

Freedom Library proposal goes before supervisors

A plea to continue county library service for residents of Freedom, Corralitos and Salsipuedes — on a "bare bones" basis — will be presented to the Board of Supervisors tomorrow.

The library faces probable closure, because of shortage of county funds. The Santa Cruz city-county library board voted "reluctantly" last week to close it.

The Freedom Library Friends, a recently-formed group which supports the library and does volunteer work there, is asking the county to keep the library open two days a week, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 2 to 7 p.m., slashing its budget to a minimum and promising volunteer help of the type which has saved the La Selva Beach library branch.

"Once a library is dismantled it is not easily restored," the Friends group wrote the board.

The library could be kept open, the Friends propose, and its budget cut from the current \$38,955 a year to \$5,720.

"We think closing this library makes little sense if the county can keep it open at less cost than transferring our library patronage to Watsonville," the Friends said. (County money reimburses the Watsonville city library system for materials circulated to people living outside the city.)

Until the library funding question settles down, the Friends' proposal for budget cuts shapes up this way:

—Salary and benefits, cut from \$18,000 a year to \$3,048. Most work now fully paid would be performed by a substitute page, the lowest salary scale, and by volunteers.

—Rent could be cut from \$7,300 to \$2,400. The Friends group is asking its landlord, Bill Johnston, for a slash for at least five months. If that doesn't work, they report, the Freedom Community Methodist Church has rooms available at a maximum of \$2,400 a year.

—Administration fee, at 5 percent, cut from \$1,855 to \$272.

—Budget items for books and subscriptions and delivery, aggregating \$7,200, would be cut out completely.

—The Santa Cruz library's "administration charge," levied for administrative and supervisory tasks, would be cut out entirely. Freedom Librarian Betty Ellis, a professional, has volunteered to do book and record keeping tasks on her own time.

In addition to helping run the regular library service, the Friends group is telling the supervisors it wants to continue a biweekly story hour, and hopes to qualify for Smithsonian Reading is Fundamental matching funds, making up the local cost by donations in the Freedom area.

"Please be assured we will do everything in our power to cooperate with the county in reducing the cost of keeping this library alive and continuing its service," the Friends letter to the supervisors concludes.

Also on the agenda for the meeting that begins at 9 a.m. in the board chambers at the County Governmental Center in Santa Cruz are:

—Recommendations from Chairman Marilyn Liddicoat and Supervisor Chris Matthews that the county's grading ordinance as it relates to agricultural land be reexamined and that a public hearing be held on the matter.

—Further consideration of changes in the county's sewage disposal (septic tank) regulations.

REFERENCE

WATSONVILLE
REGISTER-PAJARONIAN
January 14, 1980