



5310 W. Layton Avenue
Greenfield, WI 53220-4011
(414) 321-9595

September 27, 2019

Mr. Paul Ziehler, Board President
and the MCFLS Board of Trustees
Milwaukee County Federated Library System
709 N 8th St.
Milwaukee, WI 53233

Dear Mr. Ziehler and MCFLS Board of Trustees,

First off, the Greenfield Public Library Board would like to commend you and MCFLS staff for increasing the funding request to \$100,000 in the 2020 Milwaukee County budget. The MCFLS narrative and service data that were placed into the current County budget request are eloquent and comprehensive. The data speaks volumes. Thank you for making the strong case about the depth and magnitude of services our public libraries in Milwaukee County provide collaboratively to all our communities' residents. Though if funded it would only increase funding by \$34,000 over 2019, it is a step in the right direction. We noted with concern another County \$28 million budget shortfall and instructions to all departments to turn in 2020 budget requests with a 1.6% reduction. The City of Greenfield is currently in the midst of a very difficult challenging season as well.

The Greenfield Public Library Board has reviewed the MCFLS board's proposed changes to the member agreements for 2020-2024. Our board has a number of concerns about the present and future financial and contractual impacts contained in the proposed changes to the ILS, Resource Sharing, and Technology Agreement.

After the MCFLS staff and WILS led a strategic planning process this year with the MCFLS Board and member libraries, MCFLS staff and board identified several areas where they would like to increase services to member libraries. The draft 2020-2024 agreements as proposed seek to contractualize funding for three strategic planning initiatives into a 5-year contract binding member libraries to set reimbursement rates.

In the view of our board, while the increased services may be valuable and desirable in and of themselves, if funding for these new services is made permanent by inclusion in the ILS agreements, the financial and contractual changes will fundamentally alter the original concept of reimbursing net lending libraries. The changes will also set the stage for a permanent and continuous erosion in the reciprocal borrowing arrangements in place since 2009. Indeed, the proposed changes call into question MCFLS's continued support for the concept of reciprocal borrowing. Promising to revisit the

reciprocal borrowing formula sometime in the future, as MCFLS has done, after a binding 5-year contract is signed by net lending libraries, seems to the Greenfield Library Board to be damaging to the goodwill between impacted libraries and MCFLS, and an unfortunate first step toward opening a dialogue with valued partners about a difficult issue.

Based upon figures Mr. Heser provided to LDAC, we have added up all the proposed additional costs over the 5- year life of the agreement in order to assess its full impact. The magnitude of the financial and contractual changes is the cause for our concern.

Proposed Change	Additional Costs Annually	Other costs	Total Cost	Notes
New CountyCat Mobile App	\$16,500- 19,250	\$7,500	\$96,500	5 years
Expanded Electronic Resources Buying Pool	\$25,000- \$45,000		\$175,000	5 years
Marketing and Data Collection	\$30,600- \$50,600		\$207,500	5 years
Marketing Intern	\$16,793 - \$17,471		\$51,393	3 years
Totals	\$88,893- \$132,321		\$530,393	

Many municipalities in Milwaukee County are under financial strain and fiscal constraints. Consequently, the libraries they fund, which are served by MCFLS, are facing flat revenues and rapidly escalating costs for health insurance, utilities, library materials, and other fixed expenses essential for day-to-day operation of a public library. The Greenfield Public Library Board of Trustees questions whether this expansion of MCFLS services based on 3 strategic plan initiatives is appropriate when viewed against the impact it will have on our local library revenues and our ability to maintain the quality of services offered to our local patrons. While the dollar impact on each individual net lending library may be initially manageable, the aggregate dollar impact over time is significant. To accommodate these increased costs, the Greenfield Public Library will have to make internal cuts and reassignments of scarce budgeted funds.

The member agreements starting in 2009 established a means by which the net lending libraries would receive reciprocal borrowing reimbursement from MCFLS proportionate to their level of net lending based on a contractual percentage of the state aid MCFLS received that year. In 2011, this rate was 43% of state aid. The rate has been declining ever since, and this agreement will bring it down to 35%. Decreasing the percentage of state aid paid to net lending libraries with each future ILS agreement is an unsustainable manner by which to fund the system's response to changing technologies, and it establishes a precedent that the Greenfield Public Library is extremely reluctant to embrace.

Wisconsin municipalities, and the libraries they fund, are very familiar with the necessity of distinguishing between wants and needs, focusing on essential expenditures, and setting aside many desirable but non-essential expenditures. In the view of the Greenfield Public Library Board, the inclusion of all 3 strategic plan initiatives into the 2020-2024 member agreements shifts too much of the financial burden of a changing library landscape onto the net lending municipal libraries.

Our board respectfully requests that MCFLS take a closer look at its own 2020-2024 expenditures to find areas that could be reduced and streamlined in order to afford the new services it wishes to offer.

Sincerely,

Linda J. Lubotsky

Ms. Linda Lubotsky, Alderperson,
and President of the Greenfield Library Board
on behalf of the Trustees of the Greenfield Public Library Board