Date: January 30, 2012
To: Chair Stephen Albers and Members of the Board
From: Neel Parikh, Executive Director
Subject: 2012 Legislative Session Report

Some issues have arisen in this legislative session related to libraries.

**Washington State Library:** The state library has received a substantial budget cut. Also legislation was introduced by a candidate for the Secretary of State moving the state library and the state law library to the University of Washington. However, neither the University nor the Secretary of State are interested in such a move and the legislation appears to be dead.

**Junior Taxing Districts:** At the behest of Ross Hunter, Chair of Ways and Means, a bill has been introduced to study junior taxing districts, with an eye to combining them with counties. “The proliferation of special purpose districts has resulted in the creation and operation of a highly complex multilayered tapestry of local government and governmental services that can hinder shared goals of efficient and effective service delivery.” The libraries and fire districts are the largest junior taxing districts.

Apparently the authors are more interested in studying smaller districts such as mosquito abatement and cemeteries. Only two people testified on the first hearing on the bill. Mike Grose, Timberland Regional Library, pointed out that there have already been five such studies sent to each legislator, suggesting that another study was not necessary. Someone from the counties testified that it would be a good idea to prioritize which districts to study first.

We expect this legislation will go forward. It will be important to monitor the activity closely.
AN ACT Relating to a joint select committee on junior taxing districts; and creating new sections.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. Sec. 1. The legislature finds that while Washington state has a history and tradition of promoting and establishing limited purpose governmental entities, the proliferation of special purpose districts has resulted in the creation and operation of a highly complex and multilayered tapestry of local governments and governmental services that can hinder shared goals of efficient and effective service delivery.

The legislature, therefore, intends to establish a joint select committee on junior taxing districts to review junior taxing districts for the purpose of evaluating their provided services and making recommendations regarding their appropriateness for consolidation into an appropriate general purpose local government.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 2. (1)(a) A joint select committee on junior taxing districts is established, with members as provided in this subsection.
(i) Each legislative leader of the two largest political parties in each house of the legislature shall appoint one voting member to the committee by July 1, 2012.

(ii) The speaker of the house of representatives and the president of the senate jointly shall appoint two nonvoting members to the committee by July 1, 2012.

(iii) The governor shall appoint one nonvoting member to the committee by July 1, 2012.

(b) The committee shall choose its chair from among its legislative membership. The appointee from the majority caucus of the house of representatives shall convene the initial meeting of the committee.

(2)(a) The committee shall review junior taxing districts for the purpose of evaluating their provided services and making recommendations regarding their appropriateness for consolidation into a city or county, the general purpose local governments of Washington. In completing its review and recommendations, the committee shall seek pertinent information and advice from:

(i) Organizations representing counties, cities, and junior taxing districts;
(ii) Counties, cities, and junior taxing districts;
(iii) The department of revenue;
(iv) The state auditor; and
(v) The office of the attorney general.

(b) For purposes of this section, the term "junior taxing district" includes all taxing districts other than the state, counties, road districts, cities, towns, and school districts.

(3) Staff support for the committee must be provided by senate committee services and the house of representatives office of program research.

(4) Legislative members of the committee must be reimbursed for travel expenses in accordance with RCW 44.04.120. Nonlegislative members, except those representing an employer or organization, are entitled to be reimbursed for travel expenses in accordance with RCW 43.03.050 and 43.03.060.

(5) The expenses of the committee must be paid jointly by the senate and the house of representatives. Committee expenses are subject to approval by the senate facilities and operations committee.
and the house of representatives executive rules committee or their successor committees.

(6) The voting members of the committee shall report their findings and recommendations, in the form of draft legislation, to the governor and the ways and means committees of the house of representatives and senate, or their successor committees, by December 31, 2014.

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