

MEMO

Date: October 30, 2019
Submitted by: Trustee Melissa Ratcliff
For: Village Board Meeting November 4, 2019
RE: Approve and Appoint a Library Planning Committee

On Monday night, we heard from MSA regarding the study geared toward future facilities, amenities and services in the Village with examples given of a community center and/or library. MSA indicated that this was something that could be better achieved with public outreach and conversation with our residents. Additionally, numerous people have reached out to me inquiring about having a library in our community. In order to research this further, I recommend we form a Library Planning Committee so we can gather information about:

- The level of village community support for a library
- The cost of a building, including collection and furnishings
- Estimated staffing levels
- Estimated operating costs

Approving a Library Planning Committee is a good way our Village Board can find what our community desires and further answer the question, “What type of community do we aspire to be?” The committee will meet our residents face to face and conduct open meetings and surveys. Polco and Survey Monkey provided some feedback, but only reached those who were signed up for the service. The Library Planning Committee members will do the leg work of listening to residents and discern whether a library will be part of the community that we want to become.

This committee would not be a Library Board nor would it have a budget. The Library Planning Committee will provide information and make recommendations to the Village Board.

Additional support will be provided to the committee through the Dane County Library Service (DCLS) and South Central Library Service (SCLS). Building a library in a community that does not currently have a library has different rules than building a library branch in a city, such as Madison. DCLS and SCLS will provide further direction and information about the cost and size of the building, collection amounts and furnishings, estimated staffing levels and estimated operating costs required. Once these amounts are calculated, the Library Planning Commission will gather and submit additional information as to whether our community wants to have a Village library building. The building and collection size, basic services and equipment are determined by State Statute, Chapter 43, Dane County Library Standards and the number of village residents. These statutes and standards ensure that public libraries across the state are providing high quality services.

Our village residents currently pay other communities for library services. Our village residents pay about \$255,000 per year to other communities and the Bookmobile usage as part of our Dane County property taxes. If Cottage Grove had its own library, that money would go to the Village of Cottage Grove Library and stay in our community. The Library Planning Committee (with the help of DCLS and SCLS) would determine what our operating expenses would be, then the amount

of taxes we currently pay for library service to other communities would go toward (or cover) the operating expenses of our library.

The Dane County Bookmobile visits our community once a week at a set day and time, which is not always convenient to our residents or practical for some to utilize. The Library Planning Committee could also determine if there are better locations for the Bookmobile to serve in our community or different hours/days that may work better.

The committee would also submit a letter to the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) to report the research and ask if we could move ahead to plan the library building. When DPI responds positively, then the Village Board could convert the Library Planning Committee to a Village Library Board. If DPI did not approve the request to have a library in our community, then no more would need to be done.

I recommend we make a motion to form a Library Planning Committee with 5 members. The only requirement per State Statute is that one member has to be the School District Superintendent or their appointee. I would also recommend having one Trustee, one member from the Friends of the Cottage Grove Library, and then 2 additional members, one of which can be a member that is not a village resident.

[Library State Statutes](#)

[Dane County Library Standards](#)