

**From:** Ruth Michelson <ruthmichelson@sbcglobal.net>  
**Sent:** Monday, December 2, 2024 3:58 PM  
**To:** BOS-Clerk of the Board  
**Subject:** BOS Item 33, 24-1150, 12/3/2024

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Board of Supervisors-

I am writing regarding the above referenced library fines item. I have a few questions. The following sentences in quotations are excerpts from the Legislative text submitted with the agenda item.

**1. "The schedule does not align with the practices of neighboring library systems or modern borrowing philosophies for public libraries. Fines or charging fees to borrow items create community inequalities that can affect some of the most vulnerable populations including children, families, and those on a fixed income."**

*I am supportive of minimizing these barriers and inequalities that exist in our library system.*

(Simultaneously, I am motivated to get my library books back on time because of the fines associated with the book being late. It's not that the fine is egregious, but as a rule follower, the fine re-enforces that the library is serious about wanting their book back on time. Without the fines, my guess is that you will have many more overdue books. Have other libraries tracked their percentage of overdue books once they stop the daily fines?)

**2. "Any patron with an item kept 21 days past the item due date will have their account locked until the item is returned or an item replacement cost is paid"**

*This proposed solution seems **contrary** to the mission statement proposed above. Paying the replacement cost of a book is more prohibitive than paying some minimal daily late fee. Can this apparent contradiction be explained?*

**3. "The Library will combine this action with a reduction in wireless hotspot and physical audiobook budgets and upgrade self-checkout machines to a product included in the open-source ILS, resulting in an annual cost-savings of approximately \$70,000."**

*Is it advisable to reduce the wireless hotspot budget? What will the technical results be in this reduction? Physical audiobooks are enjoyed by our senior population and those with vision problems. Not everyone has the technical ability to hear audiobooks otherwise offered by the library through, I think, the Libby system. I would not cut this budget item.*

**4. "Fees - Proposed Changes:**

- 1. Lost Adult or Young Adult book - cost of book**
- 2. Lost Juvenile book - cost of book"**

*Same comment as number 2 above.*

**5. "There is currently \$286,500 in outstanding overdue fines, from almost 14,000 library users, of this amount more than 50% is from five or more years ago. Due to the age of the majority of the fines, it is unlikely that the Library Department will be able to collect these outstanding overdue fines and the expense of the collection does not justify the cost. Further, outstanding overdue fines create barriers for vulnerable populations to access library resources and can prevent the return of long overdue library items."**

I think it might be worth considering a fine-reduction incentive program. A "come in today and get half your library fine forgiven. While you're here, choose a free book off of our book sale table." You could also have individuals and organizations offer to pay off fines, like a "pay it forward" kind of a deal. Even if you only raised 1/4 of the outstanding fines, you'd still raise \$70,000. You could try it for a year, then forgive the rest. You could also drop the barrier of not being able to check out a book during this year of fundraising.

Sincerely,

Ruth Michelson  
District 4