

**Brooks Memorial Library
Finance Committee
MINUTES
9 March, 2020 4:30 PM
Brooks Library Small Meeting Room
Brattleboro, VT 05301**

- 1) Call to Order / 4:30 PM
- 2) Agenda/Changes or additions
- 3) Public Comment

- 4) New Business

- A) Library Card Costs for non-Brattleboro Residents

The current town costs per resident are as follows:

Tax base is: \$656,345

Population: 11,646 (according to the state library)

This makes our current costs just over \$56 per person in Brattleboro. This means that the base cost of an individual card is higher, but a couple or family is lower. Our website says that we should not charge more than the per-person tax base, so we should probably adjust this. The finance committee proposes a calculation to be updated every three years:

Tax-Base / Population rounded down to the nearest \$5

Current: $656,345 / 11,646 = \$56.35 = \55.00

We discussed simply not charging, but the current fees are an important line in the town budget for the library and also we would probably see a large uptick in costs if more people signed up (for things like Kanopy, especially) so the finance committee did not see this as a good option.

Discussion about the “Pay it Forward” Option:

The idea floated at the last trustee meeting to allow for donations for free cards for people needs more guidance. There are several aspects we do not know:

Will we lose revenue because some people will refuse to pay?

This might create a sense of un-fairness, but there is no obvious way to regulate the requests.

Is this raising money outside of the Friends? (Is it different than the donation box for ex-fines?)

After discussion, the finance committee has the following considerations and recommendations. Options for the system included:

- having patrons make the choice themselves avoiding an application. This places no check and might result in running through the money too quickly.
- use a written request not unlike the system we had for fines. However, this makes people jump through a hoop and gets a particular type of person to get a card.
- A balanced option where patrons can pay what they think it's worth. We could prepare a sheet with recommended amounts or leave it completely open.
- A version of the choice option would be to have a three-tiered system where the lowest is subsidized (something like \$20), the middle level is set to the tax base, and we offer the ability to subsidize others with a higher rate.

This last option would create no free category, but might make it easier for a number of people to afford cards. We could

accompany any of these with the sheet that describes how we arrive at the cost and describe some of the value of the card. The trustees would need to decide to subsidize some of the cost if it turned out that we lost a notable amount of revenue through any of these options.

Finally, we discussed changing the cost of a second card, but would recommend against it. In practice, families would only get one card more often, probably, and we would mostly restrict the ability of kids to have their own library cards.

5) Old Business

A) Grant applications

Finalize the AGD grant application for new sound equipment

We added a specific request for a portable system as well - Dave Snyder recommended a compact system with two mics that could be used both on the top floor as well as leave the library in particular circumstances.

Dave could do a comprehensive overhaul, but this is the majority of our items already - the mixer board is perhaps the largest component.

Note in the grant the selectivity and use in multiple programs
- Ask Dan about lavalier microphones.

Adam and Starr will finalize the budget and submit the grant, hopefully in the next month.

6) Adjourn

Next Meeting: TBA

