

# CITY OF PALM DESERT STAFF REPORT

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MEETING DATE: January 11, 2024

PREPARED BY: Gary Shaffer, Director of Library Services

REQUEST: STUDY SESSION: INFORMATION REGARDING THE PROGRESS OF  
MUNICIPAL LIBRARY SERVICES AND NEXT STEPS

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## **RECOMMENDATION:**

Receive and file an informational update from staff on the progress being made on the library project and next steps.

## **BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS:**

In June 2023, the City Council directed staff to proceed in withdrawing from the Riverside County Library System and establish its own municipal library services.

- On October 12, 2023, the City Council adopted the resolution.
- On November 7, 2023, the Board of Supervisors approved the resolution and notified the State Board of Equalization on November 27, 2023.

City staff has actively been negotiating the withdrawal agreement with the County including details on collections, equipment, and services. Staff will bring the agreement for City Council approval in February 2024. It will then go to the County in March 2024, which will conclude the necessary items to establish a municipal system and begin direct service delivery to Palm Desert. City staff is concurrently negotiating a lease agreement with the Desert Community College District for use of the existing library site until the City builds its own new library. City staff will bring the agreement for approval in February 2024 and the District's Board of Trustees will approve it in February 2024. During this study session staff will provide additional information on the following subject areas:

**Taskforce:** The Library Task Force consists of nine Palm Desert residents and two Councilmember liaisons. The residents are members of three subcommittees. The subcommittees are: Programming and Planning, Governance and Finance, and Community Engagement. The taskforce has met four times since its formation and the subcommittees as needed to provide input and direction. Currently the taskforce members have been tasked with recruiting community members to respond to a survey, available in English and Spanish; visiting the Palm Desert Library, neighboring libraries, and places of business that welcome customers and completing a visit-form at each location to gauge their likes and dislikes, this to inform the plan for the refreshed library and new library.

**Timeline for Service Transition:** The plan is to close the current library on April 30, 2024. This will allow County contractors to exit the library, while City Staff work to refresh the existing space. The refresh will include a new layout, service offerings, paint, and some new furniture. This will

occur in May and June, in anticipation of the July 1 opening. During the closure, residents will still be able to access electronic resources, including eBooks, from the County. Additionally, City library staff will provide bookmobile services, stock little free libraries around the City, and run a City-wide reading program called One Book-One Palm Desert.

**Staffing:** The Assistant Director has been hired and begins her employment with the City of Palm Desert on January 16. Staff have posted the next position to be hired, the Manager of Learning and Discovery. City staff plan to bring library staff on slowly, and only as necessary. Rather than have staff work in traditionally siloed services, the library will deploy a generalist model, whereby all staff are cross trained in all offerings and be able to assist whenever a need arises.

**Design and planning:** Staff have prepared an RFP for architectural services for a new library. It will be released in January.

Staff are also working with a consultant team, Margaret Sullivan Studios, on the design intervention for the current facility. As the design for the new and refreshed facilities are considered one must realize that libraries are no longer book warehouses. Instead, they are places where people convene, collaborate, and create. Yes, books will be present, however the existing facility will be reoriented as a community-building hub and library laboratory where new services can be piloted for possible inclusion in future Palm Desert libraries.

**Community engagement:** Staff are planning to conduct much outreach, ranging from visits to HOA resident meetings; Chamber of Commerce meetings; and club meetings, including the Friends of the Library; to hosting large, child-friendly, community input sessions with games and prizes, all meant to gain community insight into their hopes and dreams for a better library. This would include a digital survey link.

**Budget:** Staff are not currently anticipating an increase in the approved operating or capital budgets for FY'23-24. These remain:

Operations	\$1,321,527
Furniture, Fixtures & Equipment (Library Improvement Fund)	\$ 675,000
Total	\$1,996,527

**Legal Review:**

This report has been reviewed by the City Attorney's office.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

There is no financial impact associated with this staff report.