

Lafourche Parish Public Library

Fact Sheet

There has been much discussion about the Parish Council's proposal to rededicate a portion of the library's millage. The Lafourche Parish Public Library Board has compiled this fact sheet to provide accurate information to Lafourche Parish taxpayers about the library's funds.

The current library millage is 6.3 mills, which brings in approximately \$4.6 million. The proposed budget for 2014 is \$6.4 million, which includes increases in staffing, collections, and services. Our reserve funds are being used to make up the difference for our budget.

The Parish Council's proposal would rededicate 1 mill from the library's annual millage. If this change occurs the library would only receive \$3.9 million annually to operate the 10 parish library locations with a \$6.4 million budget. This reduction will cause our "reserve funds" to be used rather quickly and will lead to a deficit of \$83K in year 3 and a \$2.7 million deficit in year 4.

Our communities will face:

- Closure of Library Branches, Reduction of Hours
- Fewer Technology Advances
- Limited DVD, Audiobook, and Music Selections
- Fewer Programs, Classes, and Crafts for ALL Ages
- FEWER SERVICES and MATERIALS!
- Fewer Staff members to Help You
- Restricted Educational Resources
- Limited Computer & Internet Access
- Smaller eBook/Digital Collections
- Limited Number of New Books & Magazines
- Limited Storytimes for Children

The library does not have a \$12 million surplus as has been reported

➤ The Parish's Internal Auditor has shown the Council that we do not have this amount

By the end of 2013, the contingency funds are projected to be \$7.5 million.

- Actual 2011 Expenditures: \$4.6 million, Actual 2011 End of Year Reserve Balance: \$8.7 million
- Actual 2012 Expenditures: \$4.8 million, Actual 2012 End of Year Reserve Balance: \$8.2 million
- Projected 2013 Expenditures: \$5.5 million, Projected 2013 End of Year Reserve Balance: \$7.5 million
- Projected 2014 Expenditures: \$6.4 million, Projected 2014 End of Year Reserve Balance: \$5.9 million

We have been slowly spending our 'reserve funds' to meet the state standards and to address the wants and needs of our patrons.

This fund is a contingency fund, not a surplus.

- So that the parish and taxpayers would incur no debt in constructing the libraries, the Library made cuts to staffing and services. These funds are the result of cuts to programming, purchase of new books and materials, staff salaries, hours, hiring, and staff training. The library was fiscally responsible and did not have to bond out any costs of our buildings; **WE SAVED FIRST.**
- Some of these funds have not come from the millage. The library also receives state revenue sharing funds and grant funding which is deposited alongside millage-derived funds. Transferring these funds is not allowed, even by vote of the public, since they are dedicated for specific purposes.

- These funds have already been earmarked for emergencies, to offset budget increases, and for future technology.
- The Parish needs to replace the leaking roof on the Thibodaux branch; this must come from our contingency fund
- The satellite branches were furnished using older materials/furniture that now needs to be replaced

The library already gave back 2 mills, which is approximately \$1.5 million, to taxpayers since 2006 .

After the library's building program had been substantially completed in 2006, the Library Board worked with the Parish Council to relieve the burden on taxpayers.

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The Library spent many years at the bottom of the state in terms of standards and statistics. The Library has only recently improved to meet the minimum standards and cannot continue to improve with cuts to funding.

Staffing

- Lafourche Parish Public Library employees are underpaid in comparison to other Louisiana public library systems
- The current average salary for Lafourche Parish Library staff is below our Parish employees.

Collections

- 18% of total budget should be spent on updating the collection and only 25% of the collection should be materials over 5 years old.
- Patrons have personally requested almost 1300 new items be added to our collections so far this year.
- The Library began offering e-books in 2011. So far this year, there have been over 7700 e-book downloads, and this continues to increase significantly.

Services

- So far this year, our libraries have had **286,273 visitors** with **700,000+ items checked out**
- **Almost 52% of the parish population have library cards.**
- The library provides **186 computers** with internet access for **free** to the public. This is significant because:
 - **43% of Lafourche Parish Households DO NOT have internet access.**
 - Most of the state offices have closed and applications for basic services are only offered online.
 - Federal and state tax forms are becoming available only online.
 - Most job openings are only posted online.
- Libraries are the **Community Hub** when applying for emergency assistance (BP Oil spill, Hurricanes, FEMA, etc.)
- Libraries are the front line for enrolling people in the health insurance exchanges mandated under the **Affordable Healthcare Act**, per President Obama.