

# Appendix G

Questions on the Proposed  
Analysis of the Possibility of the  
Cuyahoga County Public Library  
Providing Service to the Shaker  
Heights Public Library District

**Abridged Questions on the  
Proposed Analysis of the Possibility of the Cuyahoga County Public  
Library Providing Service to the Shaker Heights Public Library District**

**May 2016**

**FACILITIES**

- Would CCPL anticipate operating either or both of SHPL's facilities on an ongoing basis?
- Would CCPL anticipate replacing (or making major renovations to) either or both of SHPL's facilities for ongoing operation? (e.g., new construction, "storefront" or similar alternative?)
- Could CCPL achieve the above financially without the need for voter or third party approval?

**SERVICES AND PROGRAMS**

- Would/is CCPL considering joining CLEVNET?

**TAXES**

- When does CCPL plan on going on the ballot next and are you anticipating any change in millage?

**THIRD PARTY APPROVALS**

- Would CCPL require any approvals or actions by third parties as conditions precedent for Shaker Library to be incorporated into CCPL? (e.g., allocation formula from the Public Library fund)

# **Proposed Analysis of the Possibility of the Cuyahoga County Public Library Providing Service to the Shaker Heights Public Library District**

**May 2016**

## **INTRODUCTION AND REQUEST**

Because of reduced funding and rising costs, Shaker Heights Public Library must make a decision about its future.

In response to growing maintenance costs and deteriorating conditions at Shaker Heights Public Library facilities, the Shaker Heights Public Library retained HBM Architects to examine its Main Library and its Bertram Woods Branch Library. In early 2014, HBM produced a Facilities Assessment and created a ten-year Maintenance Master Plan for Shaker Library; these documents projected roughly \$4 million in repairs to the Main Library and about \$1 million of repairs at the Woods Branch Library would be necessary over a ten-year period.

For a library with an annual operating budget of less than \$5 million, these new expenses are both considerable and concerning. If nothing were to change, these additional costs would force the Library Board to reallocate funds away from collection and program expenses. The future of Shaker Library will be determined by the solution its Board finds for meeting its facilities needs.

In broad terms, as an independent, community library, Shaker Library has three options for addressing the challenge of continuing to operate two facilities that have become prohibitively expensive to maintain:

**OPTION 1: Cutting services to pay for facility maintenance costs.** This is a solution of last resort. The Library has done its utmost to avoid cutting services and preserve the high-quality library services that residents of its district have been willing to pay for and come to expect.

**OPTION 2: Finding efficiencies within the Library's current budget.** This is an option of limited viability. In response to declining revenue from property tax collections following the 2008 recession and a reduction in support for local libraries from the State of Ohio, Shaker Library has already cut its annual operating expenses by \$1.2 million, a budget reduction of 26% since 2007, mostly through reductions in staff and service hours. While the Library continues to

explore additional opportunities to create efficiencies, given the magnitude of its growing facility maintenance costs, any additional savings that might be found would be inadequate to meet this need.

**OPTION 3: Increasing revenue to fund a more complete answer to Shaker Library's facilities challenge.** This solution would require the support of the residents of the Library's district. Local revenue has declined with property values and support from the State of Ohio is still well below 2007 levels. While the Library has pursued every option available to it to leverage existing revenue and bring in new sources to funding, these opportunities are almost always limited to the short-term. Longer-term, stable changes in Library revenue are only available through additional State support – which does not seem to be forthcoming – or through an operating levy increase or bond issue.

There is an additional option, however, for ensuring high-quality library services for the residents of the Shaker Library district:

**OPTION 4: Identifying an alternative method for library service provision that does not involve operating as an independent community library.** Options 1-3 are all predicated on Shaker Library continuing to provide library services to the residents of its district through its existing structure as an independent community library. While other sources of library services may exist, the most obvious alternative would be to fold the Shaker Library district into the Cuyahoga County Public Library system. Before it asks residents to consider a proposal to increase tax revenue, the Library Board, as the public's representatives, has an obligation to examine the possible benefits and costs of the Cuyahoga County Public Library as an alternative source for library services.

While Shaker Library will examine all the solutions available to it through the first three options, it cannot answer the question posed in Option 4 on its own; it will require the assistance and support of the Cuyahoga County Public Library. This memo is intended as both a request for assistance from the Cuyahoga County Public Library to help Shaker Library conduct this analysis, and as the first sketch of the questions such an analysis might attempt to answer.

