

Town of San Anselmo Library

Staff Report

October 13, 2021

For October 18, 2021 Meeting

To: Library Tax Oversight Committee
From: Linda Kenton, Town Librarian
Subject: Review 2020-21 Library Tax Expenditures Review

Recommendation

That the Library Tax Oversight Committee review the 2020-21 Library Tax expenditures.

Background

In June of 2014, voters of the Town of San Anselmo approved a renewal of the 2010 library parcel tax (Attachment 1). The 2014 renewal, known as Measure E, read as follows:

To maintain and enhance San Anselmo Library open hours, adult and children's programs, and general library services, an ordinance was adopted approving a Special Library Services Tax of \$54.00 per year per real estate parcel located in San Anselmo with a three percent (3%) annual cost of living increase, for a period of nine (9) years to augment money from the Town of San Anselmo's funding of library services and with expenditures monitored by an oversight committee.

The dollar amounts over the course of the parcel tax are projected in this chart.

\$54.00, 9-Year Parcel tax with 3.00% Cost of Living (COLA) annual percentage increase				
			TAX	REVENUE
Year 1	2015-16		\$54.00	\$254,826
Year 2	2016-17		\$55.62	\$262,471
Year 3	2017-18		\$57.29	\$270,345
Year 4	2018-19		\$59.01	\$278,455
Year 5	2019-20		\$60.78	\$286,809
Year 6	2020-21		\$62.60	\$295,413
Year 7	2021-22		\$64.48	\$304,276
Year 8	2022-23		\$66.41	\$313,388
Year 9	2023-24		\$68.40	\$322,779

The ballot measure passed with 73% of the vote. The role of the Library Tax oversight committee was codified in this measure since it was not part of the original 2010 parcel tax. The group has been an instrumental part of the process.

Discussion—Reviewing 2020-21 Expenditures

This fiscal year has been an unusual one, to say the least. It has been a time of tremendous transition ranging from strict stay at home orders to glimpses into the normalcy of the post-pandemic era.

The pandemic forced us to face the unknown and figure out how to move forward. The staff transitioned creatively to providing virtual programs, increased digital services and an array of innovative ways to reach our community through weekly newsletters and an increased presence on social media.

Parcel tax revenue for FY2020-21 was \$279,443.85. The ending balance from the previous fiscal year was \$72,788 for a total projected beginning balance of \$352,232.35 in the library tax fund account. Expenses totaled \$254,520.23 leaving a fund balance of \$97,712.12 for the next year.

Curbside service for residents started in June 2020 and continues today. The labor-intensive procedure involved monitoring phone calls, texts, and emails to schedule patrons in specific time slots throughout the week. Then all staff processed curbside which meant collecting and checking out items for patrons scheduled that day, labeling and bagging the items, and then later, taking the bags out to the curbside tables, first on the library lawn then later in the lobby of the Town Council chambers. Finally, at the end of the day, any unpicked-up bags were retrieved, patrons called and curbside cleared. This was time consuming work but we served 9315 patrons.

The building's doors opened for the first time in April 2021, on Wednesdays from 10am-4pm. Friday hours were added in May, also from 10am-4pm. Curbside continued other weekdays. By the end of the fiscal year the library was providing 18 hours of curbside and 12 hours of open building services.

The Children's Librarian continues to be a vital part of the team and this year pivoted to providing virtual programs to our community including:

Special Covid Programs

Grab and Go Crafts for Kids- 40 crafts offered
Grab and Go Crafts taken- 1,935 crafts taken

Virtual Storytime- 26 videos
Views of Storytime videos- 264 views within 7 days

Letters to Leprechauns- 200 letters received from children and 200 responses written by staff in partnership with San Anselmo Recreation Department

Chapter Book Read Aloud- 10 recordings
Views of Chapter Book Read Aloud- 11 views

Family Yoga- 4 sessions
Family Yoga Attendance- 60 total attendees

Virtual Wacky Wednesday performances- 5 performers
Virtual Wacky Wednesday attendance- 83

Virtual Book Club for 3rd-5th grade- 3 book club discussions
Virtual Book Club attendance- 9 total attendees

Virtual Children's Author Talk- 1 author presentation
Virtual Children's Author Talk attendance-14 attendees

While in-person programs were not allowed this year, virtual programs thrived for adult audiences. 941 participated in Art Talks, Master Gardener lectures, Drawing workshops and other events throughout the year. Children's programs did not garner the same levels of attendance most likely due to Zoom fatigue after having spent their days online. This may account for the success of the grab and go craft program as families sought hands-on activities.

