

Despite City-County Efforts...

Library Budget Only Covers 'Inflationary Increases'

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Librarian Charles Atkins recently said that the county Board of Supervisors and the Santa Cruz City Council had made this "a good budget year" for the Santa Cruz Public Library system.

But Monday, he warned Library Board trustees that adoption of the \$1.5 million budget for fiscal 1979-80 "just takes care of two years of inflationary increases," and that insofar as book purchases are concerned "where we are today is where we were last year before Proposition 13 was passed."

The warning tempered Library Board rejoicing that the budget sessions this year went quickly and smoothly for the library system despite unhappiness expressed by some supervisors over the funding and management agreement the county made with the city in the early 1960s.

Atkins reminded the board and the general public that service was cut back 34 percent in the wake of Proposition 13 and that this cutback in library hours will remain in effect.

He said also that the system now has 10½ fewer employees than it had before Proposition 13 was passed and that this personnel cutback also has many effects on services.

The budget this year is about \$300,000 higher than last year, with the book budget jumping to \$192,500 after a sharp cutback last year. But book prices have increased considerably since the book budget was slashed in July 1978, and personnel costs have

risen also because the city granted its workers an 18.2 percent increase over a two-year period dating from July 1 of last year.

So, Atkins stressed, the system is not as prosperous as the increased budget may indicate.

Atkins said, on the other hand, that he is very pleased with the budget approvals and that the library was given more than he had expected.

Additionally, Atkins said, there is a chance another \$35,000 will be added to the book budget in conformance with a request from Leonard Greenberg, a trustee who left the board in June. The City Council has approved the addition providing the supervisors agree to it and pay their share of the increased costs.

Atkins told the trustees further that the system's building fund of \$216,000 was left intact by the supervisors. He added: "I hope the supervisors will consider the purchase of a site for a new library in Boulder Creek or for a Live Oak library this

year."

A strong bid for a new Boulder Creek library came from Jim Lee of the Boulder Creek Businessman's Association and a delegation that included children asking for a bigger library that would make more books available to them.

Trustee Vernon Berlin got agreement from the board to try to get budget approval in the future at least 30 days before the end of the fiscal year.

Chairwoman Sara Bunnett was less than optimistic the Board of Supervisors and City Council could or would do this but agreed with Berlin the effort should be made.

Berlin said that if the budget is decided 30 days before the end of each fiscal year the trustees would be able to make required changes in an orderly manner and after full discussion. "We could function more effectively and make this a better system," he said.

Berlin also thinks there would be a much better relationship between the system directors and the legislative agencies if the budget could be examined without tension well before the end of the fiscal year.

In other business, Bunnett welcomed Al Reetz and Robert Blankholm to the board to succeed Gerald Towner and Greenberg.

CAO Suggests Closing

Five Library Branches

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By BILL NEUBAUER

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