

DATE SUBMITTED 6/30/2023  
 SUBMITTED BY DU  
 DATE ACTION REQUIRED 7/5/2023

COUNCIL ACTION (X)  
 PUBLIC HEARING REQUIRED ( )  
 RESOLUTION ( )  
 ORDINANCE 1<sup>ST</sup> READING ( )  
 ORDINANCE 2<sup>ND</sup> READING ( )  
 CITY CLERK'S INITIALS ab

**IMPERIAL CITY COUNCIL  
 AGENDA ITEM**

SUBJECT: Library Fines	DISCUSSION/ACTION: To eliminate the current overdue fee policy for library materials and implement a new fine-free policy that insures socio-economic equity for all library patrons.
DEPARTMENT INVOLVED: Imperial Public Library	
BACKGROUND/SUMMARY:  On June 13, 2023, the Imperial Public Library Board of Trustees acted to recommend that the City Council eliminate the current overdue fee police at the Imperial Public Library.  Overdue library fines are an outdated and punitive way to try to get library materials returned. The nationwide trend is to pause a patron's ability to check out until they bring the item back. Only if they lose a book, will they be asked to pay for it. Additionally, nickel and diming taxpayers in a low income community creates a socio-economic barrier to information access. It also creates negative public relations and causes undue stress to both patrons and staff.  According to the FY 2022/23 budget, the library collected \$2000 last year or \$167 a month. The amount of staff time dealing with fines is also a pertinent issue. Alerting patrons and taking payment for a fine slows down the flow of service when people check out. Time spent discussing fines can be used for reference, readers advisory and to promote our many educational and cultural programs.	
FISCAL IMPACT: No Negative Impact to Municipal Budget  Loss of \$2000 a year or less. Off set by the staff time recouped from handling these frequent, small amount transactions.	ADMIN SERV INITIALS _____
STAFF RECOMMENDATION: To implement a new, more equitable, overdue materials policy.	DEPT. INITIALS <u>   D.U.   </u>
MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION: Approve	CITY MANAGER'S INITIALS <u>   ab   </u>
MOTION:  SECONDED: AYES: NAYES: ABSENT:	
APPROVED ( )      REJECTED ( ) DISAPPROVED ( )      DEFERRED ( ) REFERRED TO:	



## **Fine Free Policy**

### **Why Go Fine Free?**

Overdue library fines are an outdated and punitive way to try to get library materials returned. The nationwide trend is to pause a patron's ability to check out until they bring the item back. Only if they lose a book, will they be asked to pay for it. Additionally, overdue fines disproportionately effect low income patrons and families with children and creates a socio-economic barrier to information access.

Alerting patrons of overdue fees and taking payment for a fine also slows down the flow of service when people check out. Time spent discussing fines can be used for reference, readers advisory and to promote our many educational and cultural programs.

### **How It Works**

All past fines and fines going forward will be forgiven. If a patron has an overdue book and returns it, they will not be charged. However, patrons who have overdue books that are not returned will not be able to check out books or use library computers until the materials are returned.

Items checked out for their standard loan periods are renewed up to 2 times, if eligible. Items on hold for other patrons cannot be renewed.

Patrons are notified by email, phone or text message, depending on patron's preference and the notice type.

### **Lost Items**

Once an item is marked lost, the patron is responsible for the replacement cost of the item and a \$5.00 processing fee. The patron is also unable to renew or check out additional items. If an item is returned after the patron has paid for it, they will receive a credit in the amount of the cost of the item to their account. However, the patron is responsible for the processing fee, as it covers the costs of notices and staff time. For items not returned, the patron must pay the original cost of the item and the processing fee.

Replacement items bought by patrons for lost items will not be accepted.

### **Damaged Items**

If a patron returns an item that is damaged and can no longer be used by the library, the patron is charged the original cost of the item and a \$5.00 processing fee per item. The patron is unable to renew or check out any items.

Replacements for damaged items are not accepted.

### **Exceptions**

Fines can still be incurred for nontraditional library materials, such as electronic equipment and Library of Things items. Also, patrons will still be responsible for fines they incur on any interlibrary loan materials from other libraries that still charge fines.