



**MIAMI-DADE COUNTY
FINAL OFFICIAL MINUTES
Mayor's Blue Ribbon Taskforce
for the
Miami-Dade Public Library System**

Stephen P. Clark Government Center
Commission Chambers
111 N.W. First Street
Miami, FL 33128

February 21, 2014
As Advertised

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Board of County Commissioners

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**CLERK'S SUMMARY AND OFFICIAL MINUTES
MAYOR'S BLUE RIBBON TASKFORCE
FOR THE MIAMI-DADE PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM
February 21, 2014**

The Mayor's Blue Ribbon Taskforce (Taskforce) convened a meeting at 9:45 a.m. on February 21, 2014 at the Stephen P. Clark Government Center, Board of County Commissioners Commission Chambers, 111 NW 1 Street, Miami, FL 33128.

The following Taskforce members were present: Chairman Carlos Gimenez, Daniel Alfonso, Charles Auslander, Se'Adoreia Brown, Barry E. Johnson, Nancy Lawther, Bhaivi Pandya, John Quick, Max Rothman, Raymond Santiago, Katherine Seaver, Javier Alberto Soto, Maria Velez, Ron Wasson, Lillian Weinberg, and Deede Weithorn.

The following Taskforce members arrived late: Commissioner Javier Souto, and Marla Alpizar.

The following staff members were present: Lisa Martinez, Chief of Staff, and Gabriela Lopez, Assistant to Chief of Staff, Office of the Mayor; and Deputy Clerk Alan Eisenberg.

1. Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Carlos Gimenez led Taskforce members in a Moment of Silence, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Welcome

Mayor Gimenez acknowledged Taskforce members for their hard work and dedication to ensure the Miami-Dade County Public Library System's (MDPLS) future success. He pointed out that today's (2/21) discussion was vital to the MDPLS's leadership team developing final recommendations to be shared with the community.

3. Approval of Minutes

Deputy Clerk Alan Eisenberg announced for the record the following corrections to the January 17, 2014 Mayor's Blue Ribbon Taskforce (MBRTF) meeting:

- Lea Nickless represented the Miami-Dade Public Library Advisory Board rather than Maria Velez.
- Javier Soto asked to be listed as Javier Alberto Soto.

It was moved by Ms. Nancy Lawther that the January 17, 2014 MBRTF meeting minutes, be approved as amended. This motion was seconded by Mr. John Quick, and upon being put to a vote, passed by a vote of 11-0 (Commissioner Javier Souto and Ms. Marla Alpizar were absent).

4. Discussion Agenda Items

Ms. Lisa Martinez, Chief of Staff, Office of the Mayor, provided an overview of the Discussion Agenda Items for the MBRTF Recommendations that would be considered at today's (2/21) meeting. She explained that Mayor Gimenez would chair the meeting; that Taskforce members would provide thoughts on each of the recommendations; and that this information would be incorporated into the MDPLS's Master Plan. Ms. Martinez noted a resolution dated February 12, 2014, presenting recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners from the Miami-Dade Public Library Advisory Board, was already shared with Taskforce members.

Mayor Gimenez pointed out that a report would be compiled of today's (2/21) discussion and the final recommendations would be presented to Taskforce members for consideration at an upcoming meeting.

❖ SERVICE NEEDS

1A *Taking into account the diverse interests and needs of our community, are there specific programs or service areas that the Taskforce would recommend to prioritize and/or phase-out as the Miami-Dade Public Library System (MDPLS) prepares its Master Plan for 2014 and Beyond? (i.e. technology, lending resources, community space, life-long learning, programming for children).*

Mr. Barry Johnson stressed the need for the increased use of technology and updated access to library resources for County residents.

Mr. Charles Auslander suggested that library resources should focus more on youth and community engagement related programming, rather than allocating those financial resources to technology needs.

Mayor Gimenez commented that there was a greater need for technological resources to be deployed to County libraries in specific communities where technology was not as readily available. He said that libraries could individualize their services based upon the community served.

Mr. Raymond Santiago pointed out that all libraries currently offered the same services throughout the entire library system; however, some branches were equipped with more computers than others, based upon community needs.

