

Township of Southgate
Administration Office
185667 Grey Road 9, RR 1
Dundalk, ON N0C 1B0



Phone: 519-923-2110
Toll Free: 1-888-560-6607
Fax: 519-923-9262
Web: www.southgate.ca

Staff Report LIB2022-001

Title of Report: LIB2022-001- Library Overdue Fines
Department: Library
Council Date: April 6, 2022

Recommendation:

Be it resolved that Council receive Staff Report LIB2022-001 for information; and
That Council direct the Treasurer to bring forward an amendment to the Fees and Charges By-law at the April 20, 2022, Council meeting.

Background:

Since the beginning of the pandemic, the Southgate Public Library has not charged for overdue items for various reasons relating to COVID-19. Libraries in Canada are discussing and/or implementing the policy change of eliminating fines for overdue items and to date over 300 libraries have discontinued library fines.

Staff Comments:

On February 17, 2022 the Southgate Public Library Board approved of the discountenance of library overdue fines and amended the Circulation Policy on March 17, 2022 to reflect these changes. The Board discussed that library fines impact the community disproportionately, as those who are in low-income households are the majority of the accounts blocked due to fines. Often these accounts are children and youth. It can create a negative relationship with the library and make patrons feel uncomfortable. Negative interactions at the circulation desk are often related to fines, resulting in stress for both the patron and staff member. The library does not receive a significant amount of money for fines in comparison to the staff time it takes and the negative impacts. In 2019, the last full year of collecting fines, only \$1,346 in revenue was received. Libraries that have implemented a fines free policy have reported an increase in materials returned and a savings in book replacement costs.

Financial Implications:

The financial implication to the Township is the small loss of revenue for library fines, which will not impact the 2022 budget as no revenue was declared in the final approval.

Communications & Community Action Plan Impact:

This report has been written and presented to Council to communicate accurate information to the public

Concluding Comments:

That Council receive Staff Report LIB2022-001 for information and that Council direct the Treasurer to bring forward an amendment to the Fees and Charges By-law at the April 20, 2022, Council meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dept. Head: *Original Signed By*
Lacy Russell, Librarian CEO

CAO Approval: *Original Signed By*
Dave Milliner, CAO

Attachments: