

Multnomah County Library
TSCC 2016-17 budget review
May 18, 2016

1. As the District embarks on its fourth year, has anything developed differently than you anticipated? Has that led you to change course in any way?

(Commissioner Shiprack)

- Public libraries everywhere are in a state of transformation and evolution.
- Multnomah County Library has prioritized efforts in recent years with those shifts in mind.
- Now, more patrons use the library online than in person.
- The library has increased investments in digital resources for patrons and infrastructure to support increased demand for digital content and an improved online experience.
 - The My Librarian program brings a human touch to the digital environment.
 - This program has been a model for public libraries in the U.S. and abroad to better serve their communities.
 - The proposed contact center will further improve the patron experience.
- One notable change relates to broader and highly visible issues in our community around mental health, addiction and homelessness.
- The library is working to find new ways of serving patrons in need, while treating every patron with dignity and respect.
- More detail about how the library is serving patrons experiencing homelessness follows in response to question #3 below.

2. This budget consolidates the Library's safety and security efforts and adds staffing to this program. Tell us more about the objectives of this work and how you measure the impact of these efforts?

(Commissioner Bailey)

- The library strives to provide a safe and welcoming environment for everyone.
- By consolidating security-related resources into one program offer library staff can review those expenditures as a group during the budget planning process.
- Persistent needs of patrons experiencing homelessness and mental health issues demand creative and compassionate approaches.
- The library has kept focus on these issues, adding a Safety and Security manager in FY 2015 and a crisis worker in FY 2016.
- This proposal extends that support by incorporating a new library safety officer classification and increased coordination of persons in charge.
- Library staff will review the frequency and severity of behavior incidents over time to determine if resources are appropriately allocated, making adjustments as needed.

3. Last year, the issues of homelessness and hunger entered into our discussion of the library budget. How are those issues impacting the Library and how are they being addressed.

(Chair Kafoury)

- The public library reflects the community it serves, functioning as the community's "living room."
- If members of our community are struggling with issues of homelessness, hunger or other challenges, library patrons will be among them.
- Multnomah County Library's service is predicated on the idea of free and equal access for all.
- Treating each patron with dignity and respect is a cornerstone of how the library does its work.
- For patrons experiencing homelessness, the library is a place of safety and assistance. Library staff help people who are seeking housing, jobs or human services.
- The current budget includes funding for the library's first social worker, contracted through Cascadia Behavioral Healthcare
 - As a "crisis worker," her job is to conduct outreach and offer to connect patrons with resources and assistance.
 - She is in the first half of a pilot project and early signals are promising. She is developing trust-based relationships with patrons at Central Library and beyond.
 - Patrons now regularly come into Central Library and ask for her or they can schedule appointments to meet with her at any library.
- With regard to hunger, the library has a well-established summer lunch program at Rockwood and Midland libraries.
 - The program (in partnership with Volunteers of America and Partners for a Hunger-free Oregon) serves thousands of free healthy meals each summer.
 - Library staff design programming to coincide with meal periods.
 - The Summer Reading Program encourages kids to continue reading throughout the summer months and discover everything the library has to offer.

4. Last year, Commissioner McKeel said that stable funding allows the Library to respond better to community needs. How does the library identify emerging community needs? How do you know if you are meeting them?

(Commissioner McKeel)

- Before voters approved stable funding in November 2012, the library was struggling with the effects of property tax compression (affecting 38 cents of every dollar of voter-approved library funding).
 - Libraries were forced to reduce hours and were closed on Mondays. This reduction in service was a significant source of patron frustration.
 - Patrons welcomed the return of seven-day-per week service in July 2013.
- The library's most recent annual patron survey shows an overall satisfaction rate of 97%.
 - Annual surveys also include ways to offer open ended suggestions and requests.

- The library closely monitors demographic information and uses it to allocate staff who speak Spanish, Russian, Chinese, Vietnamese and Somali as well as materials in those languages.
- Demographic information informs placement of outreach services. This includes poverty, academic achievement and race and language data.
- The library is also embarking on community engagement efforts to better understand individual and community aspirations and challenges.

5. The budget provides \$310,000 to fund consulting services for the capital planning process and a limited duration position to manage that process. What is the scope and purpose of this project?

(Commissioner Bailey)

- The library's 19 public buildings have all been updated or opened in the last 25 years.
- Those efforts took place before several fundamental shifts in the ways patrons use their libraries.
- Today, libraries are centers of learning and creation. They pair flexible space with cutting-edge technology and spaces for civic engagement.
- They are far more than book repositories.
- Multnomah County Library's physical spaces, by and large, do not offer flexibility to meet modern patron needs.
- The overall footprint is not adequate to meet the needs of a growing population.
- This budget prioritizes a thoughtful and comprehensive capital planning effort to identify a vision, manner and means to address these issues.

