



Office of Community Involvement



Library CBAC

TO: Chair Deborah Kafoury and Board of County Commissioners (2) pages

FROM: Library Advisory Board

DATE: April 13, 2021

SUBJECT: Library Budget Advisory Committee Report & Recommendations

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Library Advisory Board (LAB) fully supports the Multnomah County Library (MCL)'s proposed Fiscal Year 2022 (FY22) budget. This budget deepens investment in equity and inclusion, and gives the library needed flexibility to adapt services as library buildings reopen to the public and in-person programs resume in FY22. The proposed changes and additions to the budget are well considered and align with MCL's pillars and priorities. We recommend adoption of the FY22 budget as proposed.

PROCESS

In accordance with Chapter 19 of the County Code, LAB continues to serve as the Citizen Budget Advisory Committee for MCL. The Library Advisory Board holds monthly meetings throughout the year and is kept up to date on library operations, programs, policies, priorities, and budget.

This year, LAB has put the work of our traditional committees on hold to focus on shifting our board strategy and membership, to center equity and diversity more fully. While our Finance Committee has historically conducted the budget review process on behalf of the board, this year the full board participated. We discussed the FY22 Budget at our January, February, March, and April meetings. Director of Operations Don Allgeier led these sessions and provided information, reports, and budget briefings for the board's review. In addition, the committee received a Library District Revenue Forecast from County Economist Jeff Renfro. Based on these discussions, the LAB approved this report at our meeting on April 13, 2021.

EMERGING ISSUES & CHANGES

FY21 was a year unlike any other for MCL. As the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic unfolded, library staff worked hard to shift programs and services to meet rapidly changing needs and constraints. With physical locations closed to the public, MCL shifted to providing holds pick-up services for library materials. The library also launched new services designed to help communities most in need of support during the pandemic, including setting up outdoor computer labs and offering free printing. Staff worked to transition programs to online and virtual experiences to continue to support communities during this pandemic, especially parents and students. While the outlook for FY22 is hopeful, much is still unknown about when and how we will be able to fully reopen library locations and resume in-person programs.

Library CBAC

The proposed budget is designed to provide MCL with flexibility to meet community needs in this upcoming year of reopening and recovery.

The FY22 Budget includes a number of notable changes and additions:

- For the first time in several years, the tax rate for the Library District is staying the same (\$1.22) due to a more optimistic revenue forecast.
- With the passage of the library's capital bond last November, a Project Management Office has been created to begin planning and implementation of bond projects.
- A strategic realignment of work in the Public Services Division and related program offers is underway, including the creation of a new Community Engagement program offer.
- Addition of 6 staff positions to provide additional support for culturally specific programs including coordinators for We Speak Your Language teams, and positions to coordinate services for Indigenous communities, African communities, and people experiencing homelessness.

The LAB is particularly happy to see the ways in which MCL has continued to deepen its commitment to equity and inclusion in FY21 and in the FY22 budget. Library staff have engaged significantly with the communities most impacted by COVID-19 and used the feedback received to inform plans for reopening and new programming. The new Community Engagement program offer will centralize and expand efforts to engage with communities who have experienced the greatest barriers to library services.

LAB has spent much of FY21 reflecting on our advisory role in MCL's work. After much conversation and reflection, the board formally decided in January 2021 to shift our focus, and work to make LAB a body which elevates the voices of communities who face the greatest barriers to library services. This is a significant shift for LAB and we have spent this spring beginning to clarify and operationalize this new vision. Our hope is that over the course of FY22, we will appoint new members, produce a new mission and vision, and implement a number of changes to make the board a more inclusive and accessible body.

BUDGET FEEDBACK

We recommend that the Library District Board adopt the proposed budget of \$94.9 million and 532.5 FTE.

PROGRAM OFFER RECOMMENDATIONS

The Library Advisory Board recommends adopting all Library Department program offers as proposed.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Library Advisory Board wishes to give special thanks to Director of Operations Don Allgeier and LAB Staff Liaison Maddelyn High, who provided outstanding support for the work of the board.

Members: Erin Cooper, Rob Edmiston, Svetlana Karpe, Lois Leveen, Quinn MacNichol, Lizzie Martinez, Jacqueline Martinez De Jesus, Nathan Senters, Gabby Shaffer, Salma Sheikh, Clare Wilkinson

Staff: Vailey Oehlke, Director of Libraries; Don Allgeier, Director of Operations; and Maddelyn High, Director's Assistant