TO: HONORABLE CITY COUNCIL

FROM: CITY MANAGER

DATE: MARCH 14, 2005

SUBJECT: LIBRARY GIFT FUND

This is an informational report and no Council action is required.

DISCUSSION

The Library Department has established a special fund to receive donations from customers who want to make a contribution directly to the Library. This occasionally happens when customers register for new cards, renew library cards, sign or pay fines. This method of giving is an alternative to donating to the Friends of the Palo Alto Library (FOPAL) and Palo Alto Library Foundation (PALF). In general, FOPAL provides annual grants for selected programs and services; PALF raises money for large projects. The Library Gift Fund, on the other hand, is for donors who prefer to give directly to the Library, and dollar amounts are small. Contributions to the Library Gift Fund can be readily used by the Library to meet small-scale, special needs beyond the limits of public funds.

Cash and checks (made payable to the Palo Alto City Library) can be deposited by customers directly into secured plastic boxes at the check-out desks. Upon request, a gift receipt is provided by staff, with a recommendation that donors consult with their own financial advisors about tax-deductible gifts. Contributions to the gift fund are tracked separately, and transmitted to the Administrative Services Division together with other cash receipts (fines, fees, etc.), on a daily basis. Donations will stay within the Library and can only be spent on Library expenses. Sample expenditures might include books for the collection, signs, and supplies for displays and
children’s programs. Donations do not become part of the City’s General Fund. As funds accumulate over time, the Library will ask for a budget amendment ordinance and spend the money appropriately. Library Director Paula Simpson may be contacted for questions or concerns about this new program.

PREPARED BY:

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PAULA SIMPSON
LIBRARY DIRECTOR

CITY MANAGER APPROVAL:

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EMILY HARRISON
ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER