



Legislation Text

File #: RES 18-2034, **Version:** 1

Authorizing the Saint Paul Public Library Debt Write-Off

WHEREAS, the Saint Paul Public Library Agency sends patron accounts for collection efforts to recover overdue fines, fees for damaged books, and to obtain recovery of unreturned materials; and

WHEREAS, the older a debt is, the less likely it is that the collection agency will recover money for the Library; and

WHEREAS, Revenue Recapture is another recovery method, but it is time and staff intensive, and the cost of collection exceeds the likely recovery; and

WHEREAS, Minn.Stat. § 541.05, subds. 1(1) and 1(4) set six years as the statute of limitations on collection of debts such as library fines and damaged material fees, so that any account which has not been reduced to judgment within that time is legally uncollectible; and

WHEREAS, obtaining a judgment to allow collection for longer than six years would involve suing the patrons in conciliation court, requiring filing fees, and additional staff time and resources; and

WHEREAS, collection efforts to recover lost or damaged materials can result in return or replacement of the materials; and

WHEREAS, the Library currently locks accounts when patrons owe more than \$10 in fines or fees and will continue to lock accounts which have unreturned or damaged materials; and

WHEREAS, Library staff conducted extensive research on library fines and fees practices;

WHEREAS, based on that research and the recommendation of Library Administration, the Mayor has included the elimination of library late fines in the 2019 budget proposal to increase access to literacy and lifelong learning via the Library for everyone in Saint Paul; and

WHEREAS, the Library Administration has reviewed the existing uncollected fines and fees on its accounts and has requested that the Library Board approve the write-off of all debts older than six years as legally uncollectible; all fees older than two years, and all remaining overdue fines; and

WHEREAS, the Library Board finds that the Library is using the most effective method of attempting to recover the costs of lost or damaged materials and that if the account has been returned by the collection agency that further efforts at recovery would require more staff time and resources than the debts themselves; and

WHEREAS, the Library Board finds that the forgiveness of remaining existing overdue fines will eliminate barriers to the use and enjoyment of the Library, and benefit the City by increasing access to Library resources for all city residents; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the SPPLA is authorized to the write-off of all patron accounts fines and fees older than six years, all fees older than two years, and all remaining overdue fines as of December 31, 2018.