Jenny Jochimsen

Director – Abbotsford Public Library

August 12, 2020

Dear MCPL Library System Task Force and MCPL Board of Trustees:

I am the Director of the Abbotsford Public Library, a Clark County library with residents who live both within Clark County and Marathon County.

The Marathon County Public Library currently hosts the headquarters of the Wisconsin Valley Library Service (WVLS), with Wausau as the largest library in the system. MCPL is considering the major decision to withdraw from the system. A decision that will disrupt library services and cause confusion to patrons who currently use libraries both within Marathon and Clark counties, and would have huge impacts on WVLS. It is my understanding that the WVLS very much wants to work with the Marathon County library to solve any outstanding issues and address any unmet service needs that have prompted consideration of joining South Central Library System (SCLS).

The WVLS staff and the rest of its member libraries want to understand what has prompted the Task Force study, there seems to be confusion as to what these issues and needs are and what changes MCPL is seeking. The MCPL Board turned down the offer of the WVLS Board to discuss service issues. I find it difficult to understand how the MCPL Task Force and MCPL Library Board can make an informed decision to leave when service needs have not been identified. If WVLS does not know what is broken, how can they fix it?

There is also a fiscal impact to consider with the current COVID-19 pandemic. There will be economic difficulties associated with the pandemic that will take years to settle. With the financial challenges counties will be facing in the next few years, why would MCPL want to send significant dollars out of Marathon County and into Dane County? I also wonder whether Marathon County residents have been informed that a library system change is being considered which will send funds elsewhere during this turbulent time. Given the chaos and confusion that counties and municipalities are addressing due to COVID-19, why is the MCPL Board pushing a decision so quickly?

I believe MCPL and WVLS share a common goal of providing quality library services to the residents of Marathon County, especially in these uncertain times. The Abbotsford Library enjoys and appreciates working with Marathon County libraries, and would like to continue to do so. I am asking the Task Force and Board to table any decisions until the economy stabilizes and to meet with the WVLS Board to discuss concerns that haven’t been addressed.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Jenny Jochimsen