Mr. John Quick commented that lending resources for teens, children and families might be more appreciated in some areas while technological resources in others. He suggested targeting community demographics in order to provide appropriate resources and services that were important to diverse communities throughout the County.

Ms. Deede Weithorn pointed out that library computers and internet access were lending resources, needing to be scaled to the specific needs of each library. She considered technology to be the systems used by libraries for efficient operations and collection management.

Ms. Lillian Weinberg emphasized the importance of libraries being future oriented. She said that Mr. Santiago and Library staff had already identified many of the ideas she was prepared to suggest; however, these ideas could not be implemented due to insufficient funding. Ms. Weinberg commented that technology was a trend that could not be ignored and should be expanded in our libraries. She suggested using libraries as Maker Spaces. Ms. Weinberg said that libraries needed to teach coding, noting that coding was the language used to create computer applications and a growing source of employment.

Mayor Gimenez questioned whether it was the County's and the library's core mission to teach coding or would that be better addressed by the public school system. As an example, Mayor Gimenez explained that the County transferred the Head Start program to the Miami-Dade County Public Schools because that organization was better suited to provide those services, resulting in an additional 400 students being served with the same amount of funding..

Ms. Nancy Lawther pointed out that coding would become part of the public school curriculum should Senate Bill 790 be enacted. She noted concern there would be fewer media specialists available to assist students learn coding since these positions were funded at the discretion of school principals.

Mayor Gimenez commented that County government also had a core mission; that the County needed to serve its residents with limited resources; and that it could not be everything to everyone. He said that County government and the library system should determine the core mission and services its citizens needed and then strive to provide those services well.

Ms. Weinberg agreed on the importance of a core mission; however, noted that libraries were supplemental to the educational system and future trends should be considered. She said technology was a new literacy needing to be fulfilled in addition to books.

Mayor Gimenez questioned and Ms. Weinberg concurred that the library should be considered as part of the continuum of education for our children and residents.

Mr. Quick suggested that the wording "for our children and residents" be replaced with "for our community".

Mayor Gimenez stated that he preferred "for our children".

Ms. Maria Velez pointed out that the needs of adults and the illiterate who used the libraries also needed to be considered.

Mr. Max Rothman noted that Mr. Roger E. Levien conceptualized the future of the library along

four dimensions; physical to virtual, individual to community, collection to creation, and portal to archive, in an article entitled *Confronting the Future: Strategic Visions for the 21st Century Public Library*, suggesting that future strategic planning considered this framework. He said he agreed that library services should be structured to address the needs of geographic areas and the demographics of the populations served.

Mr. Javier Alberto Soto commented that the library was the center of family and civic life; a safe space for families and the community to come together. He suggested the continuation and expansion of children and adult programming could be funded through developing partnerships with other community based organizations. Mr. Soto also suggested adjusting library service hours, keeping them open on Sundays, and staggering hours scheduled during the week.

Mr. Quick asked that recommendations of this Taskforce meet or exceed the Florida Public Library Standards adopted by the Florida Library Association.

Ms. Weinberg said libraries were a place for idea exchange, for community members to gather and to engage, and not just a place for content.

Ms. Lawther noted the following service needs for the library as designated by the Parent Teachers Association: children and teens, literacy, English language, developing hardbound (physical) and virtual collections, senior programming, workforce economic development, cooperation with government agencies, reference assistance, and the provision of essential rather than extraneous programming.

Mr. Ron Wasson noted that services and resources should be allocated based upon the particular needs of each community.

Ms. Se'Adoreia Brown stressed that the survey results should be addressed by giving functions and service needs to libraries depending on particular usage and needs of each demographic group and geographical area served.

Mayor Gimenez responded that based upon the limited financial resources the library system would need to surgically direct its resources to specific needs, unless it received additional funding. He said the library would need to be different things to different people. Mayor Gimenez reiterated the need to invest in the future of our children to become productive members of our society through the libraries.

Commissioner Souto mentioned that many prominent people in the world of sports, arts, entertainment and business were from Miami. He recommended that these well-known and recognized individuals, including the creators of Amazon.com and Facebook, were asked to support our libraries.

Mayor Gimenez pointed out that efforts were also underway designed to encourage successful entrepreneurs to remain in this community.

