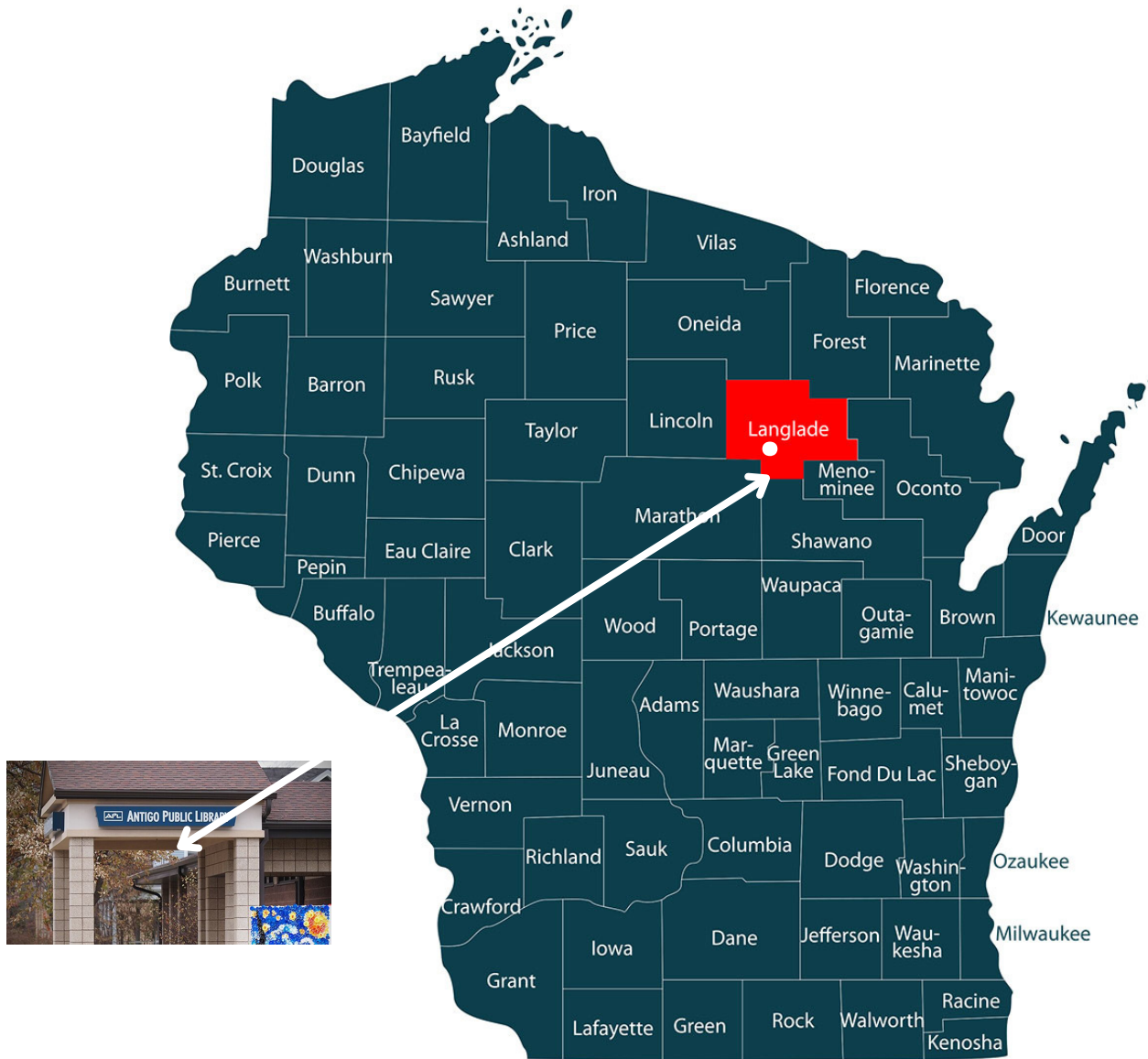


What Kind of Library Do YOU Want?

