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Library System and County Consensus Building Work Plan Reviewed

CUMBERLAND COUNTY, PA – Cumberland County Commissioners reviewed the details of a work plan proposed by Monica Gould, President of Strategic Consulting Partners, to identify a clearer vision of the future of public library service in Cumberland County, including exploration of community needs, reports from experts on the changing role of public libraries in the 21st century, as well as identifying options for operational funding.

Gould said that the work plan had been developed in consultation with County Chief Clerk Lawrence Thomas and Library System Executive Director Jonelle Prether Darr.

Gould outlined a four-phase approach that is expected to conclude by Fall 2015. She reported that the first phase of the work plan is nearly complete and the second phase has already begun. The plan calls for:

Discovery Phase:

- Impartial, expert examinations of community needs for library services, current and future library roles, and library finances. These topics will be examined in three public community panel fact-finding sessions to be held February-April 2015.
- Interviews of County Commissioners and Library System officials to identify key issues and information gaps. Gould noted that initial baseline interviews have been completed with each County Commissioner and with key Library System officials.

Analysis Phase

- Reports summarizing shared views and vision as well as areas of disconnect and differences. Gould said that she will prepare reports of each session for review by participants.

Consensus Building Phase:

- Opportunities for facilitated discussion between Commissioners and Library System officials that will also allow comments from the public. These discussions will likely occur in late spring and early summer.

Gould said that she hopes to conclude her work on the consensus building process by September 2015. More information, including a timeline, about the consensus building process is available at: <http://cumberlandcountylibraries.org>

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