➤ **SERVICE MODEL**

2A *Does the MDPLS currently have an appropriate number of points of service? Are points of service accessible to library users? Should all points of service offer the same service delivery model? Are there specific recommendations from the Taskforce regarding the future service deliver models to be offered by the MDPLS?*

Does the MDPLS currently have an appropriate number of points of service?

Ms. Deede Weithorn said the County had an adequate number of points of service, noting that the library system could make better use of readily accessible technology. She suggested implementing Skype a Librarian to share resources between libraries and the use of online chats to access content.

Mayor Gimenez noted he liked the idea suggested by Ms. Weithorn to access live people without being face to face. He pointed out that Miami-Dade County had 49 libraries and the City of Hialeah had six.

Ms. Marla Alpizar explained that the City of Hialeah had a main library and five e-libraries. She said e-libraries were small neighborhood based point of service facilities, located either within a park or a police station, staffed by trained library aides or a part-time assistant, at a reasonable cost. Ms. Alpizar noted that the main library could be compared to one of the County's Regional libraries; that the e-library provided access to computers, the internet, reference materials, limited book collections and staff assistance; and that requested materials were usually delivered to e-libraries within 24 hours. She indicated that e-libraries generated new library users who were unable to access the main library.

Lillian Weinberg pointed out that Miami-Dade County had fewer libraries than other cities serving 2.5 million residents as presented in comparable data.

Mayor Gimenez noted that 2.5 million was the entire County population and the MDPLS did not serve the entire County population.

Mr. Raymond Santiago clarified that MDPLS served approximately 2 million residents with the remainder being served by the City of Hialeah, the City of North Miami, the City of North Miami Beach, and Miami Shores. He commented that a large number of users never set foot into a library and accessed resources through specific applications and the internet. He noted that access to a face-to-face information platform through Skype or another similar platform was the next step to making library access more readily available.

Mr. Max Rothman questioned whether sufficient data on checking out books and community space usage existed, and if so, whether there were any outliers.

Mr. Santiago responded that data existed on in-person and electronic usage. He noted that

library usage decisions considered both demographics and specific community needs.

Mr. Rothman commented that combined library visits and circulation was 4.5 per capita in Miami-Dade County as compared to a national average of 9.4 and 10.9 in Broward County. He also commented that there was a rather large amount of economic and social disparity in this County, noting that the survey data showed that library use increased among the middle class/higher educated populations. Mr. Rothman suggested developing additional partnerships with the school system in neighborhoods where library usage was low.

In response to Mayor Gimenez' question about circulation, Mr. Santiago responded that circulation was the number of checked out library materials, noting that visits and circulation were usually calculated separately.

Mr. Richard L. Waters, Principal Consultant, Godfrey's Associates pointed out that circulation and visits were two of the most valid statistics to measure in-person library use. He said the 4.5 per capita represented a combination of circulation and visits divided by the Miami-Dade County service area population. Mr. Waters commented that a large number of people in this County who could not read, noting higher library usage five years ago when the library system had a larger budget and able to provide more current resources for its readers.

In response to Mayor Gimenez' inquiry about the low literacy rate at 52 percent, Mr. Waters explained this was 2003 data and no new data existed. He said this figure represented an adult population unable to perform basic functions in a satisfactory manner.

Mayor Gimenez noted that many residents were literate but not in the English language.

Ms. Bhaivi Pandya questioned whether data was available according to library branch to which Mr. Santiago responded that this information was included in the materials previously distributed.

Mr. Ron Wasson commented that the number of libraries appeared adequate. He noted that the Town of Bay Harbor Islands was designing a community center to address a community need and that this center would include space for a small library.

Are points of service accessible to library users?

Ms. Maria Velez noted that many communities throughout the County now had libraries due to the capital expansion program. She stressed the importance that libraries be used as community centers and provided programming based upon the needs of specific areas.

Mayor Gimenez commented that a provision in Article 7 of the County Charter prevented libraries from being located in County parks.

Mr. Raymond Santiago pointed out that several libraries were built in City of Miami parks prior

to the restriction noted by Mayor Gimenez becoming effective. He said that any location where a library could co-habitat with another public property was cost effective and a good use of community space. Mr. Santiago said this interpretation of the County Charter hindered the County from either acquiring or establishing libraries in County parks and needed to be further reviewed.

