

September 25, 2023

Dear Councilmembers Granato and Stringham,

I am responding to your letter dated April 14, 2023, requesting the County Library initiate a pilot to suspend overdue fees on children's materials during the Summer Reading program. On May 22, 2023, the Library Board voted to enact such a pilot, which is now complete. We are pleased to report that for the three-month period from June to August 2023, we eliminated \$42,482.18 in charges on materials for youth. Further, an astounding 94.6% of patrons responding to the library's one-cent fine survey indicated they viewed their experience positively.

Specific to your questions in the letter, library program attendance increased by 26% in the three month time period, compared to 2022; and the library experienced an almost 8% increase in visits in that same time period. While these increases cannot be completely attributed to the one-cent late fee pilot, the Library Board believes it was certainly a contributing factor.

Most importantly, library patrons responding to a survey conducted throughout the month of August were overwhelmingly positive to the pilot program. Many people noted that their summers were less stressful because of the pilot, and that the reduction in the late fees motivated them to check out more materials. One example read,

"Truly loved this program - it made it so much easier for me to say YES to all the books, DVDs etc that my daughter wanted.... Reduced my anxiety about the need to be right on top of returning as Summer seems to have moments of MORE things going on and less structure! Thanks!"

The Library Board is also happy to report that the reduction in late fees did not impact the timely return of library materials. In fact, waitlist fill time actually improved by a half-day over the three month time frame! Anecdotally, library staff believe that patrons returned materials checked out prior to the summer at higher rates as well.

The success of this pilot spurred Library Administration to submit a revenue reduction with their 2024 budget request so that the County Library can permanently eliminate late fees on materials for youth.

I want to thank you both for your request and for opening the door to make this important impact on our community!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Bill Scarber', followed by a horizontal line.

Bill Scarber
Salt Lake County Library Board Chair