Staff created book bundle requests to get more materials into residents' hands. Since the community hungered for browsing library shelves, this was the next best thing. Patrons filled out a form in which they detailed their preferences, ages of children, and how they wished to be contacted. The service was offered for all ages, started in September 2020, and served 452 patrons.

All temporary or extra hire employees were cleared off the books by the beginning of FY2020-21 to enable people to apply for unemployment benefits. One staff member was over 65 years of age and decided to take extended time off. The full time Library Assistant position that was vacant due to retirement was frozen in the budget because of uncertainty for fiscal year 2020-21. The library was down to four full time staff to run the operation but soon one full time staff left on maternity leave and another unexpectedly left on medical leave. At this point there were two full-time and one half-time staff.

Temporary or extra-hire employee costs were understandably under budget given the pandemic. However, there was still the need to re-hire library shelvers and extra hires to manage the high volume of phone calls, texts, and curbside processing as well as to organize

items in quarantine. As the year wore on and as regular staff became comfortable adding to the “pod” more help was added, though it was and continues to be a challenge finding workers. Our extra hires enabled the library to maintain its high level of service even though the doors were closed for most of the year.

All employees did whatever it took to run the operation. All staff helped with curbside, digital services, virtual programs, answering texts/phones, fulfilling book bundle requests, and so on. Everyone was also expected to continue with their normal duties so it was a very busy year that required tremendous flexibility and creativity of staff. It was a team effort to keep the library running.

The temporary help budget line also includes an extra-hire Technical Services Librarian whose hours are mostly paid from the general fund budget but whose additional desk hours are paid by this fund. This position catalogs, processes and manages all new materials acquisitions. In addition, the Technical Services Librarian represents the San Anselmo Library at the monthly Bibliographic Standards committee convened by the MARINet consortium. This position was critical during the pandemic to answer texts, the phones and schedule patrons in addition to staying in communication with our book vendor regarding supply chain issues and other irregularities.

Automated catalog expenses include new, and the maintenance of, shared services with MARINet. The CENIC Internet network, the backbone of the library’s robust Internet and Wi-Fi connection, is paid from the parcel tax budget. Shared digital resources include a selection of databases and digital subscriptions to the New York Times and Wall Street Journal.

Department supplies included things we never had to purchase before. The library ordered vast quantities of brown shopping bags in various sizes to package library materials for curbside, Sharpies to write patron names on slips, receipt paper for the sharp increase in holds fulfillment and scotch tape to attach names to bags. We had to order external cameras for staff computers to enable Zoom meetings, intercoms to be able to communicate with patrons through the large plexiglass dividers, extra disposable masks for the public and a large curbside banner identifying where patrons could pick up their bags of checked out materials. Enough construction paper, popsicle sticks, googly eyes, pipe cleaners, etc., needed to be sourced for forty weeks of grab and go crafts. Planning and organizing this program was no small feat it proved to be wildly popular with over 1930 crafts taken.

Librarians continued to buy physical books but digital materials took center stage during the pandemic. Though about \$7,000.00 was budgeted for eBooks and eaudio, \$18,500 was spent. This includes digital materials purchased in OverDrive, but also patron uses in Hoopla and Kanopy which have pay per use models.

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Conclusion

The Library Parcel Tax fund has allowed the library to be open more hours and to provide a broad spectrum of new services and programs to the San Anselmo Community within the letter and spirit of the measure's language and intent over the last decade. Though this fiscal year was extraordinary, the library tax enabled the library to serve the community in uncommon but successful ways. The library continues to be a vibrant gathering place, whether physical or virtual, where the local community can find resources and opportunities to meet their educational, social, cultural, and recreational needs.

Respectfully Submitted,



Linda Kenton
Town Librarian

Attachment 1

2010 Library Parcel Tax

In June 2010, voters of the Town of San Anselmo approved a \$49 a year parcel tax in support of the Town Library. 75% of voters approved the five-year measure.

Purpose of the library parcel tax:

*The parcel tax is meant to **increase the San Anselmo Library open hours, improve children's services at the Library including hiring a special children's Librarian, and enhance general Library services.***

The Town Council, in November 2010, approved a plan of service for the parcel tax monies. This included hiring a Children's Librarian and a Library Assistant, increasing open hours from 36 to 46 and establishing the Library Tax Oversight Committee. The library increased open hours in January 2011, the appropriate staff was hired and increased services followed.

The Library Tax Oversight Committee has reviewed and approved each year's budget since first meeting in 2011.