

Date: July 25, 2013

Memorandum



To: Honorable Chairwoman Rebeca Sosa
and Members, Board of County Commissioners

From: Carlos A. Gimenez
Mayor

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Carlos A. Gimenez", written over the name in the 'From' field.

Subject: Library District - Budget and Programmatic Update

Prior to your strong vote of support on all of the proposed millage rates at the July 16, 2013 Board of County Commissioners meeting, I set forth the significant organizational impacts that must be considered when balancing the priorities of keeping millage rates flat, while minimizing service impacts. As I conveyed to the Board then, the difficult work ahead includes the possible closure of up to 22 libraries, and the elimination of up to 251 filled positions.

At that same meeting, I reaffirmed my commitment to continually assess the way we carry out our mission of public service in a manner that seeks efficiencies and maximizes our reach, but also protects the quality of the services provided to our residents. I welcome recommendations and feedback from each of you and from vested community stakeholders, but all scenarios must be vetted against criteria that evaluate the fiscal and programmatic viability of a **sustainable** county government. Our decisions must be strategic.

The following is a summary of planning steps we have taken over the past year and intend to take over the next fiscal year for the Miami- Dade County Public Library System (MDPLS).

Planning for Libraries Beyond 2013

The residents of Miami-Dade County clearly value their Library System: last year, more than eight million visitors passed through the Library doors, and another five million visited the Library's website. The Library remains a vital part of this community because it is a user-centric government department that can change and adapt to provide the resources, services, and programs most needed by this community. However, in order to continue to adapt to the needs of the community in today's economic climate, MDPLS must take into account the trends and challenges affecting public libraries today. While books will remain at the heart of our libraries, the use of technology, the educational, civic, and social roles the library fulfills, and the partnerships it must build are all significant trends that will increasingly affect the Library in the years to come.

In the fall of 2012, we heightened the internal discussion regarding the long-term vision of our County's Library System. We analyzed system-wide strategies that will help guarantee our library system's adaptability to our diverse community needs. In an era when our local schools are shifting from regular text books to online text books, databases have taken the place of card catalogs, and traditional book stores are much harder to find, we must make a clear case for why libraries are important to our residents and what will be needed to meet our residents' evolving needs. It is our responsibility to effectively hone our holistic approach to service delivery within a sustainable fiscal framework. Our planning efforts have centered on common trends impacting most libraries. Although we have a complex road ahead of us, it is imperative that our work for short-term solutions does not stray from the integrity of our long-term plans.

- **Library Locations and Schedules**

As noted in my proposed budget, we are facing a funding gap of \$21.709 million within the Library District. This has required us to assess library usage, branch operating costs,

services provided, clients served, current service levels and a review of all leases and municipal interlocal agreements. This is a course of action that started two weeks ago and will continue to be refined as we work through the budget process, meet with community stakeholders and communicate with our clients directly. I shared an initial draft list of 22 library closures on July 16th. We are taking a very close look at all variables and identifying solutions for service gaps that would emerge with a closure, including tailoring schedules to match the needs of the community. It is a methodical, multi-faceted work-in-progress and we will keep you and community stakeholders engaged and informed along the way.

- **Technology and Connectivity**

MDPLS has more than 2,700 desktop computers and laptops in our current libraries. Free internet connectivity is also provided in – and surrounding – all branches. As library branches are being considered for closure, we are also assessing access points to connectivity in the affected communities. MDPLS, the Parks and Recreation and Open Spaces (PROS) Department and the Information Technology Department (ITD) had already been working together to broaden connectivity access points throughout the county and were also in the process of developing 11 Community Connection Labs in our community parks. This initiative is being finalized and will be launched next month. These access sites will be mapped out along with the location of library branches. We will then assess any connectivity service gaps that will be generated by library closures. These gaps will be identified and considered in the decision making process to determine the final library sites and schedules.

