

City of Copperas Cove Information Item No. 1

February 21, 2012

Proposed Changes to the Library Service Hours

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SUBJECT: Changes to the Library Service Hours.

BACKGROUND/HISTORY

City staff initiated two pilot programs to determine a more effective and efficient operating schedule to better serve the community on September 20, 2011 (see information item report dated 9/20/2011). Over the past three fiscal years, City Administration worked with all City Departments on cost cutting measures, to include staff reductions, service efficiencies, and overhead cost reductions, in an effort to offset the revenue losses experienced over the same period as a result of the economic downturn.

The hours of operation for the Library prior to the pilot programs was Monday, Wednesday, Friday 10:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Tuesday and Thursday 10:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. and Saturdays 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

The first pilot program ran from October 10, 2011 through November 23, 2011 with the operating schedule of Monday-Friday 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., for a total of 45 service hours per week.

The second program ran from November 28, 2011 to January 13, 2012 with a schedule of Tuesday through Friday 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., Saturday 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., for a total of 47 service hours per week. The library is currently operating under these hours.

FINDINGS/CURRENT ACTIVITY

City staff received 159 surveys from library patrons during the pilot program period. Surveys were distributed to members of the public by library staff; however, not all surveys received were fully completed. The survey results seem to concentrate more on the days of the week the library was open, thus indicating a preference for library operations on Mondays and Saturdays (the first pilot excluded Saturday and the second pilot excluded Monday).

At the January 2012 meeting of the Library Advisory Board, the consensus of the Board was that the library should be open on Mondays and that it had been a disappointment that the library was closed on Saturdays during the first pilot program. Thus, the members also agreed that the library should be open for a few hours on Saturday.

At the January 2012 meeting of the Friends of the Library the consensus was that a compromise should be reached between the two pilot program hours. Furthermore, the five days of operating hours were satisfactory, with a few hours open on Saturday. A suggestion to be open half days on Friday and half days on Saturday was also presented. The Friends also expressed that the Library's hours should be consistent, eliminating the possibility of creating confusion for the library patrons.

Staff has noted that usage begins to consistently reduce during the hours 5:00 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. on weekdays. Furthermore, Saturday usage diminishes after 11:00 a.m. and remains light until 2:00 p.m. with little to no usage after 3:00 pm. The new hours are considered a compromise between the citizen input through the surveys and the Library usage patterns established by the citizens.

After speaking with members of the Library Advisory Board, receiving input from the City Manager resulting from Library site visits made by the City Manager and the pilot program results, staff concluded the operational hours were set based on current staffing numbers; instead of, customer usage determining the staffing numbers. Staff will continue to monitor Library usage and make future staffing recommendations.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

No Impact.

ACTION OPTIONS/RECOMMENDATION

City staff will move forward with a new schedule (Monday – Thursday 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. and Friday and Saturday 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.) of Library operation hours effective March 10, 2012.