



LIBRARY COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION 20180827-4b: Support for Austin Public Library FY19 Budget

Date: August 27, 2018

Subject: Support for Austin Public Library FY19 Budget

Motioned By: Vice Chair Hanna

Seconded By: Commission Member Dabbert

Recommendation

Support for the Austin Public Library proposed budget for FY2019

Description of Recommendation to Council

Requesting that the Austin City Council vote in favor of the proposed Austin Public Library budget of \$52,168,472 for FY2019, a 3.42% increase or \$1.7 million increase from FY18, to increase the materials budget by 3.6% or \$155,888, and to hire two full-time social workers at \$177,914 to coordinate the library's education, training, and engagement efforts for persons experiencing homelessness.

Rationale:

Austin Public Library operates and maintains 20 branches, Central Library, Austin History Center, Recycled Reads and a Bookmobile and respects the six strategic priorities of the city budget that include Economic Opportunity; Health; Safety; Culture and Lifelong Learning; Mobility; and a Government that Works;

Citizen satisfaction with library services is at 72%, which is 20% greater than the national average;

Library visits and materials circulation numbers have either remained constant or have increased, especially with the opening of new Central Library;

Austin Public Library is enhancing staff development opportunities to provide a welcoming, compassionate, attentive, and safe environment for all patrons of the Austin Public Library into the foreseeable future;

Materials expenditure (conventional and digital format books, magazines, periodicals, music films, and online databases) remains below the national average yet a new program for all students of Austin Independent School District will enable more Austin residents to have access to these materials;

Leadership at the city level has identified mitigating and solving homelessness as a major city-wide priority. Austin Public Library staff members have long been engaged in this realm and over the years, the Austin Public Library has gained valuable insight into how to approach programming and education to those experiencing homelessness. However in the absence of dedicated staff, Library staff is limited in its capacity. Librarians are not social workers, and thus do not have the level of education or training to conduct social work programs.

The citizens of Austin, and the surrounding Austin area, are voting with their feet. Visits to library branches have either remained steady or increased from FY18. This is especially true for the new Central Library and the reverberating effect its opening has had on other library branches.

The opening of the Central Library has created an energy in the Austin community that has transformed the entire APL system. For example, customer satisfaction with the quality and cleanliness of our libraries has remained high (75-77% of survey participants) for the past 2 years. In addition, the circulation per capita remains strong with many library patrons taking advantage of digital materials. And, equally as important, APL employees feel that an increased commitment to training is helping to improve their skills. Simply put, APL is investing in its staff, and that helps create a better environment and experience for library patrons.

Vote Unanimous on a 7-0 vote

For: Chair Williams; Vice Chair Hanna; and Commission Members Dabbert, Finney, Fisher, Self, and Todd

Against:

Abstain:

Absent: Commission Members Bogucka, Hersh, and Pardo-Kaplan

Attest: 