

COUNCIL MEETING DATE:

6/1/2015

**ADDITIONAL CORRESPONDENCE
RECEIVED AFTER COUNCIL PACKET
PREPARATION**

4-10 – Additional Library Services Contract

DO NOT REMOVE

Please return to Eileen Harrington, Administration

Eileen Harrington

From: D Dorenz [ddorenz@gmail.com]
Sent: Friday, May 29, 2015 11:50 AM
To: City General Mailbox account
Subject: Re: Contract with the Alameda County Library
Attachments: Albany Contract remarks albany 51915.docx

I am writing on behalf of the Library Book Savers of Alameda County. We request that the vote on the contract with the Alameda County Library be delayed until we can have a public discussion of the issues included in the attached text. There is a precedent for the Contract being delayed: library staff will still be paid. The Albany Library Board did not have a full discussion of any of these issues: one member of the board had to leave periodically for personal reasons. We would like for another public meeting to be held for a thorough discussion of the issues and/or to bring the contract issue back to the Albany Library Board so that the public can have real input on the contract along with a Board discussion of our concerns. Thanks for your consideration.

Unfortunately, I cannot be at the City Council meeting on Monday, June 1. Thank you for making sure the City Council receives this message and the attachment.

Thank you.

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Dorothea Dorenz
for Library Book Savers of Alameda County

Re: the Contract with the ACL by the City of Albany

This contract is very vague. The way the ACL spends Albany funds should be more clearly delineated. The City needs more control over the fate of our library. If Albany is contributing significantly to all of these purchases, then it should have a significant say in how the library is run.

We urgently request that the Board take a motion tonight to suspend final signing of this contract, because there is little specific information about how the money is spent. What is missing from the contract is any opportunity for the City to exercise authority or ownership over the library which means the City has no control over the unilateral decisions made by the ACL.

We also request that there be a motion tonight to hold a public forum to discuss the elements of this contract before it is signed by the City.

This contract has no clear way to insure that the Albany Branch will not be subjected once again to the massive book discards that the ACL ordered from 2013 through 2014. I have been told by the City Manager that Albany doesn't own any of the books or other items in its library. Yet the projected budget includes "Materials, Services and supplies and "All Other Direct Costs " for a total of almost 1,815,000. The Library Board and the City should request more specific delineation in the contract about how much of Albany money is spent on the "materials" that are supplied to the library.

The City needs to have some authority over the library in the contract especially since the massive book discards continue at other branches including Irvington, and Union City even after a supposed moratorium on book discards was put in place by the Board of Supervisors on Feb. 7th.

We would like to know the original purchase value of the thousands of books that have been discarded from the library that Albany funds paid for in the past two years. That is one way for the City to know how its money is being spent and then wasted. We request that the Board make a motion tonight to ask for an independent audit of the ACL to find out how the money is really being spent.

Libraries need well -educated librarians who love books. This contract only indicates "*branch personnel*", not specifically "librarians". The ACL Administration is cutting back on qualified librarians at other branches. Nothing in this contract would prevent the ACL from doing the same at the Albany Branch. At the same time that the ACL Administrators are cutting back on librarians they have asked for a 7.99% raise in their own salaries. There needs to be some guarantee in this contract that states the library will make sure we continue to have a specified number of full time qualified librarians.

We hope you will make motion tonight to delay the signing of this contract until there is more opportunity for public discussion and for the Board to address some of these concern.

