

Council Agenda Report

Date: May 23, 2016

Prepared and Submitted by: Sandra Tripp-Jones, City Manager 

SUBJECT: FY 2017 Proposed Operating and Capital Budget

Recommendation that Council:

- A. Hold a public hearing on the budget;
- B. Consider any requests for funding from the public and from outside organizations; and
- C. Give direction to staff on the budget.

Discussion:

City Council received the FY 17 Proposed Operating and Capital Program on May 9, 2016, and has received presentations on the proposed budget. This hearing was noticed in the Dorchester Banner as part of the publication of the agenda and on the City website, also as notice of the agenda.

Staff has received one funding request from an outside organization: Dorchester County Library for an unspecified amount (attached). The City has not provided funding to the Library for about the last five years.

Following hearing from the public and considering requests for funding from outside organizations and individuals, Council may want to provide direction to staff for changes to the proposed budget.

Attach.



DORCHESTER COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

303 GAY STREET

CAMBRIDGE, MARYLAND 21613

January 2, 2016

Phone: 410-223-3331 • Fax: 410-223-6313

Website: www.dorchesterlibrary.org

410 Academy Street
Cambridge MD 21613

I am submitting this request for funds to the City of Cambridge for Dorchester County Public Library.

There are over 9,000 Cambridge residents registered to use the library. Not all patrons are registered. Some people read the magazines and newspapers, or bring their children to use the early literacy materials and toys, without getting a library card. A visitor's pass can be used to access the computers.

What services are Cambridge residents currently receiving from the library? Today, almost all jobs have online application forms. The cost of Internet services at home mean that many job seekers come to the library to use the Internet. The library provides wi-fi for those with their own devices, and computers for others. People are able to save money on newspaper and magazine subscriptions by using those at the library. The early literacy center in the library (partly funded through a grant from the City of Cambridge received in 2011) has educational toys that help develop reading skills in young children. The children's game computer has educational games installed so that children can learn math and early reading skills in a fun environment. Books and DVD collections serve those of all ages. The library subscribes to Overdrive and One Click Digital so that people with e-readers and audio devices can check out digital materials.

All of these services have costs, but many more benefits. The State of Maryland, Dorchester County, civic organizations and private donors recognize the value of the services offered and donate funds so that our library can continue to offer its services.

About five years ago, the City of Cambridge stopped giving money to the library. At the same time the County cut donations by 5%. This forced the library to discontinue the bookmobile service. Ironically, despite the loss of the bookmobile, the library continues to receive donations from the small townships of East New Market, Eldorado, and Church Creek. There are 800 registered library patrons for East New Market, and less than 200 for Church Creek. Eldorado has 260 registered library members. The amounts donated range from \$0.31 up to \$1.25 per registered borrower – all better than \$0.00 received from the City of Cambridge. The Town of Hurlock donated \$1,000 last year, the equivalent of 34 cents per registered patron.

With the majority of daily use of the Central Branch library in Cambridge coming from Cambridge residents, the city should reconsider donating funds to this important resource.

Thank you for your consideration.

Frances Cresswell
Dorchester County Public Library