



MEMORANDUM

Proposed FY26/FY27 Budget Cuts - Library Staff Reductions

Item Type: Informational
Prepared For: Mayor Lord and City Council
Date: April 16, 2025
From: Library Advisory Board
Through: Dave Berry, Library Director

Summary:

At its regular meeting on April 15, 2025, the LAB discussed the proposal to eliminate two part-time positions at the Homer Public Library. The Board unanimously opposes reductions in staffing, for a wide variety of reasons.

Background:

The community of Homer is under tremendous stress. All our cultural institutions are under assault. The school district faces a financial crisis. The Pratt Museum has lost federal funding. Federal agencies are being destroyed—the IMLS, NEA, NEH, CPB, Department of Education, and many others. In a time when the country seems to be coming apart, we must protect the shared spaces that remain.

The COVID-19 closures caused immense social damage—lost educational attainment, severed community connections, and psychological harm to children and adults both—which remains unhealed today.

The library helps local businesses with meetings and internet access, supports the elderly, and provides vital knowledge to students (especially homeschoolers). Above all, it's neutral, nonpartisan, free, and committed to universal service. It must remain fully operational.

If the library loses both these outstanding workers (equivalent to 1.3 FTE), it would have no real choice but to close on Mondays, since the remaining staff simply are not enough to maintain six-day service. This has been done once before (January 1991-December 1993) and has been narrowly avoided twice (in 2009 and 2015). The public reacted to the 1990s closure with dismay, and the experience of closing the building during COVID-19 demonstrated the harm of reducing services.