



COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR
220 NORTH MAIN STREET, P.O. BOX 8645
ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN 48107-8645
(734)222-6850
FAX (734)222-6715

TO: Barbara Levin Bergman
Chair, Ways & Means Committee

THROUGH: Robert E. Guenzel
County Administrator

FROM: Joanna Bidlack
Administration

DATE: September 17, 2008

SUBJECT: Library for the Blind and Physically Disabled transfer to the Ann Arbor
District Library

BOARD ACTION REQUESTED:

It is requested that the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners approve the transfer of the Washtenaw County Library for the Blind and Physically Disabled to the Ann Arbor District Library.

BACKGROUND:

The Washtenaw County Library for the Blind and Physically Disabled (LBDP) is part of the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, Library of Congress Network, and has been operating in Washtenaw County. The Library provides traditional services such as audio books, playback equipment, large print materials and descriptive videos to individuals in Jackson, Livingston, and Washtenaw Counties who are unable to read or use printed materials due to physical disability (blindness, macular degeneration, paralysis, multiple sclerosis, arthritis, dyslexia, etc.).

The Library offers a wide range of innovative, relevant and original programs, services and training that support the ability of the disabled customer to maintain personal independence and remain an active citizen in our community. The Library also seeks to sustain the social, emotional and intellectual health of people who are blind or live with low vision through a variety of programs. The Library engages in numerous outreach activities in collaboration with community organizations including the UM School of Information, the UM School of Art and Design, the UM School of Literature, Science and Arts and the Kellogg Eye Center, as well as the Michigan Commission for the Blind, Assistive Media, public libraries, senior citizen centers and institutions. As part of accredited coursework for University of Michigan students, the library developed the Many Ways of Seeing Workshop to help blind and visually impaired individuals create works of art. And the LBDP biennial exhibition "Visions: What's New in Technology for the Blind and Visually Impaired" has been a focal point for vendors, consumers and volunteers.

In May 2007, the Library, in partnership with MEE, Inc., opened a state-of-the-art Technology Training Center and Resource Display Area at the Library. The Center houses adaptive technology designed for individuals with disabilities. In addition, training is provided at no cost to patrons on a one on one basis and through training workshops.

This outstanding center for community service has won numerous accolades over the years. In 2006 the LBDP was honored with the very first annual Network Subregional Library of the Year Award from the National Library Service of the United States Library of Congress for excellence, innovation, special achievement and exemplary public service.

That same year, the Library also received the prestigious State Librarian's Excellence Award for exemplary public service from the Library of Michigan Foundation. The award is presented to one Michigan library each year which demonstrates new, innovative and superior services to its customers in a cost-effective manner.

DISCUSSION:

When the 2008/2009 budget shortfalls became evident, County Administration immediately engaged the organization and sought possible collaboration in the wider community to find solutions. Administration met with the Ann Arbor District Library to discuss possible collaboration and the feasibility of Library program integration. Throughout the spring and summer of 2008, Administration continued to gather input from key stakeholders and from Plante and Moran, an external consulting firm. Plante and Moran consultants conducted a thorough review of the management structure and responsibilities at the LBDP, and collected comparative information from peer counties. In their final conclusions, both the Plante and Moran consultants and key stakeholders recommended pursuing a move of the County's LBDP program to the Ann Arbor District Library.

The Ann Arbor District Library (AADL) has distinguished itself through its commitment to sustaining the value of public library services for the greater Ann Arbor community with the use of traditional and innovative technologies. The AADL assures public ownership of print collections, digital resources, and gathering spaces for the citizens of the library district. It provides collections, programs, and leadership to promote the development of literate and informed citizens through open and equal access to cultural, intellectual, recreational, and information resources. Its support and advocacy for all of its customers, including enabling collaboration with more than 80 Community Partners, demonstrate the organization's willingness to be creative and flexible in pursuit of excellent public service.