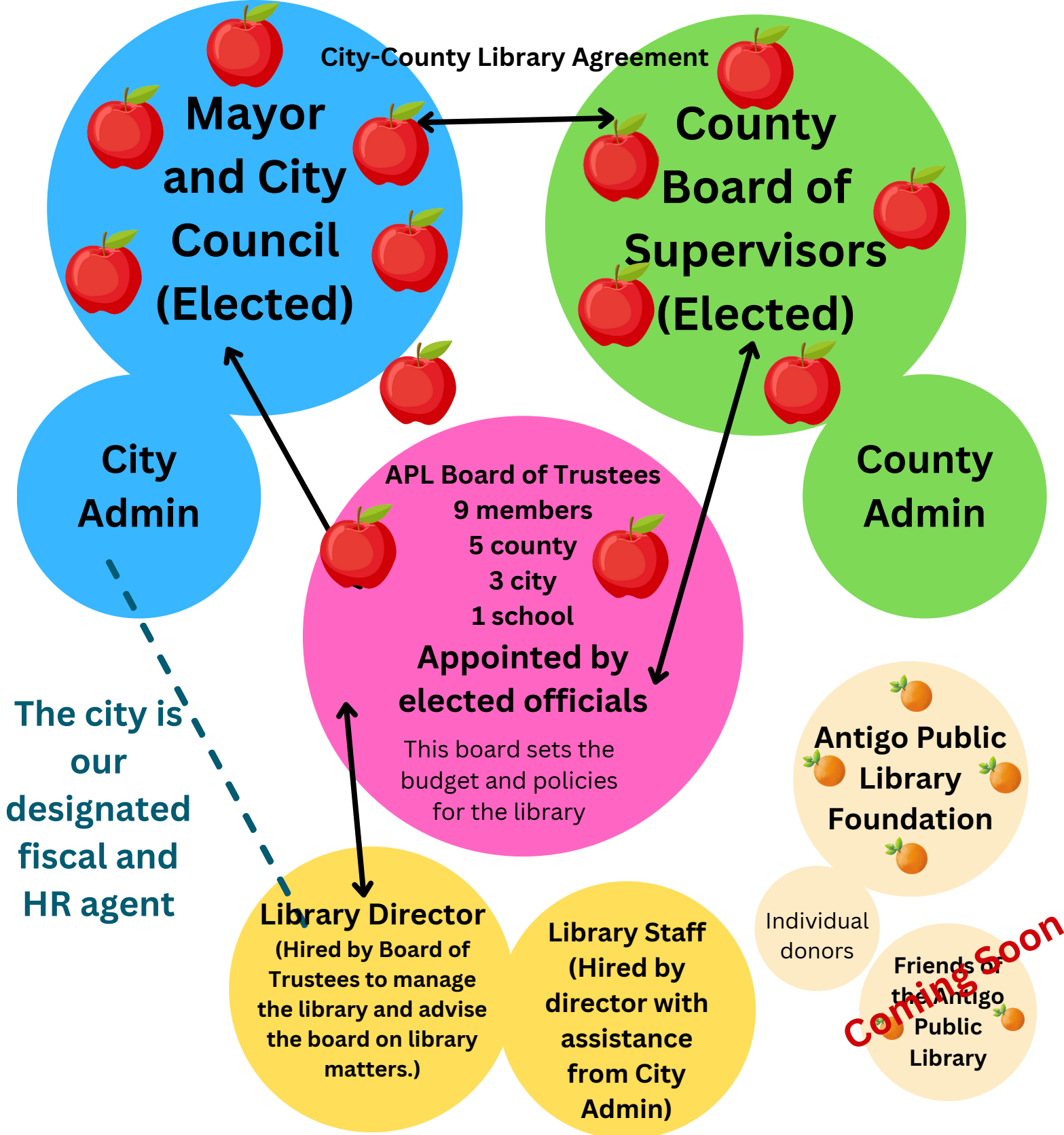
Two Struggles and a Question for All Citizens of Langlade County and the City of Antigo



*Library lovers say
this is a must read
for all who wish to
see library hours
and services remain
at their current
level.*



