

Questions:

The Library District will soon begin its third year as an autonomous special district with a stable and predictable revenue source. How has this change affected library governance, operations, and budget?

The governance for the district has not changed in that the Board of County Commissioners sits as the Multnomah County Library District Board, per Chapter 9 of the Multnomah County Home Rule Charter.

The major change to the library's operations and budget has been in the ability to plan more strategically for the future. During the years of operating with temporary levies, much attention had to be given to managing through revenue fluctuations over the life of each levy, as well as planning for the next levy: what would the rate need to be, how much would be lost to compression, and so on. With the permanent district rate and the resulting stable funding, that energy and attention can now be focused on responding to current community needs while planning for future library services. The makerspace project at Rockwood Library is an example of this type of effort.

At last year's hearing a citizen, Charles Johnson, testified about two things:

- The library as a place of refuge and alternatives for patrons who are asked to leave.
- Freeing space for library operations by leasing property for administrative headquarters.

Are these issues addressed in this budget?

One of the library's basic tenets is to provide safe and welcoming places for everyone to use and enjoy. The library's goal is to work with people as much as possible so that everyone can continue to use the library freely. As part of that effort, the library's FY 2016 budget includes funding for a contracted crisis worker pilot project. The responsibilities of this position will include providing resources and tools to connect people with needed services; provide training and support to staff; and serve as a resource across the library system.

The FY 2016 library budget includes funding for leased space for the library's administrative offices. The move of these offices in September 2014 has freed up much-needed space for the outreach programs and their book collections (equivalent to five neighborhood libraries) that are housed in the Isom building on NE Russell Street.

We have been told that 95% of the hits on the Multnomah County web site are Library hits. And with electronic library services expanding that number will only increase. How is the County dealing with this demand on its IT system and at what cost?

Information Technology continues to be the backbone of library service, and the need for quickly implementing responsive technologies for service delivery has never been more urgent. Current IT capacity has not been sufficient to meet the need. In partnership with County IT, the library's FY 2016 budget proposes an expanded model for IT functionality, including the addition of 3.0 FTE at a cost of \$488,290.

Between FY13-14 and FY15-16, library FTE is budgeted to increase by 10 positions. How are those positions allocated and what services are being enhanced?

One of the benefits of the library's stable funding is the ability to add some long overdue positions with specific expertise. These positions will enhance the library's ability to equip and support staff in order to more effectively meet evolving public demand. Public service positions are also being added in locations that have identified staffing needs. Here are the highlights of the FTE additions made since FY 2014 (the number is greater than the 9.25 FTE difference as some other positions were reduced):

- **Roughly 6.0 FTE of librarian and library assistant positions for Central Library and the neighborhood libraries;**
- **Creative Learning Spaces Coordinator (Rockwood Maker Space);**
- **Safety & Security Manager;**
- **Training Manager;**
- **School-Age Services Supervisor; and**
- **Communications Specialist.**

How does the County's new minimum wage standard impact the Library District?

The Library Page job classification had a pay range that started below the new minimum wage of \$15/hour (based on market studies of other library page positions). The agreement with AFSCME Local 88 is that the minimum wage for pages would be increased over three years: \$13/hour on July 1, 2014; \$14/hour on July 1, 2015; and \$15/hour on July 1, 2016. In order to be wise stewards of public resources, deal effectively with the changing nature of library work, and meet the new minimum wage requirements, the library is implementing a new classification called Access Services Assistant (ASA). This position is a blend of page and clerk duties, and will provide greater staffing flexibility moving forward. The FY 2016 library budget has all library page positions budgeted as ASA positions; as people are trained, they will move into the ASA classification. This impacts about 150 positions and the estimated cost of the FY 2016 implementation is \$244,200.

How does the realignment of the city of Portland Urban Renewal Districts impact Library revenues?

The Portland urban renewal plan amendments resulted in approximately \$463,000 of additional revenues to the Library District in the current fiscal year versus no plan amendments. For FY 2016, the amendments should yield roughly an additional \$600,000. It is worth noting that in FY 2023, the library will actually lose revenues due to the amendments, and by FY 2030 will lose \$1.1 million per year. After, FY 2030 the Library District will should once again see additional revenue on an annual basis.

How does the library manage its holdings? How does it decide what to buy and when? Where are budget limitations impacting those decisions?

The library utilizes expert staff and analytics to inform purchases of books and other materials. Materials “selectors” purchase new materials in concert with major publishing cycles in the fall and spring. The library responds to patron demand for bestsellers by purchasing copies based on a ratio around the number of holds placed, purchasing additional titles when demand increases. Selectors also order items based on patron requests for specific items.

Library staff run reports to identify materials that are not circulating, retiring those items from the collection and selling them to the public through the Title Wave Used Bookstore. Damaged or obsolete items are removed from the collection or replaced as appropriate as they are returned.

E-content is in increasing demand by patrons. The library and its vendors are continually adding new e-books, audio books and streaming audio/video. E-books pose a particular challenge, as individual titles may cost up to \$80 per copy, compared to much lower rates and traditional discounts of 45% on print books. The library has devoted an increasing portion of its budget to e-content in recent years.

What challenges are on the horizon for the Library and how are you responding to them? What changes might we see in the Library’s budget when we meet again next spring?

Responding to a complex and rapidly changing set of community needs and demands was the primary focus in shaping next year’s library budget. These needs include IT capacity and support to meet patron service expectations; safety and security to ensure that library spaces are welcoming and safe places; enhanced staff support and coordination; and direct service to patrons by adding more books, e-books and librarians. Some of these needs will be ongoing, but the library will also listen to community feedback and analyze data about how patrons are using the library in order to present a sustainable and responsive budget next year.