



LIBRARY COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION 20200427-3b: Support for Austin Public Library FY21 Budget

Date: April 27, 2020

Subject: Support for Austin Public Library FY21 Budget

Motioned By: Commission Member Williams Seconded By: Commission Member Dabbert

Recommendation

Support for Austin Public Library proposed budget for FY2021

Description of Recommendation to Council

Requesting that the Austin City Council vote in favor of the proposed Austin Public Library budget of \$54,414,837 for FY2021, an increase of 3.2% or \$1,729,176 million from FY20, including an increase to the materials budget by 3.6% or \$168,653.

Rationale:

Libraries will get you through times of no money better than money will get you through times of no libraries.

- *Anne Herbert*

The Austin Public Library is a vital part of the City of Austin and it continues to make a significant contribution to Culture and Lifelong Learning in the City. APL operates and maintains 20 branches, Central Library, Austin History Center, Recycled Reads and a Bookmobile and hosts over 250,000 visits a month. APL provides cardholders access to over 1.5 million items, including conventional and digital format books, magazines, periodicals, music, films and online databases. APL also provides innovative programming. The Urban Libraries Council recently announced APL as one of 10 Top Innovators during the 2019 Innovations Celebration held in Salt Lake City.

During the current shelter-in-place, APL has continued to provide Austin residents free access to a wealth of digital materials including e-books, audio books, e-learning, homework help, and entertainment, including its Electric Lady Bird digital music streaming program, which delivers commercial-free, curated music from Central Texas artists.

APL also continues to provide staff development training to support the ability of all employees to provide a welcoming, equitable, and safe environment for customers even during the shelter-in-place order. APL's Organizational Development Office is linking staff with online training opportunities related to COVID-19. Examples include: Public Libraries Respond to COVID-19; Innovative Solutions in Times of Crisis; Why and How to Promote Your Online Services During the Quarantine; Serving Patrons in Crisis; and Preparing Your Digital Branch for Increased Use.

In keeping with the City of Austin’s hiring freeze, the APL proposed budget does not include any additional FTEs. The proposed budget includes a 3.6% increase in the budget for materials, including digital materials, subscriptions and databases. These increases are necessary to keep up with inflation, the increasing cost of materials, and Austin’s population growth, which is currently averaging 1.5% per year. The increases help APL keep up with the demand of a growing educated City.

As a vital and accessible community hub, Austin Public Library has a strong history of supporting community needs, including access to WiFi hotspots, and civic engagement, including support for the 2020 Census effort. APL can be a vital community partner in the City’s recovery from COVID-19.

Vote

For: Chair Hanna; Vice Chair Self; and Commission Members Aguilar, Dabbert, Dwyer, Pardo-Kaplan, Ramos, and Williams

Against:

Abstain:

Absent:

Attest: 