Commissioner Souto commented that Article 7 prohibited the establishment of any commercial enterprise and that he was not aware of its application to County entities.

Mr. John Quick inquired whether the County Attorney had opined on this issue.

Mayor Gimenez said he would look into this situation.

Should all points of service offer the same service delivery model?

Mayor Gimenez pointed out that he believed based upon previous conversation that agreement existed that all points of service should more specifically adopt service delivery models meeting the needs of its community demographics.

Are there specific recommendations from the Taskforce regarding the future service delivery models to be offered by the MDPLS?

Mayor Gimenez concurred with Ms. Weithorn's earlier recommendation to offer more efficient library access and services from alternative locations by using Skype librarians, thus giving as much service as possible to as many people as possible. He said we needed to determine appropriate methods to increase our library usage, to serve the needs of the majority of our residents, and whether our materials and services were diverse enough for everyone.

Ms. Nancy Lawther said that the library website needed to be made available in alternate languages to meet the needs of our community; that additional applications were needed to have more readily accessible library services; that library materials needed to be catalogued using Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) tags; and that partnerships needed to be developed with other libraries throughout Florida and the State University System for the utilization of central storage technology and shared resources.

Discussion pursued among the Task Force members over the use of RFID technology and cross utilization of a single identification card across multiple County departments, noting an annual savings estimated at approximately \$100,000; however, this did not include the cost to tag library materials.

Ms. Marla Alpizar commented that libraries were both a public good as well as an efficient use of shared resources, noting a cost of between \$11.50 and \$13.00 per person. She said the library system had provided required service needs during difficult and good times, focused on core services as evidenced by user surveys, and matched the needs of our diverse community.

Ms. Lawther pointed out that other non-profit organizations and corporate entities existed that could partner to support library programs and facility requirements.

➤ FUNDING

3A *After consideration of the study presented on January 17, 2014 regarding countywide library services, the Blue Ribbon Funding Working Group's presentation shared on December 18, 2013, and the background information provided to all Taskforce members, does the Taskforce have a recommendation regarding the incorporation of the Library District into the General Fund.*

Mr. John Quick mentioned that the Friends of the Miami-Dade Public Library Board members indicated their support to keep the Library District separate from the General Fund.

Mr. Daniel Alfonso inquired whether there would be any issue with taxing municipalities that were not already part of the County's Library System.

Ms. Marla Alpizar noted she did not support the Library System being incorporated into the General Fund.

Ms. Deede Withorn pointed out that members of the Miami-Dade County League of Cities were concerned about equity issues and did not support this proposal.

3B1 *After consideration of the services currently provided by the MDPLS, the community and employee surveys, the presentations provided by the four Blue Ribbon Working Groups and the additional background information provided to all Taskforce members, does the Taskforce have a recommendation regarding library funding within its current structure? (i.e. lower the millage rate, sustain the current millage rate, increase the millage rate to sustain current service levels, increase the millage rate to enhance service levels).*

Ms. Deede Weithorn pointed out that the Miami-Dade County League of Cities believed that service level enhancements would be needed if people were asked to pay more.

Mayor Gimenez noted that additional money was needed to maintain the current level of library services; that library services were not currently being provided in the most efficient manner; and that he would not hesitate to ask residents to pay more if the libraries were operating as efficiently as possible. He commented that a status quo existed at County government; reiterating that Head Start now served more children with less money and in a better way after it was delegated to the school system. Mayor Gimenez said he would support charging more to provide service enhancements provided the Library system was able to operate more efficiently.

Mr. John Quick commented that the Taskforce also wanted the Library system; to be more efficient however, an increase in the millage rate was necessary to address the \$21 million budget shortfall.

Mayor Gimenez said that \$21 million was needed to keep the Library system exactly the way it was today, with the same number of employees, the same salary structure and benefit level.

Mr. Quick agreed that the Library system needed to be as efficient as possible; however, noted the additional cost per resident would be less than the cost of buying one book. He said it was important to increase the millage rate in order to maintain services while continuing to identify ways to increase efficiency.

Mr. Javier Alberto Soto said that taxpayer's expected the Mayor's administration to conduct a thorough review of the Library system, looking at efficiencies and the investment of resources, noting this as a Taskforce recommendation. He suggested staggered service hour adjustments and technology improvements, making both the County and municipalities more effective in the delivery of its library services.

