



Tulare County Library
COUNTY OF TULARE
AGENDA ITEM

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

- KUYLER CROCKER
District One
- PETE VANDER POEL
District Two
- AMY SHUKLIAN
District Three
- EDDIE VALERO
District Four
- DENNIS TOWNSEND
District Five

AGENDA DATE: April 30, 2019

Public Hearing Required	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Scheduled Public Hearing w/Clerk	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Published Notice Required	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Advertised Published Notice	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Meet & Confer Required	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Electronic file(s) has been sent	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/>
Budget Transfer (Aud 308) attached	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Personnel Resolution attached	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Agreements are attached and signature line for Chairman is marked with tab(s)/flag(s)	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
CONTACT PERSON: Darla Wegener PHONE: 559 713-2721				

SUBJECT: Approve the elimination of extended use fees, as recommended by the Library Department, effective July 1, 2019.

REQUEST(S):
That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Approve the elimination of extended use fees, as recommended by the Library Department, effective July 1, 2019.

SUMMARY:
The Library Department regularly reviews its fee schedule and calculates suggested fees based on the cost of providing service. The Library may request an adjustment of its fee schedule based on this review. At this time, the Library identifies the need to eliminate fees that are no longer necessary or applicable. The Library's recommended adjusted fees do not exceed the reasonable costs. Proposed fee change is as follows:

Extended Use Fee

The Library recommends the elimination of the extended use fee, commonly known as library "fines", for overdue materials. This does not include fees for materials lost or damaged. Currently the extended use fee is \$.25 per item per day once the item is overdue. The fee structure was created to encourage the return of materials and to help fund the purchase of high demand and new materials.

In reviewing the effectiveness of library fines as a deterrent, studies and articles (see attached resource list) conclude that fines do not motivate patrons to return

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materials. In fact, the extended use fees often create barriers for the most vulnerable, especially those experiencing financial hardships, on fixed incomes, and who most need our library services.

According to the US Census the median income for Tulare County is \$44,871 with 27.1% of the population in poverty, one of the highest in the state. In the Tulare County region, 32% of adults lack basic literacy skills (nces.ed.gov) and 33.5% percent of children do not meet state standards in English Language Arts (www.ed-data.org). The annual average unemployment rate for the region in 2018 is 9.4% (www.edd.ca.gov). These statistics don't complete the picture, as many working families also are challenged to pay for their day to day expenses.

Extended use fees are often the reason patrons leave the library, confused, upset, or embarrassed. This negative image leads not only to a loss of the patron but the entire family. Unfortunately, many of these patrons may not ever return to our branches. This is in direct conflict with the image the Library strives to present as the positive customer centered "free" library.

Fines can prevent patrons from using the computers for Library's databases and other services. The Library's free internet and computer services are often the only way some patrons to pay bills, apply for jobs, pay taxes, complete homework, do research, write and edit documents, and fill out their census information.

For items returned late, the extended use fee barely covers the cost of staff time. In 2018, the Library collected \$54,643 in extended use fees. Staff estimated costs for those collections were \$46,566. The estimated cost of staff time to collect these funds is \$1.13 per transaction. The Library currently recovers \$1.32 per transaction. Operating 17 locations with 42 full time staff, this time could be used more efficiently to provide essential library services. Attendance at programs continues to be high, but circulation and patrons registered, especially in our rural areas, is lower than expected. The Library believes that by eliminating extended use fees, these numbers will increase.

In the last few years, revenues from all fees have gone down about 20%, despite the use of a reputable collection agency. Changes in the economy have not been reliable predictors of decreases or increases in fee collections. This decrease could be in large part due to patrons not being able to pay outstanding fees. The fees collected are no more than 1% of the Library's budget.

The Library expects the loss of revenue will easily be adjusted in the budget. The loss of revenue will mostly be absorbed by anticipated increases in local revenues, due to an increase in State funding for programs, collections, and family literacy services, as well as an estimated increase in local revenues.

These barriers to service contradict the Library's Mission to provide equitable information access to all. It is also directly conflicts with the image the Library strives

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to present as the positive customer centered "free" community information resource.

