



Legislation Text

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City Council Meeting Date: September 18, 2018

To: Mayor and City Council
City Administrator

From: Layna Mestad, Youth Services/Teen Librarian

Consider Fine forgiveness during October 2018 for Teens during Teen Read Month.

Action Requested:

The Northfield City Council considers approving the attached Resolution for a one-time fine waiver to teens (middle school through high school) during Teen Read Month, October 2018.

Summary Report:

The City of Northfield Library Board met to discuss the fine forgiveness during October 2018 for Teens during Teen Read Month. Although this agenda item has not been officially approved by the Library Board, all members of the Library Board strongly agree and are directing the final approval to the Northfield City Council.

At Northfield Public Library, patrons' accounts are "blocked" once they have accrued \$10.00 in fines as a way of encouraging people to pay off their fines promptly. A blocked patron may no longer check out items. For many, this likely means simply no longer using the library at all—they may not be able to afford paying off fines.

This may be especially true for teens; while children's materials do not accrue fines for overdue materials, teen materials have fines of .10 per item per day; if adult materials have been checked out on a teen card, fines accrue at .25 per item per day. It is the *type* of the material rather than the *age* of the cardholder that instigates fines. Often a child's card is used by a parent to check out adult materials, and if the fines are not paid, it can be an embarrassing surprise to a teen who wants to use the library to discover fines on their card.

We reached out and invited teens involved in the Summer Blast program at the library for their views on ways to get more teens to use the library; they pointed out that teens may be the demographic most surprised that the library carries the kinds of materials they want, and that teens want to use the library. They suggested that the library function in more pro-active ways to welcome teens. In view of this, the Library proposes a one-time fine amnesty to teens during October, celebrated nationally as Teen Read Month. This would clear all late fines for teens coming into the library in October to participate in the fine forgiveness initiative. Fees for lost items would **not** be cleared.

A press release will be sent to the *Northfield News* about this amnesty, and the library will promote the waiver at Northfield Middle and High Schools and Arcadia. We believe this will bring teens into the building that may

not been here for years, and, once here, they will not only check out library materials, but see that the library has programs for teens, and a Teen Advisory Board to which they could apply.

Alternative Options:

The fine waiver for teens is not approved.

Financial Impacts: The number of teen cardholders totals 6% of our cardholder total, roughly around 1,000 teens. Our outstanding, unpaid overdue teen fines, not including lost items, total \$3,774. If all teens who had overdue fines came to the library in October for fine forgiveness, the impact to the City would be a potential loss of \$3,774. It should be pointed out that many of these fines are long overdue for a number of years and are unlikely to be collected; the impact is loss of users more than loss of fines.

Tentative Timelines:

To be applied during the month of October 2018 for Teen Read Month.