



## STAFF REPORT

DATE: January 3, 2017

**REGULAR**

ITEM #: 23

**AGENDA ITEM:** Library Negotiations

**SUBMITTED BY:** Kristina Handt, City Administrator

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### **BACKGROUND:**

In 2015 Council members Smith and Fliflet were assigned to participate in the county-library discussions. In December of 2015 Mayor Pearson offered the following discussion points related to an agreement with the county to rejoin their library system:

- It is Lake Elmo's expectation that library services would be provided uninterrupted, at Lake Elmo's existing library facility, located at 3537 Lake Elmo Ave.
- Lake Elmo understands that the county uses a data driven process to establish services and hours of operation at each of its facilities. We'd expect the same process to be used for the Lake Elmo Avenue facility, however the county will supplement it's own data with Lake Elmo data.
- As in any successful agreement between distinct parties, commitments are to be made. Lake Elmo commits to a 10 year release of its library levy, while the county commits to a 5 year commitment of a Lake Elmo library facility.
- The Lake Elmo facility maintenance costs and all reasonable facility improvement costs, shall be reimbursed to Lake Elmo by Washington County or covered directly by Washington County.
- Lake Elmo has a long history of volunteerism and while we recognize data privacy concerns must be provided for, maintaining those volunteer opportunities are paramount to any collaborative agreement.

In 2016, staff, library board members and city council representatives participated in the negotiation process with Washington County to return the Lake Elmo Library to the county system. A Resolution and MOU was sent to the County on June 29, 2016. Since the conditions in the MOU were not agreed to by both parties prior to July 1, the County notified the City they did not meet the deadline to change the levying authority and return to the County system. The county later sent a letter suggesting if the city is interested in continuing dialogue around returning to the county system, city and county staff should continue discussions in early 2017 in order to meet the July 1 deadline for taxes payable in 2018.

### **ISSUE BEFORE COUNCIL:**

Who should negotiate with Washington County regarding rejoining the county library system?

### **PROPOSAL:**

Council member Boyer and mayor Pearson requested this agenda item and would like to have city staff resume negotiations with Washington County staff to return to the county library system.

### **OPTIONS:**

- 1) Direct city staff to resume negotiations with county staff regarding the return to the county library system
- 2) Appoint council members and staff to resume negotiations with county staff regarding the return to the county library system
- 3) Do not resume negotiations with county staff regarding the return to the county library system

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

From Council Member Boyer:

**“Motion to have City staff negotiate with County staff to bring the Lake Elmo Library back into the county system.”**