

REPORT TO CITY COUNCIL

DATE: AUGUST 22, 2007

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL

FROM: GREG RAMIREZ, CITY MANAGER

BY: NATHAN HAMBURGER, ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF SUPPORT FOR THE “ONE CITY, ONE BOOK: AGOURA HILLS READS” PROGRAM

At the request of Mayor Kuperberg and concurrence by the City Council, staff is presenting a new reading initiative program that focuses on reading a particular book and engaging in constructive discussions. The program is designed to create a shared experience of reading among a wide spectrum of people. The program exists nationwide and is commonly referred to as the “One Book” reading program. Although the program exists nationwide, it is extremely flexible to meet the individual goals and needs of each community.

The program that is being proposed for Agoura Hills would be coordinated through the local Los Angeles County Library staff and the Las Virgenes Unified School District, specifically the various schools’ English departments and library staff. An age appropriate book has been specifically selected for the elementary, junior high, and high schools. Students, parents, and fellow community members would be encouraged to read the books and then participate in separate events with the authors and discuss the book through a variety of activities aimed at creating dialogue between the various participants. The program would begin with the start of the upcoming school year and the discussion events are tentatively scheduled to occur in November 2007.

The program has been introduced to the various interested school staff including school principals, librarians, English department staff members, the Agoura Hills Library staff, and the Friends of the Library. Each entity has expressed a strong desire to participate in the program and collaboratively work to make the program a success. Although some program funds have been secured, it is anticipated that an additional budget of \$8,000 will be required. Should the City Council choose to provide the requested funding for this program, it is recommended that the funds be utilized from the General Fund reserve balance. The funds would be used for marketing of the program, agreements with the various authors to appear and direct the discussion events, and light refreshments at the events.

The staff time in administering this program would be relatively minimal, consisting of confirming the appearances of the various authors, marketing, and monitoring the discussion events. The staff time required is not anticipated to have a negative effect on the existing work

plan for this fiscal year due to the fact that a large amount of the program details have been agreed upon by all of the entities involved.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff respectfully recommends the City Council:

- 1) Approve the “One City, One Book: Agoura Hills Reads” program; and
- 2) Appropriate \$8,000 from the General Fund Balance reserve to be utilized for the operation of this program.