

May 14, 2020

Reeve Amber Link  
Wheatland County  
Highway 1, RR 1  
Strathmore, AB T1P 1J6

Dear Reeve Link,

Enclosed with this letter are documents outlining the per-capita levy rates that will appear on requisitions in 2021 and 2022. The Marigold Library Board is submitting this documentation for your Council approval after giving these levy rates and library services serious consideration. The Board decided not to increase levy rates from the previous year because there is a recognition that municipalities and library boards are all facing financial challenges, and because the COVID closures have presented unique challenges and opportunities.

During the COVID pandemic, municipal libraries have closed their doors to the public, but this does not mean that library service has ceased. Quite the opposite. Library systems like Marigold are working harder than ever to provide life sustaining services for people who are bored, stressed, anxious and strapped for cash. During difficult financial times with high unemployment, the public uses and depends on library service more than ever. Library systems are now supporting parents and children who are home schooling, isolated people including seniors, vulnerable people and people with poor Internet and/or no computer devices to name a few. We are seeing skyrocketing use of our virtual resources. Because Marigold is providing library services that are valued by Albertans more than ever, we expect that libraries will continue to be important civic institutions that your residents cherish.

We were cheered to see the strong support from the province for libraries with Municipal Affairs Minister Madu's acknowledgement that important work has been and is being accomplished. Minister Madu's message was that libraries are serving Albertans in new ways with a strong network and innovative services; therefore, his Ministry announced an advance payment of the 2020 provincial operating and Indigenous grants.

Marigold's mandate is to deliver library service to our 44 member municipalities. Library systems like Marigold do not duplicate municipal library services and our governance structure are quite different from municipal libraries. While we innovate, adapt and deliver library services that are mostly behind-the-scenes, the nature of our work has not changed during the COVID closures. The volume of our services has not decreased and neither have our costs. Over the past year, Marigold Board has found operational efficiencies and savings in our multi-year contracts which we have reinvested in more virtual resources and security features. Marigold is also seeing increased costs because of the way that the province is allocating resources.

Every year Marigold prepares and distributes **Value of Your Investment** reports for all member library boards, along with a companion document entitled **Power of Your Library Card** for counties. In these documents, we report how your levy investment has been spent to provide a wide range of supportive library services for your residents and for your municipality. The return on investment is significant and made possible by our careful and transparent use of your levy investment.

As this COVID pandemic situation evolves, we hope that you and your colleagues will remain safe. We also appreciate your consideration of the attached Schedule C documents because we believe strongly that libraries deliver exceptional value.

Sincerely,



Michelle Toombs, CEO  
Marigold Library Board