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GENERAL ADMINISTRATION
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

November 10, 2020

From: Brenda Hirschi



To: BOCC, Mason County
411 North 5th Street
Shelton, WA 98584

BOCC, Lewis County
351 NW North Street
Chehalis, WA 98532

BOCC, Grays Harbor County
100 West Broadway, Suite #1
Montesano, WA 98563

BOCC, Thurston County
2000 Lake Ridge Dr SW, #269
Olympia, WA 98502

✓ BOCC, Pacific County
1216 W Robert Bush Drive
PO Box 187
South Bend, WA 98586

Dear Commissioners:

It has been an honor to serve as the Mason County Trustee to the Timberland Regional Library District for nearly three years. At this time it is with regret that I submit my resignation as I find the conflict, misinformation, dysfunction, and lack of transparency to be such that I no longer want to be associated with TRL.

The final straw for me was the fact that just eight days following the Board's approval of the 2020 budget, Executive Director Cheryl Heywood paid her direct reports salary increases as much as 25 percent higher than was budgeted in the just approved budget. Nine months passed before trustees learned of these exorbitant salary increases and only then when we received the 2021 draft budget.

Ms Heywood approved on January 8, 2020 an increase to one direct report's salary from \$84,975 to \$104,508 for a whopping 23 percent increase in just one year. In 2021 this employee will receive another 5 percent salary increase bringing her pay to \$109,807. When I came on the board in February 2018, this employee while serving as Executive Assistant to Ms Heywood earned a salary of \$66,088 according to the 2018 Adopted Budget. Over the nearly three years I've served as a trustee, the Executive Assistant has risen to the position of Director of Administration with a salary increase of at least 66%. I say "at least" because apparently Ms Heywood can make the call on how much her direct reports are paid without any accountability to the trustees or transparency to the public.

Corrected
to 23%
not
18%!

At least three other direct reports to Ms Heywood have received similar salary increases. One direct report is slated for a salary increase of 27% according to the 2021 Preliminary Budget and has been employed by TRL for less than a year. The above-mentioned employee, who went from Executive Assistant to Director of Operations, to my knowledge, never competed for her current position.

As a trustee, I have attended and been prepared for every board meeting and missed only two assigned committee meetings when I was out of state attending to my mother before she died. Using my past nearly three decades of financial management education and experience, I

have studied the TRL budgets, financial reports, and trends of patron core services from 2012 to present.

This study and my nearly three years of requesting sound and accurate financial planning and reporting lead me to conclude that the people in this five county region are not getting their money's worth. The taxpayer's property tax contribution to TRL is mainly used to support the bureaucracy at the Administrative Service Center with little or no oversight from the trustees. Neighborhood libraries struggle to meet the core services patrons would like to see. Unless more revenue flows in through a levy lid lift, our local libraries will see reduced staffing because of the bow wave of future expenditures to prop up the staff at the Administrative Service Center.

As a trustee, I have witnessed Ms Heywood's poor judgment, first with the Capital Facilities Plan in which nine small rural libraries would have been shuttered had this half-baked plan been approved by trustees in the fall of 2018. Now her poor judgment and lack of managerial expertise will take the "public" out of public libraries through staff-free buildings thereby saving staffing dollars at the branch libraries while continuing to provide exorbitant salaries for her direct reports.

I hope you can put the skids on Ms Heywood's dysfunctional management by reminding the trustees that they are a governing board not an advisory board and ultimately responsible for the use of the taxpayers' dollars.

Sincerely yours,



Brenda Hirschi

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CF:

State Auditor, 302 Sid Snyder Avenue SW, Olympia, WA 98501

TRL Board of Trustees

TRL, Executive Director, Cheryl Heywood