

**TO: PARMLY BILLINGS LIBRARY BOARD**

**FROM: BILL COCHRAN, LIBRARY DIRECTOR**

**RE: PROCESS FOR CONSIDERATION OF RENAMING LIBRARY**

**MEETING DATE: JANUARY 10, 2013**

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

To ensure that potential new names for the Library can be considered timely to coordinate with development of signage for the new building, as well as the rebranding process, Staff recommends that the Board should authorize:

1. Development of criteria to evaluate proposed new names. Typical criteria include the following:
  - a) Geographic locations
  - b) Physical features such as geologic formations, rivers, lakes, etc.
  - c) Historic features or events
  - d) Individuals
    - Of historic significance to the community
    - Who have achieved literary success
    - Who have provided significant service to the Library or City
2. Solicitation of nominations for a proposed new name for the Library as soon as possible.
3. The Board should serve as the review committee to consider nominations.
4. If a majority of the Board supports a new name, it should be presented to the City Council for review and action.
5. If the City Council approves a new name, it should be presented to the County Commissioners, as well, because the current name is specified in the 2005 Library Interlocal Agreement between the City and the County.

It should be understood that the Parmly Billings Library name may continue, but the Board believes that construction of a new building provides an opportunity to solicit and evaluate new names.

### **BACKGROUND**

The Library originally was named Parmly Billings Memorial Library, in memory of the recently-deceased son of City namesake Frederick Billings, and in recognition of its construction costs being paid by Parmly's surviving siblings, when it was dedicated on October 1, 1901. The name changed to Billings Public Library on October 16, 1967, during negotiations between the City of Billings and Yellowstone County regarding service to rural County residents. After an interlocal agreement between the City and County had been approved by both jurisdictions, the name changed to its current name, Parmly Billings Library, on April 28, 1976.

The following excerpt from the minutes of the Library Board Retreat of November 17, 2012, provides background to this recommendation.

By consensus, the Board determined that it doesn't want a potential name to be

sold, i.e. named in exchange for a donation.

Pros and cons of pursuing a name change were suggested by Board members, as follows.

### Pros

- New building, fresh start
- New residents don't understand the name
- Generate excitement
- Looking to the future rather than the past
- New concept in library services
- In front of growth trend
- Current name is obscure and awkward
- Old and stogy name

### Neutral

- Anonymous donor doesn't like name, but thinks it's historic

### Cons

- Historic significance
- Commission and Council have both agreed to current name
- Can't do better
- Public library identity

Although not unanimously, the majority of the Board would like to move forward with a renaming process and directed Cochran to research procedural requirements and bring them to the December meeting. These are to include the process for obtaining agreement from Council & Commission as well as the best ways to include public.

Cochran did not complete research on these topics timely for the December meeting, but presents them for consideration at the January meeting.