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City Council Approves Extending the Monroe Community Library IGA to December 31, 2024

On Monday, August 26, 2024, the Monroe City Council approved a resolution that extends the Monroe Community Library Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) from Monday, September 30, 2024 through Tuesday, December 31, 2024. The additional time will allow for the City of Monroe to seek mediation services, which were agreed upon by all parties, to renegotiate the IGA with the City of Corvallis who manages the Corvallis-Benton County Public Library System (CBCPL), and the South Benton Community Enhancement Association (SBCEA) to update the Library's Property Use Easement. The current IGA and Property Use Easement will remain in full force and effect.

As mentioned at the City Council's August 26, 2024 meeting, the City of Monroe is requesting the City of Corvallis, which manages the CBCPL System, to include cost share of utilities and maintenance for library operations. The current IGA tasks the citizens of Monroe with the cost of maintaining the entire building for the Library when the building is also used for the greater Monroe Community outside of city limits. This inequity creates a very difficult financial situation for the City of Monroe. The City does not have the necessary funding to maintain the entire building as it should be and the City must either reduce services or increase fees that in effect requires Monroe citizens to pay twice for the library. Once for receiving Library Services through Benton County property taxes and again for maintaining the Library Facilities by the City of Monroe. The additional costs are not shared by residents who live outside the City and Monroe does not receive any of the Library tax dollars that Benton County collects from you and gives to Corvallis.

In addition, the City of Monroe and Benton County attorneys have spent a significant amount of time discussing the building's Property Use Easement. Both attorneys agree the wording of the Easement requires changes. At this point, the City is not certain if the Easement was properly transferred, or even could be transferred, to the City of Monroe back in 2013. Because of the uncertainty, the focus has shifted from the IGA to the Property Use Easement as the first order of business. Clearly, if the parties cannot, or will not, agree to make changes to the Easement, the

very ownership of the property is in doubt and the City cannot enter into an IGA for Library Services with a building it has no control over.

With the IGA extended to the end of the 2024 calendar year, the City of Monroe will first initiate discussions with SBCEA to see if they are willing to enter into mediation to modify the Property Use Easement. If the Property Use Easement can be updated to the SBCEA and the City's satisfaction, the City can return focus to mediation and negotiation of a new IGA with the City of Corvallis. As negotiations move forward, the Monroe City Council will continue to have a fiduciary responsibility to the citizens of Monroe to ensure all tax dollars are maximized for the benefit of the City of Monroe and its citizens.

The City of Monroe recognizes the Monroe Community Library as an important asset to all residents, both Monroe citizens and Benton County residents. The City of Monroe is committed to work with the SBCEA, City of Corvallis, and Benton County to determine the best path forward that is sustainable for the community and equitable for our citizens.

The City of Monroe and Monroe City Council look forward to finalizing a new Property Use Easement with the SBCEA and an IGA with the City of Corvallis that is mutually beneficial to all parties including the citizens of Monroe and South Benton County residents.

For questions, contact Monroe City Hall at (541) 847-5175 or email cityhall@monroeor.gov

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