

RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY REPORT FORM

Report Title: Libraries Aren't Just for Books Anymore

Report Date: April 29, 2013

Response by: Marin County Library Commission

FINDINGS

- We agree with the findings numbered: F3, F4, F6, F7.
- We disagree wholly or *partially* with the findings numbered: F1, F2, F5, F8.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recommendations numbered 1, 4, 6, 7, 8 have not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future.
- Recommendations numbered 2, 3, 5 require further analysis.

Date: July 16, 2013

Signed:

Ann Ona Hel

Marin County Library Commission
Response to Findings and Recommendations from Grand Jury Report
"Libraries Aren't Just for Books Anymore"

FINDINGS

- F1. MCFL staff feel they are not included in the planning process. They feel uninformed, out of the loop and that big decisions "come down to them" from the Administration, already fully formed. This affects morale negatively and lessens the potential for "buy-in" by staff to support change and could stifle the very improvements the planning process seeks to introduce.**

Response: Partially Disagree.

The Commission lacks sufficient information with which to make a judgment at this time. The transformation to the "Single Point of Service" delivery model will clearly have a significant impact on the job responsibilities of librarians and library assistants. Therefore, we believe that there needed to be substantial staff involvement throughout the entire planning and implementation process. If that failed to happen or if it appears to have been inadequate, the Commission will advise the new Library Director to initiate conversations to develop corrective measures.

- F2. MCFL uses a large number of "extra-hire" employees. There are often long employment times filled by extra-hires in temporary status while waiting for an opportunity to move to an FTE status. Staff have expressed that this serves to lower employee morale, which results in a potentially stressful working climate.**

Response: Partially Disagree.

The Commission disagrees in that the Grand Jury did not take into account certain staff members who want to remain part time due to personal circumstances.

The Commission does agree that transformation of extra-hire positions that are supposed to meet short-term needs into what should be, in reality, permanent positions is not a desirable practice. If these staff members meet the definition of long-term employees, the Commission would favor that a process be implemented through which they can eventually receive

the same benefits provided to other employees. The Commission will ask the new Library Director to work with County Human Resources to address this issue by creating more flexible categories of employment.

- F3. The Library Commission was originally created by the BOS to act as advisor to both the BOS and Library administration on Library issues. The BOS also appointed the Library Commission in 2010 as the Measure A Independent Citizen Oversight Committee. The Library Commission's input on Measure A has been limited to twice-yearly reports from Library Administration. The Commission's limited input and apparent lack of involvement leaves an unfilled gap in what should be proactive support for advocating needed service support for Library objectives.**

Response: Agree.

To perform its responsibility as Oversight Committee for Measure A, the Commission has a responsibility to the voters of Marin County to review and critique monthly status and expenditure reports. These reports should clearly distinguish Measure A revenues from other funding sources.

- F4. There is insufficient contact and communication between the Library Commission and the BOS. There have been 2 vacant positions on the Library Commission unfilled for some months, and some of the Commissioners have never met the Supervisor who appointed them. This further negatively affects the effectiveness and usefulness of what should be supportive Commission advocacy for the Library programs and objectives.**

Response: Agree.

Greater contact and communication with the BOS would substantially enhance the effectiveness of the Commission in performing its advisory role. An initial step in that direction would be to have the Library administration submit all significant policy issues to the Commission for its input prior to submitting them to the BOS for its approval. The Commission would be in a position to convey its views on the issue to the BOS.

- F5. The Library Foundation has drifted away from its primary role to find ways to support the library financially. The Grand Jury in 2002 and this Grand Jury find a lack of understanding in this body as to ways and means of producing needed, sustainable financial support for the MCFL system.**

Response: Agree.

- F6. Friends of the Library have been valuable partners. They provide an avenue for enthusiastic volunteers to be involved with and support their community libraries in a variety of ways. Their efforts and contributions---both financial and supportive---we found warrant commendation and recognition.**

Response: Agree.

The Friends provide an invaluable support service to the Library

- F7. Expenditures of Measure A funds are difficult to track. The MCFL budget does not show separate line items for Measure A expenditures. An improved, focused presentation of Measure A inflows and outflows should be established and reviewed by the Library Commission and be reported by the Commission to the BOS, at least yearly, and preferably more frequently.**

Response: Agree.