Ms. Katherine Seaver noted the Funding Working Group recommended that the Library system needed additional funding to maintain its service levels, and suggested a budget that will grow and sustain the Library system into the future.

Mayor Gimenez said he supported this request provided that the Library system was as efficient as possible. He pointed out that the issue was the amount the employees were being paid and not the number of employees.

Ms. Bhaivi Pandya noted she believed a millage rate increase to sustain the library would be a minimum impact to County taxpayers and proceed to question the amount this increase would cost the average taxpayer.

Mayor Gimenez responded that it would be an increase of approximately \$20 to \$25 for the average property owner.

Mr. Daniel Alfonso said he used the library's audio book resources but did not go into their facilities. He noted less expensive delivery systems such as that used in Hialeah were appealing. Mr. Alfonso concurred with previous comments that different service levels were needed based upon the community being served. He said the Library Service Millage Rate required to maintain service levels was likely to increase, even after efficiencies were applied; however, noted his preference was for the increase to be taken from the County's total millage.

Mayor Gimenez explained that transferring money from the General Funds to the Library would create other issues and needed to be carefully evaluated. He clarified the Taskforce's consensus was to increase the Library Service Millage Rate in order to enhance services; however, voters needed to be assured that libraries were functioning as efficiency as possible.

Ms. Weithorn stressed the importance of developing public private partnerships in order to obtain, build and subsidize buildings that were more technologically oriented and contained more usable space. She cautioned that funding also needed to support electronic collections,

books and technological investments. Ms. Weithorn said that efficiencies would need to be reviewed in all 49 library locations.

Mayor Gimenez pointed out an example where the private industry funded improvements to County facilities and assumed their ongoing maintenance costs, noting that this concept could be expanded to our libraries, thus reducing the burden to County taxpayers.

3B2 *After consideration of the services currently provided by the MDPLS, the community and employee surveys, the presentations provided by the four Blue Ribbon Working Groups and the additional background information provided to all Taskforce members, does the Taskforce have a recommendation regarding funding library services through alternative approaches? (i.e. independent taxing district, a sales tax as an alternative to ad valorem funding, non-ad valorem fee, referendum on a temporary millage increase).*

Ms. Nancy Lawther pointed out that House Bill 113 and Senate Bill 66 proposed a ½ cent sales tax to benefit Miami-Dade College and Florida International University be placed on the November 2014 ballot. She expressed concern about the viability of asking for another sales tax increase following this initiative and the recent Jackson Health System public funding approval.

Mr. John Quick pointed out that pursuant to *Wilson vs. Miami-Dade County*; only the County Commission could set millage rates. He suggested the option of a straw poll of County voters be considered, rather than to go through the lengthy process of a referendum.

Ms. Lillian Weinberg questioned the option of increasing the millage rate to close the budget deficit and provide additional library funding, noting that the County spent \$13 per capita when the average was \$27 per capita.

Mayor Gimenez responded that the County Commission needed to decide whether to increase the millage rate; however, the question was whether County voters are given the opportunity to voice their opinion through a referendum. He said he did not think voters would approve a millage rate increase unless additional services were provided. Mayor Gimenez noted six commissioners were up for re-election and a straw ballot could present a strong indication to the Commission as to the will of this community. He explained that the Commission allowed three years of carry-over into one year with no millage rate increase to maintain library services which created the current issues.

Mr. Quick questioned the internal process before placing a straw ballot referendum on the ballot.

Mayor Gimenez explained that Trim Notices were sent to property owners in July; that the Trim Notice could contain a higher millage rate to include the amount of a proposed rate increase; that the County Commission would vote to approve the Trim Notice in August; and that Commission would vote to approve the millage rates in September. He said that placing a non-binding straw ballot referendum on the August ballot would not incur an additional cost because the election was already scheduled.

Mayor Gimenez noted the Taskforce consensus was to increase the millage rate in order to both maintain and increase library services.

