Library Board to give direction on new libraries and conduct budget hearing

PIERCE COUNTY, Washington – The Pierce County Library System Board of Trustees is expected to direct the Library on next steps for potential new libraries in Lakewood and Sumner, conduct its first hearing for the 2020 budget, and discuss other issues at the board’s meeting at the Administrative Center and Library, 3005 112th St. E., Tacoma, on Wednesday, Nov. 13, at 3:30 p.m.

At the November meeting, the Board of Trustees will conduct the following business.

Potential new libraries in Lakewood and Sumner: The Board of Trustees is expected to give direction for next steps for potential new libraries in new locations in Lakewood and Sumner. The libraries would replace the current Lakewood, Tillicum and Sumner Libraries. At an October study session, the Board reviewed the findings and recommendations from the Library’s engagement with thousands of residents to learn the public’s interest in new libraries. Overall, residents in both communities expressed interest in potential new libraries:

- 84% of Lakewood survey respondents said they were interested in new libraries in Lakewood
- 88% of Sumner survey respondents said they were interested in a new library in Sumner

Direction from the Board will be whether to continue into a planning phase for building projects in Lakewood, Tillicum or Sumner. A planning phase would include further engagement with the public getting their input on a building program, conceptual designs and review of construction cost estimates.

The Lakewood, Tillicum and Sumner Libraries have been well loved and well used. The aging buildings are underserving the communities, as more people and more services compete for limited space.

- The Sumner Library is on land owned by the City of Sumner in a building co-owned by the city and the Library System. The building is aging and will close because it is in need of costly repairs.
- The Lakewood Library is dated, hard to maintain, and would require millions of dollars in upgrades. The City of Lakewood would like to see a new Lakewood library in the downtown core.
- The Tillicum Library is housed in an aging shared facility in poor physical condition. The current layout does not support how people use the library today or tomorrow.

First hearing on 2020 budget: The Board will conduct its first of two public hearings on the Library’s proposed 2020 budget. With funding from a restored levy approved by voters in 2018, revenues exceed what is needed for operational expenses for the first few years of a multi-year funding cycle and allow the Library to sustain operations for multiple years. In 2020 the Library estimates $42.3 million in revenues, which will come primarily from property taxes. The Library proposes a $39.6 million budget for 2020, which would fund services to support residents’ growth and curiosity, offer excellent reading choices, and work to connect and strengthen growing and changing communities. The remaining $2.7 million would be deposited into a sustainability fund to sustain operations for multiple years.

About Pierce County Library System
The nationally acclaimed Pierce County Library System serves 603,000 people throughout Pierce County with 20 libraries and online services. The system is the fourth largest in the state and is funded primarily through property taxes. People may choose from 1.1 million books, movies and other materials, as well as nearly half a million online/downloadable materials. Pierce County Library is committed to directing services in three primary areas: learning, enjoyment and community connection. Its services and programs spark success for Pierce County residents. More than 2 million people visit Pierce County Libraries each year. The Library provides services and programs directly to people in adult care facilities or who are homebound, and to children in child care centers and schools. Pierce County Libraries are located at Anderson Island, Bonney Lake, Buckley, DuPont, Eatonville, Fife, Gig Harbor, Graham, Key Center, Lakewood, Milton/Edgewood, Orting, Parkland/Spanaway, Pierce County Library Administrative Center, South Hill, Steilacoom, Summit, Sumner, Tillicum and University Place. Pierce County Library is an independent municipal corporation and operates as a junior taxing district.

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