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Patricia Lee/Sara Belz
LEG Library Levy RESO
December 7, 2011
Version #4

RESOLUTION _____

A RESOLUTION relating to The Seattle Public Library and setting forth a structure, process and schedule to consider placing a Library Levy on the August 7, 2012 ballot for funding to be used in combination with existing City funding for Library operations and major maintenance.

WHEREAS, The Seattle Public Library (Library) was established in 1890 and since that time has served as a free source of information and a community gathering place for residents of Seattle and the region; and

WHEREAS, in 1998 Seattle voters overwhelmingly supported the Libraries for All bond measure, which made library services more accessible throughout the City by supporting the construction of four branch libraries in communities without library service, the replacement or renovation of 22 existing branches and the development of a new downtown Central Library; and

WHEREAS, the successful implementation of Libraries for All has contributed to a tremendous growth in Library usage; in 2010 the Library recorded nearly 7 million in-person patron visits system-wide, circulated over 11 million items and hosted 1.6 million public internet sessions; and

WHEREAS, the Library provides residents with access to an array of free services and programming, including computer and job search classes, tax preparation help and citizenship classes and introduces Seattle to local and world-renowned authors through author readings and book discussion groups; and

WHEREAS, the Library is an important partner in the education of Seattle's youth through crucial literacy activities for young children, homework help, programs to encourage reading over summer vacation, teen activities and other vital services; and

WHEREAS, the Library's public computers and wireless network provide free internet access for Seattle residents, and Library staff are available to help residents to find, evaluate and use information; and

WHEREAS, the Library's mobile services bring books and other materials to seniors and other residents who may lack the mobility to access their neighborhood branch library; and

WHEREAS, the Library has no dedicated funding source to keep operating budgets stable or keep pace with increasing maintenance costs; and

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WHEREAS, about 95 percent of the Library's 2012 operating budget is supported by the City's General Fund; and

WHEREAS, the City Council may not increase regular property taxes by more than one percent without a vote of the people; and

WHEREAS, the Library's heavy reliance on the General Fund makes it particularly vulnerable to the constraints on the growth of this revenue source; and

WHEREAS, the weakening of the national and local economies in recent years has affected City revenues and placed significant spending pressures on the General Fund; and

WHEREAS, the Library's reliance on the City's General Fund places it in competition for funding with other city priorities, including public safety and services for the homeless; and

WHEREAS, as a result of constraints on the City's General Fund, the entire Library system has been closed for one week every year since 2009, Library employees have taken an unpaid furlough of one week every year since 2009, fifteen of the 26 neighborhood branch libraries are currently closed two days per week, and the Library's collections budget has been cut by more than 13 percent since 2009; and

WHEREAS, the City's financial situation is not expected to significantly improve over the next three to four years and further reductions in General Fund support for the Library may be unavoidable; and

WHEREAS, library system operations in other jurisdictions, including Multnomah County (Portland), Oregon, are supported by a combination of levy proceeds and General Fund; NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SEATTLE, THE MAYOR CONCURRING, THAT:

Section 1. Findings and Declarations. The City of Seattle finds and declares as follows:

A. A strong Library system supports the economic, educational and cultural vitality of our city, and contributes to fostering an informed community;

B. Libraries are anchors of Seattle's neighborhoods; and

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C. A new dedicated and stable source of funding would diversify the Library's existing funding base; provide a stable source of funding which, in combination with the City General Fund, will allow the Library to continue to provide the collections, services, technology and programs valued by Seattle residents; and preserve the recent capital investments in Library buildings that were supported by Libraries for All.

Section 2. Purpose. The Seattle City Council and the Mayor of Seattle shall work with the Library and Library's Board of Trustees (the Library Board) to develop a Library Levy proposal for the August 7, 2012 ballot.

Section 3. Library Levy Public Engagement Process. The Library Board and the City Librarian shall obtain input from a broad cross-section of the community regarding the essential elements of a sustainable Library budget. The Library Board shall convene three public meetings at which proposed programmatic elements will be presented for public input and comment. The Library Board shall also convene a workshop with civic leaders to assist in developing a Library Levy proposal.

