

**LIBRARY COMMISSION MINUTES
Regular Meeting
September 17, 2024**

1) Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 p.m. by Chair Laney.

2) Roll Call

Present: Commissioners: Allaman, Jonnalagadda, Laney, Moore, Pacheco and Shannon

Absent: Commissioners: Xu

3) Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Pacheco moved to approve the August 20, 2024, Minutes as written. Commissioner Allaman seconded. Motion carried.

AYES: Commissioners: Allaman, Laney, Jonnalagadda, Moore, Pacheco and Shannon

NOES: Commissioners: None

ABSENT: Commissioners: Xu

ABSTAIN: Commissioners: None

4) Business from the Floor

5) Reports and Presentations

a. Monthly Statistics:

- Library Director Thomas Gruneisen reported on the August Statistics. The library is off to a solid start to the new fiscal year: physical checkouts, eBook

- usage, library visits, and program attendance are all outpacing their performance from last year and are doing well.
- At this time, eMaterial purchases are up when compared to this point last year, but the Library expects this trend to reverse as the year goes on. Due to reductions in State funding, our consortium's budget for the Library To Go collection has decreased, and our Library's own contributions are not expected to exceed last year's level.
- Lisa Newlin, our Circulation Coordinator, has been doing a great job of recruiting and training new adult volunteers, and we expect that adult volunteer hours will continue to increase this year, presenting the Library with a cost savings.
- Outreach is also up from last year. This year for the first time the Library attended the Twin Lakes Food Bank's Back-to-School event, where Librarian Lindsay Melhus was able to meet Folsom residents, connecting some of them with Library services for the first time.

b. **Folsom Public Library Fine Free: A Report On First Year Impacts of City Council Resolution No. 11069:**

- Library Director Thomas Gruneisen discussed some of the changes in circulation that may have resulted from City Council Resolution No. 11069, which removed most fines from the Folsom Public Library fee schedule.
- **Number of blocked accounts:** At the end of each fiscal year, the Library takes a snapshot of its collection. In June 2023, the Library had 2,682 accounts that were blocked due to fines and fees (8.43% of all cardholders), 698 of which were youth accounts (10.37% of youth accounts). In June 2024, FPL had 1,518 accounts that were blocked due to fines and fees (4.03% of all accounts), 386 of which were youth accounts (5.04% of all youth accounts). Out of all the metrics we assessed, this was the most directly attributable to cessation of fines: that the number of blocked accounts was effectively halved.
- **Growth in new accounts:** Beyond a clear reduction in the number of blocked accounts, it is challenging to assess how directly the decision to go fine-free impacted other metrics. Aside from continuously improving our own performance measures, FPL exists in a dynamic environment: we belong to multiple consortia whose libraries are themselves in flux, and serve a growing population here in Folsom. However, there is reason to believe that the removal of late fees has led to a greater number of new accounts. In Fiscal Year 2022-2023, FPL added 3,460 new accounts; in FY24, the Library added 4,274 – up 814, or 24%, when compared to the year before. Anecdotally, we know that fines were a reason cited by some caregivers to avoid registering their children for Library accounts. This change would have ameliorated those concerns, making our outreach more effective – a benefit that is expected to carry forward into the future.
- **Other performance measures:** Library usage overall increased in Fiscal Year 2023-2024, but it is more challenging to isolate which of these factors were due to the Library going fine-free, and which were due to other factors. During this year, the Library saw growth in unique check-outs, eBook and eAudiobook

- usage, public computer sessions, visits, new account creation, and program attendance. Details can be found on the Library's monthly statistical report.
- **Equivalent overdue activity:** Although research suggested that FPL would not experience a surge in overdue activity, staff can admit that they experienced some trepidation when they saw a dramatic plunge in the number of patron renewals – down from 86,533 in FY23 to only 14,917 in FY24. Despite this rapid decrease, however, the number of overdue items remained essentially unchanged from year-to-year (13,127 in FY23 compared to 13,305 in FY24), as was the number of billed items (3,672 IN FY23 compared to 3,768 in FY24). This suggests that the great majority of renewals from previous years were unnecessary; i.e., that patrons renewed items out of a concern that they could potentially become late, rather than that those renewals were actually needed to prevent those items from becoming late.
- **Customer service:** The customer service challenges that came from being the last public library location in Sacramento County to levy late fines were considerable, and were compounded by our geographic and technical integration with Sacramento Public Library and other fine-free regional partners. These challenges were detailed in the Staff Report that accompanied Resolution No. 11069, but for this report, their cessation has been accompanied by fewer complaints and greater goodwill from our residents, as well as increases in staff and operational efficiencies.
- **Financial impact:** As was predicted by the Library's research prior to going fine-free, the decision to end fines came at a cost of approximately 1% of the Library's budget. The Library collected \$29,968 (1.48% of budget) in Fines & Fees during FY23. It collected \$12,587 (.59% of budget) in Fines & Fees during FY24.

