



**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
AGENDA LETTER**

Agenda Number:

Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 568-2240

Department Name: Community Services
Department No.: 057
For Agenda Of: August 25, 2020
Placement: Departmental Item
Estimated Time: 45 minutes
Continued Item: No
If Yes, date from: N/A
Vote Required: Majority

TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Department
Director: George Chapjian, Community Services Director (805) 568-2467
Contact Info: Ryder Bailey, CPA, Chief Financial Officer (805) 568-3526
SUBJECT: Library Ad Hoc Committee Update; All Supervisorial Districts.

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Recommended Actions:

That the Board of Supervisors:

- a) Receive an update on the work of the Library Ad Hoc Committee; and
- b) Strive for the County Library Branch Minimum Standards on Slide #12 of PowerPoint Presentation, developed by the Ad Hoc Committee and approved by Library Advisory Committee; and
- c) Direct Staff to work with Cities toward helping fund the Minimum Standards for all branch libraries; and
- d) Provide direction on a potential Phase 3 of the Library Ad Hoc Committee, which could include;
 - i. Exploring funding options, and/or
 - ii. Improved governance model, and/or
 - iii. Other direction as necessary; and
- e) Determine that the above recommended actions are not the approval of a project that is subject to environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(b)(5), finding that the action involves government organizational or administrative activities which do not involve any commitment to any specific project which may result in a potentially significant physical impact on the environment.

Summary Text:

This update from the Ad Hoc Committee to the Board is on the agenda seeking your consideration of the County Library Branch minimum service levels and to provide direction on the future of the Ad Hoc Committee.

Since its formation in late 2018, the Library Ad Hoc Committee has been working diligently towards its purpose to achieve a long term sustainable and equitable service delivery model for County Branch Libraries. The initial phase of the Ad Hoc committee's work, which ran from January 2019 through May 2019, established the Committee's purpose and guiding principals to make sure the Committee was working with the same facts and level of understanding. In the next phase, which ran from July 2019 through May 2020, library categories were established and minimum service levels were agreed upon and estimates to meet those minimum standards were calculated. Future phases of the committee's work could include identifying funding; either external in the form of taxes, additional City contributions, or other sources, or internal by revising the existing per capita funding model to address equity and minimum standards. Lastly, a future phase could include governance changes to support collaboration and sustainability.

Background:

Formation of the Library Ad Hoc Committee

On June 5, 2018, the Board of Supervisors directed staff to create an Ad Hoc committee, a Brown Act Committee, comprised of two members of the Board of Supervisors, the four Library Administrators, and County Staff with the purpose of addressing the need for an effective and sustainable long-term library service delivery model. At the September 19th, 2018 Library Advisory Committee (LAC) meeting, the LAC unanimously recommended for appointment to the Ad Hoc Committee LAC member 3rd District appointee Judith Dale and Library Friends member 1st District appointee Patricia Saley. At the October 9th, 2018 Board Meeting 1st District Supervisor Das Williams and 3rd District Supervisor Joan Hartmann were appointed as Board of Supervisor representatives on the Committee. Staff has been involved in the coordination of the committee and engaged the consultant LegacyWorks Group, to assist facilitating the Committee whose purpose is to address the need for an effective long-term library service delivery model.

Phase 1 – Establish purpose and Guiding Principles (January 2019 – May 2019)

In the initial phase, the Committee established its purpose and guiding principles. They embarked on fact finding by identifying challenges and informational needs. As an immediate priority, the Committee recommended a strategy to fill budget gaps and encouraged additional Cities' and Friends contributions to arrive at a balanced budget for fiscal year 2019-20.

Key outcomes on the initial phase identified libraries as being valued and valuable because they service important community functions. The Committee found that our libraries were underfunded relative to local and national benchmarks; that our existing governance is unique and complex; and given the uniqueness of our system, that additional work was needed on equity, revenue and governance.

Phase 2 – Working groups established and research (July 2019 – May 2020)

During the second phase, the Committee broke into two separate working groups; one to address Benchmarking and the other on Funding. Initial conversations around public-private partnerships were explored, but not finalized.

The aim of the Benchmarking working group, comprised of the four City Librarians, was to establish realistic and equitable standards for library service under existing and future funding scenarios. The

working group reviewed State library data and benchmarking Counties including Ventura, Sonoma, San Luis Obispo, and Monterey. Additionally, the four Librarians worked collaboratively to categorize County Branch Libraries based on population, density and proximity to a main library. The Benchmarking group recommended minimum standards to Library Advisory Committee and is seeking the Board’s consideration of these minimum standards.

The goal of the Funding working group was to identify the most feasible option for increasing revenue for the countywide library system. This effort would protect and enhance library services, supplementing existing per capita funding. Dedicated funding for libraries would have the added benefit of providing predictability and long-term sustainability. It would reduce the need for private sources to cover core operations and improve equity in access to library services and resources. While many options were considered, there is still much work to be done: for example, further assessing the need and the political feasibility of a tax measure to fund libraries; gauging support via polling; and, building support for a measure via a campaign. These options can be further explored at your Board’s direction in a future Phase 3.

In addition to the two working groups noted above, preliminary work on Public Private Partnerships and philanthropy has begun. The Committee found that there is clear potential for partnerships to support county libraries, but further work is required. Most promising would be support of capital improvements and facilities, and the potential to support polling and campaigning for a dedicated revenue source. Currently de-centralized, the system would benefit from a coordinated systemwide strategic planning process. This work can be further explored at your Board’s direction in a future Phase 3.

Future Phase(s) – Identify funding solution and address Governance

Should the Board direct the work of the Ad Hoc Committee to continue, staff and the Committee seeks direction from the Board on which funding avenues to pursue. Additionally, by addressing systemwide Governance, collaboration and efficiency within the system could be improved.

Chart of Progress



Fiscal Analysis:

Budgeted: Yes, during April Budget Workshops the Board provided an additional funding of \$658,700 to address immediate County Library Branch budgetary shortfalls. The total amount of funding provided by the County Board of Supervisors towards the Countywide Library System for Fiscal Year 2020-21 is \$4,319,400. The Department has identified funding for external facilitation, should the Board recommend future phases of the Ad Hoc Committee.

County Branch Library Minimum Standards referenced under Recommended Action B, and on Slide's #12 through 14 of the PowerPoint, are estimated at \$642,000 annually and are not within the existing Library Division Budget. While this funding is not being requested from the Board, direction for Staff to work with Cities to help fund these standards, is Recommended Action C.

Performance Measures:

The County has contracted with City municipal libraries over fifty years. The libraries have met their goals of operational hours, book circulation, visitation and internet use by patrons. However, recent strains within the system have necessitated further study to determine whether the existing model is the most efficient use of available resources.

Attachments:

Attachment 1 – PowerPoint Presentation