



MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH

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MEMORANDUM

To: Eric Phillips, Community Development Director

Thru: Hugh Leslie, Recreation Services Manager

From: Mat-Su Borough Librarians

SUBJECT: MSLN

The librarians of the five borough libraries are in agreement that the Mat-Su Library Network has been replaced by the Joint Library Catalog consortium. Despite that, the libraries geographically collocated in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough should continue to maintain a special relationship. This relationship, while not formal, consists of cooperation as defined by portions of a mission statement that prefaced shared policy documents. That mission statement does need to be revised to eliminate the reference to automation. Previously, the formal portion of the MSLN was the automation agreement which is no longer in existence and has been replaced with the JLC automation agreement. Our meeting notes from the MSLN Meeting of September 20, 2016 are attached and describe the need for further conversations and collaboration that are needed by these seven public libraries in the borough.

The borough librarians are in agreement that it would be very useful for planning purposes for the 5 borough libraries as a unit under the administration of the Borough to have a strategic or master plan. We believe that library service is substantially changing and that current models may no longer be responsive in the future to the needs of those the libraries serve. Such a document should be constructed by a professional planner with extensive knowledge of libraries. Additionally they should have the ability work with patrons of libraries as well as library and borough staff. As an example of our changing services, patrons no longer look to the library as their primary place to access books – while that remains part of the service, it has become only one part of a multi-faceted service which includes various community resources. One of the borough libraries recently installed a video recording studio for their community, something that libraries traditionally have not had available. The current “strategic plan” fails to address any future changes or technology, has not polled patrons, and therefore does not prescribe the steps staff and administration should take to ensure that the libraries remain relevant to the users. The Mat-Su Borough Library Board does not have the expertise to write a document of this sort. To that end, Nancy Bertels will contact Patience Frederickson at the Alaska State Library and ask if an Interlibrary Cooperation Grant might be available to assist in hiring the needed professionals to write a comprehensive master plan.