



## **LIBRARY COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION 20190722-4a2: Support for Addition of 6 FTE Security and Custodial Staff to the Austin Public Library FY20 Budget**

Date: July 22, 2019

Subject: Support for Addition of 6 FTE Security and Custodial Staff to the Austin Public Library proposed budget for FY20

Motioned By: Vice Chair Finney

Seconded By: Commission Member Williams

### **Recommendation**

Support for the Addition of 6 FTEs Security and Custodial Staff to the Austin Public Library proposed budget for FY2020

### **Description of Recommendation to Council**

Requesting that the Austin City Council, in addition to approving the proposed Austin Public Library budget for FY 2020, approve an additional 6 FTEs security and custodial staff totaling \$346,671. Three additional security and three additional custodial staff are considered vital for the safety of library patrons and for safeguarding the taxpayers' investment in library facilities through critical maintenance and upkeep.

### **Rationale:**

Austin Public Library is a vital public space and community hub, which supports and advances all six key outcome areas of the City's Strategic Direction.

As the population of the City grows so does the use of the Austin Public Library's 20 branches, Central Library, Austin History Center, Recycled Reads and bookmobile. The opening of the new Central Library has also increased the Austin Public Library's visibility and popularity. Unfortunately, with increased usage comes increased criminal and policy violations and a need for more security to ensure that the Austin Public Library remains a safe environment for all customers.

The top five violations of library policy violations since 2017 are the following:

- Harass, sexuality harass, abuse, threaten, or fight with a person
- Sleeping
- Abusive, indecent, profane, or vulgar language
- Disrupting use of library services or property
- Vandalize, steal, or damage property (library or another person)

Each of these categories of incidents has increased significantly since 2017.

Incident Report Percent Change

Central Library	Harassment	Sleeping	Disrupting use	Abusive	Vandalism
2017 to 2018	31.43%	128.00%	13.21%	11.90%	21.74%
2018 to 2019	20.69%	-8.77%	3.33%	61.70%	81.58%

Branch Libraries	Harassment	Sleeping	Disrupting use	Abusive	Vandalism
2017 to 2018	-17.07%	-29.22%	-13.30%	29.17%	-41.22%
2018 to 2019	103.92%	2.75%	50.92%	64.71%	-10.45%

These violations include two assaults of staff members, one attempted suicide by a customer, customers fighting and brandishing weapons, theft and intimidation. Even the enforcement of policy violations that would seem innocuous on their face can have serious security consequences. In two separate incidents, patrons who were thought to be sleeping were in medical distress due to K2, a synthetic marijuana.

Increased library usage also places more strain on facilities. Through bond elections, the taxpayers of the City of Austin have authorized significant investment in the Austin Public Library and its facilities. Over \$126 million has been invested in projects that are substantially complete, including the new Central Library. Austin Public Library currently has over \$2.5 million invested in current active projects. An additional \$34.5 million was approved by voters in the 2018 bond election. Austin Public Library currently spends over \$100,000 per year on contract expenditures to address these growing security and janitorial needs.

The request for 6 additional FTEs to address security, maintenance and custodial needs is a fiscally conservative yet critically important need to preserve and maintain the taxpayers' investment in these vital facilities.

**Vote**

For: Chair Hanna; Vice Chair Finney; and Commission Members Dwyer, Ramos, Smyer, and Williams

Against:

Abstain:

Absent: Commission Members Dabbert, Pardo-Kaplan, and Self

Attest:

  
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