

7. **Review, Discuss and Adopt Changes to the VCL Budget Policies Adopted in June, 2002.** **Report/Action**

**Background**

The Budget Policies for the Ventura County Library System were last reviewed in June, 2002. [see attachment 7a] VCL Commission members have asked for a review of the budget policies and VCL staff would like direction from the Commission on whether future budgets should continue to use the budget policies currently in place.

The budget policies currently in place, set first priority for funding the baseline of hours at each branch. Staff would like to hear from the Commission if some standard of funding should be adopted for a baseline of purchasing books and materials. There is a tension between these two needs. While maximum hours of operation are essential to providing adequate services to each community, it is increasingly coming at the expense of the ability to purchase books and other materials. This inventory is as important to our communities as our open hours and staff requests that the Commission offer direction on whether to introduce a budget policy regarding this funding.

The statewide mean for California public libraries materials expenditures for 2007-2008 was \$3.36 per capita. Ventura spends \$3.06 per capita. [see attachment 7b] However, this is somewhat misleading because almost half of that funding is obtained from the fundraising of our Friends groups and therefore must be considered as tenuous. Dedicated VCL funding for books and other materials is approximately \$1.50 per capita.

**Staff Recommendation**

Staff recommends that the VCL Commission direct staff as to a baseline of materials expenditure, to gradually increase as funding is available, to create an adequate budget, in which Friend's donations would be supplemental rather than baseline. Staff requests that the commission offer direction on what priority hours of operation should have in relationship to a stable and growing budget for books and other materials.