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BACKGROUND FOR LEON
Tuesday, November 26, 1991
COUNTY LIBRARY CLOSURE

BACKGROUND:
The County Library has been attempting to stabilize long-range funding for several years.

Library Long-range Financing Task Force met for 13 months to identify sources to secure stabilized long-range library financing; culminating in a report in January 1989.

Findings recommended the passage of a special tax to insure more secure long-term funding.

August 1990, a Special Tax feasibility study was done. The findings strongly indicated that voters would not support such a ballot issue, so it was not pursued.

The question still remained - How to increase revenue and decrease costs....

The Task Force Report and Library staff made the following suggestions for cost reductions for FY 1991-92:

- o increase revenues: double overdue fines (approved 11/5)
- o reduction in audiovisual services
- o discontinue distribution of tax forms at the branches
- o decreasing the library book budget from $920,000 in FY 1990-91 to $775,000 in FY 1991-92 (a reduction of $145,000 (16%)

With the revenue increases and cost reductions listed above, the library will still experience a funding shortfall in fiscal year 1992-93.

Finally staff came up with the concept of improving the system-wide quality of service, while reducing the number of branches.

Criteria used:

- o proximity of one library branch to another
- o limit of the number of branches in an individual commty.
- o number of items being circulated per hour
- o minimum number of hours a branch is to be open.

Libraries slated for closure or consolidation:

Cardiff Branch	- service to be provided by Encinitas
Crest Branch	- 7 miles from El Cajon Branch
Fletcher Hills Branch	- Service to be provided by El Cajon
Jacumba Branch	- Bookmobile serve to be provided
Lincoln Acres Branch	- Bookmobile service to be provided
Pine Valley Branch	- Bookmobile service to be provided
Potrero Branch	- To be combined with Campo Branch

No layoffs - all staff will be placed at other county libraries

The County Library's critical funding problem has resulted over time from several factors.

a). Property Tax and Special District Augmentation Fund.

The County Library District's portion of the 1% property tax collected within the Library District Boundaries is about 1.5% of the 1%. Even though there has been growth in the county since passage of prop 13 the property tax has not been enough to fully support library services.

1978-80 the decrease in Property Tax Revenue was partially made up by General Fund contributions to the library fund of about $1,000,000 per year.

Beginning in 1980-81 the County Library was allocated a portion of the Special District Augmentation Fund (SDAF) which was about $1,340,000/yr. and the general fund revenues were discontinued.

Then Special District Augmentation Funds were reduced drastically due to legislation (AB1849) passed in 1984 which froze the amount of property tax which is transferred to the SDAF, at 1983-84 levels. The property tax growth in the assessed valuation is retained by the Fire Districts and is not subject to SDAF allocation.

(The SDAF funds have decreased from $1,400,000 since FY 1983-84 but have remained stable at $475,000 over the last three years.

b). General Fund Constraints

For taxing purposes the County Library is a Library District because it has its own portion of the 1% Property Tax separate and distinct from the County.

Because the County Library has its separate tax ratio it is not a financial responsibility of the County General Fund.

Since the county is experiencing an overall revenue shortfall that will impact many General Fund services, the County Library system does not expect to receive much help from general fund monies.

OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

Recommendations

1. Voter Approved Taxes - Imposition of special tax for county library services.

disadvantages: 2/3 vote required; lack of public support.

2. User Fees: - fees assessed on users for services.

disadvantages: Could provide some funds but would not resolve long term County Library funding needs.

3. Cost Sharing - Would ensure each incorporated city pays fully for the service received.

disadvantages: some communities already contribute to the costs of new or expanded facilities

4. Existing Sources - Private donations and fund-raising from private sources.

disadvantages: it can not be relied on for long term stable funding.

5. Regional Library Approach - establish long range plan to consolidate all county libraries (34 bldgs.) and work with local governments to provide costs of new or expanded facilities similar to El Cajon and Poway Regional Libraries.

disadvantages: the public will protest closing any library in their neighborhood; cities too are struggling with general fund deficits.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Bilbray will host a press conference on Monday, at 10'A.M. at the Lincoln Acres Library in support of keeping it open.

Diane Jacob was interviewed by a local paper and quoted as saying, "if we did away with general relief we could fund the library and other vital county services."

District Two will propose to the Board that all facilities remain open where the community is willing to offset lease costs. The problem with this is that the lease cost are minimal in most cases. Our greatest expens is staff and materials.

Jacumba is requesting the County to keep the library open because the owners of the building are willing to provide the building lease for free and charge only for the cost of taxes and insurance. (the lease is only $2,300 annualy whereas the salaries and materials are $15,330 combined.

The Board will use this as an opportunity to grand stand and avoid making tough decisions but they must be made. The regional library approach will allow us to scale back in a major way: go from 34 buildings to regional buildings and also incorporate city's financial support.