Berkeley Heights Public Library

2026 BUDGET PROPOSAL

Presented by:

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LIBRARY VISION 2026

BHPL: Strengthening the library through early literacy, empowered staff, welcoming spaces, and relevant and current technology.

Strengthen the library as a dynamic community resource by prioritizing early literacy, enhancing public and staff spaces, thoughtfully expanding technology, and investing in staff development. These focus areas will support high-quality service, operational excellence, and the library's long-term sustainability.

INTRODUCTION TO BUDGET

Library funding can be complex, so I would like to clarify the primary components. The Library's core operating revenue is derived from a one-third mill allocation. A "mill" represents $1 per $1,000 of assessed property value; therefore, one-third of a mill equals $0.333, or 33.3 cents, per $1,000. This allocation is established by state law as the minimum level of funding a public library must receive.

For 2026, the one-third mill rate is $1,737,267.48.

In addition to millage funding, the Library receives supplemental revenue through private donations, contributions from the Friends of the Library, and annual state aid. State aid is typically distributed in the fall and averages approximately $7,000.

At the library, we use our budget for:

- Salaries, benefits, and wages: typically this is the largest pot of the budget and the American Library Association (ALA) recommends spending 70-75% of budget on staff.
- General operations: Books, databases, technology, utilities, professional services, etc.
- Library contribution to township for our cost of shared services (including staff benefits) per our shared services agreement with the Township.
- Capital Planning (not for today's vote).

2026 BUDGET OBJECTIVES



Optimized Use of Library Space

- Door accessibility and badge readers.
- New circulation desk with indoor return.
- Office redesign for children’s workroom and the back office.
- Add study and living room area to adult section.
- Changes to children’s shelving.

Staff Development

- Hire 3 new librarian positions to better meet library and community needs.
- Full time staff attending conferences, part time staff attending training and webinars.
- Hiring professional development speakers for staff.

Outreach Services

- Start school book delivery.

Technology Upgrades

- Security cameras.
- Upgrading public computers.
- Upgraded and more accessible catalogs.

LAST YEAR VS THIS YEAR

2025

Mill rate: $1,472,414.00

- Actual Operating Expenses $492,583
- Staff Salaries and Wages: $653,751
- Library contribution: $268,626
- Total Spent: $1,414,960

2026

Mill rate: $1,737,267

- Operating Budget: $648,500
- Staff Salaries and Wages: $872,700
- Library contribution*: $280,000
- Projected Total: $1,801,200
  - Deficit of $63,933 to be funded out of unrestricted operating account balance, if necessary.



OPERATING BUDGET BREAKDOWN

Operating Budget	2026	2025	2025	
CATEGORY	BUDGET	BUDGET	SPENT	Rationale
BOOKS	80,000.00	110,000.00	58,986.32	Now that collection weeding shifts are complete, we can focus on what we are missing and use consortium data to better fill patron requests.
DIGITAL MATERIALS	80,000.00	90,000.00	89,278.26	Ebooks are a beloved town resource, so we will continue this investment. The 2026 number is slightly lower due to prepayment from last year.
A-V MATERIALS	1,000.00	6,000.00	70.38	No longer purchasing physical audiobooks, smaller amount of DVDs purchased.
PERIODICALS & SUBSCRIPTIONS	40,000.00	25,000.00	32,635.03	Costs increases of print, digital and newspapers.
DATABASE	20,000.00	45,000.00	15,366.87	Costs are going down for some databases as we are using some shared services, and hope to continue to trim what is not being used.
MUSEUM PASSES	8,500.00	6,000.00	7,377.00	Extrememly popular. Increase represents expected rising cost for passes and the potential to include more.
LIBRARY OF THINGS	3,000.00	5,000.00	1,922.32	Slight increase to keep up with demands.
UTILITIES	50,000.00	50,000.00	45,563.33	Slight increase for rising costs.
SUPPLIES	32,000.00	25,000.00	20,677.58	Plan to offer free print pilot patrons-- allocated an additional $10,000 to cover that potential cost. Start delivery service to schools- branded bags (1000)
POSTAGE	1,000.00	500.00	582.68	Slight increase for rising costs.
MARKETING	10,000.00	11,000.00	3,986.00	Increases renewed marketing activities such as specific campaigns, mailers, outside vendors and the like.
FACILITIES	30,000.00	25,000.00	26,384.00	Slight increase for rising costs.
XEROX SERVICE	6,000.00	7,000.00	4,984.09	Slight increase for rising costs.
MEMBERSHIPS	5,000.00	3,000.00	3,614.00	Slight increase for rising costs.
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	27,000.00	27,000.00	14,521.38	Covers staff conferences (10,000), webinars, trainings (3,000), hiring outside speakers, staff celerbations, staff day costs
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES	45,000.00	30,000.00	39,186.62	Covers potential legal and remaining HR consulting costs, as well as Strategic Planning Consulting.
PROGRAMS	28,000.00	50,000.00	17,952.49	Expanding paid performers for adult programming and children's (10,000), Slight increase for rising costs.
SUMMER READING	10,000.00	10,000.00	9,104.07	Slight increase for rising costs.
TECH & EQUIPMENT	55,000.00	25,000.00	7,049.61	New computers, (7500) new catalog stands (15,000), cameras (30,000)
DELIVERY	2,000.00	5,000.00	905.00	Potential increase as State library funding changes.
CONSORTIUM	10,000.00	50,000.00	73,840.35	30,000 of 2026 costs were prepaid in 2025, so balance reflects potential remaining expenses.
REIMAGINING	40,000.00	50,000.00	18,595.64	Children's reconfiguration: Book bins: 11,000, new rug: 2,000, miscallous furniture (5000 for seating, 1000 for shelving, 1000 for storage) Circulation desk 15000, plus misc. items
Sub Totals	**583,500.00**	**655,500.00**	**492,583.02**	
New Initiatives 2026				-
Accessiblity Door	40,000.00			
Badge Readers	25,000.00			
NI Sub Total	65,000.00			
Total 2026	**648,500.00**			

