



Where Life is Sweet

Mayor and Members of the City Council
STAFF REPORT
For the Meeting of January 30, 2025

Title/Subject

Umatilla County Special Library District (UCSLD) Contract Renewal

Summary and Background

From the District's website: "The UCSLD is a county-wide, tax-supported public library district. We partner with 12 public libraries in Umatilla County to provide library services. This office is the administrative headquarters for the District and the headquarters of TakeOff!, an early childhood literacy outreach program. UCSLD was created by a vote of the Umatilla County voters in November 1986." *One thing that I would add to this definition is that the boundaries of the UCSLD is all of Umatilla County minus everything located in the City of Hermiston.*

The City of Hermiston has had an agreement with UCSLD starting in 1988 to serve the residents of the district that lie in the 97838 zip code but outside of the city limits. This has been a good partnership.

When Mark Rose began his work here as Library Director there was a lot of discussion about the formula used to distribute the funding throughout UCSLD. The formula adopted by the district beginning on July 1, 2022, is much easier to understand and in most ways much better than the old formula. Because of the timing of that adoption along with other things, I recommended then to the Council that we approve this agreement with what I consider to be one final flaw. My intention then was to work with UCSLD to change the formula prior to the adoption of another three-year agreement. During the intervening three years UCSLD has hired a new director. That change has improved communication between UCSLD and the City quite a bit. UCSLD leadership has listened to our concerns again. However, neither the new director nor the UCSLD Board have shown any interest in changing the adopted funding formula or addressing our concerns in other ways. Under the fiscal information section, I will attempt to explain the funding formula and the flaw that I think is there.

In the development of the new formula leading up to July 2022, other cities in Western Umatilla County had concerns with the formula and the general unfairness of where revenues were generated and then spent. Representatives of Umatilla County also expressed their concerns regarding some of these issues as well as our formula concerns. I would say some of these items have improved with the new director, but I don't think they have totally gone away.

Tie-In to Council Goals

N/A

Fiscal Information

Under the formula proposed by the district with the 2023 population numbers the City would receive \$132,211 in FY25-26. This approach removes the Hermiston Rural population of 8,708 out of the first half of the formula.

Under the formula as applied to all other residents of the district, the City would receive \$253,118.

That is a difference of \$120,907.

Alternatives and Recommendation

Alternatives

1. Authorize the City Manager to sign the Agreement for Library Services as presented.
2. Direct staff to work with UCSLD further to find a compromise.

Recommended Action/Motion

Authorize the City Manager to sign the Agreement for Library Services as presented.

Submitted By:

Byron D. Smith

Mark Rose