

From: [Susan Orbom](#)
To: [BOC Office](#)
Subject: Agenda Item 5E, Commissioners meeting August 5, 2020
Date: Monday, August 3, 2020 7:20:50 PM

This email letter was authorized by the Langlois Public Library Special District Board at a meeting held August 3, 2020.

We are writing in opposition to Agenda Item 5E. Ballot Measure Discussion No. 4: Advisory Question Library District Consolidation. We believe the proposed consolidation of all the county libraries into one district would benefit neither the County nor any of the libraries.

We do not understand how consolidation would result in any economies. In a small library like ours in Langlois, the library director performs a great many functions on site that are “staff functions” in larger libraries. The director is only minimally aided by part-time hourly staff and volunteers. Thus consolidation would not noticeably reduce employee hours or the personnel budget. In fact, our personnel budget — which is the greater part of our total budget — would increase if wages and benefits were raised to match those of other county libraries.

We do not understand how consolidation would improve the service we provide to our patrons. The county’s small population is dispersed over a large geographic area. Each library in the county serves a local community with a distinctive character and needs and tailors its acquisitions and programs accordingly. Centralized planning and management could weaken that community bond.

The greatest economy available to a group of libraries is to merge their online catalogues. This results in a huge reduction in the cost of circulation software and a much larger combined collection of books and materials than any one library could afford individually. Several years ago we did just that when the Coastline system was expanded to include all the libraries in Curry and Coos Counties.

Finally, tax monies the library districts receive are not adequate as it is and consolidation would not improve the situation. Libraries must depend on Foundations and Friends groups to raise money to augment taxes for present and future needs and possibly an endowment. These are 501 (c) (3) non-profit organizations whose funds by law are not available to the County.

Commissioner Paasch has stated that “the amount the [library] districts get far outweighs their budget” and urges “reassessing their budgets to make sure our tax dollars are well spent.” The truth is that no Curry library gets more in property taxes than they can use. Furthermore, the duly elected special district boards — not the County — by law have the responsibility for prudent management of our tax dollars.

That Curry libraries provide the services they do with the modest tax income they receive shows their efficiency and makes them the best bargain in the county.

Respectfully,

Deanna McDermott, Sandra R. McDonald, Susan Orbom, Jo Rieber, Carol Waxham
Langlois Public Library Special District Board