



**Peterborough  
Public Library**

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**To:** Peterborough Public Library Board of Trustees

**From:** Jennifer Jones, Acting Library Manager/CEO

**Meeting Date:** September 27, 2016

**Subject:** Report PPL16-024B  
Removal of Charges from Patron Accounts

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## **Purpose**

A report to seek approval to remove charges from patron accounts incurred previous to January 1, 2013.

## **Recommendation**

That the Library Board approves the recommendation outlined in Report PPL16-024 dated September 27, 2016 of the acting Library Manager/CEO as follows:

That the removal of charges from patrons accounts incurred previous to January 1, 2013 be approved

## **Budget and Financial Implications**

If the recommendation is adopted there would be no affect to the Library's overall budget. The City's Manager of Financial Services has confirmed that these charges are not linked to the Library's account as all fines and fees are not officially recorded as revenue until they are received.

## Background

This report was originally presented at the 23 February 2016 meeting. The library does collect a portion of the overall fines and fees charged each year, as indicated in the year end Financial Statements. Those amounts were not taken into consideration when creating the original report as they have been accounted for. The focus of the report was on amounts not collected, but which still remain in our system.

The numbers presented in the 23 February 2016 report reflect the totals from accounts still owing a balance. The percentages given were calculated from the total amounts received on those accounts in particular vs. the amounts still owing on the same accounts.

Accounts that are no longer active and that have been paid in full, or that owe less than \$10 are purged from the system every few years. The accounts from the report have amounts larger than \$10 still owing on them, regardless of payments received to this point.

In order for the Library to maintain a better handle on the fines and fees in the future, a new procedure has been established.

A standardized payment plan chart has been created. This chart will make it easy for staff to provide consistent payment options to patrons who owe any amount on their account. Should an exception be needed, a supervisor will need to be consulted to speak with the patron to make alternative arrangements.

### Payment plan chart:

Amount owing	Payment option
\$0-\$10	Pay what you can/pay in full
\$10.01-\$30.00	\$3 per visit/wanting to borrow
\$30.01-\$40.00	\$6 per visit/wanting to borrow
\$40.01-\$50.00	\$10 per visit/wanting to borrow
\$50.01-\$60.00	\$15 per visit/wanting to borrow
\$60.01-\$70.00	\$21 per visit/wanting to borrow
\$70.01-\$80.00	\$28 per visit/wanting to borrow
\$80.01-\$100.00	\$40 per visit/wanting to borrow
\$100.01 +	\$50+ per visit/wanting to borrow

Once a patron reaches \$30 owing on their account, they will be switched into a "limited" profile. This limited profile will provide them with the opportunity to continue using the library while restricting their borrowing to 3 items, preventing them from further accumulating fines at an exponential rate, while they pay down their total amount owing to under the \$10 limit.

Should a patron's account reach \$50 in fines/fees, the Library will have the option to send them to the City's Collections department. Two attempts to contact the patron and make payment arrangements will be made before the choice is made to send them to Collections.

The Library would also like to hold an annual Food for Fines campaign. This will provide patrons with the opportunity to pay down their account balances while contributing to a much needed resource in our community. A set amount will be determined per item donated which will be credited to the patron's account (e.g. \$0.50 for each can, or \$5 for a full bag of food), up to a maximum of \$50.

There is also the potential for running a different type of campaign to provide patrons with another option to pay down amounts owing on their accounts. For example, an Amnesty Week where the Library matches all payments made on an account up to a pre-determined maximum: A patron pays \$10 on a \$20 fine, the library waives the other \$10 in matching payments and the patron's account is cleared of those charges. This type of campaign would be a one off event which would be requested at a Board meeting for approval.

## Summary

The amounts currently outstanding are charges that we have been unsuccessful in collecting from our patrons. They are creating barriers for borrowing, embarrassing situations at the service desks, and unnecessary stress for staff trying to collect the amounts owing. New procedures and new approaches to collecting this money on a regular basis will aid in preventing the amounts from accumulating to unreasonable levels, as well as provide staff with the support needed to collect amounts owing from patrons.

Submitted by,

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