

Two important organizational development strategies from the Library's new strategic plan are to cultivate innovation through technology and strive to improve staff work processes. The implementation of AMH technology meets both of these strategies and will improve customer convenience and staff materials handling throughout the library system.

The Library plans to install AMH technology at six of the eight branch libraries. AMH equipment will be installed at the Fairfield Cordelia Library, Fairfield Civic Center Library, John F. Kennedy Library, Suisun City Library, Vacaville Cultural Center Library and Vacaville Town Square Library. Because of space constraints at the Rio Vista Library and Springstowne Library, AMH equipment will not be installed at these sites.

AMH equipment consists of an automated customer return component attached to a short conveyor through which incoming materials pass. As the materials move through the conveyor, they are automatically returned in the Library's integrated library system (ILS) and then pre-sorted into holding bins based on media type or other designation.

Currently, customers are required to return their materials either through a manual book drop available at all hours or inside the library during business hours. Items returned in the book drop are not removed from the customer's account until staff manually returns the items in the Library's ILS. When using the book drop, customers are unable to receive a return receipt. Currently, a receipt can only be offered if the customer brings their items into the library during business hours and staff return the items manually at the customer service desk. Customers frequently request a return receipt and this is often why they make a point of returning their materials at the customer service desk during business hours.

Currently, staff is required to manually return and sort each item that is returned through the book drop or delivered through the internal delivery service. This time-consuming process requires the repetitive handling of items by removing them from the book drop or delivery bin, checking each item into the Library's ILS, and sorting the items onto book trucks for shelving.

Some of the significant benefits of AMH technology include:

- 1) Customer convenience enhanced by allowing customers to return their library materials through the automated customer return 24/7, at which time the items are immediately removed from their library account.
- 2) Customer convenience enhanced by giving customers the option to receive a receipt of their items returned through the automated customer return. Customers requiring a receipt no longer have to return their items during Library business hours.
- 3) Repetitive motion reduced for staff handling returns and delivery. Items are automatically checked into the Library's ILS through the automated customer return and pre-sorted by designated categories for shelving. Staff no longer have to do these tasks manually, making the materials handling process much more ergonomic.
- 4) Staff time saved will free staff to do other critical tasks such as shelving materials and assisting with public-facing activities, programs, and events.

In 2008, the Library contracted a consultant to review materials handling workflows throughout the library system. In addition to a number of minor workflow changes that were subsequently implemented, the consultant recommended implementing automated materials handling technology. At that time, the Library was not in an operational position to implement this technology. In 2016, the Library contracted with the same consultant to re-examine current materials handling workflows throughout the library system. Again, the most significant recommendation was to implement automated materials handling technology to improve the customer experience and staff efficiencies. The Library is now in a position to implement this technology.

In June 2017, the Library submitted a request for proposal (RFP) through General Services to purchase AMH

equipment to be installed in six of the eight Solano County Library branches. The materials handling consultant worked with the Library throughout this RFP process.

Three vendors responded to the AMH RFP. The three vendors were Bibliotheca, Lyngsoe and Tech-Logic. The criteria for selection of the AMH vendor was based on the following:

- 1) Suitability of the proposed solution for each of the six branch libraries
- 2) Ability of the product to meet the technical requirements outlined in the RFP
- 3) Vendor's experience and capability
- 4) Service, support and warranties provided to the Library
- 5) Affordability of the proposed system

After reviewing the consultant's recommendations, and staff feedback from vendor demonstrations, the RFP evaluation committee chose Lyngsoe Systems, Inc. as the vendor most responsive to the needs of the Library based on the selection criteria.

Some of the reasons Lyngsoe Systems, Inc. is the vendor of choice include:

- 1) Lyngsoe Systems, Inc. AMH equipment is more streamlined and compact, utilizing existing space more efficiently than the other vendors' products
- 2) Lyngsoe Systems, Inc. AMH equipment is significantly lower in cost than the other vendors' products
- 3) Each installation is designed and manufactured individually to meet the specific needs of each installation site

The Library has done due diligence in investigating automated materials handling (AMH) equipment in the Library setting. Lyngsoe Systems, Inc. is the vendor of choice. The Library is recommending the Board approve the negotiated five-year contract with Lyngsoe Systems, Inc. and authorize the Director of Library Services to execute the contract.

ALTERNATIVES:

The Board of Supervisors could choose not to approve this contract; however, this alternative is not recommended because the Board has consistently supported library technology and equipment that allows staff to work more efficiently and effectively, and improves the overall customer service experience.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

County Counsel reviewed and approved the contract as to form. General Services was involved in the RFP process.

CAO RECOMMENDATION:

APPROVE DEPARTMENTAL RECOMMENDATION