

Public Comment for Upcoming Commission Meeting

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Comments:

Comments to Commission

Ordinance No.3-13-24-10, An Ordinance to Create a Library Board

The Ordinance proposes a 12 Member Board to:

- Establish a formal process and procedure to review requests for funding
- Recommend a regular General Obligation Library Bond amount and a "prioritized list of library projects to receive Bond Funding"
- Provide a venue for all involved to share best practices
- Reallocate unused funds in a "planned, organized and transparent process"
- Propose allocations to "Assure Library services are keeping up with population growth"

All of these elements are supportive of good libraries. However, the makeup of the Board as proposed almost assures the Rural Libraries of Jemez Springs, Cuba, Torreon and Pena Blanca will have little to no voice in any decision making. And the 8-9 Pueblo libraries will likewise have very little input into any allocation of money. In order to pass motions by this proposed 12 member board would take 7 votes.

The proposed 12 Member Board is "Only 50% of which are from Rio Rancho" or 6 members, one short of the magic 7 needed to pass any vote. "The other 50% would include representatives from Bernalillo, Corrales and County Libraries that serve populations of less than 6000". And as stated in the Ordinance, to get to that magic number "...there would have to be cooperation among Board members for the Board to work effectively."

The above statement sums up my concern. Rio Rancho, Bernalillo, Placitas and Corrales vs. the rest of us. And the rest of us will be dependent on "cooperation among Board Members".

When the Board is stacked with those representing urban areas of larger populations, those in the Rural areas and Pueblos are left with very little chance of having any reliable and necessary funding approved. When the proposal spends many paragraphs focused on the numbers of taxpayers and amount of taxes collected from them in the urban areas, the intent is obvious: The Board will be stacked with members representing URBAN needs. The rest of the county can fend for themselves. The proposed Board is unfair and biased, and could even be said to discriminate against Pueblo communities and small towns.

And for the very smallest of the libraries, such as Jemez Springs, Cuba, Torreon, Pena Blanca and all the Pueblo libraries, the only consideration written into the Proposal was a single sentence toward the end of it: "A Library Board Agenda for Quarterly meetings would set aside time to consider issues of smaller libraries for example." That's it. The Agenda item suggested reads: "Comments from Libraries serving a population of less than 3000."

All of the rural and Pueblo libraries are reduced to a simple Agenda item at a Quarterly Meeting.

I STRONGLY request that this motion be TABLED until the issue is further reviewed preferably by a committee made of community members representing not just those with the largest population numbers /tax base, but members that would also take into consideration the educational, social, recreational and COMMUNITY impact that smaller rural libraries have in their communities. Our Sandoval County rural libraries are central to the livability of their respective communities. They aren't just places to check out books. They are essential members of our little towns and Pueblos.

Regards,
Pamela Cornell