



CITY OF GULFPORT CITY COUNCIL MEETING NOTICE AGENDA MEMORANDUM

FROM: Dave Mather, IT/Library

DATE: January 5, 2021

AGENDA ITEM: 7.b

RESOLUTION NO: 2021-04

SUBJECT: Resolution No. 2021-04: A Resolution amending fees for the Department of Leisure Services, Gulfport Public Library, in accordance with Chapter 25 of the Code of Ordinances.

RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends City Council approve Resolution No. 2021-04 allowing the Gulfport Public Library to go fine-free for library material late charges, pending approval by all city and governmental jurisdictions bound by the Pinellas Public Library Cooperative inter-local agreement. The fine-free status would be effective countywide October 1, 2021. As provided by Chapter 25 of the City of Gulfport Code of Ordinances, approve a resolution amending library fines on Books/Audio Books and DVDs.

BACKGROUND:

To establish PPLC as a fine-free public library cooperative. By moving to a fine-free cooperative, PPLC member libraries reinforce their commitment to equity and inclusion and remove barriers to resources for many community members. Fines for overdue materials discourage customers from accessing the invaluable resources that our libraries offer such as free technology, literacy, and lifelong learning. Customers will continue to be liable for costs associated with lost or damaged items, as well as fees for non-resident cards fees, faxing fees, passport fees, and any other fee associated with library services.

ANALYSIS:

There are a multitude of studies conducted in the last 5 years indicating that use of library services increases drastically once fines are eliminated. Books are returned without penalty, but as indicated in background, patrons are still responsible for lost and damaged books. Nationally, a number of libraries are now fine-free, including; the Free Library of Philadelphia, San Francisco, New York Public Library, Seattle Public Library, and many others. In Florida, the trend is also taking hold. Most libraries locally, with the exception of PPLC are now fine-free. Florida fine-free libraries include; Citrus, Boynton Beach (2020), Lake Wales Public Library/ Polk County Cooperative (2019), Lake Worth (2020), Miami Dade (2017), North Miami Beach (2017), Palm Beach County Library System (2019), Pasco County Library Cooperative (2020), Valparaiso Community Library (2019), Sarasota County (2019), Tampa Hillsborough County (2018), Delray Beach Public Library (2020).

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

In fiscal year 2018-2019, the Gulfport Public Library took in \$5,217.57 in fines associated with late items. In fiscal year 2019-2020, the Gulfport Library took in \$1,642.23 in fines associated with late items. The 2018-19 number is a better representation of the average in recent years due to the closures in the last fiscal year. Fees incurred by library patrons were never intended to be a revenue stream, but rather a deterrence to keeping materials out passed the due date. That deterrence sometimes has the opposite effect. Especially for lower income families. Several studies by the ALA and other institutions consistently find that the cost of implementing and carrying out fine structures costs more than fine revenue; particularly in smaller libraries. Compared to other libraries in PPLC, the Gulfport Public Library fine revenue is relatively small. We hope to supplement that loss with our passport acceptance initiative rolling out later this year.

(Please see attached for fee change schedule).

MOTION:

Move to approve Resolution 2021-04

ATTACHMENTS:

[Item 7.b - Library Fee Schedule.pdf](#)
[Item 7.b - Resolution No. 2021-04.pdf](#)
[Item 7.b - ALA Fine Free FAQ.pdf](#)