Finally, it should be noted that, as a profession, libraries continue to respond to the findings that fines are ineffective at causing items to be returned on time, and that the costs of having fines outweighs their benefits. In California, Stockton-San Joaquin, San Jose Public Library, Moorpark City Library, Riverside Public Library, and San Bernadino County Library recently joined the large number of public libraries that had adopted fine-free models after the pandemic. Staff are unaware of any libraries that reverted to reintroducing fines after having experienced the benefits of being fine-free.

Library Director Thomas Gruneisen responded to comments and questions from the Library Commission.

6) Library Director's Report

Library Director Thomas Gruneisen reported on the following:

- Community Service Day (CSD) is this Saturday, September 21st. Volunteers are helping to clean the library, are writing letters to military personnel, and are conducting a toy drive.
- The Friends of the Folsom Library's Fall Book Sale was a success, bringing in \$7,306.15, which is an additional \$1,000 more than last year. Thank you to library staff Lisa Newlin and Susan Renaud for working the extended hours. The Friends of the Library are now preparing for their next sale at the Renaissance Faire on September 28 and 29.
- The Baby Storytime program has resumed at the library.
- Family Movie Matinee will continue as a monthly Saturday program.
- The Library hosted a Community Blood Drive with Vitalant that collected 20 pints of blood, including donations from 5 first-time donors.
- Construction to repair the exterior stucco and water damage in the youth wing will begin on September 23rd by Belfor Property Restoration. The Library will keep its regular hours of service, program offerings, and collection availability during repairs. To ensure safety, the project area will be sealed in a 3-stage decontamination chamber, kept under negative pressure, and will be serviced by HEPA air filtration 2000 CFM air scrubbers and monitored by a digital manometer.
- The City of Folsom is having a series of three Town Hall Meetings to discuss the City's Budget. The first Town Hall Meeting will be at the Library on Thursday, September 26th at 6 p.m., followed by a Zoom Meeting on Tuesday, October 1st. The third Town Hall Meeting will be held at Mangini Ranch on Thursday, October 10th. This is a chance for residents to ask questions about the City's Budget.
- The impact of California budget cuts on FPL is still being assessed. FPL receives very little in direct funding from the state, with most funds arriving through our consortia or in the form of program subsidies. Immediate impacts, however, include the conclusion of the online Homework Help and Career Development services. Additional direct costs include a reduction in our staff training budget (down to \$1,000 compared to last year's \$1,500) and an increase in our annual Internet cost by \$3,573. We are still waiting to see how the budget reduction impacts our costs for other services.
- Fortunately, SB 108 amended the Budget Act of 2024 to include funding for the Library Park Pass Program for one additional year.
- After selecting Folsom Public Library as the Third Congressional District's favorite library, Congressman Kiley toured the Library, shared some kind words on our importance, and presented the Library with a certificate of recognition. The Library completed its application for the IMLS National Medal and will learn its award status in Spring 2025.
- The end of term for this Library Commission is approaching. Under the City's Municipal Code, new City Council Members are sworn into office on the second Monday of December, which this year falls on December 9th. In mid-October, the recruitment process will begin for commission appointments to at-large positions and for those appointed by the Councilmembers who are running for election this year. The new City Council will appoint these

commissioners at their January 14th meeting; the Library will be conducting its onboarding for new Commissioners in January, and the first meeting of the new term will happen in February.

7) Commission Request for Future Agenda Items

8) Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Jonnalagadda stated that he would like to stay on as a Library Commissioner next year and will reapply. He was happy to see Telugu Books come to the library.

Commissioner Pacheco had no comment.

Commissioner Moore had no comment.

Commissioner Allaman commented that she had the pleasure of attending the Friends of the Library Book Sale for the first time. She was grateful to hear of the sale's success, and was impressed by its number of volunteers and how well-organized it was. She was amazed to see other attendees leaving the Book Sale with whole bag of books for just \$5.

Vice Chair Shannon thanked Library Director Gruneisen for putting together the report on the impact that going fine free had on the Library. Reducing the number of blocked youth cards by half is a huge accomplishment; essentially restoring access to the library for an elementary school's worth of children.

Chair Laney commented on some of the accomplishments that the Library Commission achieved during the past two years. With the Library Commission's recommendation, the former Eistein Café was transformed from an inactive space into a thriving bookstore, and the Library ending fines has been a success. We had a lot of wins with the help of a new director.

9) Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 6:51 p.m.



Elizabeth Maximo
Secretary to the Library Commission