

Library Director Report

June 2024

Prepared by Tana Elias, July 3, 2024



Budget Update

On July 17, the library, like other general fund agencies, was asked to prepare a cost-to-continue budget as well as identifying service reductions of at least 5%, or \$1,088,699. I'm sharing our proposed budget and service reductions with the Board a week before the board meeting. While I'll present the slides I share at the Board meeting, I strongly encourage you all to review the budget presentation and supplementary data in advance of the Board meeting and use the week of July 3-11 to ask questions of myself or other staff, request additional data or scenarios, or make additional requests so we can come to the July 11 Board meeting prepared to answer your questions and present data you've requested. If needed, we'll meet again on July 18 as a Board to discuss, but our budget submission is due to City Finance by Friday, July 19 so I am hoping a second meeting is not necessary to allow us the time to meet that deadline.

After July 19, the conversation will continue as Common Council deliberates a possible referendum in July and August, the Mayor releases her Executive Operating Budget in October, and Council approves the final operating budget November 12-14. Should the City go to referendum, and should that referendum pass in November, it is likely that some or many of those reductions would be restored. If we do go to referendum, the Council would have to agree to do so and to propose specific language for voters no later than August 20, and residents would vote on the referendum on November 5.

This year, June through November will be an extended period of uncertainty for library staff. The 2025 city budget process is unprecedented and exceptionally complicated. I intend to keep the Board and staff as informed as I can during this time and to help provide Board and staff with information each group can use to navigate questions and unknowns as best as possible. I've set up multiple opportunities for staff to share input and ask questions in the next week as the Board prepares to vote on the budget and will keep the Board apprised of these efforts.

Madison's libraries are much loved by city residents and library service enjoys widespread community support. That support is a testament to the work of our staff in providing collections, services, spaces and programs that serve a wide variety of needs in our community. I am committed to continuing to advocate on behalf of our libraries to get through this difficult process as best we can, and to continue to keep our libraries strong and our staff supported.

Organizational Assessment Update

Since my last report, our management team has split into four groups to tackle two projects outlined in the organizational assessment presentation in June: recommending a new organizational structure and outlining a new system-wide programming department. Our

management team will meet again with Advancing with Purpose on July 23rd with the goal of having both projects complete in September 2024.

Director Onboarding Update

I've now had a chance to meet individually with all library managers, most Library Board members, the directors of Dane County Library Service and South Central Library System, the president of Wisconsin Library Association and the CEO of Urban Libraries Council. I've also continued to meet with City agency heads as well as Common Council members focusing on areas of specific interest to the library, and have scheduled regular checkins with the Mayor's office, City Human Resources, the Foundation, and my direct reports. In collaboration with our Community Engagement Coordinator, Annie Weatherby-Flowers, I'll begin a round of meetings with community partners once we complete the first round of the operating budget process.