FISCAL IMPACT/FINANCING:

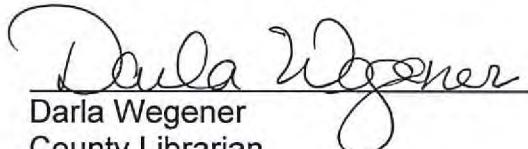
The revenue reduction from the proposed fee adjustments will be included in the revenue projections for FY 2019/20 proposed budget. Tulare County Library anticipates no major impact to the Library Department's revenues. There is no net cost to the County's General Fund.

LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY OF TULARE STRATEGIC BUSINESS PLAN:

The County's five-year strategic plan includes quality of life of its citizens and organizational performance. The fee proposal specifically addresses the following:

The Library continues to evaluate fees to improve delivery of service. By eliminating the extended use fees, the Library can remove barriers and provide easy, free access to information, programs, and services, especially to our most vulnerable populations, children, teens, senior citizens, unemployed, and low income community members.

ADMINISTRATIVE SIGN-OFF:


Darla Wegener
County Librarian

cc: County Administrative Office

Attachment(s)
Proposed Fee Form
Eliminating Library Fines Resource List
PowerPoint

**BEFORE THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF TULARE, STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

IN THE MATTER OF APPROVE THE)
ELIMINATION OF EXTENDED USE FEES) Resolution No. _____
BY THE LIBRARY DEPARTMENT) Agreement No. _____
)

UPON MOTION OF SUPERVISOR _____, SECONDED BY
SUPERVISOR _____, THE FOLLOWING WAS ADOPTED BY THE
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, AT AN OFFICIAL MEETING HELD _____
_____, BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES:
NOES:
ABSTAIN:
ABSENT:

ATTEST: JASON T. BRITT
COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER/
CLERK, BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

BY: _____
Deputy Clerk

1. Approved the elimination of extended use fees, as recommended by the Library Department, effective July 1, 2019.

Eliminating Library Fines Resource List

Alcazar, Dan, Beth Crist, Steph Myers, and Meg DePriest, *Removing Barriers to Access: Eliminating Fines and Fees for a Win-Win for your Library and Community*, a **webinar from CSL in Session**, December 17, 2017.

<https://cslinsession.cvlisites.org/past/removing-barriers-to-access-eliminating-fines-and-fees-for-a-win-win-for-your-library-and-community/>

Depriest, Meg Johnson, MLIS, MSSW. *Removing Barriers to Access: Eliminating Library Fines and Fees on Children's Materials*, **Prepared For the Colorado State Library**, 2016.

http://hermes.cde.state.co.us/drupal/islandora/object/co%3A25676/datastream/OBJ/download/Removing_barriers_to_access_eliminating_library_fines_and_fees_on_children_s_materials.pdf and the research methodology used for the project http://spellproject.weebly.com/uploads/1/5/3/3/15331602/spell_research_methodology_and_findings.pdf

Dixon, Jennifer A. and Steven A. Gillis, *Doing Fine(s)? | Fines & Fee*, **Library Journal**, Apr 04, 2017.

Gardner, Marilyn, *Is the lifting of library fines long overdue?*, **Christian Science Monitor**, May 25, 2006 <https://www.csmonitor.com/2006/0525/p13s01-lign.html>

Graham, Ruth, *Long Overdue: Why public libraries are finally eliminating the late-return fine*, **Slate**, Feb 06, 2017. <https://slate.com/culture/2017/02/librarians-are-realizing-that-overdue-fines-undercut-libraries-missions.html>

<https://www.libraryjournal.com/?detailStory=doing-fines-fines-fees>

Meyer, Robert S., *Two Fineless Years, A History, Analysis, and Evaluation*, Meyer (Robert S.) and Associates and Alameda County Library System, Hayward, California, August 1972. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED072788.pdf>

More libraries are going fine-free. That's good for everyone, **Washington Post**, June 17, 2018. https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2018/06/15/7ad6f80e-709d-11e8-afd5-778aca903bbe_story.html?noredirect=on&utm_term=.2dfa0b876288

Pyatetsky, Julia, *The End of Overdue Fines? Public Libraries*, November 5, 2015. <http://publiclibrariesonline.org/2015/11/the-end-of-overdue-fines/>