

11 April 2023

County Manager Rogers,

The J. Joel Edwards Library Board of Trustees met at 1631 on 10 April 2023 to review the proposed budget for FY 2023/2024. In our role as advocate and authority, we officially notify you of concerns and questions raised during the meeting.

Despite reservations expressed to you by board members and the library manager both prior to and during the budget process, you have made certain changes that we believe may violate both the spirit and letter of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) drafted by the county attorney and signed by representatives of the Pike County Board of Commissioners, the Flint River Regional Library System (FRRLS), and the Library Board.

We also believe that these changes signal additional planned strategic shifts that would jeopardize the library's continued relationship with the Georgia Public Library System and FRRLS, severely limiting its ability to continue properly and proudly serving our community. We base these assertions on statements made by you, to and in the presence of, members of the Library Board and the Library Manager.

Our concerns are as follows:

- We are curious why these changes are being implemented. To our knowledge there have been no problems, issues, or allegations of improprieties regarding the library budget. None have been raised with the Board. The changes make the library's job harder regarding the approval and reimbursement of expenses made using impact fee monies. The proposed changes, then, appear to be solutions in search of problems rather than required remedies or fixes. This appears nothing less than a move to exert greater control over library operations, a clear violation of our MOU.
- You have included \$15K of impact fee monies in our budget. During our budget meeting in March, you claimed that impact fees could "be used for the purchase of library materials", including books. Despite our requests, you have failed to provide us with specifics as to what defines "library materials", access to an itemized list of said qualifying materials, and the specific regulations defining them. We ask that these particulars be officially addressed in writing.
- We are concerned about the approval process for use of impact fees since, to our knowledge, the commissioners, not the county manager, are solely responsible for reviewing and approving any requests for reimbursement and use of impact fees. How will this process affect our ability to meet our obligations promptly and efficiently? Additionally, as our needs increase with the growth of the county, will our percentage of impact fees - since they are included as a part of our budget - be increased each year to accommodate them? We ask that these particulars be officially addressed in writing.
- We are concerned about how the changes you have proposed affect the MOU drafted by the county attorney and signed by representatives of the Pike County Board of Commissioners, FRRLS, and the Library Board of Trustees. Rightly suspicious of your support for our county library, we would also ask that you provide assurances that these changes are not part of a

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strategy to minimize or erode the library's role in the community. We ask that you officially address these concerns in writing.

- We are curious as to whether other departments who receive impact fees monies are being treated similarly, or if the library is being singled out for a purpose. If the library is being treated differently, we would be curious to know why. We ask that you officially address this concern in writing.

We would point out that the library budget accounts for less than 1% of the county's total budget, and that the return on that investment is quite high, almost incalculably so. We are far more than a simple lending library. Our relationship with FRRLS gives the county access to a broad range of services and programs, all free of charge to citizens. Our library manager and staff provide both goods and services to the citizens of Pike County, the Pike County School System, and other county entities. These programs are conducted both on and off site and widely lauded by those who participate. We intend to see that these programs, and others, are available to the citizens of Pike County well into the future and ask your support toward that end.

We are aware that you have initiated conversations with the commissioners and county attorney to rewrite the MOU so that it is more favorable to you. You did so without consulting with or including the library board. We find this a gross violation of trust demonstrating a continued lack of professional integrity.

We look forward to your responses to our inquiries, and trust you understand that we will faithfully execute our responsibilities to the library and the community.

On behalf of the Board,

Anthony Vinson
Chairman, Pike County Library Board of Trustee