

**Minutes of the Board of Commissioners
Multnomah County, Oregon
Multnomah Building, Board Room 100
Tuesday, June 21, 2011**

BOARD BRIEFINGS

Chair Jeff Cogen convened the meeting at 10:07 a.m. with Vice-Chair Deborah Kafoury and Commissioners Diane McKeel, Loretta Smith and Judy Shiprack present.

**B.1. Briefing on the Completion of the Library Materials Movement Project.
Presenters: Vailey Oehlke, Library Director; Cindy Gibbon, Senior Manager
for IT & Access Services; Lucien Kress, Project Manager.**

Ms. Oehlke provided the introduction. Ms. Gibbon spoke about the Library's newly implemented radio frequency identification (RFID) technology. It was instituted to respond to the growth of checkouts, renewals and holds, and protects items from theft. It makes patron self-checkout easier and faster, increases efficiency at staff check-in stations, and improves the security of the libraries. RFID involved installing security gates at 18 locations, replacing outdated public checkout stations with 76 new self-checkout stations and 200 staff work stations. This two-year project was completed on May 31, 2011 and involved 62 volunteers contributing 1,100 hours of time at 14 library locations to help install 1.886 million transponder tags in books and media. As a result, self-checkout has increased from 19% to 81%, and missing items are down by 61%. The project budget was \$2.97 million; \$2.56 million has been expended to date; additional funds will be spent for PDAs or netbook computers that connect to the inventory devices. The first phase for the central library, totaled \$1.369 million, and was funded by the Library's beginning fund balance. The second phase, for all other libraries, was \$1.858 million, with 50% funded with one-time only money and the other 50% funded through debt financing.

Mr. Kress explained that the next step will include deploying portable inventory devices that have already been purchased from the project budget. These devices will help with searching for specific items, keeping the library's collection in order, and performing inventories of selected sections.

Ms. Gibbon stated that the overall feedback from patrons has been positive. Patrons have noticed that employees are able to provide greater assistance to the public and the checkout system is easy and speedy.

The presenters responded to Board questions and comments. The Board thanked them for their hard work and dedication to this project.

B.2 Briefing on Potential Multnomah County Library District Funding. Presenters: Vailey Oehlke; Becky Cobb, Deputy Director, Library; Mike Jaspin, Economist, Budget Office; Jerry Hudson, Vice-Chair, The Library Foundation; Katie Lane, Library Advisory Board; Kurt Krause, Vice-President, Friends of the Library; Michael Hanna, President, AFSCME Local 88.

Ms. Oehlke provided the introduction and explained that Multnomah County's Libraries are widely used, with circulation up by 182% since 1997. They are in their fifth and final year of the current library levy, which provides 66% of the library's total funding. The levy expires June 2012. Therefore, a funding measure must be referred soon to the November ballot. Due to the passage of Measure 26-114 in November, 2010, the Board now has the authority within the County Charter to directly refer a library district formation measure to the voters as a matter of County concern. Today's briefing provides a recap of the district process and a review of polling results and indicators of community support. Passage of a library district measure would impact property tax collections for some jurisdictions and encompass both the current levy and the County's General Fund transfer to the library fund. The formation of an independent library district raises policy and legal questions that need to be resolved prior to a ballot referral. It is expected that citizens will have the opportunity to vote on either a library district or levy renewal measure as part of the November 2011 ballot.

Ms. Oehlke said their budget for Fiscal Year 2012 is \$62.5 million with 57% or \$35,416,964 from the Library Levy; 23% or \$14,445,810 from the General Fund; and 15% or \$9,241,682 from BWC, and 5% or \$3,421,008 other funding including grants, fines, fees, interest and sales.

Mr. Jaspin provided the financial analysis. He explained that the rate projection for the levy renewal could be \$1.14 to \$1.17/\$1000, whereas the district could be \$1.14 to \$1.19/\$1000. The estimated permanent rate for the district option would most likely be \$1.18/\$1000 based on FY10-11 Certified Values and Rates. This would have an impact on other jurisdictions and on the County's General Fund. Ms. Oehlke explained that it would ultimately be up to the Board to decide on the rate, but the \$1.18 rate is based on three years of analysis.