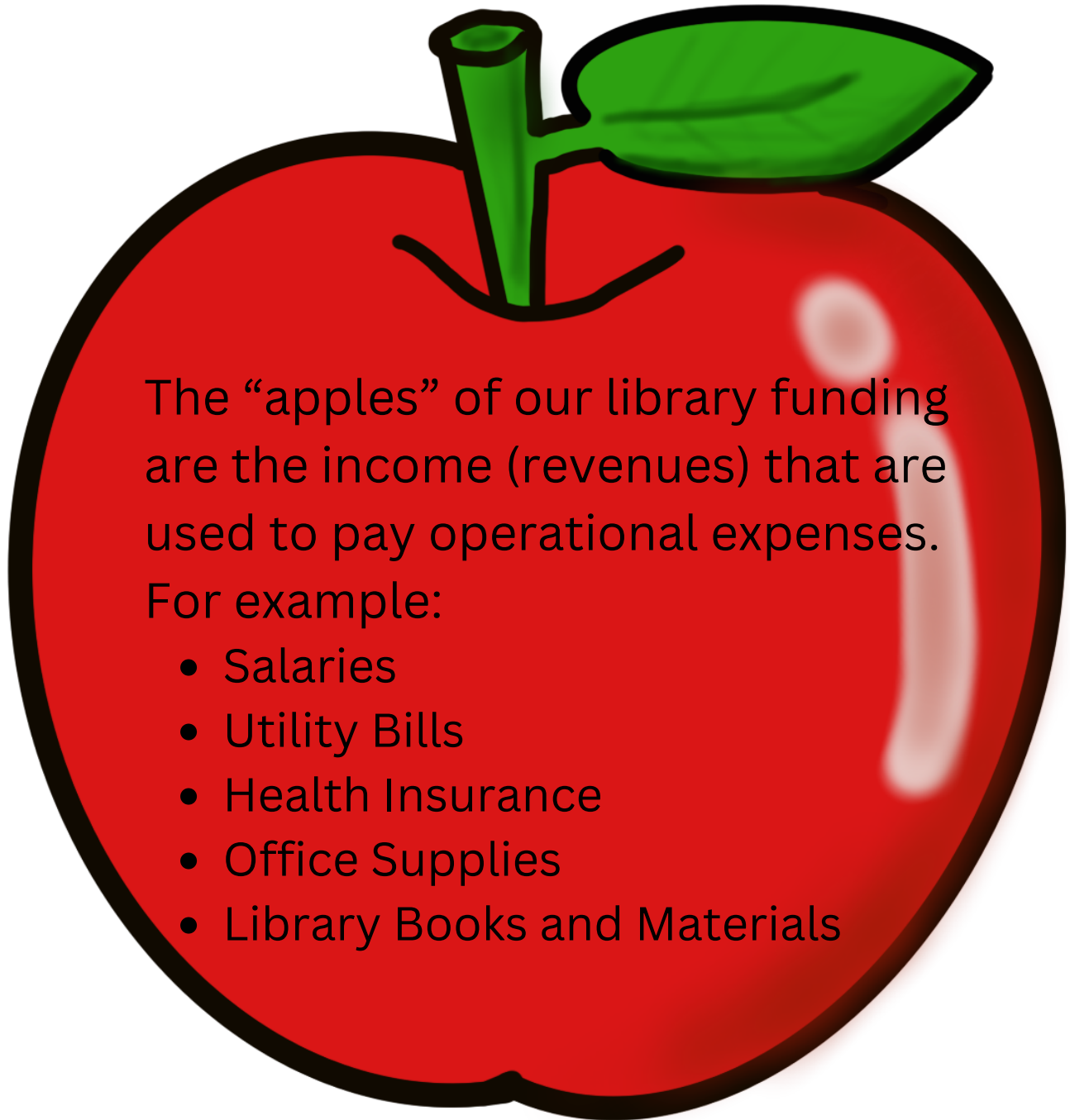
In the state of Wisconsin, in the county of Langlade, on a downtown street in Antigo sits a public library that supports and provides services to all residents of Langlade County. It is called the Antigo Public Library is our community library.



The Antigo Public Library exists due to an agreement made between the city of Antigo and Langlade County to operate the library. This agreement includes payments of income (revenues) to the Antigo Library Board of Trustees, the governing body of the library made up of city and county appointees. These revenues (income), shown here in apples, are used to operate the library. This agreement also states that the library will be operated according to the Antigo Public Library Bylaws.