We have organized these initial questions into eight categories:

1. Facilities
2. Funding
3. Services and Programs
4. Staffing
5. Governance
6. Partnerships
7. One-Time Considerations
8. CCPL Needs

For each category, we have included a few paragraphs to help put the topic into context and an initial list of questions we believe would need to be addressed.

## **FACILITIES**

Residents of the Shaker Heights Public Library district currently receive library services from two facilities: Main Library in Shaker’s “Town Center” section of the Moreland neighborhood, and Bertram Woods Branch Library on Warrensville Road, next to the Shaker Middle School.

Usage patterns provide evidence that Shaker residents tend to use the library branch closest to their homes and, through a telephone survey that was conducted during the summer of 2015, the community indicated a preference to maintain two branches.

The Library leases the former Moreland School building, which houses its Main Library, from the City of Shaker Heights. Some residents view the Moreland School as having historical importance and the Main Library is a major service point for the Moreland neighborhood. The City of Shaker Heights has never seriously discussed demolishing and redeveloping its older, decommissioned school properties and has sought to repurpose them instead. The Library’s presence in the Moreland School building relieves the City of the need to find an alternative use for the property. The lease from the City is for a nominal cost but leaves maintenance expenses the responsibility of the Library, and the Library has the option to terminate the lease if it determines it cannot economically operate in the Moreland School building.

The Shaker Library Board has explored multiple options for addressing its growing facility-maintenance expenses, including renovating both facilities, consolidating its operations into one upgraded facility, constructing a new library facility on one of its current sites, and constructing a new facility at another site within Shaker Heights. These

different options were discussed with residents of Shaker Heights at public events beginning in 2014.

While the Shaker Library Board has not indicated a preference among these options, the City has indicated it would prefer that the Main Library continue to operate out the Moreland School building.

The Cuyahoga County Public Library operates 27 branches throughout Cuyahoga County. Two of these branches, Warrensville Heights and Maple Heights, are within three miles of Shaker's Main Library. Four more, Garfield Heights, South Euclid-Lyndhurst, Beachwood, and Southeast, are within five miles. The South Euclid-Lyndhurst, Beachwood, and Warrensville Heights branches are within 2.5 miles of Shaker's Bertram Woods Branch, and the Maple Heights and Richmond Heights branches are within five miles.

- How does Cuyahoga County Public Library determine the placement of its branches to ensure the populations within its jurisdiction have nearby access to library services?
- What standards does CCPL use to judge if a library should be closed?
- How many library facilities would CCPL anticipate operating within the current Shaker Library district? Can CCPL guarantee that a library branch would remain located within Shaker Heights?
- How would Cuyahoga County Public Library address Shaker Library's facilities needs? What decision-making process would be used? What would the timing be of addressing these needs and how would this be funded?
- Would CCPL ever consider construction of a new library facility to meet the needs of residents of the current Shaker Library district? Would CCPL consider new construction only on the two existing Shaker Library sites or would it consider alternative locations within the district?
- How would CCPL anticipate approaching Shaker Library's current lease agreement with the City of Shaker Heights to operate out of the former Moreland School building through 2033?
- Is CCPL considering/anticipating other capital projects? When might they be undertaken? How would they be funded? What impact would other capital projects have on addressing Shaker Library's facility needs?

## **FUNDING**

Shaker Library has an operating budget of \$4.8 million and is funded through two primary sources: its allocation from the State of Ohio's Public Library Fund, which

represents roughly 38% of its funding, and revenue from a 4.0 mill continuing property tax levy that was approved by district voters in 2008 and which represents roughly 58% of its funding.

Property owners in the City of Shaker Heights are taxed an aggregate rate of 200.4 mills; Shaker Library's 4.0 mills represents just less than 2% of the City of Shaker's total property tax millage. The Library receives 2.8% of all property tax paid by owners of property within the City of Shaker Heights. In 2014, the per capita cost of the Shaker Library tax levy was \$84.96 and property owners paid \$122.50 annually/\$0.34 daily per \$100,000 of property valuation due to the Library levy.

Because it is an independent library, Shaker Library retains a legacy advantage in the long-standing formula used to divide funding from the State of Ohio's Public Library Fund among the libraries in Cuyahoga County. Shaker Library receives \$43.23 per capita from Cuyahoga County's Public Library Fund allocation.

From 2009-2014, tax collections from Shaker Library's property tax levy fell by nearly \$700,000. Revenue from the Public Library Fund fell by nearly half a million dollars from 2007-2014. This revenue loss forced Shaker Library to reduce its budget by \$1.2 million, which was achieved mostly through reduction in staff size and shortened library hours. Roughly 70% of Shaker Library's annual expenditures are for personnel; facility costs and library materials/circulation items represent 17% and 13% of its annual budget, respectively.

