County of Fresno

Board of Supervisors

RESPONSE TO THE

2022-23

FRESNO COUNTY GRAND JURY

FINAL REPORT #2
Has Measure B Benefitted the Fresno County Free Library?
Measuring Performance

Please find below the Fresno County Board of Supervisors’ response to the 2022-23 Grand Jury Final Report No. 2 findings and recommendations. The County thanks the Grand Jury for its investigation and recommendations related to Fresno County’s public library system.

FINDINGS

F1. The Board of Supervisors has not sufficiently outlined its expectations of the Citizens Review Panel (CRP) by providing them with a detailed outline of their oversight responsibilities.

Response:

The Board of Supervisors disagrees with the finding. Resolution 99-069 states the role of the CRP is to advise the Board of Supervisors regarding the uses made by the Fresno County Library of sales tax revenues and that the advice will include review to ensure that the uses are in accordance with the expenditure plan approved by the voters. Additionally, the CRP presents an annual report to the Board of Supervisors. The report submitted on March 22, 2022 states the Fresno County Library is utilizing Measure B sales tax funds in a commendable manner.

F2. There are four vacancies on the CRP, which creates difficulty in achieving a quorum at the CRP meetings.

Response:

The Board of Supervisors partially agrees with the finding as there are currently three vacancies on the CRP. The CRP is an 11-member board with eight active members at the time of this response.

F3. The Fresno County Free Library (FCFL) does not have a current, detailed Operational Service Delivery Plan (OSDP) document that expands the OSDP outlined in the 2012 Measure B Ordinance (MBO).

Response:

The Board of Supervisors agrees with the finding.

F4. The FCFL does not have a current, detailed and prioritized Long Term Facilities Plan referenced in the 2012 Measure B Ordinance (MBO).

Response:

The Board of Supervisors agrees with the finding.

F5. The FCFL number of registered users falls short of the average for comparably sized and budgeted library systems in the state as reported on the fiscal year 2020-2021 spreadsheet located on the State Library’s California Public Libraries Statistics database website.
Response:

The Board of Supervisors agrees with the finding given the methodology used to interpret the data located within the 2020-2021 State Library Statistics spreadsheet. However, as indicated by the FCFL Librarian, the FCFL has the highest number of registered users within the local area library system (San Joaquin Valley). Additionally, Fiscal Year 2020-2021 was the last of a 10-year decline in registered users.

F6. The 2012 Measure B Ordinance funding mandate to “supplement and not supplant” the existing funds received from the County exceeds the mandated minimum of the 2012 MBO.

Response:

The Board of Supervisors agrees with the finding.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R1. The Board of Supervisors should develop a list of expectations for the Citizens Review Panel of the metrics to be used in evaluating Measure B expenditures. Implementation by December 31, 2023. (F1)

Response:

This recommendation will not be implemented. The role of the Citizens Review Panel is to ensure Measure B revenue uses are in accordance with the expenditure plan approved by the voters. Included within the Grand Jury Report No. 2 is the full text of Measure B, which includes language from Fresno County Ordinance Sections 4.20.010 and 4.20.110 describing the purpose and use of the taxes.

R2. The Board of Supervisors should select and maintain a full complement of representatives to the Citizens Review Panel for their districts to ensure proper oversight of Measure B utilization. Completed by September 30, 2023. (F2)

Response:

The Board of Supervisors continually seeks to fill positions on all boards, commissions, and committees. Three positions within the Citizens Review Panel were filled in January and February 2023. The Board of Supervisors will continue to seek candidates to fill the remaining three vacancies.

R7. The Board of Supervisors and the FCFL Librarian should consider hiring a professional Program Management firm to assist in developing a comprehensive long term plan for maximizing the stewardship of public funds more in line with similar sized and similarly funded libraries. Implementation by December 31, 2023. (F1-F6)

Response:
This recommendation will not be implemented as the Board of Supervisors agrees with the FCFL Librarian’s response to this recommendation. As mentioned within the Librarian’s response to Recommendation No. 5 and 7, the FCFL is working with stakeholders, library jurisdictions and the State Library to implement an Operational Service Delivery Plan to better measure performance, which will be accomplished by December 31, 2023. This mitigates the need for a Program Management firm.

This concludes the Board of Supervisors’ comments on the Findings and Recommendations of the Fresno County Grand Jury Report No. 2.
July 6, 2023

The Honorable David Kalemkarian, Presiding Judge
Fresno County Superior Court
1100 Van Ness Avenue
Fresno, CA 93724-0002

Subject: Fresno County Grand Jury Report No. 2: Has Measure B Benefitted the Fresno County Free Library? Measuring Performance

Judge Kalemkarian:

Please find below the Fresno County Public Library's response to the 2022-23 Grand Jury Final Report No. 2 findings and recommendations. The County and the Library thanks the Grand Jury for its investigation and recommendations related to the Library and the value of Measure B.

FINDINGS

F3. The Fresno County Free Library (FCFL) does not have a current, detailed Operational Service Delivery Plan (OSDP) document that expands the OSDP outlined in the 2012 Measure B Ordinance (MBO).

The department agrees with the findings.

F4. The FCFL does not have a current, detailed and prioritized Long Term Facilities Plan referenced in the 2012 Measure B Ordinance (MBO).

The department agrees with the findings.

