



Pinellas County

Staff Report

File #: 21-826A, Version: 1

Subject:

East Lake Community Library Fiscal Year 2021 Municipal Services Taxing Unit special projects funding request.

Recommended Action:

Approval of the Municipal Services Taxing Unit special projects funding request made by the East Lake Community Library (ELCL) for replacement of three outdated laptop and seventeen desktop computers and for weatherproof outlets, USB ports, and device chargers to be installed in a covered outdoor "Tech Deck" pavilion.

- This project will allow the ELCL to continue to provide essential technological resources to its staff and community users. The expanded technology "Tech Deck" area will allow for increased WiFi access to patrons who bring their own devices and will help to mitigate for usable space which has been lost to COVID-19 precaution measures.
- The ELCL has demonstrated good stewardship of this County owned facility. The requested updates will increase its value to the County and to the community.
- The project funding request is in an amount not to exceed \$20,000.00. Costs exceeding the maximum award will be paid for by the ELCL, utilizing capitalized expenditure funds set aside in their annual budget.

Strategic Plan:

Foster Continual Economic Growth and Vitality

4.4 Invest in infrastructure to meet current and future needs

4.6 Support a vibrant community with recreation, arts, and culture to attract residents and visitors

Deliver First Class Services to the Public and Our Customers

5.1 Maximize partner relationships and public outreach

5.2 Be responsible stewards of the public's resources

5.3 Ensure effective and efficient delivery of county services and support

Summary:

Municipal Services Taxing Unit (MSTU) special projects Fiscal Year 2021 funding request for the East Lake Community Library (ELCL); a non-profit organization under the auspice of the Palm Harbor Community Services Agency Inc. East Lake Community Library aspires to be the center of information and discovery in the community through inspiration, enrichment, and education.

The first request is to replace three older, outdated laptops and seventeen desktop computers for our patrons and staff members. The ELCL is in dire need of updating these computers so that they can meet the needs of the staff and residents. With the anticipated loss of revenue from the elimination of "overdue" fines in October 2021, funding to replace these computers can no longer come out of their operational budget without cutting from somewhere else. The positive impact will be immediately

evident - the speed, features, etc. of the new computers will be a welcome change. With the older computers, there were the increasing concerns of freezing as well as lost files and data.

Additionally, and because the ELCL is the smallest library in Pinellas County, they will extend their WiFi capabilities to a new "Tech Deck" - a covered outdoor pavilion with weatherproof outlets, USB ports, and device chargers on the side patio where patrons can use their own devices. This request will pay for the tables and technological elements of the extended facility.

It is anticipated that the amount requested will not be adequate to complete the desired updates. Any financial gaps between the MSTU funding and the actual costs will be paid for by ELCL utilizing capitalized expenditure funds set aside in their annual budget.

Background Information:

The MSTU Special Projects Funding opportunity was created by the Board of County Commissioners for the purpose of supporting projects that enhance community and neighborhood opportunities in unincorporated areas of Pinellas County. These MSTU Special Projects Awards are intended to support culture, recreation, and community engagement opportunities for residents in unincorporated areas that are comparable to those opportunities which municipalities typically provide to their residents.

Prior to the current health crisis, the East Lake Community Library budgeted part of its operational funds to replace older, outdated desktop computers and laptops for our patrons and staff members. However, when COVID-19 hit, this money had to be utilized for protective measures, supplies for staff and patrons, acrylic barriers, signage, weekly defogging, etc., all of which continues to this day. Although ELCL received PPP grant funds, there were many intangibles that affected their budget lines - for example, the loss of income from room rentals, print services, fundraising, proctoring fees, overdue fines (and the subsequent amnesty) which went on for months. Also, without volunteers, they had to pay staff extra hours to do the basic support tasks normally done by my volunteers.

In anticipation of a "return to normal" soon, they are in dire need of updating these computers so they can meet the needs of staff and residents. With the anticipated loss of revenue from the elimination of fines in October 2021, this funding can no longer come out of their operational budget without cutting from somewhere else. Designated public computers at ELCL have been used in the past as Census 2020 stations and presently as a COVID-19 vaccination information station - patrons need to have easy access and qualified assistance (i.e. library staff) on reliable computers so that we can better serve our community. This has become even more critical with increased requests for assistance with online job applications, resumes, and filing for unemployment insurance.

The pandemic has also resulted in a loss of usable space for patrons to utilize their own devices; for example, the Community Room has become a quarantine zone for returned library materials until they can safely be checked in. The ELCL plans to extend their usable space to an outdoor "Tech Deck" a covered pavilion with weather-proof outlets, USB ports, and device chargers on our side patio.

Fiscal Impact:

The request for funding in the amount of \$20,000.00 is a one-time expenditure of MSTU Special Projects funds. Funding is appropriated and available in the FY21 Adopted Budget. The cost of the entire project will exceed the maximum MSTU award amount. Costs exceeding the maximum award

will be paid for by ELCL, utilizing capitalized expenditure funds set aside in their annual budget.

Staff Member Responsible:

Nancy McKibben, Assistant to the County Administrator representing Unincorporated North County

Partners:

Palm Harbor Community Services Agency

Attachments:

East Lake Community Library (ELCL) MSTU Special Projects Funding Request Application

ELCL Evaluation Criteria Form Fiscal Year 2021 MSTU

ELCL Summary of Project Expenses