

RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY REPORT FORM

Report Title: Libraries Aren't Just for Books Anymore
Report Date: April 29, 2013
Response by: Marin County Board of Supervisors including County Librarian

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: _____
Number of pages attached: 9

Marin County Board of Supervisors

Response to Findings and Recommendations including responses from County Library 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.

Based on the last employee survey, the Library received an engagement rate of 3.82 out of 5, which places the Library in line with many other County Departments. But given the feelings expressed to the Grand Jury, the County acknowledges that these and other efforts were insufficient. Library Administration will strive to increase communication with and participation of Library staff in the future.

In changing the way the Library provides services to meet the changing needs of the communities, Library Administration has made efforts to include all levels of Library staff in the process of implementing these changes, including:

- Forming a committee of staff members to implement some of the staffing study reports recommendations
- Having Library staff participate in both the initial communications audit and the implementation of the audit recommendations
- Piloting the Single Point of Service change with Library staff while creating the training and evaluation tools for the pilot

- 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.

Providing library service to the public 7-days a week, the Library will always need some level of extra-hire coverage for staff absence, peak workload and other needs.

There have been delays in being able to recruit to fill open positions at the Library. During some of these delays, extra-hires have been used to fill those positions and stayed longer than expected. The Library has been working with the Department of Human Resources and an established formal committee with MAPE to reduce reliance on extra-hires

While many extra-hire employees may want a permanent assignment with the Library, not all of them may want permanent positions. There are many extra-hire employees (e.g., students, young parents, people supplementing their income with another job) for whom extra-hire work allows flexibility that a permanent job and fixed schedule would not provide.

- 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.

- 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 between the Commission (whether as a body or as individual Commissioners) and the Board of Supervisors are highly desirable. Filling vacancies on the Library Commission should be a high priority.

- 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: Partially Disagree.

While the Library Foundation has worked with the Center for Volunteer and Nonprofit Leadership on improving its effectiveness, we do agree that the Foundation could do more and come closer to achieving its goal of meeting the long-term funding needs of the Library. Nevertheless, the Foundation's fund raising efforts have provided essential Library services in the past, including funding for One Book One Marin and the F.L.A.G.ship Literacy program.

- 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 of the Library are invaluable partners without which many of the best programs that the Library offers could not take place.

- 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.

Measure A raises approximately \$2.3 million for the Library annually, which represents nearly 16% of the Library's budget in Fiscal Year 2013-14. Without the funding from Measure A, cutbacks in Library services would have been inevitable.

The Library needs to do a better job of showing how the Measure A funds are being used to benefit the communities. Those benefits include:

- Facility upgrades to improve accessibility and increase efficiency
- Enhanced hours at Bolinas, Stinson Beach, and South Novato
- Reduction or elimination of Library fines and fees
- Most importantly, the maintenance of existing services at libraries.

While incorporating Measure A funds into the Library's existing budget structures seemed the most efficient way of sustaining the Library's hours and staffing, with 20-20 hindsight, it would have been better to have given up some efficiency in order to make the tracking of Measure A related expenditures in the budget more transparent. The Library will work to improve this transparency.

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.

While parts of the 2007 Vision Plan are out of date, the specified programmatic and space needs have not been met and continue to be needed.

A new plan should be a priority. The new Library Director will work with the Commission on creating an updated plan that includes long-range facility and service planning. The new Library Director's experience in strategic planning and fresh perspective as a newcomer from the outside will be invaluable in the creation of an updated plan.

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 implemented in the future. As noted in the response to Finding F1, Library Administration has already been striving to increase the involvement of staff, including creating a team to implement ways of improving communications. The new Library Director will meet individually with all permanent Library staff by the end of her first three months on the job to establish a basis for ongoing communications. She will also review the progress of the Communications Audit Implementation team. Library staff will be asked to participate in the planning process.

- 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 Library agrees that well-defined paths to a career in Library service are highly desirable. However, the Library disagrees that the current paths are not well defined.

The Library believes that the County of Marin’s Civil Service regulations and the hiring processes that the Department of Human Resources and the Library have put in place serve to define what is required for anyone, including extra-hires, to compete successfully for Library jobs when they become available. The Library believes that a competitive hiring process open to all ensures the best staff for libraries.

The Library will work with the Department of Human Resources and the employee unions to develop a way of better informing extra-hire staff of employment opportunities with the Library and the background requirements for competing for those opportunities. Human Resources is

working to make the process more transparent to extra hires and unions; including establishing career ladders
(http://www.co.marin.ca.us/depts/HR/Main/docs/Career_Ladders_Cover_Memo.pdf) for a number of job classes.

- 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: This recommendation requires further analysis. The Library will work to prepare any reports the Commission, in its capacity as the Independent Citizen Oversight Committee for Measure A, requires, at any interval(s) the Commission feels will make their oversight of Measure A spending most effective.

The frequency and nature of BOS and Library Commissioners meetings need to be looked at further over the next few months.

- 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 has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. The County will try to fill all existing Library Commission vacancies within the next six months and to improve and expedite the process of filling vacancies.

- 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 Library agrees that the Foundation should regularly examine both its fundraising strategies and its organizational structure in order to increase its fundraising capabilities. Both the Foundation and the Friends are separate and distinct 501-c3 organizations; the Library will help to facilitate discussions between the two groups if a merger is determined to be the best approach.

- 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: This recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. The Library Director regularly attends the monthly meetings of the Foundation and the friends to keep them abreast of what is going on at the Library, and the Director and staff at the branch Libraries regularly participate in events to honor and appreciate all of the assistance the Friends of the Library provide to the libraries. The County will further recognize these supporting groups and individual volunteers at BOS meetings more regularly.

The County encourages and will help with collaboration between the Friends and the Foundation, including developing a plan to increase cooperation between them over the next six months.

- 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: This recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. In the future, the Library will provide an annual report reviewing the planned expenditures of Measure A funds. As said in R3, the Library will work with the Commission to provide them with this information.

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

Response: This recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future. The planning process will start in Fiscal Year 2013-14.