Staff Salaries

Proposed Salaries 2026			
Full time employees at 4% increase		359,284	
Part time employees at 4% increase		373,407	
	Sub Total:	732,691	
New Hires:			
Head of Access Services		74,000	
Community Outreach Librarian		69,000	
Program/Marketing Librarian		69,000	
	Sub Total:	212,000	
			at 66%140,000
Total Expected 2026		**872,700**	

Summary of Available Library Funds As of December 31, 2025.

Unrestriced:	
2026 Mill rate	1,737,267
Operating Account Balance*	344,164
Sub Total	**2,081,431**
Restricted:	
Captial Account*	702,000
Total	**2,783,431**

*See Exhibit 1 for additional detail.

Excess Funds Calculation

Total Available Funds as of 12/31/25 (Net of O-S checks $16,622)	$2,064,809
Less: 20% of Estimated 2025 Audited Funds ($1,472,414)	$294,483
Minimum Required 2026 Budget Spend	$1,770,326
Proposed 2026 Budget	$1,801,200

PROJECTED BUDGET TIMELINE

Quarter 1

- Hire new staff
- Appoint Township CFO as QPA, focus on bid for library cameras.
- Pay to Play documentation.
- Launch early literacy program, new book bins in childrens.

Quarter 2

- Onboard and train new staff
- Work with Board and QPA to oversee bid projects such as access doors & badge readers.
- Research desk options for staff areas.
- Set up community delivery services.

Quarter 3

- Desk swap-- contingent upon desk purchases.
- Contact firms for Strategic Plan
- Trainer for staff day 2026.
- Start thinking about budget for 2027.