Coming Soon

The Apples of the APL Library Funding

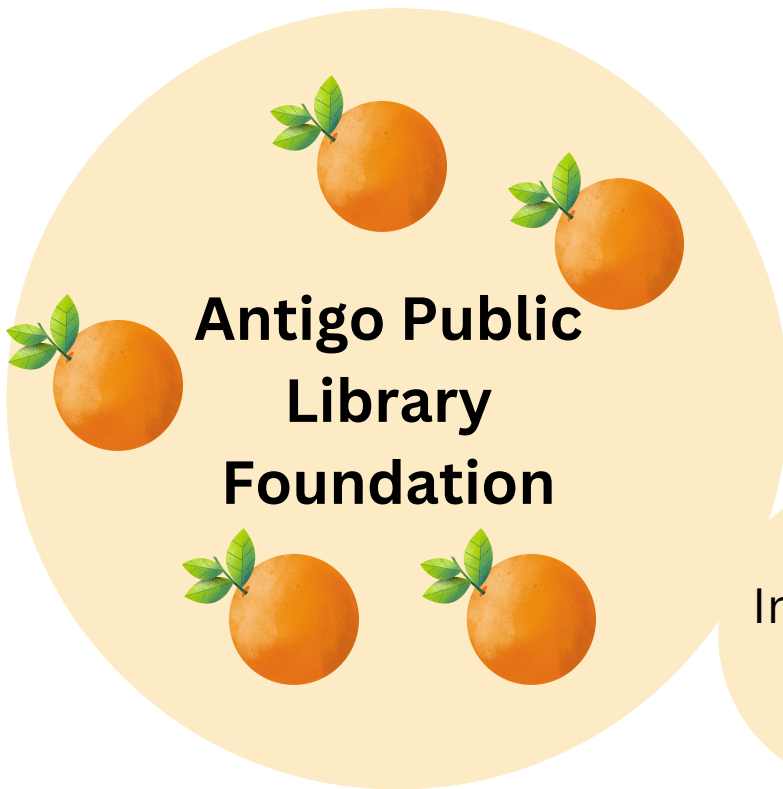


The “apples” of our library funding are the income (revenues) that are used to pay operational expenses.

For example:

- Salaries
- Utility Bills
- Health Insurance
- Office Supplies
- Library Books and Materials

Because the library is a taxpayer supported government entity, it receives most of its “apples” from taxes paid to the city and county who each agreed to give the library the same number of “apples.” Other “apples” come from fees the library charges for some services like copying, faxing, etc. If we have extra “apples” at the end of the year they go into an “apple” savings to pay future operational expenses.



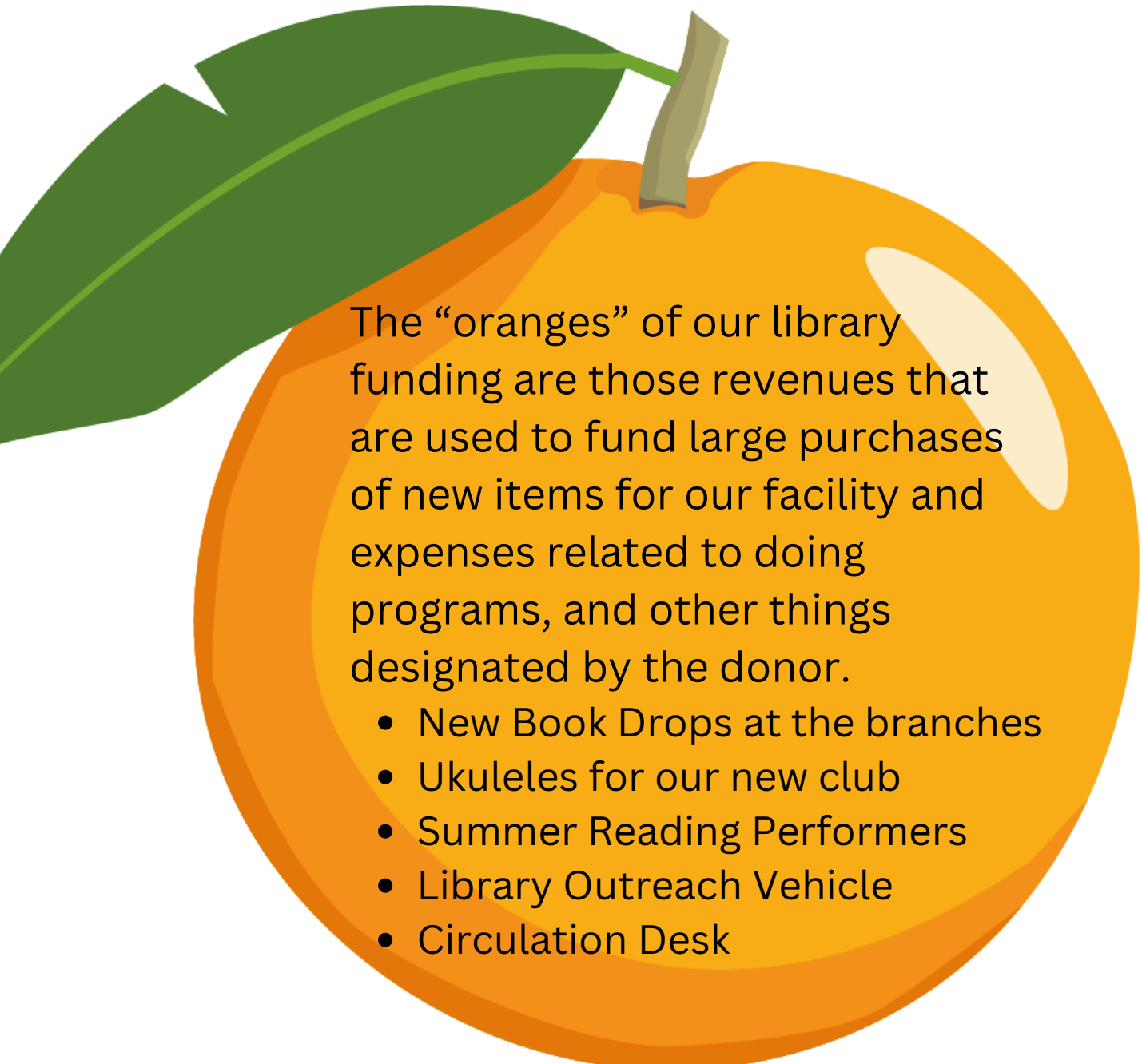
Coming Soon
Friends of
the Antigo
Public
Library