The Ann Arbor District Library has agreed to assume the existing programs and services provided by the Library for the Blind and Physically Disabled while enhancing services for patrons throughout Washtenaw County. Patrons will continue to have access to audio books, playback equipment, large print materials and descriptive videos. In addition, the AADL will continue to offer a wide range of programs, services and training that support the ability of the disabled customer to maintain personal independence and remain an active citizen in the community. The AADL will continue to provide the state-of-the-art Technology Training Center and Resource Display Area. The transition of the Library will take 3-4 months with a final transition date of January 1, 2009. Contact has been made with the Library of Michigan and they have indicated approval of this transfer.

IMPACT ON HUMAN RESOURCES:

The AADL will assure that services are provided by their existing staff: well qualified, competent staff with the appropriate degrees and credentials to provide high quality services. Administration recommends, as part of the 2009 budget reaffirmation, the following position modifications:

- Elimination of six positions:
 - 1.0 Library Manager
 - 1.0 FTE LLRC Coordinator
 - 1.0 FTE LLRC Facility & Tech Assistant I/II
 - 1.0 FTE Library Tech Coordinator
 - 1.0 FTE LLRC Specialist
 - .5 FTE Library Services Assistant

IMPACT ON BUDGET:

The impact on the budget is included in the 2009 Budget Reaffirmation cover memo and resolution dated September 17, 2008. Starting on January 1, 2009 the county will assume no costs for the LBPD. With the transfer of the LBPD as well as the LLRC position eliminations highlighted above, the county General Fund will save \$546,532 in fiscal year 2009.

IMPACT ON INDIRECT COSTS:

The impact on the indirect costs is included in the 2009 Budget Reaffirmation cover memo and resolution dated September 17, 2008.

IMPACT ON OTHER COUNTY DEPARTMENTS OR OUTSIDE AGENCIES:

None.

CONFORMITY TO COUNTY POLICIES:

This request is in conformance with County policies.

ATTACHMENTS/APPENDICES:

None.

A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE TRANSFER OF THE LIBRARY OF THE BLIND AND PHYSICALLY DISABLED TO THE ANN ARBOR DISTRICT LIBRARY

WASHTENAW COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

October 1, 2008

WHEREAS, the Washtenaw County Library for the Blind and Physically Disabled (LBPD) is part of the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, Library of Congress Network and operates in Washtenaw County; and

WHEREAS, the Washtenaw County Library for the Blind and Physically Disabled provides free library services to qualified individuals and institutions who are unable to read standard print for physical reasons; and

WHEREAS, the Washtenaw County Library for the Blind and Physically Disabled have received numerous accolades over the years including Network Subregional Library of the Year Award and State Librarian's Excellence Award in 2006; and

WHEREAS, in 2008, Administration met with the Ann Arbor District Library to discuss possible collaboration and the feasibility of Library program integration; and

WHEREAS, the Ann Arbor District Library (AADL) has distinguished itself through its commitment to sustaining the value of public library services for the greater Ann Arbor community with the use of traditional and innovative technologies; and

WHEREAS, the Ann Arbor District Library has agreed to assume the existing programs and services provided by the Library for the Blind and Physically Disabled while enhancing services for patrons throughout Washtenaw County; and

WHEREAS, patrons will continue to have access to audio books, playback equipment, large print materials and descriptive videos; and

WHEREAS, the Ann Arbor District Library will continue to offer a wide range of programs, services and training that support the ability of the disabled customer to maintain personal independence and remain an active citizen in the community; and

WHEREAS, the Ann Arbor District Library will continue to provide the state-of-the-art Technology Training Center and Resource Display Area; and

WHEREAS, the transition of the Library for the Blind and Physically Disabled will take 3-4 months with a final transition date of January 1, 2009;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners hereby approves the transfer of the Library for the Blind and Physically Disabled to the Ann Arbor District Library.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that upon transfer of the Library for the Blind and Physically Disabled to the Ann Arbor District Library the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners hereby dissolves the Library for the Blind and Physically Disabled and the Library Board of Trustees.