February 4, 2014

Marin County Board of Supervisors
3501 Civic Center Drive
San Rafael, CA 94903

SUBJECT: Informational Report regarding Measure A Library funds
Dear Supervisors:

RECOMMENDATION: Accept report and consider recommendation for June ballot measure to renew the existing parcel tax

Measure A has provided critical resources to maintain and enhance our libraries.

The Marin County Free Library (MCFL) serves the unincorporated areas of Marin County as well as the City of Novato and the Towns of Fairfax and Corte Madera. In 2010, Measure A passed with a 74% approval rating from voters. It provided a tax of $49 per parcel for a period of 5 years. This funding will end when the measure expires on June 30, 2015 unless a renewal of the parcel tax is approved by voters.

Measure A provides the MCFL approximately $2.5 million per year, or roughly 15% of our overall budget for library services. Over the past three years, MCFL committed $2.5 million of that funding for remodels and service improvements at all 10 branches, and rectified ADA accessibility concerns at several locations. MCFL is projected to spend $1.3 million for additional collections, including books, CDs, DVDs and materials to support education and job seeking resources. The remainder of funding has been dedicated to staff costs to maintain library hours and preventing branch closures. Approximately $1.7 million, or roughly 17%, of the total staffing budget comes from Measure A support, without which we would be unable to fund about 17 FTE in the library system (this is roughly equivalent to full staffing at one of our larger regional locations).

This parcel tax funding provides a critical part of the needed financial resources to keep our library system whole to avoid reduced hours or closure of any of our branches. It also funds critical services to children that support their formal education and encourages them to become lifelong learners. The passage of Measure A in 2010 has provided the necessary funds to maintain and enhance our public library programs.
Specifically, with Measure A funds the Marin County Free library has been able to:
- Increase total service hours by 12%
- Increase youth borrowers by 24%
- Increase total materials circulated by 26%

Measure A funding have also been used to make our library more accessible to people with disabilities and to implement modern, up-to-date technology for our patrons.

**Long-term Budget Overview- Renewal of Measure A funds needed to maintain current service levels**

We have worked with the County Administrator to develop long-term budget projections consistent with the County's projections. The chart below illustrates operating budget projections with both the expiration of Measure A funding and the extension of Measure A funding. As you can see, these funds are vital to maintaining our current services over the long-term. If Measure A funds are not extended, we will face budget shortfalls of approximately $2.5 million by FY 2015-16:

**Projected Library Expenditures vs. Revenues with and without Extension of Measure A Funding ($ Millions)**

In November of 2013, Godbe Research was commissioned by the Marin County Free Library, using funds donated by the Friends of the Library and Library Foundation, to conduct a community telephone survey to assess support for a renewal of Measure A.

**Methodology:** Godbe Research conducted a total of 422 interviews, representing 64,640 registered likely November 2014 voters within the Marin County Free Library boundaries. This includes subsamples of 375 likely June 2014 voters, as well as a subsample of 335 likely May 2015 Mail Ballot voters contained entirely within the November 2014 sample. The error rate is plus or minus 4.7% for the sample of 422 likely November 2014 voters, plus or minus 5.0% for the sample of 375 likely June 2014 voters, and plus or minus 5.3% for the sample of 335 likely May 2015 Mail Ballot voters. Interviews were conducted from November 11 through November 19, 2013. The average interview time was approximately 18.4 minutes.
The survey results indicate a strong base of support for a renewal of Measure A among likely June 2014 voters: After hearing an initial summary of parcel tax renewal measure, with a nine year sunset, and with an annual CPI adjustment, 74.5 percent of the likely June 2014 voters indicated support. This exceeds the two-thirds majority required, even when including the 5 percent error rate. This data suggest that a renewal of Measure A could be successful in the June 2014 election.

To help ensure success, a well organized and enthusiastic committee has formed called Yes for Marin County Library, which has raised significant private funds to help support the renewal of Measure A.

A ballot measure to extend the parcel tax would provide necessary funding to: keep local libraries up to date, prevent closures, and maintain library hours; provide children, teen, senior and disabled programs - including adult and family literacy; maintain collections of books, CDs, DVDs, materials and services; provide ADA accessibility; and ensure local funding that can’t be taken by the State.

Staff Recommendation- Consider placing an extension of the parcel tax with CPI adjustments on the June, 2014 ballot

Given the critical nature of these funds to the library system and support of the community, we recommend returning to your Board on February 25th to place an extension of the existing parcel tax with CPI adjustments on the June ballot.

The Library Commission served as the oversight for the expenditure of Measure A funding from 2011-2015. The Commission is a fifteen member body that meets monthly; two meetings per year were dedicated to oversight of Measure A funds. Since the new Director came on board in July of 2013, Measure A reporting occurs at every meeting. There are several possible alternatives for improving citizen oversight of the funds:

1) One Library Commission member from each Supervisors District could be indicated as the Oversight Board this committee would meet as public body quarterly AND separately from the regular monthly Commission meetings. All commissioners and any interested member of the public would be welcome but a group of five could be more actively engaged in oversight and could still be in direct liaison with the Library Commission.

2) An independent advisory committee could be designated by the Board of Supervisors. This would create an additional body providing public input and oversight over the Marin County Free Library and meetings would be public and supported administratively by the Marin County Free Library.

3) The MCFL Library Commission could remain as oversight of the funding and meeting frequency and topics for reporting could be more clearly delineated for the Commission, the Library and the public.

FISCAL/STAFFING IMPACT: The extension of the parcel tax as described would allow the library to continue current services, potentially expand some library hours on Fridays where they currently are not open and continue much needed further ADA accessibility improvements. If it does not pass, MCFL would be forced to reduce staff, library hours and services. Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns. Thank you for your attention in this matter.
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Respectfully submitted,

Sara Jones
Director of County Library Services

SJ: elg

cc: Roy Given, Director of Finance
    Sheila Lichtblau, Deputy County Counsel
    Jacalyn Mah, Administrative Analyst III
    Alison Dana Howard, President, Library Commission