

## M E M O R A N D U M

**TO:** Howard Tipton, Town Manager  
**FROM:** Carolyn Brown, Support Services Director  
**REPORT DATE:** March 20, 2024  
**MEETING DATE:** April 1, 2024  
**SUBJECT:** Sarasota County Library Design

### **Recommended Action**

Consensus of design and size of community room within the Sarasota County Library for Longboat Key.

### **Background**

Sarasota County held the 2<sup>nd</sup> Public Library for Longboat Key planning/public workshop meeting on March 18, 2024, at Town Hall. The meeting provided an opportunity for residents of Longboat Key to hear the outcome of ideas generated at the first public workshop held on February 12, 2024, as well as view block diagrams of proposed spaces within the core and enhanced library project. The workshop also allowed for residents to express their valuable feedback of the proposed diagrams with a Q&A opportunity.

The Town Manager welcomed the attendees and began the meeting by providing an update on the proposed community center project at Whitney Plaza, which is a partnership with Manatee County and Manatee County School Board. He also introduced members of the County team.

Sarasota County staff presented an overview of services which will be provided at the new County Library for Longboat Key, as well as elements of their overall Sarasota County Library Strategic Plan which includes a heavy focus on diverse and varied programming. Also discussed was the feedback received at the first public input meeting and the key points and suggested enhancements which included:

- Upsized meeting room
- Activated outdoor spaces
- Deck/terrace open or covered.

The County's design consultant, Sonny Fornoles from Borrelli and Partners, then explained what the base library project would include, and the approximate size of these spaces within the anticipated 8,000 square foot facility. Two draft concepts were presented including the core library and a library with an upsized community room. Approximately 50 residents and interested parties attended the workshop.

### **Analysis**

When examining the overall library project, all of the possibilities at the site, as well as what has been expressed by the community, further consideration of the new Community Center at Whitney Plaza currently being designed by Manatee County needs to be taken into consideration.

Attachment D of this memo contains the layout which will include two small meeting rooms to accommodate 6 and 8 people, a multi-purpose room with a partition that can accommodate up to 96 people sitting at tables of four, an art studio, a computer room with 20 spaces, a senior's multi-use room that could accommodate 24 people sitting four to a

table, as well as seating in the lobby/reception area. This new facility will provide an abundance of meeting space and spaces for community education, arts, and cultural presentations.

When examining all that will be offered at the Sarasota County Library and the desires expressed by the residents, it appears that most are met with a facility that will be operated six days per week:

Citizen Desires	Sarasota County Library
Roof-top balcony	Not included, but design includes an elevated exterior deck.
Large Meeting Space/Community Room for 200 or more	Proposed enhance space could accommodate 200.
Reading nooks, quiet spots	There will be quiet areas for reading both inside and out.
Children’s Space	Library will have an area for children.
Audio visual equipment in meeting room	Updated audio-visual equipment will be provided equivalent to other County libraries.
Creation station, makers space	Programs and classes will be available utilizing proposed meeting space.

**Program Offerings**

Sarasota County indicated that the library on Longboat Key will have books, materials, meeting rooms and gathering spaces, technology, programs, and events. They indicated that their programs and events would include: art classes, author events, book clubs, crafts, history topics, musical performances, reading programs, Spanish language instruction, speakers on current events, travel, and writing workshops. They also stated that events and programs offered at the library are free and open to the public. The community/meeting room would not be available to rent and would not serve as space for private parties or private events.

**Dimensions**

As the size of the community room is contemplated, we asked Sarasota County for the dimensions of the core and enhanced meeting space. The response provided was that assigning precise dimensions at this time would be premature as the 2<sup>nd</sup> Workshop drawings were just block diagrams, not actual designs, and that the design consultant will need to get well into their next stage of Advanced Schematic Design (ASD) to know better how the facility fits the site with all the provisions required. The meeting room size has implications for structural, mechanical, storage, exiting, and restroom fixture count. It was also noted that the larger space may require a different roof structural system and/or columns in the middle of the room. These are details that will still need to be determined. However, Sarasota County did provide Borelli’s rough, estimated dimensions of 30’x35’ for the core 37’x58’ for the enhanced, and 45’10”x58” for an upsized community room.

The County also provided several seating arrangement configurations for both the core and the enhanced community room illustrating the capacity for each. They also provided one theater style configuration for the 45’10”x58’ upsized space. The following chart outlines the differences:

**Seating Arrangement – Capacity Chart**

	<b>Core</b>	<b>Enhanced</b>	<b>Upsized</b>
Theater Style	77	200	256
Banquet Style – Round Tables	56	128	
Classroom Style	48	126	
Square Meeting	38	60	

It is still unclear whether it is even possible to fit a community room that could accommodate more than 200 people based on the square footage needed for the core library, parking and the available footprint at Town Center. Also, to be determined are any other requirements which may need to be increased based on any additional space (steel trusses to avoid columns, additional bathroom fixtures, HVAC, etc.). In addition, and as part of the analysis in terms of space consideration, based on a historical look back since Town Hall was reconstructed in 2003, it appears there have been only two occasions where there was a need for Town business to be conducted offsite due to capacity issues.

**Next Steps**

Sarasota County and their design consultant will explore the potential of the enhanced and upsized meeting room further. Mid to late April, Borelli will finalize the concepts out of which final enhancement size will be determined. These concepts can provide the graphics for marketing materials for fundraising.

Once the design is finalized, the Construction Manager at Risk will determine a cost estimate and a determination will be made as to the amount of funds that will be needed for the project and the enhancements. The County will then create a construction project for funding consideration by the County Commission in their 5-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) budget process for a base library project. Any enhancements or additions to the project would be the responsibility of private donors. The Sarasota County Library Foundation will serve as the fundraising arm of the project for any additions or enhancements. The fundraising effort for the enhancements will take place from approximately May 2024 through August 2024. Assuming that the fundraising goals will be met for the enhanced facility, then permitting and construction will commence. It is anticipated that the library will be ready to open by the end of 2026.

**Staff Recommendation**

The Town has been in discussions with Sarasota County about a Library since the Ringling deal fell through in 2019. Between the proposed Sarasota County Library and the Community Center at Whitney Plaza, it appears that most of the needs and desires of the community that have been expressed will be accommodated. Staff is recommending approval of the one-story, enhanced library design, with any additional maximum size enhancements possible to the community meeting room to fit within the allocated footprint at Town Center.

**Attachments** (Available in Town Clerks Office)

- A. PowerPoint for the 4.1.24 meeting
- B. PowerPoint from the 3.18.24 Sarasota County Library meeting
- C. Core and Upsized Meeting Room Seating Arrangements
- D. Whitney Plaza Community Center Floor Plan

**End of Agenda Item**