“Oranges” recently allowed us to replace the rusted out bookdrops at our two branches. In 2008 oranges purchased the library outreach vehicle which is still in use today.

It takes more than apples to run the Antigo Public Library. The Library offers quality programs, interactive experiences, furnishings, outreach and much more that requires funding outside the realm of your public tax dollar. Funding for these items comes from individual donors and the Antigo Public Library Foundation. We are also in the process of starting a Friends of the Library group to assist with both advocating and raising oranges to support the library.

The Oranges of the APL Library Funding

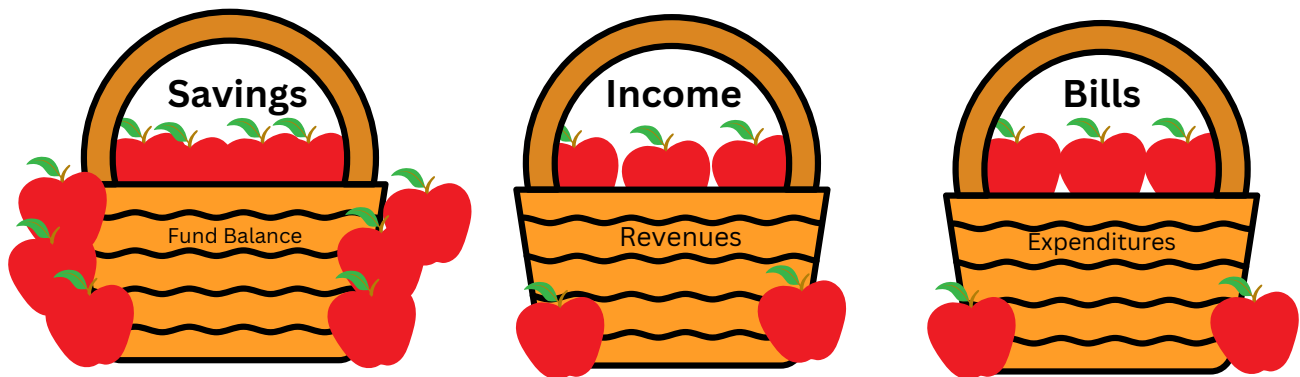


The “oranges” of our library funding are those revenues that are used to fund large purchases of new items for our facility and expenses related to doing programs, and other things designated by the donor.

