

## **Fine Free Pilot Program**

The elimination of overdue fines is not only a national trend, it is a local trend. Fine free libraries in our area include:

- Brighton Public Library (November 2021)
- Port Hope Public Library (December 2021)
- Peterborough Public Library (September 2021)
- Kawartha Lakes (October 2020)
- Prince Edward County (2019)

### **Recommendation**

The Cobourg Public Library would like to recommend that the Board make a motion *“to implement fine free library service for the Youth (Teen) and Junior (Children’s) Collections, beginning January 1, 2022 for a period of one-year”*.

After one-year, the Library will compare the differences in use between our prior years of using fines to incentivize the return of check-out materials and the year of going fine-free.

### **Budget & Financial Implications**

There is a financial implication associated with the recommendation.

While late fines as a source of revenue are currently included in the Library’s operating budget, the Library is not dependent on late fine revenue to operate. Late fines account for only 1.08% of the total operating budget, or \$15,000. Approximately one-third of total fine income is generated from the Teen and Children’s collections, which would be a total of \$5,000, or 0.36% of the budget.

As evidenced by the waiving of late fines during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Library is able to absorb the loss of late fine revenue within its operating budget. Additional revenue sources will be pursued to ensure the sustainability of offering fine free library service during this pilot program.

### **Lost Item Fees**

The Library’s lost and damaged item fees will remain in place for the Teen and Children’s collections. Items considered to be long overdue will be marked as lost, and replacement fees will be billed according to current practices. Damaged items would also continue to have repair/replacement fees billed as appropriate.

### **Summary**

While the move to a fine-free service model during this one-year pilot program will eliminate a portion of the Library’s overdue fine revenue, this amount is quite small when considering the overall operating budget.

The community benefits of a fine-free library service for our Teens and Children outweigh the minor financial risk of making the change for one year.