The Cuyahoga County Public Library is funded in part by a 2.5 mill property tax levy that was approved by voters within the communities it serves. Voters last increased this levy by 1.0 mill in 2008.

- Would consolidation of CCPL and Shaker Library require placing a ballot issue before Shaker voters to approve CCPL's property tax level?
- When does CCPL anticipate placing its next ballot issue before voters? Would it be an operating levy or a bond issue? What level of taxation does CCPL anticipate requesting?
- If the two library systems were to consolidate, when would the tax on Shaker Heights property owners decrease from 4.0 mills to 2.5 mills?
- How would the allocations from the Public Library Fund received by Shaker Library and CCPL change as a result of consolidation?
- What process would be used to determine the change in Public Library Fund allocation and whose approval would be necessary? Would the approval of the other independent libraries in Cuyahoga County be required?

- What impact would the consolidation of the two libraries have on the State of Ohio's application of the Homestead Exemption Roll Back on Shaker Heights property taxes?
- What level of expenditures would CCPL anticipate making to provide services to the residents of the current Shaker Library district? What would the ratio be between property tax revenue from Shaker Library district property owners and the expenditures for services to Shaker Library district residents?
- What would be the disposition of the Shaker Heights Library Fund at the Cleveland Foundation?

## **SERVICES AND PROGRAMS**

Shaker Library is part of the CLEVNET consortium and provides its customers with access to CLEVNET's extensive collection. Shaker Library also offers specialized services that are of particular interest to Shaker residents, such as its sizeable computer center at the Main Library and its collections and programs focusing on the history of Shaker Heights.

A recent public opinion survey indicated that, on balance, Shaker residents are happy with the services they receive from their Library. Patron satisfaction is reflected in both the consistent support the Library has enjoyed from Shaker voters and their active use of Library services. Shaker Library's district is home to roughly 32,000 people and annual visits to Shaker Library have exceeded 500,000, an average of nearly 16 visits per resident. As of 2014, Shaker Library customers checked out an average of 34 unique items per Shaker resident every year and the Library's circulation was 4<sup>th</sup> in Ohio and 6<sup>th</sup> nationwide among communities the same size or larger.

- How would CCPL integrate Shaker Library's services into its own? What process would be used to make service integration decisions?
- Would CCPL anticipate any gaps in service to Shaker Library district residents as this transition takes place? How long would Shaker Library district residents be without service and how would CCPL propose to address them?
- What impact would consolidation have on the ability of local staff to develop services and programs designed specifically for Shaker Library district residents?
- What impact would the loss of CLEVNET have on Shaker Library customers? How would CCPL anticipate addressing this loss? Would CCPL consider joining CLEVNET?
- What impact would consolidation have on Shaker Library's local collection, including its local history collection? Would this collection be maintained and

further developed or would it be incorporated into CCPL's broader collection and distributed?

- What impact would the loss of a direct OPLIN line have on Internet connection speed?
- Would the loss of the state delivery service have an impact on the timeliness of deliveries to meet the needs of Shaker Library district residents?
- What impact would consolidation have on the computer center? As equipment ages and becomes obsolete, at what level would the computer center be maintained? At what size does CCPL anticipate the computer center would operate?
- How would CCPL approach the administration of current Shaker Library programs, like the annual Barbara Luton Art Competition and other local art/author events?

## **STAFFING**

Using the Cuyahoga County Public Library to provide library services to the residents of the current Shaker Library district would inevitably have an impact on the staff of Shaker Library. As an independent library, Shaker Library has staffed its services differently than the Cuyahoga County Public Library, creating roles that may not exist in the Cuyahoga County system, providing different compensation and benefit packages, and operating under a different set of rules. Cuyahoga County Public Library staff members are represented by a union, while Shaker Library staff members are not.

- How would CCPL determine staffing levels for services to Shaker Library district residents? What metrics would be used for making such determinations?
- How would decisions about the addition and elimination of positions serving Shaker Library district residents be made? How many positions would CCPL anticipate adding or eliminating?
- Would CCPL maintain Shaker Library's current specialized positions, such as Local History Librarian, Community Engagement Librarian, and Digital Services Manager?
- What process would CCPL use to integrate non-union staff into a union environment? What impact would this integration have on the salaries and benefits of individual staff members? How would seniority be calculated for newly integrated staff and how would former Shaker Library staff be ranked compared to laid off CCPL staff?
- How would former Shaker Library staff be trained and what orientation would they be provided? How long would this process take?

