

## West Linn Library Advisory Board Minutes

Wednesday, October 20, 2021 VIA Zoom

**Present members:** Library Advisory Board (LAB) members: Matt Brown, Janet Dalgaard, Emily Hogan, Tom Miller, Rebecca Cassidy

**Absent:** Jan Boyd (*excused*)

Martha Swanson (*excused*)

Councilor Rory Bialostosky, Liaison to the Library Advisory Board (*excused*)

**Staff present:** Doug Erickson, Director of Library & Community Services &  
Melanie Nelson, Library Operations Supervisor/Assistant to the Director  
Sarah Flathman, Youth Services Library Manager  
Rick Peterson, Library Manager

**Call to order:** Janet Dalgaard called the meeting to order at 5:03 p.m.

**Minutes review:** 09.15.2021 minutes approved with no edits or changes. Passed 5:0.

**Agenda review:** No additions or edits to agenda. Passed 5:0.

**Public Comment:** Matt Brown sent email to Doug Erickson just prior to the meeting regarding ending library late fees- please see below along with link to article:

**Subject:** Re: New York Public Library ending late fees

**From:** Matt Brown < >

**Date:** Wednesday, October 20, 2021 at 1:29 PM

**To:** "Erickson, Doug" <[derickson@westlinnoregon.gov](mailto:derickson@westlinnoregon.gov)>

**Subject:** New York Public Library ending late fees

**CAUTION:** This email originated from an External source. Do not click links, open attachments, or follow instructions from this sender unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. If you are unsure, please contact the Help Desk immediately for further assistance.

Hi Doug,

I hope that you're doing well. I am looking forward to tonight's LAB meeting. You may have already seen this article

[Largest public library system in U.S. ends late fees in push for equity](#)

It got me thinking, so wanted to ask, who sets late fees? Are they set by each city, or by LINCC? And also, are you aware of discussions for us to adopt a similar approach?

It sounds as if late fees aren't much of an incentive for patrons to return items, but that they can be a barrier to library access. And patrons who accrue more than \$20 in fines have their library cards blocked. I imagine that NYPL is keeping its fees for replacing lost library items. Thanks for any info you're able to share on this topic. Matt Brown

Doug's response:

**From:** Doug Erickson <[derickson@westlinnoregon.gov](mailto:derickson@westlinnoregon.gov)>

**Date:** Wednesday, October 20, 2021 at 1:48 PM

**To:** Matt Brown

**Cc:** Sarah Flathman <[sflathman@westlinnoregon.gov](mailto:sflathman@westlinnoregon.gov)>, Melanie Nelson

<[mnelson@westlinnoregon.gov](mailto:mnelson@westlinnoregon.gov)>, Rick Peterson <[rpeterson@westlinnoregon.gov](mailto:rpeterson@westlinnoregon.gov)>, #Board - Library Board <[libraryboard@westlinnoregon.gov](mailto:libraryboard@westlinnoregon.gov)>

Hi Matt and LAB,

I am happy to talk about Fines and how it works in Clackamas County and what we are doing here in West Linn. We establish the fines locally but try and keep them the same across the County. Since you can pay for a fine at any Library in the County for any item, it would need to be a decision that would need to happen as a consortium. One of the obstacles is that many Libraries including our own relies on those fines, as they are counted against our revenues. So if we were to eliminate fines in WL we would lose over 40K in revenue that is expected income that goes against our bottom line. We have just recently re-imposed fines as they were not accumulating or being counted on for nearly 18 months of the pandemic. We understand that this can be a burden for some and punitive. Here in WL each staff member has the authority to waive fines based on any situation they feel is warranted. We also are the only Library in Clackamas County that has book drops at every primary school, and 5 24/7 Library book drops around town. (Willamette, Robinwood, Rosemont, Sunset and Bolton neighborhoods have drops. Note the Bolton Drop is the Library Drop. 😊). We also have "food for fines" month every year along with other chosen week(s) in the year where people can bring in food in exchange for fines. The food going to the food pantry in WL. At Summer Reading and Kindergarten Carnival we give out 5 dollar coins (Otto Coins) that can be used for fines. We try and work with all our patrons and to not let fines be a barrier to use. Happy to talk more about it as well. -Doug