➤ **AWARENESS, ADVOCACY, AND MARKETING**

4A After consideration of the community and employee surveys and the presentation provided by the Blue Ribbon Awareness, Advocacy and Marketing Working Groups, is the public aware of library services available in Miami-Dade County? Does the public demonstrate an understanding of how library services are funded? If it is determined that there is a need to increase education and awareness in these areas, what specific strategies does the Taskforce recommend to the MDPLS Leadership Team to include in the proposed MDPLS Master Plan for 2014 and Beyond?

Ms. Marla Alpizar stressed the importance of a strategic marketing program performed by outside marketing experts, noting that libraries across the county often relied on in-house marketing which was not as effective.

Mr. Raymond Santiago pointed out that he concurred with Ms. Alpizar, noting that the MDPLS had relied on in-house and County marketing efforts. He said successful library systems benefited from outside marketing opportunities and expertise. Mr. Santiago noted a strategic marketing effort would be helpful.

Ms. Deede Weithorn suggested matching marketing to the different needs of our communities, noting a single approach to marketing was not used by corporate America anymore. She said that marketing should match the service delivery model.

Ms. Lillian Weinberg noted marketing efforts needed to explain what the Library system was currently doing as well as what it will be doing in the future.

Mayor Gimenez concurred with earlier comments that libraries should not be the same throughout the County, noting the need to market its programs and future service enhancements. He suggested targeting libraries based upon certain criteria similar to magnet schools.

Ms. Maria Velez suggested that local Chambers of Commerce's be encouraged to market the Library system and the services being provided to assist local businesses and entrepreneurs in order to help attract more residents.

Mayor Gimenez concurred that the library should be a selling point of our community, a reason people want to live here, and for companies to relocate here. He said efforts to integrate our library system as a learning environment and to make it an integral part in attracting new businesses, helping businesses, and creating new jobs were needed.

Ms. Nancy Lawther questioned whether to solicit pro-bono marketing support and/or the use of graduate marketing students to offset the costs associated with the development and implementation of a professional marketing program.

Mayor Gimenez responded that the County had a good relationship with local universities; that a Mayor's Internship Program with Florida International University currently existed; and that the program could be expanded to obtain students with marketing expertise from the University of Miami.

Ms. Bhaivi Pandya suggested that a graduate student competition be used to develop a marketing plan with an award for the best plan. She pointed out that that State universities had excellent advertising and design programs that should be considered. Ms. Pandya mentioned that an advertising/marketing campaign be adopted, rather than a marketing strategy, and that the Library system's brand be revisited with a fresh outlook through that campaign.

Mr. Javier Alberto Soto pointed out that the marketing resources and expertise that currently existed at the County should be leveraged. He noted that synergies existed between the Library system and other County departments.

Mr. Charles Auslander noted the library was a place where parents could bring children for learning opportunities and social engagement.

Ms. Lillian Weinberg noted that efforts were needed to obtain support from community partners who could help market the library. She said the Knight Foundation as well as other local organizations existed who cared about libraries, wanted them to succeed and available to help. Ms. Weinberg suggested digital marketing be incorporated into a campaign. She said she liked the idea of graduate students competing to develop a marketing plan.

Mayor Gimenez asked for comments on a potential park, cultural, library partnership.

Mr. Barry Johnson responded that leveraging County assets would give a competitive advantage over other markets, noting similar efforts Chicago had undertaken.

Mr. John Quick concurred that this was a good idea and that the parks and library already had a natural partnership with many shared facilities.

Mr. Raymond Santiago pointed out that the synergies that existed in the Foundation relationship needed to be expanded. He said that local realtors often used our libraries, parks, schools and museums to showcase neighborhoods, noting access to these facilities and quality of life issues were important to our residents. Mr. Santiago stressed the need to maximize existing relationships and move forward in a more strategic manner.

Ms. Pandya suggested that Miami International Airport (MIA) be utilized as a library partner because of the vast number of tourists who visit this city through that facility.

Mayor Gimenez responded that MIA revenue could not be used for other purposes because of Federal Aviation Administration regulations. He said that MIA was a self-sustaining operation and did not receive any County funding. Mayor Gimenez noted that MIA could perhaps help promote the libraries in order to attract passengers to the airport.

Mayor Gimenez pointed out that Miami was exploding and that people were moving to this city because of our culture, including our libraries.

