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June 19, 2009

Via Hand Delivery

Ms. Brenda Young, Chairperson
Pennington County Commission
315 St. Joseph Street, Suite 156
Rapid City, SD 57701

Re: Rapid City Public Library

Dear Chairperson Young:

This is the first of the written reports that I will be providing to the Commission as the Commission's liaison to the Rapid City Public Library Board. I have intended to write reports on a quarterly basis, since I began as liaison early this year. However, I have delayed doing so to await developments on a couple of issues prior to writing to you at this time.

I have attended all of the Board meetings this year that did not conflict with my court obligations as a practicing lawyer. I recall that I have missed one meeting. The Library Board meetings are preceded by agendas, electronically provided to all board members. I review those both prior to and during meetings. I participate in discussions during Board meetings but, as you know, I do not have a vote, based on the rules in force. (As you may recall, counsel for the Board, that is, from the City Attorney's office, and counsel for the Commission exchanged correspondence and a legal opinion on the voting issue.) I exchange emails with Library staff, with Library Director Chapman and with others on the Board from time to time.

Eastside Branch Library in Conjunction with Western Dakota Technical Institute ("WDTI") & Rapid City Area School District ("RCASD"). I was included in a meeting on May 11, 2009, at WDTI. Library Board members Jim Olson (Chairman) and Monte Loos, Greta Chapman (Library Director), Dr. Craig Bailey (WDTI President), Dr. Pete Wharton (RCASD Superintendent), and others from WDTI attended. The discussion centered on WDTI's expansion plans and the possibility of a shared library branch. I surmise that several recent executive sessions of the Library Board have included discussions of this potential project.

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At least one additional meeting recently has been held on this topic, of which I am aware, including Library, City and School district representatives. I understand that someone from the School District may be contacting Mr. Alderman to explore potential operational costs for this project. The agreement on the Rapid City Public Library North (General Beadle School) between the City and the School District should be a reference point during this process.

I think that the project has considerable merit. An Eastside Branch Library could be of great usefulness to all patrons of the Library, both from the City and from the County. The project also presents an opportunity to share costs which, if borne alone by one entity or another, would be impossible to do with solid services to patrons. In other words, this is an excellent opportunity for a significant partnership. Those things having been said, to use the old cliché: "the devil is in the details."

Library Contract Refund. There may be relatively few things more enjoyable than getting back money. I understand that Attorneys Jay Alderman for the Commission and Mike Schad for the Library/City have been corresponding on this topic. I further understand that the County will be receiving considerable "refunds." Library Director Chapman has informed me that she plans to attend the Commission's meeting on July 7.

Knowledge Network – Community History Digitization Project. The Library Strategic Plan has a number of components, various of which are quite dynamic. One of those components is the ongoing digitization of community history. One current topic for that project is information about the 1972 Flood. I also can see potential for including special collections of local history so that the information is preserved, archived and made easily accessible electronically. The County's recent efforts to preserve facilities may be considered a valuable parallel project.

Summer Reading Program. The program kicked off on June 6 for the summer months. It is noteworthy that more than 700 kids usually participate.

Please advise if you have any instructions for me.

Sincerely,



Robert Van Norman

RVN