- New Book Drops at the branches
- Ukuleles for our new club
- Summer Reading Performers
- Library Outreach Vehicle
- Circulation Desk

The APL Library “oranges” come from individual and organizational donors. Because we are a taxpayer supported government entity, the purpose of these gifts and funds is to enhance the library building, services and programs rather than to pay operational expenses. The library needs both apples and oranges to fund the library but they are different in origin and purpose.

How Do the Apples Work?



Let's look at how the budgeting process works for the library board apples.

Just like in a household budget, there are bills, income and, sometimes, savings.

In order to pay all your bills you have to have income to do so. If your income one year doesn't cover the bills and you are fortunate to have money in your savings, you can use that to help you. If you are out of savings and don't have enough income, you either have to cut your bills or find more income. If one year you find that you have income left after paying your bills, you have the opportunity to save those funds for future use.

The library board budget is really no different than this.

There is one difference the library has in comparison to other county or city departments. A city department that doesn't have its own board does not have its own savings account (fund balance). Instead, if that department has leftover funds at the end of its year, it returns them to a general fund which is shared by all the departments. The reason for this difference is a state law that requires library boards to manage library income. These savings accounts work in similar ways, but the library board has its own.

Struggle #1

The Library Savings Account (Fund Balance) has been one of the big struggles for the Antigo Library Board for much of the library's history.

There have been no rules or policies about this library board savings account. How big should it grow? What can it be used for?

This has led to tensions in the city/county/library board relationships. Elected officials ask "why do we need to increase funding if the library has some money in savings?" Library directors wonder when this account grows if there is something specific they should do with the funds. When it starts to decrease they wonder what will happen when it is gone. "Will the county and city increase our funding when the time comes where we can no longer make things work?"

As the questions raged, problems with library funding grew. Because the library had this savings account, the library has received no increases in apple income from the city and county since 2011.

Fortunately the fund balance struggle is finally on its way to being resolved. In a recent meeting with leaders from the library, city and county an agreement was made to create a fund balance policy to guide our future steps during the budget creation and approval process. This policy will guide how big the savings should be, what it can be used for, and how it can or should affect requests for funding increases. We will be working on this as we move through the 2025 Budget Creation Process.



Struggle #2

Unfortunately, the second struggle is much larger and more difficult to resolve. It is connected to the first struggle.

Struggle #2 is that the library is facing a serious funding crisis for 2025. If not resolved there will be deep cuts to hours and services at our library.

Imagine if you were working a job where the pay didn't come anywhere close to supporting the family and the household bills. Imagine that they never gave you a raise. Imagine that you tried so many ways to get a job with better income or to get where you worked to increase your pay but nothing worked. The only way you would survive was if you had another source of funds to pay the bills. So imagine you did have a savings account and you used that to keep you from falling behind on bills. As the cost of your food, clothes and healthcare increases, the amount of savings you must use starts to increase at a faster and faster rate to keep those bills paid. You cut all the extras out to make that savings last as long as you can, but at some point it is inevitable that you will run out of savings and be faced with a huge gap between your bills and your income.



This is where the library sits. For well over a decade when the city and county have developed their budgets, they have kept the amount of apple income for the library the same.

This wasn't because our bills were staying the same. It was because the leadership in the city and county wished for us to use our savings up BEFORE requesting additional funds.

Some leaders offered assurances that once our savings had shrunk, they would resume increases in funding. Others did not make those promises. Leaders come and go and uncertainty rules.



**No increases in funding +
increases in bills = Budget Cut**



Did you know that the Antigo Public Library and its three branches offer 86 hours of service each week? The library welcomes 950 visitors each week and offers 20-25 programs each month?

Staff are out of the library 5-8 times each week visiting schools, daycares, assisted living centers and more to provide outreach to even more citizens.

All of this is achieved with 5 full-time and 8 part-time staff.

The library has had to use a combination of budget cuts and usage of its apple savings to continue operating and offering services to the community despite not receiving any increases in its apple income for 14 years. Our savings alone would not have gotten us through even half of that time period, changes had to be made.

Not all of the cuts were bad. The library was able to do some strategic cutting based on usage trends. For example, weekday evening usage of libraries dropped in the internet age. Cutting evening hours was a logical choice for keeping costs low. Our connection to Wisconsin Valley Library Service has allowed us to bring our patrons additional resources and services without big impacts on our budget.