6. The budget includes an Equity Manager position. What will that position be doing and how will you measure the success of the effort?

(Commissioner Smith)

- Multnomah County Library has always embraced the concept that a public library must be free and open to all.
- Libraries help address barriers to opportunity and access that disproportionately affect families in poverty and communities of color.
- Multnomah County Library is committed to the goals of equity, inclusion and sustaining a workforce that reflects the community it serves.
- This budget proposal funds a senior-level position devoted to championing the library's diversity efforts and engaging staff to build a welcoming and inclusive culture at the library for employees and patrons.
 - Under the direction of the library director, the Equity and Inclusion program manager will lead the development and implementation of proactive diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives.
 - These encompass goals; metrics; partnerships; recruitment; training; and supporting the needs of staff and patrons.
- The library will evaluate the success of this effort using a range of output and outcome-based measurements.

- Signs of success would include:
 - Increased engagement with the library by historically underrepresented communities
 - Increased diversity and retention within the workforce
 - A richer network of community-based partnerships
 - Staff feedback that positively reflects on the library's commitments to diversity and inclusion.

7. The Library has created a “Makerspace” in Rockwood. What is a Makerspace, whom do they serve, how are they equipped and staffed, what do they cost to operate, and are there more in the planning stages?

(Commissioner McKeel)

- A makerspace is an experiential hands-on environment that supports self-guided learning and creation.
 - They are often filled with cutting-edge technology like 3D printers, laser cutters, and milling machines.
 - They also can include computers and software to teach digital design, coding, video and audio production, along with more traditional tools of creation like sewing machines.
- Multnomah County Library's Rockwood Library makerspace is made possible by funding from The Library Foundation, a Community Technology grant from Mount Hood Cable Regulatory Commission and Multnomah County Library.
- This effort is aimed at teen patrons, particularly girls.
- The Rockwood Library makerspace pairs youth in Rockwood with technology and skilled adult mentors to learn real-life skills that will help prepare them for success in school, in the workforce and beyond.
- The makerspace opened on April 2 and programming is now up and running.
- To date, the makerspace has been staffed by a creative learning spaces coordinator and a library assistant.
- The creative learning spaces coordinator will begin a longer-term effort to identify potential locations and approaches for future efforts.
- The library's FY17 budget proposal includes funding for a dedicated library assistant to staff the makerspace.

8. Since establishing a permanent levy, the Library's expenditures have grown by an average of 6% annually and staffing has increased by 21 FTE. Is this growth likely to continue? If so, in what areas and why?

(Commissioner Smith)

- The growth in the library's expenditure budget is in alignment with the library district's forecast as last presented by Mike Jaspin on April 26, 2016 to the Multnomah County Library District Board.
- The growth in costs has been lower than initially assumed in the district planning. This has allowed the library district to add FTE while staying within the initial modeling.

- The increase in FTE represents positions added in some targeted areas of need: safety and security; IT capacity for adding and upgrading services to patrons; services to immigrants; and the Rockwood Makerspace.
- The library will continue to carefully examine and reallocate vacant positions to meet changing needs while also making targeted additions as new needs arise.
- Targeted additions are all made within the limits of the forecast projections.

9. What metrics do you use to compare the efficiency and effectiveness of your service delivery? What other library districts do you use for comparison?

(Commissioner Shiprack)

- Multnomah County Library participates in the Public Library Data Service (PLDS), which compiles statistics from public libraries across the United States.
- This annual report captures data that include:
 - Number of locations, staff size, population served and open hours.
 - Transactional information like circulation, and per capita measures of library visits, transactions or program attendance.
 - Cost and efficiency metrics, like expenditures per capita, percentage of operating expenditures spent on staff or collections or use per item.
- The library compiles data from 10 “peer” libraries to analyze efficiency and service delivery.
- Peer libraries are determined based on size of community served, number of locations, transactional volume or other factors that make them comparable to Multnomah County Library.
- Peer libraries are located in:
 - Charlotte, NC
 - Columbus and Cuyahoga County, OH
 - Denver, CO
 - Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN
 - Indianapolis, IN
 - Seattle and King County, WA
 - New York and Queens, NY.
- A few facts from the most recent PLDS report:
 - MCL is ranked as the third busiest library in the nation (first among those serving fewer than 1 million people).
 - MCL has the smallest amount of space and the fewest number of branches within its peer group.
 - Each item in MCL’s collection of books and other materials is more heavily used each year than in any other peer library.