Eileen Harrington

From: Cityhall@albanyca.org
Sent: Sunday, May 31, 2015 5:35 PM
To: City General Mailbox account
Subject: Contact the City of Albany

Submission information

Submitter DB ID : 14419
Submitter's language : Default language
IP address : 12.218.209.43
Time to take the survey : 17 min. , 33 sec.
Submission recorded on : 5/31/2015 5:34:58 PM

Survey answers

Your Information:

Name Guy Wohlford
Email guy_wohlford@hotmail.com
Subject Albany Library Board Contract
What can we do for you? RE: Albany Library Board Contract 05/31/2015
Attn: Nicole Almaguer [City Clerk]

I am writing on behalf of the Library Book Savers of Alameda County. We request that the vote on the contract with the Alameda County Library be delayed until we can have a public discussion of the issues included in the attached text. There is a precedent for the Contract being delayed: library staff will still be paid. The Albany Library Board did not have a full discussion of any of these issues: one member of the board had to leave periodically for personal reasons. We would like for another public meeting to be held for a thorough discussion of the issues and/or to bring the contract issue back to the Albany Library Board so that the public can have real input on the contract along with a Board discussion of our concerns.

- 1 - The unilateral decision to change the role of the library from one that offers citizens the chance to delve in the many subjects in depth to one that only stocks new books
- 2 - Giving our public property to a for profit Corporation, Discover Books Co., through the back door of the Alameda County Library Foundation, a non-profit, is a cynical way of getting around the law.

If the library stopped discarding so many books based on their unfortunate "policy" that older books are not supposed to be in public libraries, then perhaps they would not need to throw out so many books. AND urge the BOS who oversees the library to come up with a way to store older books for our use. Right now the public library relies on University libraries and is not ordering books that may be slightly off the best seller list. This has resulted in the dumbing down of our libraries.

P.S....

Further more ... I personally think with the duplicitous nature of the ACL and the ACLAC ... regarding their concern for the public's right to voice an opinion in the "Selection" and "Weeding" Policy issues ... that Albany would do well to ask for some independent autonomy within and regarding the contract ... and stipulate some concessions ... because like it or not ... there's a Real Storm brewing

on the Horizon for ACL and Carmen Martinez ... and so far we've only seen a mild breeze ... and Albany would do well not to be dragged into that until it's resolved ... but it's just my suggestion ...

Guy

http://www.mercurynews.com/my-town/ci_28200435/albany-battle-over-library-book-policy-continues

Eileen Harrington

From: Robert Pack Browning [robertpackbrowning@gmail.com]
Sent: Sunday, May 31, 2015 11:31 AM
To: citycouncil
Subject: Albany's contract with Alameda County Library

May 31, 2015

Re: June 1, 2015, Agenda item: Additional Library Services Agreement w/County

Dear Friends on the Albany City Council:

As I am sure you are aware, there is deep concern among many people throughout Alameda County about the alarming level of book disposals in our county's library system. After a long career as a literary scholar at the University of California (Senior Editor of the comprehensive UC Press edition of the works of Mark Twain), I share that concern.

Your current agenda includes consideration of a significant contract with the Alameda County Library, which, if approved, will subject the Albany Library, and all others in the county system, to a number of negative consequences, including likely continuation of the County Library's deeply flawed book disposal practices, practices that virtually guarantee the dumbing-down of our cultural and intellectual heritage through the permanent loss of information.

I urge you to delay approval of this contract until you have convened a public forum in which the following troubling features of the proposed contract can be fully aired:

- The contract fails to grant to Albany, and other communities in our County Library system, authority that will protect our libraries from further massive book discards such as the County Library's administrators inflicted on Albany in 2013 and 2014. Those massive discards have continued at other branches (such as Irvington and Union City) even after a moratorium on book discards was approved by the Board of Supervisors on February 7th.
- The contract ignores the fact that Albany funds have contributed to the purchase of the thousands of books that continue to be discarded, even in the absence of a clearly articulated and broadly endorsed discard policy. The system's administrators have never published a document describing their discard policy, nor have they released lists of the titles thus lost. The public deserves to know what policy is guiding the expenditure of our library funds and the full extent of the losses our libraries are suffering in the absence of a published policy. An independent audit of the system's practices would be a good start.

- Libraries should be guided by professional librarians who love books. This contract would place “branch personnel,” not trained and qualified librarians, in charge of our libraries. The County Library’s administrators are cutting back on qualified librarians at other branches. Nothing in this contract prevents similar losses at the Albany Library. While reducing the number of qualified librarians, the administrators are seeking a 7.99% salary increase for themselves. The contract needs to require an appropriate number of qualified librarians to manage our libraries.

