

*Obtained under the Public Records Act, the following message from Lee (lead City council staff member on the levy) to Noble (Council central staff director) and Belz (another Central staff member) warns that, although a consensus among City Councilmembers is secretly being achieved by moving some of the Library's regular funding away from the Library to other departments, communications to the public should describe the levy as fully benefitting the Library (that is, hiding the net reduction of the levy's value to the Library through transferring regular funding away from the library) . ("Beth" is the director of the City Budget Office).*

-----Original Message-----

From: Lee, Patricia (LEG)

Sent: Wednesday, January 11, 2012 8:03 PM

To: Noble, Ben; Belz, Sara

Subject: library

So I've been thinking about Beth's comments about brownouts and the need to consider the larger city budget issues all day and wanted to share my thoughts before I forgot them.

I don't disagree that the Library levy should help relieve the pressures on the general fund which will help mitigate reductions to other city services but I think we need to be careful about how we portray this.

First, I think we have to be careful how we describe this levy. We have asked the Library to ask the public the question - what services would they like the library to offer. The library levy is asking voters to vote to raise their taxes for library services . If we are portraying to councilmembers or others that this Levy is a way to fund other general fund services then we think about whether we are consistently describing the purpose of this levy.

Secondly, I'm concerned with the statement if the library doesn't reduce it's general fund allotment we'll have brownouts. Maybe we'll have brownouts because we haven't required the fire dept to make operational changes that will reduce their revenue requirements. I'm uncomfortable with the direct causal link- if we don't reduce the library's general fund revenue it will cause these negative consequences for other services without understanding if there are other options to reduce the revenue requirements of other services.

Like I said, I don't disagree the library levy should relieve general fund pressures - i just think we need to think through and be thoughtful about the conclusions we draw and the way we express this.

Those are my thoughts - thanks for listening.