Ms. Oehlke said a poll conducted in March 2011 surveyed 400 voters, of which 67% have "strong and consistent support" for the creation of a library district. She then invited library stakeholders to come up and speak.

Ms. Lane spoke on behalf of the Library Advisory Board. She stated that her group is a strong advocate of the library district. This group of 17 members was established by Ordinance in 1990. Their mission is to promote excellence in library services and advocate for a strong and visible library system. The LAB identified the need for long-term funding for the library as their #1 concern. With 57% of the library's budget

dependent on the levy, the levy's failure could have devastating effects on the library and the services it provides.

Commissioner Smith asked who would be responsible to request audits on the library if it became a district. Ms. Lane responded that the Board would have this authority.

Mr. Krauss spoke on behalf of the Friends of the Library. This group was founded in 1972 in response to major library budget cuts and has grown to 1,100 members. They work to promote public involvement in the library and advocate and fundraise for library campaigns. Mr. Krauss stated that his group is in strong support of the library district and will be ready to mobilize group members if the library district option goes up for a vote.

Mr. Hudson spoke on behalf of the Library Foundation, which was established in 1995. They raise private support to enhance the library's programs. The Foundation has been a major contributor to the last two library campaigns. Mr. Hudson thanked the Board for providing oversight and guidance for the library and urged them to consider the library district as a more permanent and stable funding source. His group will pledge financial support and communicate with the 17k households associated with the Library Foundation.

Mr. Hanna spoke on behalf of AFSCME Local 88. He stated that Local 88 has been involved in library district discussions and taskforces. Many members met with Ms. Oehlke during Q&A sessions and workplace meetings. Employees raised concern about representation and benefits. Negotiations with Ms. Oehlke and HR Services resulted in a Management Statement of Intent signed June 1, 2011, which states that employee status would remain at a status quo if the library district was implemented. About 39% of surveyed employees still prefer the levy option. He will continue conversations with the Chair's Office and hopes to negotiate a Proclamation from the Board that reassures shifting to a library district will not take away workers' rights.

Commissioner Smith asked whether the district option could result in any projected job losses. Mr. Hanna answered that none were discussed, and he understands all funding calculations used are based on an employment status quo and do not account for any staff decreases. If the library district comes up for a vote, Local 88 has the option to endorse it and support it with their resources.

The presenters responded to Board questions and comments. The Board thanked them for their presentation.

B.3 Briefing on Community 101 Grantmaking Program for High School Students. Sponsor: Commissioner Smith. Presenters: Jennesa Datema, Community 101 Coordinator, Oregon Community Foundation; Annie Burton & Taya Walter, Community 101 Students; Jeff Anderson, Exec Vice-President & Chief Operating Officer, Oregon Community Foundation.

Commissioner Smith provided the introduction and said she was impressed by the students in the Community 101 program during her visit to Roosevelt High School. She described this program as a terrific way to get students more engaged in the community and learn the value of philanthropy and nonprofit organizations.

Ms. Datema provided an overview of the Community 101 program. This program is classroom-based and generally taught in high schools. Each classroom is donated \$5,000 to award in grants to community nonprofits. Essentially, students are operating a mini-foundation where they identify community needs, research nonprofits, volunteer at sites, review grant applications and make funding decisions. Currently, about 71 schools are participating in the program across Oregon. She thanked the students for being here today.

Ms. Burton from Milwaukie High School and Ms. Welter from Roosevelt High School spoke about their experience in Community 101. They described the program as an interesting and positive learning experience.

The Board commended the students for their hard work and thanked them for their presentation.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:38 a.m.

Submitted by:
Lynda J. Grow, Board Clerk and
Marina Baker, Assistant Board Clerk
Board of County Commissioners
Multnomah County