

Open forum Letter

On Monday evening January 25th I attended an Adel city preliminary budget meeting. The meeting went very smoothly as the council reviewed the budget request of the various city departments. When they discussed the library, councilman Swanson challenged the library budget.

In 2001 planning began for construction of a new 18,000 square foot library to replace the existing 4000 square foot library, which opened in 1924. The cost of the new library was \$2,950,000.00. The citizens of the Adel community contributed \$550,000 with the balance of the funds raised by city issued bonds. The election for the sale of the bonds passed by 72% of the Adel voters.

Library funding has become a "bone of contention" with councilman Dale Swanson.

When the former library was sold in June 2006 for \$125,000.00, the money was put into the city general fund to be used over a period of years to offset the increase in operating expenses of the new library. Obviously a move from a 4000 square foot building to an 18,000 square foot building incurred increased operating costs. To ease the increased cost burden to the city it was decided to allocate the \$125,000.00 in funds from the sale over a period of 3 to 4 years. Those funds are depleted, and councilman Swanson feels the library should reduce its budget or come up with the money. He does not take into account the former library has contributed approximately \$2,700.00 in property taxes per year to the city budget and \$2700.00 to the school and others the past 2 years. That will increase to almost \$3900.00 to the city and \$3900.00 to the school and others next year due to improvements made by the private owners. To me, that will assist in offsetting the loss of funds from the sale of former library and should continue for many years in the future..

I would also like to point out that the circulation and usage has increased 33 %.

Last year 2102 hours of volunteer time have been donated for the operation of the library. If they were paid a minimum wage, it would be over \$15,000.00 per year. Youth activities have also increased over 160%, which keep their interests directed in constructive ways.

Director Paula James has done a superior job as director of the library for the past 10 years and has put together a terrific staff of employees and volunteers to serve the Adel community. In my opinion, she did not deserve the abusive comments directed at her by Councilman Swanson at the meeting I attended.

I understand Councilman Swanson is trying to squeeze spending from the city budget, but I think he has picked the wrong horse to whip..

Wayne Gadelmann
Adel Citizen and Adel Library Board Member