



**UMATILLA COUNTY
SPECIAL LIBRARY
DISTRICT**

Strengthening our community libraries

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Minutes
Special Meeting of the Board of Directors

January 12, 2021 at 5:30 pm
via Zoom
[Pendleton, Oregon]

ATTENDANCE BOARD:

Caty Clifton (via Zoom)
Nick Nash, President (via Zoom)
Hilary Stoupa (via Zoom)
John Thomas (via Zoom)

ATTENDANCE STAFF:

Erin McCusker, District Director (via Zoom)
Dea Nowell, Technical Services Manager (via Zoom)

ATTENDANCE - VISITORS:

Ruth Metz, Facilitator (via Zoom)
Benjamin Burgener, Stanfield City Manager (via Zoom)
Jennifer Costley, Pendleton PL Director (via Zoom)
Melissa Ince, Umatilla PL Acting Director (via Zoom)
Cecili Longhorn, Stanfield PL Director (via Zoom)
Lili Schmidt, Milton-Freewater PL Interim Director (via Zoom)
Kathleen Schmidtgall, Weston PL Director (via Zoom)
Kristin Williams, Athena PL Director (via Zoom)

CALL TO ORDER:

Board President Nick Nash called the Special Board Meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

CALL THE ROLL & ESTABLISH QUORUM:

Erin McCusker called the roll and noted three Board Members - Caty Clifton, Nick Nash and John Thomas - present at the time, thus there was a quorum. [Hilary Stoupa arrived a few minutes later.]

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA:

There were no changes to the agenda. John Thomas moved to approve the agenda as presented. Caty Clifton seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS:

Board President Nick Nash welcomed everyone and turned the meeting over to Erin McCusker and Ruth Metz. Erin welcomed everyone for coming, noting that the first of these meetings occurred one year ago. Erin then reintroduced our facilitator, Ruth Metz.

Facilitator Ruth Metz shared the ground rules, as well as the purpose (present findings, conclusions, and recommendations prior to the Board's January 28 meeting) and desired outcome (the Board has what it needs to make its determination on January 28, 2021) of the meeting. The District's purpose and responsibility of the Board were reiterated and an overview of the revenues for

UCSLD member libraries (City, District, and other revenues which include State and Federal revenues) through the years was given.

OVERVIEW OF FUNDING FORMULA SCENARIOS:

Erin McCusker shared the directives from the Board in terms of formula review goals, and the criteria and values, consolidated by Erin and Ruth, that guided the tax revenue distribution formula development which were set by the Board following the previous two tax revenue distribution review meetings. Erin then walked through the formula scenario spreadsheets giving explanations of various pieces.

CLARIFICATION [Clarifying questions to those scenarios shared]:

Jennifer Costley noted in chat “the comparison tab at the end was very helpful.” Cecili Longhorn stated she noticed in a lot of the formulas figuring how much would be received per person that Stanfield is the same as Pendleton while smaller libraries like Adams gets more per person. Erin McCusker responded that when basing on population there are going to be scenarios where it may look better for any individual libraries. As a district, there is a pot of money that is distributed not based on what is being done, but on what each entity could do. She noted “the collective benefits the whole.” She stated that historically in the early years the Board knew this amount would not fund everyone. The first attempt at setting a levy did not pass and so the Board went back for a smaller levy rate knowing it would not fund everyone, but would pass. That revenue has grown over the years, as have costs. There is a finite amount of money that is not enough to fund everyone. Jennifer Costley noted in chat: “To Erin’s point. I, as a large library feel that the distribution doesn’t meet my needs either. That is the consequence of having a district with such varying sizes. Erin responded that the District is not over funding anyone’s needs. We are contributing to the threshold level of service – District-wide. Caty stated she looks at the glass as half full, noting we have seen phenomenal growth in taxes and that we are looking to find the best way to compromise. Ruth Metz commented in chat: “Your District revenue is a finite amount that alone is not sufficient to fund all library services. The formula is emphasizing threshold of service and secondarily, per capita. The goal of the formula is not strictly a per capita distribution.” She noted we are trying to find a way to emphasize the Board reaffirmed two values, how to give the nodes of service a leg up (partial allocation). Jennifer Costley stated in chat: “I think it is important to look at the percentage changes in the final comparison chart. It demonstrates that an effort was made NOT to injure any library disproportionately.”

QUESTIONS ANSWERED:

Erin McCusker addressed questions that were submitted over the last year and following the formula scenario spreadsheets that went out last week. The questions (which were addressed on the slides) being:

- What is the benefit to being in the District?
- Why not continue to use the current distribution percentages?
- How are the funding elements determined?
- How are the threshold funding elements determined?
- Why might my library be getting more or less revenue in the formula scenarios?
- Why use zip code populations and how will those be certified and adjusted?
- Shouldn’t my library get more money because we have less revenue locally?
- Why isn’t there more money?
- Why is Hermiston not funded the same way as other libraries?
- Why isn’t assessed value being used to determine the distribution?

NEXT STEPS:

In conclusion Erin McCusker gave her recommendations to the Board. She reiterated that the recommended formula 1) be easily understood and applied impartially; 2) contributes to the delivery of library service throughout the District; 3) be consistent with Oregon public library law and Oregon Library Association Standards. Her recommendation is to utilize population by zip code; be a two-part formula consisting of threshold and population; does not recommend return to source given the purpose of the District and the role of the Board; recommends that Hermiston city be funded with only the population portion of the formula; and recommends two scenarios from the spreadsheets, in this order: Tab F - 2-level scenario and Tab E - FTE raised to \$20.00 per hour.

Ruth Metz, noting she was putting on her consultant hat, stated there is nothing wrong with the return to source approach, some library districts do use it, like Clackamas County. She addressed the Board stating that the purpose of that county district is stated in their origination/creation documents - they are actually a county district not a special district. She noted that as a special district you (the UCSLD) are given broad authority to provide for equitable library service for the residents. The emphasis in Clackamas is on library, whereas yours is on residents. Some regions do not have as much money, though you strive for equitable service regardless by providing a subsidy in funding. It is important in funding to look at the original purpose. She stated your authority is so broad, though it does not tell you how to do it. The Board may have to decide on a completely different service model down the road, since no one knows the future, however when given that much authority you should not tie yourselves up without knowing what you are doing (such as with return to source). She then went on to explain what has happened in Clackamas where overall city and district money are becoming more dependent upon district funding with withdrawing city revenues.

Erin asked the Board if they have what they feel they need to move forward? She noted that a resolution would generally be made to finalize a decision like this, however a resolution will not be created until the Board makes their decision, thus it will be a two-part decision. Caty Clifton thanked Erin for the exceptional staff work, thanked Ruth for helping us, and noted she feels she has what she needs. Nick Nash agreed with Caty that he has what he needs and thanked both Erin and Ruth. John Thomas and Hilary Stoupa both gave a thumbs up on the Zoom screen. The Board will consider this at their next regular meeting - January 28, 2021.

Erin thanked everyone for their time and attention.

ADJOURN:

Caty Clifton moved to adjourn the meeting. John Thomas seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 7:33 pm by Board President Nick Nash.

Respectfully submitted by Dea Nowell