City of Stoughton

Additional Staffing Request Form

General Information

Date:	07/19/23
Director:	Jim Ramsey
City Department:	Library
Requested Position Title:	Circulation Supervisor
Status:	☒ 40 Hours ☐ 30 Hours ☐ 24 Hours ☐ 22.5 Hours ☐ Other _____

Directions:

Before adding a new position to our budget, we need to justify the significant additional expense. Increasing headcount is an important and expensive decision that can only be funded with anticipated increased productivity, expense reduction, and/or additional revenues.

The Employee Cost Summary will be completed by the Director of Human Resources & Risk Management once this form is received.

Justification

Give a specific explanation regarding why the proposed position is critical to the operation of your department: Attach proposed or existing position description and organizational chart.

This is an existing position at 30 hours per week. Our request is for an increase of 10 hours for a total of 40 hours per week.

The Circulation Supervisor is one of four supervisors who, along with the Director, comprise the Library's Management Team. This position is responsible for supervising, scheduling, and staffing the library's busiest public service desk. The supervisor is also in charge of training, scheduling, and supervising the library's shelvers. The department is the largest in the library, with approximately 10-12 employees, depending on how many shelver positions happen to be vacant. Yet the Circulation Supervisor position is the only supervisory position that is not full time, a situation unique among City departments.

A survey of peer libraries in Wisconsin confirms that Stoughton Public Library is an outlier in this respect. Even smaller libraries that circulate fewer items have full-time Circulation supervisors. (See attached)

The Circulation Supervisor is critical to the efficient functioning of the public library in that she ensures the timely processing and movement of library materials in and out of the building. In the two years since the library fully reopened following the COVID-19 pandemic, the volume of materials processed has slowly but surely returned to pre-pandemic levels. Our self-check-out machines allow for the automation of some processes, but the fact is that most of the checking-in and processing of library materials must be performed by staff.

Perhaps most importantly, the supervisor provides superior customer service to the hundreds of patrons who walk through our doors each day, as the Circulation desk is the primary point of contact for everyone who enters the library. The library's 2023-2026 Strategic Plan cites the creation of a "free, safe, and welcoming environment" as a critical element of the library's mission. As the first point of contact, the Circulation Supervisor is responsible for maintaining a welcoming, equitable, and inclusive environment. The addition of 10 hours to this position has been identified as a priority in the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan (See Goal Area 5, Action/Initiative 2 in the Library's Strategic Plan, attached).

At only 30 hours per week, the supervisor is unable to maintain a consistent presence in the building in order to supervise and train staff and to provide quality customer service. The supervisor is responsible for deciding when to charge a patron for a damaged item, when to forgive charges, and when to set up a payment plan. These tasks can't be accomplished when the supervisor is out of the building, resulting in a poor customer service experience. At her current hours, our supervisor is able to assess damaged items weekly, at best, resulting in damaged items remaining on a library user's record long after the item has been returned, a major source of confusion and frustration for library patrons.

Our Circulation Department has fallen behind on processes required by our membership in a library consortium. (The South Central Library System includes 7 counties and 54 libraries.) To take only one example, the system's software creates reports of library patrons who are owed refunds for lost library materials. These reports are then sent to the libraries which owned the materials in question. According to a report from April 27 of this year, our library has the fourth most unresolved refunds in a system of 54 libraries. These unresolved issues on library records lead to frustration and confusion for library users across the system, and there has been considerable pressure recently to clear them. At her current classification of 30 hours, our Circulation Supervisor is simply not able to process these and other reports to meet our responsibilities as a member of the South Central Library System.

Another important responsibility of consortium membership is participation in system sub-committees. This supervisor participates in South Central System's Circulation Services Subcommittee (CSS), a group charged with determining system-wide policies and procedures related to the lending of library materials. Having a seat on the CSS allows our supervisor to learn about emerging trends in technology/automation and to develop best-practices in customer service and department workflows. These meetings are held at a set time each month. Owing to her limited hours, our supervisor must choose between attending these sessions and meeting with her department's staff and the library's Management Team.

Over the next several years, South Central Library System will require all member libraries to attach Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) tags to items the library owns. Machine-readable RFID tags will facilitate increased automation and efficiency at the consortium's central sorting facility, as well as improve the experience of patrons using our automated self-checkout terminals. Most member libraries have already tagged their collections, but our library has not due to lack of staff hours. The Circulation Supervisor, along with the Technical Services Supervisor, would be the project manager for the retroactive conversion of the library's 80,000+ items to RFID.