F5. The FCFL number of registered users falls short of the average for comparably sized and budgeted library systems in the state as reported on the fiscal year 2020-2021 spreadsheet located on the State Library's California Public Libraries Statistics database website.

The department disagrees partly with the finding. The snapshot taken from FY 20-21 is taken in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic and does not show a complete picture of operations. At the same time, when looking at all other libraries in the Central Valley (the SJVLS system includes 6 other counties) the statistics for FCPL are not so disparate. By looking at the percentage of registered users from FY19/20 to FY 20/21 FCPL's registered users dropped a total of 30.6%. This number is in line with drops that similar systems saw during these fiscal years. Contra Costa's registered users dropped a total
of 22%, Kern County’s registered users dropped a total of 45.6%, and Riverside’s registered users dropped a total of 23%. Fresno County has shown a lower number of registered users compared to other systems outside of SJVLS but has consistently had the highest number of registered users within the SJVLS system. The Department acknowledges that there has been a trend of decline in registered users. FY 21/22 was the first year to show an increase in registered users after a ten-year decline.

F6. The 2012 Measure B Ordinance funding mandate to “supplement and not supplant” the existing funds received from the County exceeds the mandated minimum of the 2012 MBO.

The department agrees with the findings.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R3. The FCFL Librarian in conjunction with associated stakeholders should schedule planning sessions and develop an Operational Service Delivery Plan implementing ongoing measurable metrics for each of the listed expenditures and OSDP items as outlined in the Measure B Ordinance. Commencing not later than December 31, 2023. (F3)

Recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented this year. FCPL will work closely with stakeholders, staff and other library jurisdictions in California, as well as the State Library to create better measurable standards for measuring performance. Actual performance standards for libraries across the State have varied widely over the years, but by working with the above mentioned groups measurable standards will be forthcoming no later than December 31, 2023.

R4. The FCFL Librarian should develop a current detailed and prioritized Long Term Facilities Plan. Commencing not later than December 31, 2023. (F4)

Recommendation has not yet been implemented. The preliminary data collection and needs assessment of a long-term facilities plan to be implemented concurrently with capital needs improvements will commence no later than December 31, 2023.

R5. The FCFL Librarian should budget for an outside professional media/advertising consultant to aid in the development of a comprehensive advertising and awareness campaign to inform the citizens of Fresno County of the vast array of services available at the FCFL. Completion by September 30, 2023. (F5)

Recommendation has been implemented. The Fresno County Public Library is participating in a county wide marketing RFP to provide media and mass communications services to educate and engage target audiences, generate public interest in county-related topics and influence positive behavior changes in Fresno County for three years with the option to renew for up to two additional one-year periods. This was planned well before the Grand Jury investigation. FCPL will be spending $40,000 of its marketing budget per year for this RFP with the goal of marketing to new and existing users. FCPL will also invest additional
time and effort utilizing internal resources to increase awareness of the Library's vast resources. The county wide RFP will close on July 7, 2023.

R6. The FCFL Librarian should require that each library branch entity regularly submit accurate data to be submitted to the State Library's California Public Libraries Statistics database in order to develop an accurate measurable baseline against similarly sized and funded library systems. Implementation by December 31, 2023. (F5)

Recommendation has been implemented. The department understands the thorough job conducted by the Grand Jury, however there is a discrepancy in the findings and the resulting recommendation. Each individual branch provides statistics that are collected centrally and sent off to the State. The Department has contribut ed to the State Report each year consistently. This process has not changed since the start of the report in 1988. It is the opinion of the department that the jury saw gaps in statistics in the FY 20/21 report and assumed these gaps existed for all reports throughout the system. Categories, questions, and instructions for the State Library annual report change from year to year. At times, these changes may impact the ability of FCPL to provide accurate data. In some circumstances a question will be left blank because the data is captured more accurately in another question or cannot be answered in line with the instructions. These circumstances are rare. During the pandemic, including FY20/21, the instructions from the State Library included specific changes that made collecting and reporting complete statistics unreliable. As in other years, FCPL used the FY 20/21 questions and instructions to inform our statistical methods for FY 21/22 so we could better align with future reports. The department will once again highlight the irregularities of the COVID years as to the discrepancies in recent stats reporting. Full statistics including usage, people counters, and circulation are tallied yearly branch by branch and are available for further review.

R7. The Board of Supervisors and the FCFL Librarian should consider hiring a professional Program Management firm to assist in developing a comprehensive long term plan for maximizing the stewardship of public funds more in line with similar sized and similarly funded libraries. Implementation by December 31, 2023. (F1-F6)

Recommendation will not be implemented. By creating a detailed OSDP taking into account community needs as well as measurable metrics for success of Library operations, FCPL believes that the need for a Program Management firm is mitigated. As detailed above, the addition of an external marketing agency will further enhance use and awareness and in conjunction with the above recommendations, result in an even greater reach for FCPL's services. As explained in the Grand Jury report, Measure B has provided an unprecedented expansion in Library programs and capital projects since its inception. By implementing the Grand Jury’s recommendations, it will continue to do so.

This concludes the Fresno County Public Library’s comments on the Findings and Recommendations of the Fresno County Grand Jury Report No. 2.

Sincerely,

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The County of Fresno is an Equal Employment Opportunity Employer
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