## GOVERNANCE

As an independent library, Shaker Library is organized as a separate political subdivision with Cuyahoga County that is governed by a seven-member Board of Trustees, the members of which are appointed by the Shaker Heights Board of Education. A majority of the members of Shaker Library Board must be residents of the Shaker Heights School District.

A seven-member Board of Trustees also governs the Cuyahoga County Public Library. Its members are appointed by Cuyahoga County government and by the Cuyahoga County Court of Common Pleas.

While the Cuyahoga County Public Library's Executive Director, Sari Feldman, is a resident of Shaker Heights, none of the members of the Cuyahoga County Public Library's Board of Trustees are Shaker residents. Consolidating library operations into a larger system would limit or end the local control that Shaker residents have maintained over their library. The questions below are designed to help outline how Shaker Library district residents might continue to participate in decisions about the library services they would receive through a consolidated approach.

- How does CCPL incorporate local residents into decisions about the services and operations of its branches?
- Can CCPL provide examples of how local residents have helped set the direction of their branches?
- When was the last time CCPL consolidated with an existing library system and how was local governance handled?
- What role should the Shaker Library Board of Trustees play during transition?

## PARTNERSHIPS

During its nearly 80-year history as an independent library, Shaker Library has entered into a series of partnerships with local organizations to develop programs and activities that provide service to and improve the lives of the residents of its district. As a result, consolidation of Shaker Library and Cuyahoga County Public Library would have an impact that reaches beyond just Shaker Library. The questions in this section are intended to explore those potential effects.

- What role would CCPL anticipate for the Friends of the Shaker Library? Would it continue as a separate organization or would it be absorbed by another group? How would this transition take place?

- Would CCPL continue partnerships that have been developed by Shaker Library, including the operation of the Play and Learn Station with Family Connections and the Community Entrepreneurial Office with the Career Transition Center?
- Can CCPL provide examples of branch-level partnerships similar to those developed by Shaker Library? How were these partnerships developed and how are they managed?

## **ONE-TIME CONSIDERATIONS**

Merging one organization into another comes at a cost. The questions in this section are intended to help us identify expenses, operational adjustments, and transitional issues that might arise, should Shaker Library and Cuyahoga County Public Library choose to consolidate.

- Beyond the study conducted by Baldwin-Wallace in regard to the possibility of incorporating the East Cleveland Public Library into CCPL, is there other research available that could provide both libraries guidance on this analysis? Is outside expertise needed and at what cost could it be accessed?
- How would the transition from the CLEVNET catalog to CCPL catalog take place? How long would it take and at what cost?
- Would current Shaker Library customers need new library cards and what costs would be involved?
- How would the transition between IT systems take place? How long would it take and at what cost?
- What would happen to Shaker Library's current contracts with vendors/service providers? What process would be used for analyzing these contracts? How would CCPL determine which contracts it might wish to continue and those it would need to terminate? What costs would be involved in this transitioning of contracts?
- How would accounting data from Shaker Library be incorporated into CCPL's system? How would this process be managed, how long would it take and at what cost?

## **CCPL QUESTIONS**

Shaker Library has the utmost respect for the Cuyahoga County Public Library. CCPL has earned its national reputation for excellence through the quality of its services and its programming achievements. Shaker Library recognizes that most, if not all, of the questions outlined in the previous sections are focused on Shaker Library's operations

and its services to customers. This section attempts to anticipate the questions that the Cuyahoga County Public Library may have for Shaker Library.

- What information and commitments does CCPL need to partner with Shaker Library to conduct this analysis?
- How would CCPL prefer to coordinate with Shaker Library on this analysis? What staff would be assigned and who would serve as the leads for both libraries?
- How can we ensure that the reputations and interests of both libraries are protected during this analysis?
- What Board actions are necessary to undertake this analysis? Are any non-disclosure agreements necessary?
- How would both libraries guarantee that the State of Ohio's Sunshine Laws are strictly followed during this analysis?
- Can we identify and prioritize a set of questions that must be answered in a way that is satisfactory to both parties for consolidation to move forward? Can we map a critical path of agreements that would need to be reached?

## CONCLUSION

The topics and questions outlined above are a first-pass at identifying the information that both organizations would need to consider whether consolidation might be viable and appropriate. We would expect CCPL to make additions and we would work together to further refine them.

It is our hope that CCPL would be willing to meet and discuss with us the possibility of undertaking the analysis we have described and the process we might use in doing so.