



MULTNOMAH COUNTY AGENDA PLACEMENT REQUEST (short form)

Board Clerk Use Only

Meeting Date: 7-31-12
Agenda Item #: B.1
Est. Start Time: 10:00 am
Date Submitted: 7-25-12

Agenda Title: Public Hearing on Referral of a Ballot Measure to Approve Formation of a Multnomah County Library District with a Permanent Rate

Note: If Ordinance, Resolution, Order or Proclamation, provide exact title. For all other submissions, provide a clearly written title.

Requested Meeting Date: July 31st, 2012 **Amount of Time Needed:** 2 hours
Department: Non-Departmental **Division:** _____
Contact(s): Marissa Madrigal, Chief of Staff, Chair Cogen's Office
Phone: 503-988-5239 **Ext.** _____ **I/O Address:** _____
Presenter(s): Marissa Madrigal

General Information

1. What action are you requesting from the Board?

None.

2. Please provide sufficient background information for the Board and the public to understand this issue. Please note which Program Offer this action affects and how it impacts the results.

The Multnomah County Library is the nation's second busiest library, but since 1976, a significant portion of the library's funding has come from temporary property tax levies. Changes to the property tax system in the 1990's further complicated and destabilized library funding. In some years, the library is prevented from collecting the full rate authorized by the voters because of an effect called "property tax compression". For example, last year, the library only collected 64% of its \$.89 per \$1000 assessed value tax rate, forcing it to deplete its reserves to maintain services.

Creation of a dedicated and permanent tax district for library services has long been discussed as a way to stabilize library funding. In November 2010, Multnomah County voters gave Multnomah County the authority under its charter to refer the creation of a library district to the voters. In May 2012, voters approved a three year extension of the \$.89 cent per \$1000 assessed value levy, which due to compression resulted in Monday library closures. In June 2012, the Board of County Commissioners initiated a community conversation on the future of library funding, including a July 31st hearing on the possibility of referring a library district to the November 2012 ballot.

3. Explain the fiscal impact (current year and ongoing).

If a library district is approved by voters and becomes operational, the Library will have permanent and stable funding and will be financially self-sufficient. Thereafter, the County's General Fund would not make annual contributions to the Library. Had the Library District existed in FY 2012, this would have saved the General Fund roughly \$14.4 million. These savings would have been offset by increased compression loss of at least \$5.9 million.

4. Explain any legal and/or policy issues involved.

See sections 3 and 5. Provision of library services is a matter of County concern. This public hearing and any subsequent referral is made in accordance with the Multnomah County Charter Chapter IX.

5. Explain any citizen and/or other government participation that has or will take place.

On June 28th, the Board of County Commissioners approved an order establishing this public hearing on July 31st to consider a library district. Five community listening sessions were held at public libraries in July 2012 to discuss library funding options and hear from the public. An online survey is available to the public through July 31st, results of which will be made public at the close of the survey. Additional public testimony on August 2nd is invited and encouraged.

Required Signature

**Elected Official or
Department/
Agency Director:**

Marissa Madrigal /s/

Date: 7/24/2012