Section 4. Library Board and City Librarian Recommendations. The Library Board and City Librarian shall work with the Mayor and City Council to develop a set of recommendations regarding the term and annual amount to be levied from a 2012 Library Levy. The recommendations shall all provide the Library with a dedicated funding source to be used in combination with existing operating and capital (major maintenance) funding sources and take into account the comments the Library Board receives from the public and civic leaders. In developing the recommendations, all parties should recognize that the City might not be able to sustain its current level of General Fund support for the Library over the course of a multi-year levy.

Section 5. City Council Consideration of a Library Levy. The City Council shall consider the recommendations for a 2012 Library Levy presented by the Library Board and City

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Librarian. The Council may also consider and vote on legislation that would place a Library Levy proposal on the August 7, 2012 ballot.

Section 6. Schedule for Developing 2012 Library Levy. The following schedule identifies major milestones and decision points that will apply if a 2012 Library Levy is placed on the August 7, 2012 ballot. The timeline below may be subject to change but the process and order of decisions should not deviate significantly from what is outlined below.

Date	Action
January – February 2012	* Library Board hears public input at three community meetings and a civic leaders workshop. * Library Board and City Librarian work with the Mayor and City Council to develop recommendations for a 2012 Library Levy.
March 19, 2012	* Ordinance for 2012 Library Levy is introduced to City Council.
March - April 2012	* City Council considers and holds public hearing(s) on proposed Ordinance.
April 2012	* Council considers Ordinance to place 2012 Library Levy on August 7, 2012 ballot.
August 7, 2012	* Public vote on 2012 Library Levy ballot measure.

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Adopted by the City Council the ____ day of _____, 2011, and signed by me in open session in authentication of its adoption this_____ day of _____, 2011.

_____

President _____of the City Council

THE MAYOR CONCURRING:

_____

Michael McGinn, Mayor

Filed by me this ____ day of _____, 2011.

_____

Monica Martinez Simmons, City Clerk

(Seal)

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Form revised: July 12, 2011

FISCAL NOTE FOR NON-CAPITAL PROJECTS

Department:	Contact Person/Phone:	CBO Analyst/Phone:
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Legislation Title: A RESOLUTION relating to The Seattle Public Library and setting forth a structure, process and schedule to consider placing a Library Levy on the August 7, 2012 ballot for funding to be used in combination with existing City funding for Library operations and major maintenance.

Summary of the Legislation:
This resolution recognizes the role a strong public library system plays in the City's economic, educational and cultural vitality; the Seattle Public Library's (Library) current reliance for revenue on the City's General Fund; and the need for a new dedicated and stable source of funding that, in combination with the City's General Fund, will allow the Library to provide the resources and services valued by Seattle residents and preserve the public's capital investments in Library buildings. The Seattle City Council, Mayor, City Librarian and Library Board of Trustees will work together to develop a Library Levy proposal for the August 7, 2012 ballot.

The Library Board and City Librarian will obtain input from a broad cross-section of the community regarding essential elements of a sustainable Library budget and work with the Mayor and City Council to develop recommendations for a 2012 Library Levy by March 2012. The City Council established a City Council Special Committee on the Library Levy that will meet from December through April 2012 to consider a 2012 Library Levy for the August 7, 2012 ballot.

Background:

The Library is funded almost entirely by the City's General Fund. The City's inability to increase regular property taxes by more than one percent without a vote of the people and the resultant constraint this places on the growth of City revenues has had a significant impact on the Library's budget in recent years. This includes closure of the entire Library system for one week every year since 2009, Library employees taking an unpaid furlough of one week every year since 2009, 15 of the 26 neighborhood branch libraries reducing operating hours and a 13percent reduction in the library's collections budget since 2009.

__X__ This legislation does not have any financial implications.

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Other Implications:

a) **Does the legislation have indirect financial implications, or long-term implications?**
This resolution provides the framework for the City Council, Mayor and Library to discuss and consider placing a Library Levy on the August 2012 ballot. A levy would impact the future funding of the Library.

b) **What is the financial cost of not implementing the legislation?**
NA

c) **Does this legislation affect any departments besides the originating department?**
No

d) **What are the possible alternatives to the legislation that could achieve the same or similar objectives?**
NA

e) **Is a public hearing required for this legislation?**
No

f) **Is publication of notice with *The Daily Journal of Commerce* and/or *The Seattle Times* required for this legislation?**
No

g) **Does this legislation affect a piece of property?**
No

h) **Other Issues:**
None

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