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- [Board Should Encourage Efficiencies Not Discourage Them](#): A pilot program to test efficiencies and streamline services has been proposed to be tested at two of our libraries. Some Board members oppose the pilot before it has even begun. What does this say to our County employees who want to deliver better services?
- [D.C. Area to Explore 2024 Olympic Bid](#): I am excited about the possibility of the region hosting the 2024 summer Olympics. Fairfax will show the world what we can do when we host the World Police and Fire Games in 2015, an event that attracts as many athletes as the summer Olympics. A successful 2015 World Police and Fire Games will help demonstrate the region's ability to host the 2024 Olympics.

Board Should Encourage Efficiencies Not Discourage Them

There has been much confusion about the recently-announced recommendation from the Library Board to pilot changes to more efficiently serve library patrons at two County libraries. Libraries are pillars in our community; they are resources for people furthering their education, they are places of discovery for children, and they are a critical gathering place in our neighborhoods. Just like our community, our libraries have evolved over time, and just as they have nation-wide, libraries will need to continue to evolve in order to best meet the needs of our residents.

Unfortunately, the announcement of this simple, two-library pilot has resulted in a swirl of misinformation about what it is and what it will do. Even more unfortunately, some Supervisors have stated that they want the Board of Supervisors to ask the Library Board to defer the pilot. At a time when we should be encouraging our staff to be more innovative and efficient, we as a Board should not be discouraging their efforts.

I fully support the libraries undertaking this pilot, here is why:

First, this is a pilot program. The county is not suddenly making overnight changes to the way our libraries operate. Instead, we are planning to run a pilot program at the Burke Centre and Reston Regional Libraries to see if the recommendations work. Both libraries will test the "one-desk" model of customer service, with cross-trained staff answering account and information questions, as well as increased programming conducted within the branch and the community. The one-desk model should be a benefit to the library patron who will only have to go to one place to get all of their questions answered. It will likely also make for more well-rounded staff that have a greater understanding of the total operation of a library.

Second, we are not laying anyone off. This is a pilot program-- we have absolutely no intention of cutting staff to accommodate the pilot program. If the model works, any reduction in staff at the libraries is expected to occur via natural attrition. Over 30% of employees in the County's library workforce will be eligible to retire by 2015.

Third, by not requiring a Masters of Library Science (MLS) for the positions in the pilot, we are not "dumbing down" the library workforce. Only 15 states nationwide currently have a MLS requirement and Virginia isn't one of them. The MLS will remain a preferred qualification, however a dynamic workforce, and one that attracts the best and the brightest, should be open to competition from people with differing backgrounds. As the challenges of a 21st century library system continue to evolve, the county needs to be able to hire the best person for the job--that could be someone with a MLS, someone with a technology or education degree, or more likely, a mix of both. Currently, the vast majority of those on our library staff do not hold an MLS.

Fourth, a request by the Board of Supervisors is detrimental. If this were a pilot at every library in the County I could see some need for an extended period of community outreach, but this pilot is at only two libraries out of 25 across the County. Furthermore, the Library Board has vetted this proposal and has already conducted outreach. It makes no sense to me that we would discourage them from piloting an innovative solution. It also sends the wrong message to every other county department and agency, and dis-incentivizes them to try something new that could result in cost savings, innovations, and efficiencies.

Finally, this is an opportunity for the county to bring you the best library service that it possibly can. This is an opportunity to increase the efficiency of our library system and improve customer service. It is an opportunity to adapt to the challenges brought by the internet and technology.

The real question is "Why wouldn't you want to do a pilot to see if you can improve service and be more efficient?" Only when we have the results of the pilot can the Library Board and County staff make an informed decision on the best course for our libraries and the County. I hope the Board decides to do the right thing and let the pilot go ahead as planned. I will be waiting for the results of the pilot before I form any opinion on whether we should make the changes permanent at these two libraries or institute them at any others.

D.C. Area to Explore 2024 Olympic Bid

I am happy to announce that I am working in conjunction with other local area groups on bringing the 2024 Olympic Games to the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. It was announced at 10am this morning that an exploratory committee that has the backing of the region's political, business, and sporting communities, has been set up to pursue the 2024 games; the committee's statement can be found [here](#).

Washington, D.C. has never held the games before, and the last summer Olympics in the United States was in Atlanta in 1996, making the nation's capital an enticing candidate for the 2024 games. The area boasts the most state-of-the-art sports facilities in a 40 mile radius anywhere in the country, and is well adept at handling special events and large crowds playing host to the annual Cherry Blossom Festival, as well as Presidential inaugurations.

Fairfax County is poised to play a significant role in the Olympics, with excellent facilities such as George Mason University, a plethora of lodging options, and an expanding and diversifying transportation network. Perhaps most importantly Fairfax's hosting of the 2015 World Police and Fire Games, with as many athletes as the summer Olympics, will play an important role in the D.C. bid.

I am excited about the possibility of the region hosting the 2024 summer Olympics. Fairfax will show the world what we can do when we host the World Police and Fire Games in 2015, an event that attracts as many athletes as the summer Olympics. A successful 2015 World Police and Fire Games will help demonstrate the region's ability to host the 2024 Olympics.

For more information on the 2024 Exploratory Committee visit www.dc2024.org

For more information on the 2015 World Police and Fire Games visit www.fairfax2015.com