

APPEAL TO FINANCE COMMITTEE -- 18 APRIL 2012

I would like to thank you all for allowing me an opportunity to meet with you again tonight to discuss the Library's Recommended Budget.

When we met last, in January, we presented our budget with a line item for additional hours for our Children's and Youth Services Librarian. In February, when we met with the Selectmen, we also shared with them signatures of nearly 200 residents who supported increases in children's and YA programming and additional hours for the children's and YA position. (SHOW SIGNATURE PAGES—AND GIVE A COPY TO CHRIS).

Tonight, as the Finance Committee works to finalize FY13 budget recommendations, I would like to take this last opportunity to advocate for consideration of increased hours for the Children's and Youth Services Librarian Position at the MPL. Knowing that the priorities for the Fin Comm are to first restore services and cuts made in departments in recent years, and knowing too that budgets are always tight, no matter what the situation, I am here to ask that in the event that monies or funds remain which are not yet targeted to particular uses, that consideration be given to funding at least some portion of the additional hours we are recommending for the Children's and Youth Services Position at the Millis Public Library.

Retaining talented employees is a top priority for the Library, and this past year, we were in the unhappy position of losing two professional children's librarians to other neighboring towns, leaving the Millis patrons without a professional resource, and adding additional work burdens to our existing staff for the period of time that we were without a children's librarian. Every time we lose someone, the existing staff have to pitch in to cover programs (or we have to cancel programs), and then, after a somewhat lengthy recruitment and hiring process, when a successful candidate does come on board, that individual needs additional training before they become fully conversant with how the Millis Public Library operates, and before they become really attuned to the needs and expectations of the Millis community at large. No matter how many years of professional experience a candidate has, every community has different needs and uses the library and its resources differently. It takes time to learn about the community, and to make connections and build bridges and form partnerships within the community.

Replacing children's librarians on an ongoing basis is not the best use of the town's resources, and in fact does a disservice to the town's residents. But, even with the resulting breaks in service, the staff of the library do remain committed to providing the best possible public service to all members of the community. And this is a community which does use its library.

Over the past several years, circulation consistently has increased – and, in just the past three months, circulation has increased 17% over the same time period last year. (Note -- last year, during this same time period, was when we were without a children's librarian).

In looking at towns that are generally considered to be comparable to Millis (towns regularly used as benchmarks for the Town Admin and Selectmen), it is revealing to note that most of these towns have full-time children's librarians. In addition, many also include additional staffing for Young Adult needs as well. In Millis, we have combined the two

responsibilities into a Children's and Youth Services Position, serving children from birth to age 18 roughly. We believe that it is important to continue to service this community, and the growing population of this 0 – 18 years contingent.

In terms of hours, specifically, the Millis Library position, at 24 hours, is significantly fewer hours than in these "comparable towns"; Norfolk 37.5 hours; Upton 40 hours; Littleton 30 hours; Dover 35 hours... (see spreadsheet handout).

In our previous meeting you heard already some of the specifics about what the Children's and Youth Services Librarian does; reading groups, storytimes, children's, teen and family programming, summer reading program, community outreach... Funding additional hours would allow us to increase our presence in the community and in the schools--- creating pathfinders, meeting with students in classes, conducting research skill workshops, increased reader's advisory services and other programming. There are many potential initiatives that remain unfulfilled due to our present staffing level.

This year, because of the several months when the position was vacant, we anticipate that approximately \$6,000 will be returned to the Town from unspent monies in the regular salary line. These funds would cover about half of the salary requirement for next year. Last year, again because of the gap in service and the lack of a salaried employee in this position, more than \$9,000 was returned in salary money to the Town. Additionally, on an annual basis, the Library also regularly returns to the General Fund approximately \$7000 collected as library fines.

In conclusion, I would like to highlight two points: the first, that what I am advocating for here today concerns day-to-day library programming and operations, and secondly, I want to be clear that this request is completely separate from the construction of the new library, and is, in fact, independent of that construction. We are talking about service needs that exist today, in our present facility; needs that continue to grow and expand with the input from community.

Thank you for allowing me the time to speak with you tonight, and thank you all, too, for your dedicated service to the Millis Community through the many hours and hard work you all do as members of this committee.

Respectfully submitted:
Tricia Perry, Library Director
Millis Public Library

18 April 2012

Childrens and Youth Services Positions

18-Jan-12

Town	# postions	Hours	Responsibilities
Millis	1	24 hours	Children's and Youth Services--collection dev't, programming, circ desk 3-4 hours per week
Medway	n/a	N/A	<div> <div>16 hours</div> <div>Library Assistant</div> <div>Library Assistant works 16 hours a week</div> </div> <div> <div>20 hours</div> <div>Library Director</div> <div>Works 20 hours per week and does collection dev't for whole library</div> </div>
Norfolk	1	37.5 Hours	Children's and YA -- collection dev't and programming --- no circ desk
Upton	1	40 Hours	Children's and YA collection dev't, programming, all services -- not scheduled for circ desk
Holliston	<div>1</div> <div>1</div>	<div>20 Hours</div> <div>24 Hours</div>	<div>Children's</div> <div>Assistant Director -- covers YA --she works 24 hours per week total - a portion of it for YA</div>
Littleton	<div>1</div> <div>1</div>	<div>30 hours</div> <div>20 hours</div>	<div>Children's</div> <div>YA/Reference --- splits the 20 hours between YA and Reference as needed; works circ desk also</div>
Medfield	<div>1</div> <div>1</div>	<div>35 Hours</div> <div>23 Hours</div>	<div>Childrens</div> <div>Teen Services</div>
Grafton	<div>1</div> <div>1</div>	<div>35 Hours</div> <div>20 Hours</div>	<div>Childrens</div> <div>YA Librarian</div> <div>Also oversees YA Librarian purchasing materials, most programming; also works circ</div>
Dover	1	35 Hours	Children's -- also responsible for YA and circ/reference duties as needed