

City of Philadelphia



Council of the City of Philadelphia
Office of the Chief Clerk
Room 402, City Hall
Philadelphia

(Resolution No. 050030)

RESOLUTION

Authorizing the Committee of the Whole to hold hearings on the proposed changes to the hours of operation at the City's branch libraries and the impact of these service cuts to the Free Library System; and further authorizing the Committee to examine contract cost savings that may be utilized to restore services to the Free Library System and other critical operating departments.

WHEREAS, The mission of the Free Library of Philadelphia is "to provide city residents a comprehensive collection of recorded knowledge, ideas, artistic expression, and information; to assure ease of access to these materials; and, to provide programs to stimulate awareness and use of these resources"; and

WHEREAS, The Free Library System consists of 50 neighborhood branch libraries, three regional libraries, and the Central Library; and

WHEREAS, Beginning in Fiscal Year 1995, a multi-year capital improvement plan was initiated to renovate all library facilities and install new technology in each branch for public use. This capital program called the "Big Change" which was funded by the William Penn Foundation, private funds and City capital dollars; and

WHEREAS, For the first time in many years, all branch libraries were open on Saturdays in the fall of 1996; and

WHEREAS, As a result of the Big Change initiative which modernized the facilities and installed technological advancements, combined with after-school programming, and expanded Saturday hours, library visits and circulation increased; and

WHEREAS, For decades, the highest circulation ever recorded dated from 1964 when it reached 6,716,174; however, the improvements and expanded hours to the branch libraries helped propel circulation to over 7,000,000 in Fiscal Year 2002; and

City of Philadelphia

RESOLUTION NO. 050030 continued

WHEREAS, On December 16, 2004, City Council approved the borrowing of up to \$30 million to assist with the planned expansion and renovation of the Central Library which is estimated to total \$130 million; and, the current debt service for this borrowing is \$3.5 million per year; and

WHEREAS, Due to recent layoffs and budget cuts, the Free Library System has lost almost 130 positions over the past three years; and over 800 hours of service were lost due to staff shortages during 2004, and only 10 branches are open on Saturday; and

WHEREAS, As a result of these personnel cuts, the Free Library System recently proposed a further reduction in the hour with 20 branch libraries going from full-day service to half-day; and

WHEREAS, In an effort to restore full day services to all branch libraries, City Council should review any and all expenditures and revenues, including utilizing unspent PICA funds and Act 71 monies for the Central Library expansion; and examining all professional services and no-bid contracts to determine across the board reductions in costs and fees from such contracts for the purpose of utilizing such savings to restore services to the Free Library and to other critical operating departments; now therefore

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That the Committee of the Whole is authorized to hold hearings on the proposed changes to the hours of operation at the City's branch libraries and the impact of these service cuts to the Free Library System; and to examine contract cost savings that may be utilized to restore services to the Free Library System and other critical operating departments.

City of Philadelphia

RESOLUTION NO. 050030 continued

City of Philadelphia

RESOLUTION NO. 050030 continued

CERTIFICATION: This is a true and correct copy of the original Resolution, Adopted by the Council of the City of Philadelphia on the twenty-fifth of January, 2005.

Anna C. Verna
PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

Patricia Rafferty
CHIEF CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Introduced by: Councilmember Nutter

Sponsored by: Councilmembers Nutter, DiCicco, Miller, Tasco, Rizzo, Kelly, Clarke, O'Neill, Ramos, Goode, Reynolds Brown, Kenney, Mariano, Cohen and Blackwell