



Monterey Bay Area Cooperative Library System
32 West 25th Avenue, Suite 201, San Mateo, CA 94403-2273
Phone (650)349-5538 Fax (650) 349-5089

Honorable Mayor and Council,

On behalf of the Monterey Bay Area Cooperative Library System (MOBAC), a library consortium of 18 public, academic and special libraries in Monterey, San Benito and Santa Cruz counties, I would like to submit these comments regarding the proposed City of Monterey staff layoffs.

We recognize that the City is facing an unprecedented situation and a dire fiscal challenge. We share your concern for the City and the Monterey community as you consider the difficult decisions before you. We are grateful for every City staff member, and we recognize the value of their hard work and the services they provide.

During the best of times libraries provide critical access to the widest variety of materials to people of all ages, from all ethnicities and groups, and from all socioeconomic backgrounds. More importantly, during the worst of times, such as a natural disaster or recession, libraries provide critical access to the widest variety of materials to people of all ages, from all ethnicities and groups, and from all socioeconomic backgrounds

In the past four weeks Monterey Public Library staff have responded quickly and efficiently to an unprecedented global emergency to continue to provide these critical services to the Monterey Peninsula community, in particular to parents and students and the community's most vulnerable members. Library staff have reached out to numerous community members to ensure that they are taken care of and to connect them with the information and resources they need during this time.

Maintaining and supporting the community's social infrastructure, at which the Monterey Public library is the heart, will be critical to the recovery of the community. The library's core mission is to help people elevate themselves and improve their situations. When the shelter-in-place order is lifted the community will look to the library for help searching for jobs, figuring out federal and state benefits, housing issues, among so many other things, which are critical services that neither the Conference Center nor the Sports Center provide.

The current proposed staff reduction and plan to reinstate staff will drastically limit community access to essential library services at a time when they will be needed more than ever. We ask that you please reconsider your current plan for the reinstatement of library staff and prioritize library services for the health, safety, and economic recovery of your community.

Respectfully,

Georg Romero
Library Director, Cabrillo College
Chair, MOBAC

Ashlee Wright
Library Director, Carmel Public Library
Vice-Chair, MOBAC