

Udall Public Library

Bill #2176
In Support, Oral Testimony
Monica Rupp

March 10th, 2023

Dear Chairman and Committee,

We would like to thank you for considering our house bill number 2176.

Our library is located in a town with an average population of 650-700 people. Until February 1, 2022, we were housed in a building with the town's museum. Our old library was a small, dark, and uninviting place. In 2021, we only had a total of 500 visits for the whole year. Very few books and other materials were being purchased because our budgets had been extremely restricted up to that point.

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| Budget: | 2020 | ~\$7,000 |
| | 2021 | ~\$10,000 |
| | 2022 | ~\$22,300 |

The change in budget between 2021 and 2022 was mainly to cover the increase in salary to provide the open hours that were promised to the city in order for the library to move into its new Wellness Center building.

Last year's budget provided only \$800 for new books, movies, magazines, etc. Most of our "new" books are either purchased used for less than \$5-6, purchased through grant funds, or donated. The budget also had no money for programs such as the Summer Reading Program or Books and Babies. However, through grants, we were able to make some wonderful changes, and our visits for 2022 grew to 2,123! For 2023, our budget is \$30,183 which is finally closer to being reasonable. However, the library's mil levy is now 6.7 mils for the residents of Udall. We also need the ability to have more income if the City of Udall ever decides that it wants to quit paying our utility and telephone/internet bills or whenever we grow enough to need to employ one full-time person.

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We have also realized that our patrons are evenly split between those living inside the city (current taxing area) and those living outside of the taxing district. As of January 2023, we had 155 patrons living inside the city's taxing area, 169 outside the city but within the school district boundaries, and 26 patrons living outside the school district (350 active patrons). With 48% living outside the city but within the school district and 44% living in the city, we feel the taxing to support the library would be more fairly divided if our taxing area became the school district. Under current property valuations, a 1 mil library tax rate for the school district's area could fund a budget of about \$37,000. By changing our taxing boundaries from the city to the school district, library taxes would be lowered for the taxpayers in town (from ~6.7 mil to ~1) and for the people outside the city but within the school district (from 1.229 mil to ~1) barring unforeseen circumstances. Even though those outside the town would not see a lot of change, the library would be more fairly supported. Even better, our library would be able to provide better services at this lower rate.

After moving to the new building and making many operating changes, we have seen a huge change in the number of people using our library. Along with the additional visits, our number of checkouts this year was 1,580 items compared to 367 in 2021. We believe it is vital that we have the ability to fund our library adequately into the future in order to continue this growth. Our library is one of the few places in town that kids can go to read, play games (board and video), do homework, use computers, participate in art classes, and check out materials. We supplement our school district by being able to get the kids books when the school doesn't have enough of them or they are all checked out, and we provide access to books and other materials when the kids are out of school and on breaks. Our library has become a place that is valuable to our community, and we would like to ensure that it will be financially able to continue to do so.

Warm regards,

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Board President

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