

COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
Inter-Agency Correspondence

San Mateo County Law Library

DATE: October 21, 2002

BOARD MEETING DATE: November 12, 2002

TO: Honorable Board of Supervisors

FROM: Board of Law Library Trustees, San Mateo County

SUBJECT: Filing Fee Increase

Recommendation

Adopt a Resolution to increase the Law Library portion of the Superior Court civil filing fee from \$26.50 to \$29.50 effective January 1, 2003.

Background

The San Mateo County Law Library ("Library") provides free access to legal materials and resources to the public by maintaining a reference collection commensurate with the needs of the community. The main source of income for the Library is a component of the Superior Court civil filing fee, which accounts for over 90% of the Library's operating revenue.

Discussion

The Law Library fee portion is currently \$26.50. The Library is requesting a \$3 increase. The Library's Board of Trustees and staff believe that without adequate funding, significant cutbacks in services to the public would result through reductions in the reference collection and the number of hours that the Library is open to the public.

The fee was increased January 1, 2002 from \$25 to \$26.50. Revenues have not been able to keep pace with rising costs due to declining civil filings. In FY 2001-2002, the Library had total revenues of \$502,351. Of that amount, \$479,093 represented fee income. The remaining revenue of \$23,258 came from coin-operated copy machines, conference room rental, sale of used books, and other miscellaneous revenue sources. (The Library did receive voluntary contributions in the amount of \$1,275, which were deposited with the Peninsula Community Foundation Law Library Fund.) Expenditures for FY 2001-2002 equaled \$546,703. Beginning FY 2001-2002, the reserve balance was \$69,026. At the conclusion of FY 2001-2002, the reserve fund had dropped to \$24,674. The Library, thus, incurred a \$44,352 operating deficit. As of September 2002, the reserve fund was \$2,044. The Board of Law Library Trustees is of the consensus opinion that further cancellations would compromise the Library's ability to function as a viable research facility.

Vision Alignment

The request for a fee increase keeps commitments Nos. 2, “provide equal access to educational opportunity” and 9, “responsive, effective and collaborative government,” and goals Nos. 4, “residents have many educational and training opportunities beyond high school” and 22, “providing that County and local governments effectively communicate, collaborate and develop strategic approaches to issues affecting the entire County.”

Fiscal Impact

There is no cost to the County.

This request has been reviewed and approved as to form by County Counsel.

BOARD OF LAW LIBRARY TRUSTEES

By Karen M. Lutke