



LIBRARY COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION 20140324-5b

Date: March 24, 2014

Subject: Restoration of Austin Public Library Branch Hours

Motioned By: Vice Chair Dabbert

Seconded By: Commission Member Wiggins

Recommendation

We ask that the Council consider increasing the staffing of Library branches, with a view toward the resumption of full daily hours in the FY2015 budget.

Description of Recommendation to Council

The Austin Public Library Commission understands that the City Manager has vowed to make Austin, Texas the best managed city in the United States. This is surely a laudable goal. There is, however, a significant gap in the public services offered by the City of Austin and the Austin Public Library (APL), namely the lack of full-service daily library hours in the APL branches.

We ask that the Council consider increasing the staffing of the APL branches, with a view toward the resumption of full daily hours in the FY2015 budget. An estimate of this cost would be \$703,346 for 13.0 FTEs. At present, only the Faulk Central Library is open daily (including Sundays). All except three branch libraries are closed two days a week – on Sunday and on either Thursday or Friday. Three branches are open on Sunday but closed on either Thursday or Friday.

We believe that the present limited schedule of library hours is an inadequate level of service in a city that labels itself the “Idea City.” Library branches help educate children, provide computers for internet use and job searching, and give our citizens access to a wide variety of both print and electronic reading options. The library is not merely an institution that serves to educate and entertain; it gives our citizens access to resources that are necessary to compete in a complex and competitive world.

A great city deserves a great library system. A great library is one that provides accessibility and service. Accessibility and service require adequate funding. Please consider, therefore, the seriousness with which the Library Commission makes this request for additional funding. We certainly hope that you will contact the Commission with your questions and comments. We welcome hearing from you.

Rationale:

Limited staffing and limited hours limit service to the public. It is a sad fact that for over five years now (since October 2008), the citizens of Austin have been unable to fully utilize the resources of the library they support with their tax dollars.

Vote

For: Chair Wise, Vice Chair Dabbert, Commission Members Kahn, Price Todd, Rosenblatt, Wiggins

Against:

Abstain:

Absent: Commission Member Ornelas

Attest:

Sharon M. Herfurth