- F8. There is insufficient long-range Library facility and services planning. The 2007 Vision Plan is out of date with the current funding situation and rapidly changing service needs of the MCFL. A new Long-Range Plan should be a high priority of the Library Commission and should be targeted for completion within the 2013-14 Fiscal Year, and preferably early in that period so that it can be reflected in the solicitation of additional tax funds.**

Response: Partially Disagree.

The Commission agrees that creating this plan is a top priority but the time frame of targeting FY 13/14 for completion is ambitious and should be referred to the new Library Director.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The 2012-2013 Marin County Civil Grand Jury recommends that:

- R1. The new MCFL Director of Library Services make improved communication a priority and include all affected groups and stakeholders early in any new MCFL planning process to get feedback and input from Staff. Leadership needs to encourage staff input in contemplating major changes. Participation could include tasking staff to do research and reports in-house during the planning process.**

Response: This recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be in the next six months. The Commission will work with the Library Director to implement this recommendation.

- R2. The MCFL administration develop a well-defined and reasonably short path to permanent hire status for those (especially "extra hires") who want to pursue a career in Library service.**

Response: This recommendation requires further analysis.

The Commission agrees that transformation of extra-hire positions that are supposed to meet short-term needs into what could be in reality permanent positions is not a desirable practice. If these staff members meet the definition of long-term employees, the Commission would favor that a process be implemented through which they can eventually receive the same benefits provided to other employees. The Commission will ask the new Library Director during her first six months to work with County Human Resources to address this issue by creating more flexible categories of employment.

- R3. MCFL prepare progress reports and audit of expenditures on Measure A spending and that Library Commissioners, in their**

capacity as the Independent Citizen Oversight Committee for Measure A, review the status monthly. Both the BOS and Library Commissioners to meet a minimum of twice yearly to discuss and provide guidance on current issues and long term plans for the MCFL, including feedback to the BOS.

Response: The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be in the future.

The Commission will implement this beginning in FY 2013/14.

- R4. The BOS appoint commissioners to the two vacant positions in District 4 and District 5, and that the BOS make it a policy to promptly find and replace commissioners when needed. When a new commissioner comes to his or her first meeting, the appointing Supervisor should attend and introduce the person to the Commission.**

Response: This recommendation requires further analysis.

The Commission will work with the BOS to fill the vacancies as soon as possible over the next three months but ultimately it is up to the BOS to make the filling of vacant positions on the Commission a priority.

- R5. The Library Foundation develop a plan to further its stated goals of spear-heading community enthusiasm and financial support for the MCFL. The Library Foundation investigate ways to increase long-term, consistent funding for the MCFL that can be relied on for continuing library services, such as the FLAGship and the Bookmobile. If such a plan is not forthcoming, the Grand Jury recommends that the Library Foundation consider a merger with the Friends.**

Response: This recommendation requires further analysis.

The Commission believes that a merger seems worthwhile and encourages the Foundation and the Friends to initiate a merger process within the next 6 months.

- R6. MCFL and BOS support Friends with information and recognition! MCFL and BOS should encourage collaboration between the Friends and the Foundation to share ideas and coordinate fund-raising efforts and possibly events.**

Response: The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be in the future. The Commission will work with the BOS and MCFL over the next three months to formally recognize the Friends and Foundation's achievements in fund raising and will work with the Friends and the Foundation to encourage greater collaboration and coordination between those groups.

- R7. MCFL develop a comprehensive work plan including scope, schedule and budget for all work funded through Measure A and make the status of Measure A projects a discussion item at each Library Commission meeting.**

Response: The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be in the future.

The Commission will implement this beginning in FY 2013/14.

- R8. MCFL revisit and update its 2007 Vision Plan, with staff and community participation.**

Response: The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be in the future.

The Commission will implement this beginning in FY 2013/14.

July 16, 2013

Honorable James R. Ritchie
Presiding Judge
Marin County Superior Court
3501 Civic Center Drive
San Rafael, CA 94903

Dear Judge Ritchie:

Forwarded herewith is the Marin County Library Commission's response to the 2012-13 Civil Grand Jury Report "Libraries Aren't Just for Books Anymore." The Marin County Library Commission's response addresses all Findings and Recommendations for which a response was requested from the Commission.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Alison Howard".

Alison Howard
President, Marin County Library Commission

cc: Civil Grand Jury