

MEMORANDUM

To: Andrew Quittner, City Attorney

From: Jacki Gross, Library Director

Subject: FY 2019 Library Proposed Fee Changes

Date: July 9, 2018

Charging fines for overdue materials has been a hotly debated topic in the library profession for many years. Many libraries believe overdue fines encourage the prompt return of materials, with the added benefit of being a source of revenue. On the other side of the coin, overdue fines are regarded as barriers to library services and discourage low-income families from borrowing library materials.

Nurturing early literacy skills development is a key component of the library’s mission. Research shows that increased access to books is related to increases in reading achievement. Our children’s programs and juvenile collection are tools we provide to parents and caregivers that are vital to the enhancement of early literacy. However, studies show that assessing overdue fines, particularly on children’s materials, disproportionately affects low-income families – the families in most need of the library’s resources. In libraries across the country, the poorest neighborhoods have the most number of people blocked from use.

Therefore, I would like to eliminate overdue fees on children’s materials. From October 1, 2017 through June 30, 2018, the library collected \$30,818 in fees for late materials, faxing, printing and copying. Overdue fees collected on children’s materials makes up 21% of the total collected. Late fees for materials, other than children’s, would remain the same.

<u>Description</u>	<u>Current Fee</u>	<u>New Fee</u>
Juv Material Late Fee	\$.20 per day	No Late Fee

I realize this step would result in a loss of revenue, however, the income generated from the community meeting room rental would offset some of the loss. At some point, we would like to start selling library book bags and t-shirts to the public, which could serve as another revenue source.

While this change will result in a small revenue loss, I believe by eliminating late fees on children’s materials, the library will encourage families to check out the books they need without fear of incurring fines and fees and will therefore be viewed as more welcoming and community minded.