A wise policy of “weeding” collections needs to be conducted in the fullest possible collaboration not only with the general public but with specialists in all fields to ensure that all readers, now and in the future, will have the broadest possible access to our intellectual and cultural heritage. A healthy democracy, as Thomas Jefferson well knew—actively advocating throughout his life for public access to education and information—requires nothing less.

Please postpone approval of Albany’s contract with the Alameda County Library until the above concerns have received a full public airing and opportunity for discussion. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Rob Browning

1732 Berkeley Way

Berkeley, Calif. 94703

robertpackbrowning@gmail.com

Eileen Harrington

From: Nicole Almaguer
Sent: Monday, June 01, 2015 9:52 AM
To: Eileen Harrington
Subject: FW: item on city council agenda

Eileen,
For processing with Council/etc. re. item 4-10.

From: Steve Hernandez [<mailto:vjandsh@gmail.com>]
Sent: Monday, June 01, 2015 9:31 AM
To: Nicole Almaguer
Subject: item on city council agenda

Dear Ms. Almaguer,

I request that the vote on the contract with the Alameda County Library be delayed until concerns about it are properly addressed, for the reasons stated below.

I attended the Library Board meeting on May 19 and observed that the Board members present passed the contract along without addressing legitimate concerns put forth by the community. The Library Board has only five members. Of those, one was absent on May 19 and one arrived late and was distracted throughout the meeting as she attended to her newborn. Two of the Board members present were sworn in as members of the Board in March and don't know the history of the Board's interaction with Alameda County Library administration, which I have observed firsthand over the last several years.

The Alameda County Library administration has failed repeatedly to account for the way they divide expenses between the branches throughout the county. It has been proven that the Albany branch pays more per hour for the "extra hours" the city contract pays for than branches such as Dublin do. The administration cannot explain or justify why this is so.

In addition, the contract as written is vague and appears to require Albany to pay for county services that aren't provided in our part of the county, such as the Bookmobile and Literacy. The FTE positions that are in the budget have at times remained unfilled for years, yet we pay to fund them year after year.

I would like for the contract to be returned to the Albany Library Board and for the Board to require answers to questions that have been posed to the Administration for years without substantive answers. Without meaningful contract negotiations, the Administration seems unwilling to operate with the transparency taxpayers have the right to expect.

Please pass these comments along to the City Council for their consideration before tonight's meeting.

Thank you.

Steve Hernandez, 817 Madison St.

Received CC Mtg
6/1/2015

To: The Albany City Council, June 1, 2015
From: Dorothea Dorenz, for Library Book Savers of Alameda County

We request that the Albany City Council please pull the ACL contract off the consent calendar so it can be more fully considered.

The Albany "Journal" article of May 29 expresses some of the issues that the Albany Library Patrons have with the way the Alameda County Library Administration has run the library. We feel its time to approach the City Council about improving communications between the County Library Administration, the Board of Supervisors, Albany Citizens and Library patrons. Since you may be renewing a contract with the ACL this would be a good time to proactively redesign future interactions between the City of Albany, the Alameda County Library Administration, the Board of Supervisors, and Library patrons. The current communication process is unsatisfactory.

We request that you designate a member of the City staff who would represent the City's interest and the patrons' needs before the County Board of Supervisors and the Alameda County Library, as the Albany City Council deems necessary. The City Council needs a representative at the Board of Supervisor's meetings. We hope that a future discussion by the City Council would result in the appointment of City Staff member who would facilitate communication between the City, the Library Patrons, the Alameda County Library Administration and the Board of Supervisors.

Please see the attached documents that explain some of the issues, none of which were discussed at the May 19th Albany Library Board meeting:
May 19, 2015 Albany Library Board Meeting
Re: the Contract with the ACL by the City of Albany

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I urge you to delay approval of this contract until you have convened a public forum in which the following troubling features of the proposed contract can be fully aired:

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