TOWN OF GUTTENBERG

PUBLIC QUESTION

ESTABLISHMENT OF A MUNICIPAL FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY

GENERAL ELECTION — TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2026



THE PUBLIC QUESTION

On Tuesday, **November 3, 2026,** Guttenberg voters will be asked to decide whether the Town should establish a municipal free public library.

PROPOSED LIBRARY LOCATION
Guttenberg Resource Center
7002 Boulevard East, Unit 115
(Existing Facility)

CURRENT LIBRARY EXPENDITURES

The Town currently spends approximately **$600,000** annually on library-related services.

Of that amount, **$325,000** is paid directly to the Township of North Bergen for library services provided to Guttenberg residents.

THE PROPOSAL

If approved, the Town proposes to establish its own municipal free public library at the existing Guttenberg Resource Center and utilize its existing library-related expenditures, including funds currently paid to North Bergen, to support the operation of a municipal library.

ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR — VOTING YES

1. **Local Control and Decision-Making**
   Establishing a municipal library would give Guttenberg greater control over library services, programming, resources, and priorities based on the needs of our residents.
2. **Directing Existing Library Expenditures Toward a Municipal Library**
   The Town currently spends approximately $600,000 annually on library-related services, including the $325,000 paid to North Bergen. Establishing a municipal library would allow the Town to redirect these funds to support a library operated for Guttenberg residents.
3. **Convenient Location**
   The proposed library would operate at the existing Guttenberg Resource Center, a familiar location within our community.
4. **In-House Programming**
   Library programs, events, and activities would be conducted directly by the Guttenberg municipal library rather than through the North Bergen Library. This would allow the Town to develop educational programs, children's activities, literacy initiatives, technology assistance, senior programs, and other community services specifically tailored to Guttenberg residents.
5. **Access to Additional Grant Funding**
   Ability to apply for eligible state, federal, and private grants to support technology, educational programs, library materials, facility enhancements, and expanded services. Grant funding could supplement local funding and reduce reliance on property taxes for certain projects.
6. **Use of an Existing Facility**
   Utilize the existing Resource Center rather than construct a new library building, potentially reducing initial facility costs.

ARGUMENTS AGAINST — VOTING NO

1. **Financial Responsibility**
   Establishing a municipal library would make Guttenberg responsible for funding and overseeing library operations, including personnel, technology, collections, equipment, utilities, and maintenance.
2. **Mandatory Library Tax**
   Under N.J.S.A. 40:54-8, municipalities must annually raise a dedicated library tax based on one-third of a mill of the municipality's equalized property valuation, unless voters approve a higher rate. Based on current estimates, Guttenberg's statutory library funding obligation is approximately $500,000 annually. The Town currently spends approximately $600,000 on library-related services, exceeding this estimated requirement by approximately $100,000. The required amount could change in future years.
3. **Potential Future Expenses**
   Increases in staffing, operating expenses, maintenance, and other costs could create additional financial obligations in future years.
4. **Changes to Library Program Availability**
   Guttenberg residents would no longer be able to attend programs offered by the North Bergen Library through the Town's existing arrangement. Instead, programs, events, and activities would be conducted in-house at the Guttenberg municipal library. The availability and variety of programs would depend on the Town's resources, staffing, and funding.
5. **Limited Facility Space**
   Operating within the existing Resource Center may limit the amount of space available for books, technology, study areas, and certain programs compared with a larger library facility.
6. **Transition and Administrative Requirements**
   Establishing an independent library would require additional administrative responsibilities and transition from the existing arrangement with North Bergen. Certain services or resources currently available through North Bergen could change.
7. **Grant Funding Is Not Guaranteed**
   Although grants could be pursued, awards depend on eligibility, available funding, and competitive selection. Some programs may require matching funds.

UNDERSTANDING THE FINANCIAL IMPACT

- The Town currently spends approximately $600,000 annually on library-related services, of which approximately $325,000 is paid directly to North Bergen.
- Under N.J.S.A. 40:54-8, Guttenberg's estimated statutory library funding obligation is approximately $500,000 annually, based on the municipality's equalized property valuation.
- Current expenditures of approximately $600,000 exceed the estimated statutory requirement by approximately $100,000.
- If approved, the Town intends to utilize its existing library-related expenditures to support the operation of its own municipal library at the Guttenberg Resource Center.
- The required appropriation may change annually as equalized valuations change, and future operating costs cannot be guaranteed to remain at current levels.
- The establishment of a municipal library may also provide access to state aid and competitive grant programs, subject to eligibility requirements.

WHAT DOES YOUR VOTE MEAN?

VOTING YES

Supports establishing a municipal free public library in Guttenberg, allowing the Town to move forward with creating and funding its own library in accordance with New Jersey law. Library programming would be conducted locally at the Guttenberg municipal library rather than through the existing arrangement with North Bergen.

VOTING NO

Opposes establishing a municipal free public library. The Town would not establish the proposed library as a result of this referendum. Existing library arrangements would remain subject to applicable agreements and future municipal decisions.

ELECTION DAY
Tuesday,
November 3, 2026

EARLY VOTING
October 24 –
November 1, 2026

PROPOSED LIBRARY LOCATION
Guttenberg Resource Center
7002 Boulevard East, Unit 115

CURRENT ANNUAL LIBRARY EXPENDITURES
Approximately $600,000
($325,000 paid to North Bergen)

TOWN OF GUTTENBERG
Office of the Town Clerk
Dr. Cosmo A. Cirillo, RMC
Town Clerk

YOUR VOTE MATTERS

The Town of Guttenberg encourages all eligible voters to review the public question carefully and participate in the November 3, 2026 General Election.

This notice is provided for informational purposes only. The Town of Guttenberg does not endorse or oppose the public question through this publication.