As noted earlier, millions of county residents access library services via the MDPLS website. Over the next few weeks, MDPLS, ITD and the Community Information and Outreach (CIAO) Department will be working on further enhancing online library services including the development of an App that will inform the public of the nearest open library and the services and schedules of each site. This tool will be essential as we transition into a new service delivery framework, and it will be ready for review and initial public feedback at the end of August. The App will also allow residents to check the status of holds, review account information, find interesting titles, browse the library catalog, review items, retrieve call numbers and view outstanding fees on overdue items.

- **Programming**

Over the past year, more than 5,000 hours of programming activities were provided directly to Miami-Dade County residents by our Libraries. These programs included Reading Ready, YouMedia, Life-Long Learning Courses, Project LEAD, JumpStart, Writer-in-Residence, Digital Literacy Classes, Employability Skill Courses, The International Art of Story Telling, Lifetime Living through Art, and Teen Safe Spaces. As we redefine the way we do our work, we will reach out to partners and funders to integrate their ideas and feedback within our planning process for FY 2013-14 and beyond. We currently work with the Friends of Miami-Dade Library, Miami-Dade County Departments (PROS and Cultural Affairs), municipalities, local museums, The Children's Trust, Miami-Dade County Public Schools, United Way of Miami-Dade and the Miami Dolphins to provide community programming. We believe including them in the planning process will maximize our ability to leverage community resources. As with the library locations and schedules, we will keep you and community stakeholders engaged and informed along the way regarding programmatic offerings for the upcoming fiscal year.

- **Community Conversations**

I have met with the Friends of the Miami-Dade Public Library today and have asked my Senior Advisor Lisa Martinez, MDPLS Director Raymond Santiago, and other members of the MDPLS management team to hold a series of conversations over the next four weeks with community stakeholders including municipalities in the Library District, the Knight Foundation, the Children's Trust, Miami-Dade County Public Schools, South Florida Workforce, local universities and colleges and other programming partners mentioned earlier. It is also important to work closely with the Friends of the Miami-Dade Public Library as decisions are being considered. Additionally, I am hosting several Town Hall meetings that will provide a forum for discussion with our residents. The feedback, ideas and new partnerships that may emerge from these conversations will only strengthen our final recommendation for the MDPLS 2013-14 fiscal year.

The work will not stop there. I have made it clear that these discussions and the development of stronger partnerships in our libraries must continue beyond the current fiscal year's budget development process. It is my sincere hope that we will ultimately emerge from current challenges with a stronger Library System that combines the best of traditional library resources like books with the innovative learning tools that our patrons deserve. That combination will propel MDPLS towards a brighter long-term future, and ensure that our community has a **sustainable** library system that it can continue to be proud of.

Over the next few weeks, we will provide you regular updates. If you have any questions regarding the Library Department, please do not hesitate to contact Lisa M. Martinez, Senior Advisor, at 305-375-2911, Raymond Santiago, Director, Miami-Dade Public Library System, at 305-375-5026, or me directly.

c: Municipal Mayors - Library District

Ed Marquez, Deputy Mayor, Office of the Mayor
Lisa M. Martinez, Senior Advisor, Office of the Mayor
Raymond Santiago, Director, Miami-Dade Library System
Jack Kardys, Director, Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces Department
Jennifer Moon, Director, Office of Management and Budget
Angel Petisco, Director, Information Technology Department
Henry Sori, Director, Community Information and Outreach Department
Michael Spring, Director, Cultural Affairs Department
Suzet Alvarez-Cleary, Assistant Director, Miami-Dade Library System
Charles Auslander, President and CEO, The Children's Trust
Roderick Beasley, Executive Director, South Florida Workforce
Sister Linda Bevilacqua, O.P., Ph.D., President, Barry University
Alberto M. Carvalho, Superintendent, Miami-Dade County Public Schools
Dennis J. Crudele, Acting President, Florida Atlantic University
George L. Hambury II, President/CEO, Nova Southeastern University
Alberto Ibarguen, President and CEO, Knight Foundation
Harve Mogul, President/CEO, United Way of Miami-Dade
John Quick, Board President, Friends of Miami-Dade Public Library
Eduardo J. Padron, Ph.D., President, Miami Dade College
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