**Library Update:** Doug Erickson, Director of Library & Community Services:

- **COVID:** Doug reported that the library has continued with the library being open 7 days a week with two late nights-closing at 7pm (Tue./Wed.) M, Th, F close at 6pm, Sat/Sun open earlier (10am) and close at 4pm. The operation hours are based on both door counters & patron requests to open earlier on the weekends. \*Future LAB meetings in person or continue on-line? Doug requested input from LAB members' thoughts on continuing on-line meetings or in-person/hybrid meetings as required. Tom Miller reported that he prefers to stay safe with on-line meetings until the State Health Department dictates otherwise. If requirement to hold public meetings in person/hybrid could LAB meet in Council Chambers to ease the recording/hybrid requirement? Rebecca Cassidy shared that after teaching in a hybrid environment, it is challenging to manage this type of format & would like to return to in-person meetings when it is safe to do so. Emily Hogan would also like to meet in person as soon as it is safe to do so. Janet Dalgaard asked if after the first of the year to meet in person? Doug indicated that we are currently in compliance with in-person/hybrid meetings as public meetings are streamed & recorded. Doug also suggested that the "format" for

January's meetings should be tabled until the January to see what the Oregon Health Authority & COVID numbers are at. It was agreed to address this topic in January. Doug was also happy to announce that in January or February of 2022 the Library will host the annual Holiday Party at the library for staff & Community Advisory Board members.

- **Programing:** The library continues to offer program virtually for patrons of all ages. Adult Librarians report an increase of attendees in the adult on-line/virtual programs so these programs will continue. Doug also reported that starting in November or December, we will welcome back small groups to gather at the library-book clubs like the "Great Books" club. These groups have been meeting outside at local parks during the summer. Currently countywide in-person story time for children is not being held so the library will continue with virtual story time for safety.
- **Re: New York Public Library ending late fees:** Doug noted in his email (above) the process for late fees & how they are created as part of the Library's budget (expected revenue) as well as the consortium with Library in Clackamas County (LINCC). Fines in past budgetary years has been approximately 60K and over the years the library has lowered that to 40K. This revenue if completely removed would need to be replaced by either staff salary or collection development. This could reduce either staff to help patrons or materials that patrons may be looking for. Over the last 18 months of the pandemic, no late fines were assessed. The library continues to implement various opportunities to help patrons with late fees by several remote book drop boxes (Bolton, Sunset, Robinwood, Willamette & Rosemont Heights) neighborhoods. Also, book drops are located at all of the West Linn primary schools for students to return public library materials at while attending school. The library also engages with many community groups that work directly with families where late fines may be a barrier to access of library materials. Doug has given his staff the ability to evaluate each late fine situation & determine to waive late fines or fees for each situation. The library also participates a few times a year on "Food for Fines" programs where fines are removed when a patron makes a canned food donation in lieu of payment. These food donations directly benefit the West Linn Food Pantry here in West Linn. The libraries goal is to ensure that as many community members have equitable access to any materials here at the library & will continue to support the needs of all patrons. Doug also shared how important it is that decisions of the library are made locally. Bigger cities where decisions are made for several branches (up to 7 branches in larger cities) without any local input. West Linn Library can tailor the programs & services to best fit the needs of our community.

**Foundation Update:** Doug reported the Foundation is close to getting specialty baskets together for on-line auction (no need to be present). These baskets are to help “Get ready for Thanksgiving” each raffle ticket is \$25.00. **Please visit & share with friends:** <https://wllf.betterworld.org> **to take a peek at the creative baskets.** Also a wine tasting experience & chef cooking experience with Latitude 45 Catering here in West Linn!

**Board Comments:** Janet Dalgaard wanted to thank Doug and all the library staff for all the hard work in keeping the library open & running during the last 19 months. The community appreciates all of their hard work with curbside, programming & take and makes projects. Many Library Advisory Board members shared their “happiness” & “gratitude” for the library & staff.

**Adjourn:** Janet Dalgaard moved to adjourn at 5:51 p.m. and Tom Miller & Rebecca Cassidy seconded.

Respectfully submitted,  
Melanie Nelson  
Library Operation Supervisor/Assistant to the Director  
10.21.2021

**Next meeting Wednesday, November 17<sup>th</sup> at 5:00pm via Zoom**