Quarter 4



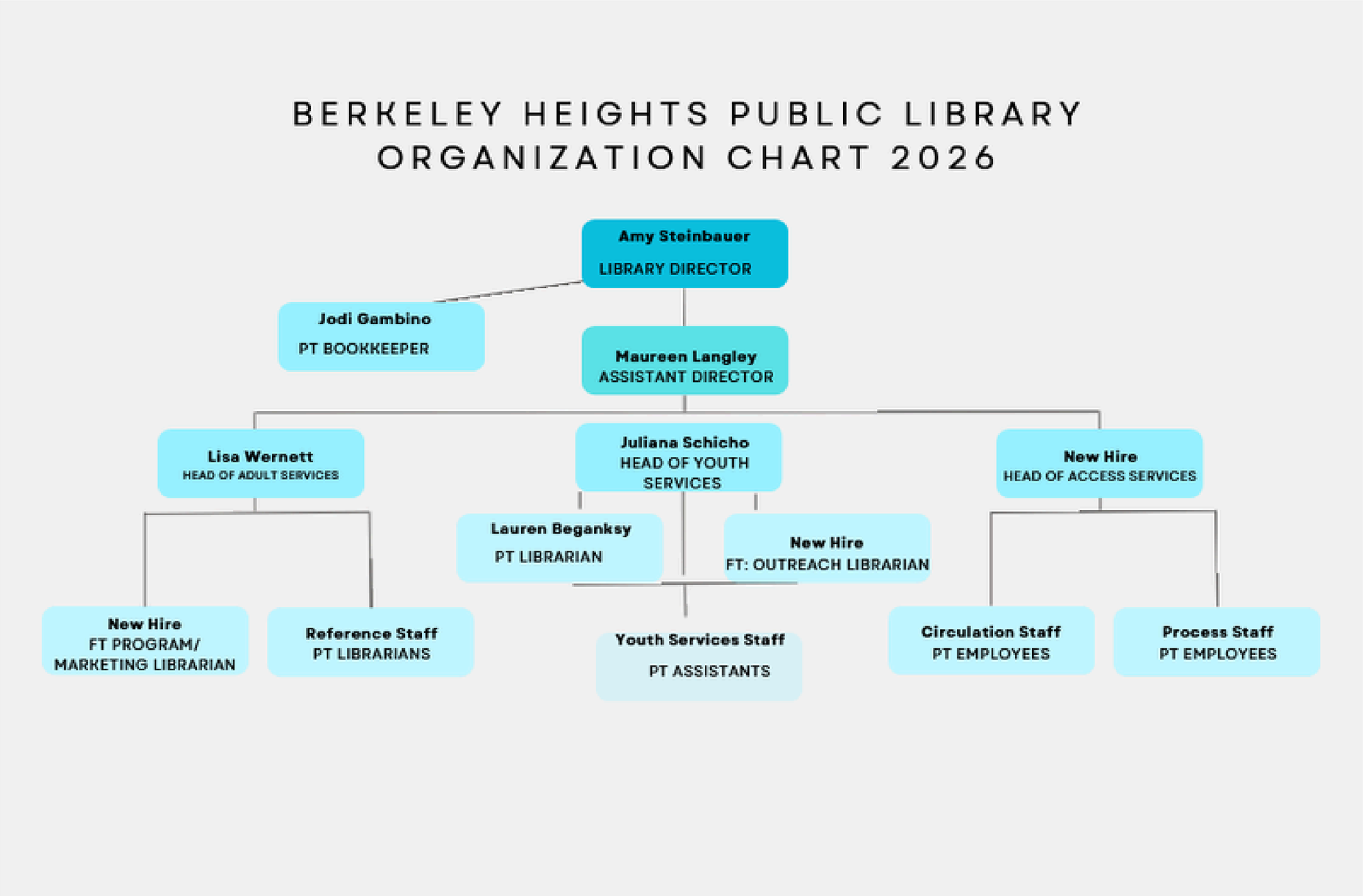
- Follow up on all bid/quote processes.
- Finalize plans for 2027 and onward.
- Schedule Strategic Plan work.

2026 & Beyond Capital Investment Initiatives

	Estimated Costs
Bookmobile and related expenses	$150,000- $200,000
Offsite Book Depots (Location TBD)	$50,000- $100,000
Office Space Redesigns	$100,000- $150,000
Redesign 2nd Floor Lobby for Study Pods	$70,000- $100,000
Building and Maintenance Issues (Roof Leakage, HVAC, Paint, etc)	TBD

Note: See Exhibit 2 for 2024-2029 Capital Plan.

STAFF ORGANIZATION CHART (FYI)



QUESTIONS?

Next Step: Motion to pass proposed operating budget.

THANK YOU!

Exhibit 1

December Financial Fund Statement

Financial Revenue Expense Statement			DECEMBER 2025		
Citizens Bank					
Main Account		Previous Balance	Income / Deposit	Transfer / Disbursement	Current Balance
	Interest		$85.93		
	Fines		$16.00		
	Photocopy		313.00		
	Lost Book		117.00		
	Gifts		1,000.00		
	From BH Twp		355,820.00		
	Disbursement		-250,000.00		
Total		$260,972.86	$107,351.93	$ 40,782.97	$327,541.82
	O/S Checks	$3,599.82			$16,622.07
	Balance per Bank	$264,572.68			$344,163.89
Citizens Bank					
Capital Account		Current Balance	Income / Deposit	Transfer / Disbursement	Current Balance
	Interest		$156.06		
	Transfer		$250,000.00		
	Disbursement				
Total		$451,996.99	$250,156.06	$0.00	$702,153.05
	O/S Checks	0.00			0.00
	Balance per Bank	$451,996.99			$702,153.05

Exhibit 2

Capital Plan 2024-2029