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DATE: October 28, 2021
TO: Honorable Charter Township of Waterford Board of Directors
FROM: Joan Rogers, Library Director
RE: Elimination of Overdue Fines

The Waterford Township Public Library is formally requesting a Board resolution eliminating fines on overdue materials (currently ranging from \$.10/day on most print items to \$.25/day with a cap at \$10 for any one item).

The Library Advisory Committee began looking into going “fine free” in 2019 as an increasing number of public libraries across the country and in our library cooperative were adopting this policy change. The rationale for this is that overdue fines are a holdover from the past. Experience has taught us the following about overdue fines

- Revenues from fines have been steadily declining over the past 5 years. As of 2019 they were approximately .26% of total revenues (\$6,660).
 - Most fines occur when borrowers forget to renew items they need extra time to enjoy. In October 2020 our circulation system was reconfigured to automatically renew items on their due date for the maximum number of renewals, as long as no other borrowers are waiting for them, which further reduces these revenues.
 - Another factor in this decline is the increase of eContent in the makeup of library collections, where items borrowed electronically never become overdue but simply disappear from the borrower’s e-reading device on the due date.
- They are not an incentive for the timely return of items borrowed.
- They can be a dis-incentive for residents on tight household budgets, often with school-aged children, to make full use of the library’s collection as overdue fines are unanticipated expenses.

Finally, lending materials from the library collection is one of the tax supported services offered to our community and overdue fines increase its cost for residents who actually use it. Over the course of the pandemic we have been able to use the service restrictions caused by it as a “pilot project” for this concept. Overdue fines have been suspended since March 2020 with no negative impact on lending services. Rather the opposite, it has removed a stressor for both borrowers and staff.

With us there are no boundaries

TLN fine-free libraries are listed below as of 10/6/2021

Allen Park
Belleville
Chelsea
Ferndale
Franklin
Garden City
Hartland
Lyon
Madison Heights
Milford
Redford
Southgate
Taylor
Wixom