4B *The MDPLS already has established entities that lead advisory and advocacy activities for the department. Are there specific strategies that the Taskforce recommends related to the MDPLS's work with these entities?*

Mr. Max Rothman suggested that all marketing activity should take into consideration the survey data depicting areas in the community with low usage, low taxation support, and the need for greater marketing support.

Ms. Nancy Lawther inquired whether an allegiance or donor support structure could be established for specific library branches.

Mr. John Quick responded that the Friends of the Miami-Dade Public Library System were a countywide system, noting that some libraries would be left out if specific branches were selected to receive donations.

Mr. Raymond Santiago noted concern about implementing a segmented support system and concurred with Mr. Quick over the need to support an entire system rather than individual branches.

Ms. Lillian Weinberg noted she believed there were opportunities to explore, noting the success of Chicago's Adopt-A-Branch program.

Mr. Santiago commented that many local cities and municipalities have shown their generosity by funding specific programs within library branches in their communities.

Ms. Deede Weithorn pointed out that she did not believe good marketing recommendations would come from only library users and that advisory groups could not ignore the non-users and non-traditional users.

Mayor Gimenez clarified that marketing should be targeted to those individuals who were not already using the libraries.

Mr. Santiago said non-users and non-traditional users were a significant portion of the community and this component of the community needed to be included in the strategic plan.

Ms. Weinberg said she believed non-user data existed; however, noted that the needs of users

who were willing to have their millage rate increased as well as those who were not, both needed to be taken into consideration with a vote.

Mr. Santiago commented that non-users paid the same amount in library taxes as users.

Ms. Lawther said there were plenty of users who were not aware of the various services provided by the library, noting a campaign must address this population. She suggested using readily known individuals who were easily recognized and representative of the various communities to promote library services to non-users in those areas.

Ms. Bhaivi Pandya suggested that the advertising campaign utilized grand ambassadors.

Mayor Gimenez noted that marketing efforts needed to reach the entire community, specifically those individuals that would benefit from expanded programs and services. He said that individuals who would benefit from programs that did not know those programs existed also needed to be considered.

Ms. Weinberg suggested holding a hackathon in County libraries where programmers would be given data and encouraged to produce applications, noting this type of event would generate media attention.

Mayor Gimenez pointed out the library could serve as a gathering place for individuals to convene and discuss products/ideas with other like-minded people.

Mr. Max Rothman indicated that the Alliance for Aging participated in numerous health fairs throughout the community, noting the potential for the libraries to participate in these events.

4C If changes in service delivery and/or funding levels are recommended by the Taskforce, are there specific strategies the Taskforce recommends to inform and engage municipalities, community stakeholder groups and Miami-Dade County residents?

Ms. Marla Alpizar pointed out that the County could learn from the effective campaign conducted by the Miami-Dade County Public Schools that was used to inform and engage the community on the recent bond initiative.

Ms. Deede Weithorn said this was the chance for the County to reinvent itself, noting that the opportunity now existed to rebrand itself and make service delivery, funding, and efficiency changes. She pledged the support of the Miami-Dade County League of Cities (League) to spread the word and to assist in any way they could.

Mayor Gimenez acknowledged the League for their support and concurred with Ms. Weithorn that the Library system needed to reinvent itself. He noted that the Library system needed to determine what were the things it was going to do, how it would be different, and how it would

become the best system. Mayor Gimenez said the Library system needed to give more to the community, to help our children and to improve the quality of our lives if it were to ask for an investment into its future.

5. Conclusion

Mayor Gimenez pointed out that the Taskforce feedback would be evaluated by Mr. Raymond Santiago, Ms. Lisa Martinez and other members of the County Administration. He said that the final report would be prepared within two weeks and then presented to Taskforce members at its next meeting, to be scheduled within three weeks.

Mr. John Quick suggested that the materials made available to Taskforce members be provided to the County Commission as part of the final report.

Mayor Gimenez expressed his appreciation to Taskforce members for their participation. He said that the final report would be presented at the next meeting along with a presentation from the library system as to their future vision and how to proceed.

Mayor Gimenez acknowledged Ms. Martinez for her excellent work.

6. Adjournment

There being no further business, the Mayor's Blue Ribbon Taskforce meeting was adjourned at 12:21 p.m.



Mayor Carlos Gimenez