

SCOTT COUNTY LAW LIBRARY

Meeting of the Board of Trustees

December 1, 2015, 7:30 a.m.

Present

Comr. Barbara Marschall, ASCA Jodi Keiser Kisting, Library Director Jake Grussing, Law Librarian Mary Freyberg. Honorable J. Rex Stacey was absent.

Mary presented a statistical update for the year 2015. As of October 31, 2015, 8,930 people have either visited the Scott County Law Library, participated in a Law Library sponsored clinic or attended a Law Library outreach program. There has also been an increase in requests for assistance over the telephone and on-line.

Mary reported that Law Library programs continue to be offered regularly. The Divorce Clinic is offered every month during the school year. In fact, the program has become so successful that a similar program is being offered in Dakota County by Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services (SMRLS). They have used our prototype when developing their program.

As of January 1, 2015, Expungement laws in Minnesota changed. As a result of this change, there has been an increase in questions and interest in Expungement. The Law Library has offered expungement clinics to the public in an effort to address some of these questions. The most recent expungement clinic was held Tuesday, November 17th. The next clinic will be offered in January, 2016.

The Law Library has formed a partnership with Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services((SMRLS) and they are now offering free legal services in the evening at the Shakopee Public Library. The next clinic is scheduled for December 1st. A Free Will Clinic will be offered on January 27th at Club Prior in Prior Lake. Some of the services offered at that clinic will include assisting seniors in drafting wills.

On October 29, 2015, the Council on American Islamic Relations hosted a free legal clinic open to all members of the public. Eight members of the public were served at this clinic.

In addition to the legal clinics offered through the Law Library, Mary participated on behalf of the Law Library in Project Community Connect this past Fall. Mary organized volunteer lawyers to provide legal advice to participants and directed individuals to resources to assist them with their legal issues.

On October 27, 2015, the Scott County Scene published an article regarding the Rights of Unmarried Parents. The law library also offered a clinic addressing this topic on that same date.

Getting the budget under control has been a priority for 2013, 2014 and 2015. Mary reported that the law library was able to decrease expenses by 14.83% in 2014 and with the re-

negotiation of the West contract, she expects there will be a similar impact on the 2015 expenses. Because of budget restraints the Scott County Library system has had to continue to cut back on its' collection of NOLO (self- help titles) Press books for both the Law Library and the public libraries. In addition, the Law Library had to cancel its' subscription to the United States Supreme Digest because it is too cost prohibitive. The Law Library continues to offer a Westlaw Next online package for members of the public to use. The West contract was re-negotiated last May and has resulted in a reduction in monthly expenses of \$1279.50 since that time.

Although costs have been reduced, there remains a need to increase the amount of Law Library Fees assessed in criminal and civil court cases in Scott County from \$8.00 to \$13.00 in order to prevent budget problems in the future. These fees are paid when a civil suit is filed or assessed to a criminal defendant as part of a sentence. Increasingly, civil case filing fees are being waived due to the financial situations of the filing party. Fees are also being waived in criminal sentences due to financial hardship for the defendants. A review of the statistics from 2011 through 2015 reveals that the amount of money collected from the aforementioned fees has decreased steadily each year. As a result of the decrease in fees collected, the Law Library has had to use more of its' reserve fund balance to fund its' operations. An increase in the fee amount assessed would help to restore some of the fund balance. Law Library fees have not changed since 2005.

Currently, Carver County assesses a \$15.00 law library fee. Dakota County presently assesses a \$10.00 law library fee.

The Law Library Board unanimously agreed to request that the Scott County Board of Commissioners take action to adopt an increase in law library fees from \$8.00 to \$13.00 effective in 2016.