Impact

If position is not approved, give specific departmental impact as well as impact to City services and other departments:

If this increase is not approved, customer service at the library's busiest service desk will suffer. Patrons may not be able to resolve charges on their accounts or inquire about lost/damaged items when the supervisor is absent. The supervisor will be unable to consistently supervise the work they have trained their subordinates to perform. As noted above, we will continue to fall behind on our obligations to our library consortium.

Because this is a demanding, public-facing position supervising the Library's largest department, the Library Board is concerned that at the current hours burnout will occur quickly and this position will become a kind of revolving door.

The current hours leave no time for future planning or development of new initiatives, such as Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) tagging of library materials. It is unlikely that our library would be able to meet our RFID tagging obligations without these additional hours.

Alternatives

List alternatives to filling this position: Give specific alternatives, i.e., restructure – attach additional documents, if necessary.

The library could further reduce its open hours in order to increase the amount of time the supervisor is present, but the Library Board, not to mention the community at large, is unlikely to support this.

The supervisor could delegate responsibilities for assessing damages and charges to library assistants, but because these positions have even fewer hours than the supervisor, it would be difficult to find time off-desk to complete these assessments and follow up with patrons. This would also lead to inconsistencies and disputes with patrons as the decision of when and how to apply charges can be subjective.

The supervisor could resign from the Circulation Services Subcommittee, leaving our library without representation on this body. She could also cease holding monthly meetings with her staff, which is bound to negatively impact communication and department morale.

Note: As of July, 2023, we are investigating the possibility of adding hours to this position via the restructuring of an existing Circulation/Children's Services position into two part-time positions.

Submitted By

Director:

Click here to enter text.

Signature: **James Ramsey, Director** **Date: 7/13/2022**

Large-scale projects

- RFID project (Applying Radio Frequency ID tags to all library items)
    - Helping Technical Services Dept. implement this massive project
    - The faster this project is completed the more efficiencies gained, both at our library (e.g. RFID tags increase success rate for self-check-out machines) and system-wide (e.g. RFID allows South Central's delivery service to sort materials faster and more accurately).
- "Welcome back" campaign
    - Jim and I have discussed sending out "welcome-back" letters to patrons with fines/lost items.
    - Want to let them know about:
        - No-overdue-fines policy
        - Waiving of fines if Lost items are returned
        - Payment plan options
- Create better templates for patron notices
    - Cindy sends out print notices (overdue items, Lost charges, etc.) but the template provided by South Central Library System leaves a lot to be desired.
        - Needs better wording
        - Needs better formatting
    - We had worked on this a little, but there is not enough time to go any further

Medium-scale projects

- Creating a damaged items guidelines database for staff
    - Guidelines would allow staff to make better decisions regarding damaged items instead of giving everything to me.
    - Items are kept checked out to patrons until final decisions are made.
    - I only have time to work on damaged items once a week. Patrons often wonder why a returned item is still on their account (See "Customer Service Impact," below)
    - If staff can handle items with minor damage, items get processed faster.
    - Once created, I would need time to train staff on how to use it.
    - This was one of my goals from my performance review.

Reports

- There are many reports from South Central Library System that I need to be running on a regular basis. There are some reports I don't even know about, simply because I haven't had time to explore them.
- More time is needed to learn about these reports, how to run them and how often.
- Eventually, I may be able to delegate some of these reports to staff, but that means I'd also need time to create instructions and train staff.
- These are the reports I know of so far:
    - Patrons who registered as juveniles but are now adults and need their account status updated
    - Claims returned
    - Damaged and paid at another library
    - Lost and paid at another library

    - I'm sure there are plenty of other reports used to clean up patron and catalog records for more accurate data.

Procedure updates

- Making sure internal staff procedures are up-to-date
- Creating needed procedures

Training

- Making sure staff are trained on current procedures/practices
- Finding time for my own continued training and being able to share what I've learned with my staff

Customer Service Impact

One of the biggest customer service impacts of additional hours would be faster decisions/actions regarding damaged items.