We also started using “orange” income for programs and program materials. This is also a trend happening across the country and works well with most donors. Donors want to give in ways that enhance the library and programs do just that. Today every single program at the library from magic shows, to take and make bags to free book prizes are ALL made possible by “orange” income. We are grateful for our donors who make these programs possible and who are happy to give for the cause of quality library programs.

We no longer hire student pages and have volunteers and front desk staff do the shelving at the library. This helps staff be more aware of the collection and also provides a wonderful way for community members to contribute their time to the library.

All of these things and more helped to keep the library vital during times of uncertain apple income.

It is the costs of health insurance that has become the tipping point of our current crisis. Health insurance costs for the library have risen from 72,000 to 119,000 in four years. This is not a cost the library can control as our employees are city employees and we pay the insurance policies and rates offered to all city employees.

At the beginning of 2023, our apples savings account was 120,000. We needed 50,000 of our apple savings to balance the budget. Due to some vacancies and a gap in hiring two part-time positions, we didn't end up using the entire 50,000. Instead we used less than half of it. This left us with an apple savings account of around 100,000 going into 2024.

This year (2024) we had another rise in insurance and had to balance the budget with 70,000 dollars of the 100,000 we have in apple savings. The only way we won't use all of the 70,000 is if an employee leaves and there are gaps just as there were in 2023. While this is always possible, it is never guaranteed.

If we don't have any employee changes in 2024, our apple savings will dwindle to 30,000 by the end of 2024. This will not be enough to balance the 2025 budget. We have to act NOW to avoid a major crisis. The choices are for the library to be given an increase in funding or for there to be deep cuts to services and hours beginning in 2025.





This leaves us all with an important question:
What Kind of Library Do YOU Want?

Do you want a library that continues to be able to offer meaningful services, materials, and programs that improve the community?

Do you want a vibrant children's program with story times, special events, hands-on science and art activities?

Do you want a library that offers support to our patrons with finding great books, placing holds, interlibrary loan, curbside service, home visit service and more?

Do you want a library that is open 51 hours each week giving time for families with varying schedules to visit?

Do you want outposts out in the county where you can pick up and return books?

Do you want to have a library staff with the knowledge and expertise to provide technology support and assistance with getting important documents created, printed or scanned to send?

OR

Do you want a library that never receives any increases in funding and quickly dwindles to a service that can make no meaningful impact on the community?

The library is preparing a 2025 budget along with a three year plan to close the gap between our apple income and apple bills without further diminishing library services. **It will be a major uphill battle to get this funding increase approved.** While we understand and appreciate our city and county leader's desire to keep taxes low, we believe that the library has given ample evidence that it is a good steward of the funds we receive. We are not asking for additional funds to fund anything outside operational costs. We simply want to keep offering the same services and hours we currently provide.

If you want a library that has a meaningful impact on our community, please call your elected officials and city/county administrators and let them know. We have them listed in the back matter of this booklet. Also share this information with your friends and neighbors so they can do the same.



A final reminder about “orange” income.



Sometimes there is confusion because people hear that the library has access to other money besides what you see in our apple budget.



Yup, we do. These funds help the library do amazing things without it being a burden on the tax payer. “Orange” income comes from private donors.

For example, the Library Foundation does hold about 200,000 in funds in a variety of investments.



The Foundation will be the ones we ask when we need to replace our 2008 outreach vehicle. Our ability to provide services throughout the county will depend on this purchase.

The Foundation will be the ones who pay for the digitization of our newspapers when our regional library is ready to begin that project.



The Foundation will be the ones who assist us with purchase of new furnishings for our meeting room and children’s department that will be happening in the coming months.



They provided our educational computers for children, materials to create our story walk, purchased our front desk and much more.



We also have a donation account with around 26,000 in it. This funds our programs. We use it for supplies to make our take and makes, to pay for guest presenters, puzzles for our puzzle competitions and much more. Once we form a Friends of the Library group, they will be the ones to manage our donations and funds for programs.

“Orange” income cannot be used for apple bills any more than we can use apple income to pay for an outreach vehicle.



The existence of “orange” income makes it possible to keep our requests from the city and county to only being operating costs (apples) making the burden of the library on the taxpayer even less. All while our programs and services are offered at no cost to our operating budget helping the taxpayer save money on important resources and services by utilizing the library.



Remember the library needs both apples and oranges, but they have different origins and purposes.