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Unlike City, library has no budget deficit

New website, other records noted

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For The Elmhurst Independent

The report to the City Council about the Elmhurst Public Library was good on all aspects including the fact that this Elmhurst institution does not have a budget deficit like the City does.

At a budget meeting held on March 19, Alderman Chris Nybo (5th Ward) asked, if the City is not going to replace staff members who leave, why shouldn't the Library do the same?

"Because we have funds," replied Library Director Marilyn Boria. "We do not have a budget

deficit like the City does."

She added that the Library did not plan to hire new staff, but could replace people who leave and had a pool of funds for merit pay increases for 26 full-time staff members and about 125 part-time people.

The director also noted that the Library is open more hours than City Hall including time on Saturday and Sunday.

Talking about the current difficult economic times, Boria said that now is not the time to cut services because people need the library now more than ever, particularly if they are looking for

jobs. Previously the Library has not separately tracked job-related information, but the staff just started keeping records in February. There are no firm statistics to report as yet.

Overall, people use the library at five times the national average, according to Rose Walsh, president of the Library Board of Trustees. Summer programs for children reached an attendance of 5000, an all-time record. Throughout the last year, the library conducted 840 programs and had the meeting rooms in use 320 times.

The Library will not stand still however, Walsh assured. She told aldermen that a new website

will be launched soon and all the computers are being replaced and Internet access is being upgraded. The Board will be considering new strategies. The Library Board is responsible for its budget, while the City provides the tax levy to the library.

When asked about any federal government stimulus funds being used, Boria said the Library did not have any "shovel-ready projects" which could be part of an announced federal government package.

"But nobody knows what else might happen," she said. "If there is an opportunity, we will look at it." She noted the Library could

use more parking space.

Moira Moriarty (5th Ward) said that the Library services are needed even more in these difficult economic times.

Stephen Hipskind (4th Ward) noted that the Library can provide peace and solace in these difficult times.

"It is pretty amazing to see the first floor rooms teeming with 70 to 200 kids," he added. "The Library is a great asset to Elmhurst because the staff has turned it into a community center."

"We are very proud of our Library," said Mayor Thomas D. Marcucci. "The staff has done a terrific job, a crackerjack job."