- When items are returned with damage, they are kept checked out to the patron.
- I only have time to work on damaged items about once a week. If the week is extra busy, it can take longer.
- This can lead to items becoming overdue or even going to Lost status while they wait to be processed. Patrons have even paid Lost charges on these items before I get a chance to process the items.
- Here's a specific example:
    - A patron returned and reported a damaged item on 8/5.
    - On 8/8, the patron came back to the library and asked about the progress of the item and asked to speak to me. I informed that patron that I only have time to look at damaged items once a week and that I would try to get to it later that day. I ended up too busy to work on any damaged items.
    - The patron returned on 8/9 and inquired again. I informed him I hadn't worked on them yet. I was also unable to work on any damages again that day. I was able to find this particular item and plan to make a final decision on 8/10, making this a priority for the day.

Gini Skarda

Subject: FW: Justification for additional hours for Circulation Supervisor
Attachments: Circ Supervisor improvements with extra hours.docx; 2023 Circulation Supervisor Staffing Request - Director Request.docx; Proposed wage-benefit changes recap 05-19-2023-1.pdf

---

From: James Ramsey <jramsey@stolib.org>
Sent: Friday, August 11, 2023 12:53 PM
To: Amy Jo Gillingham <AJGillingham@cityofstoughton.com>
Cc: Tim Swadley <TSwadley@cityofstoughton.com>
Subject: Justification for additional hours for Circulation Supervisor

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Hi, AJ

Per out conversation at Leadership on Wednesday, I've asked Circulation Supervisor Robin Behringer to provide me with a list of tasks and projects that she is unable to complete in her current 30 hr./week schedule. The list she came up with is attached. I'd like to emphasize a couple points:

- Much of this boils down to customer service. At only 30 hours per week, Robin is unable to provide the level of customer service that our patrons expect. This is especially evident in her example of a patron who needed a damaged item assessed. Without the consistent, full-time presence of a supervisor in the library's busiest department, patrons are having to wait longer for certain services.

- We are falling behind on our obligations to South Central Library System, the seven-county library system of which we are a member. SCLS requires that its member libraries maintain quality patron and bibliographic data in our shared database. One of the ways we do this is by periodically running reports to identify faulty or outdated data. At her current classification, Robin is unable to even learn how to run these reports, let alone use them to clean up our database.

I've also attached a copy of our 2024 Personnel Request for Robin's position. It contains many of the same justifications as Robin's list.

I've also attached Dave's memo showing the savings created by the restructuring of the full-time Children's/Circulation Assistant position into 2 part-time positions. This is scenario 3. In fact, the savings will be even greater because the scenario Dave considers imagined the Children's Services Assistant being hired at 24 hrs/week, which is what we were originally hoping for. The position was ultimately hired at 20 hrs/week.

Tim also thought it would be helpful to know the exact amount by which our county funding is increasing in 2024. That amount is $33,870.

Last of all, a question: The first Monday of the month, when the Personnel Committee would have been scheduled to meet, is Labor Day. Do you know when they plan to meet in September?

Thanks,

Jim Ramsey, Director
Stoughton Public Library
304 S. Fourth St.
Stoughton, WI 53589
(608) 873-5309

CITY OF STOUGHTON
FINANCE DEPARTMENT
207 S. Forrest St, Stoughton, WI 53589

(608) 873-6677 www.cityofstoughton.com

To: Jim Ramsey
AJ Gillingham
Tim Swadley
From: Dave Ehlinger
Re: Proposed library personnel changes
Date: May 19, 2023

Hello everyone,

Below is a recap of the effect on the proposed wages and benefits changes that were discussed at our May 17, 2023 meeting. Please note that the amounts are based upon a full year using current 2023 rates.

Scenario #1 – Increase Circulation Supervisor from 30 to 40 hours per week

Current wages and benefits	$48,423	30-hour single health and dental
Proposed wages and benefits	$63,012	Single health and dental
Proposed increased expenditures	$14,589	

Scenario #2 – Replace Youth/Circulation Services Assistant with 20-hour and 24-hour positions

Current wages and benefits	$71,106	Employee/spouse health and family dental
20-hour position	$34,375	Assumed $18.70 starting wage Not WRS eligible Assumed family health and dental (prorated) Assumed $20 annual for life insurance
24-hour position	$55,683	Assumed $23.32 position WRS eligible Assumed family health and dental (prorated) Assumed $20 annual for life insurance
Proposed increased expenditures	$18,952	

Scenario #3 – Assume new employees in scenario two do not elect health or dental insurance

Current wages and benefits	$71,106
20- hour position	$21,793
24-hour position	$34,660
Proposed decreased expenditures	($14,563)