of the revenue the Township will collect if the millage is approved and levied in the first year of levy (2025) is approximately \$45,000. The revenue from this millage levy will be disbursed to the Wheatland Township Library.

Yes

No

### **Why does the Library need this?**

The Wheatland Township Library relies on a dedicated millage, which accounts for 86% of its annual operating budget. Without this funding, the continued operation of the library would be in jeopardy.

While the Wheatland Township Library serves the residents of Wheatland Township, it is not a Township department and does not receive operational funding from Wheatland Township.

### **What are “operating” expenses?**

Operating expenses are incurred as a result of the library’s normal daily operations, including but not limited to: library materials, staffing, computers, supplies, internet access, utilities, and equipment.

### **Is the Library offering services to Broomfield Township residents?**

In January, the Library Board approved a 3-year contract with Broomfield Township for library services.

Broomfield Township also signed a contract with Sherman Township, allowing residents a choice between using the Sherman Township Library in Weidman or the Wheatland Township Library based on their location. Wheatland Township Library will receive 50% of the penal fines collected for those residents annually, which is estimated to be approximately \$2,400 per year. More importantly, this contract will provide the Wheatland Township Library with a one-time payment of approximately \$50,000 from escrowed penal fine monies. This Board decision was a crucial step in supporting the Wheatland Township Library during its’ current challenge marked by the 2/3 reduction in millage revenue due to the .8 millage renewal not being approved in November.

### **What does the library provide to the Wheatland Township community?**

- Open 32 hours weekly
- Free WiFi and public computers for both youth and adults, equipped with Microsoft Office software.
- One-on-one staff assistance with technology, job searches, resumes, and research.
- Support for students with formal and informal education.

- Weekly pre-school storytimes.

### **How much is the Wheatland Township Library used?**

Every month, the Wheatland Township Library is a bustling hub of activity, providing invaluable services to the community:

- **516** people used library computers and/or WiFi for their digital needs.
- **1752 materials** are checked out, fueling the minds and imaginations of our patrons.
- **2016 in-person visitors** find a welcoming space for reading, studying, and community engagement.
- **300 reference/research questions** were answered by library staff
- **280 people** attended **20 library programs**

### **What will happen if the millage doesn't pass?**

If the millage renewal does not pass, the library will lose two-thirds of its funding. Within a few months, the library will need to use its savings and reserve funds to operate, and it will likely need to close.

### **The Wheatland Township Library received a grant to automate. What does this mean for library services to the community?**

The Wheatland Township Library is diligently working to improve services for the community. With the grant for automation, the library will become more efficient, accessible, and user-friendly. Library users will be able to search for library materials via their home computer or mobile device.

1. **Convenient Access:** Users can search for materials and place holds from home or mobile devices.
2. **Interlibrary Loan:** Access to MeLCat for borrowing books from more than 430 libraries statewide.
3. **Operational Efficiency:** Streamlined tasks like cataloging and circulation.

