

Janice Rockwood

From: Kathy Fedor <khfedor@hotmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 11, 2022 3:23 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: Re: Citizen's Statement Library Examines Future of Late Fees -The Killingly Villager 1/7/2022

Please excuse the lateness of my submission by all means hold it until February if necessary.

On Jan 11, 2022 2:55 PM, Kathy Fedor <khfedor@hotmail.com> wrote:

I had every intention to attend tonight's meeting; but with the cold temperatures, COVID, and remote meeting attendance by Town Council Members I decided to defer for a written statement. Thank you

Dear Town Council Chair, Members and Manager;

I am a well known, ardent advocate for the Killingly Public Library. In the past, I have spoken to each of you about the Killingly Public Library's vital role in our community and the responsibility of town stakeholders to support it. I have even spoken to some of you about library fines and the practice of the fines addition to the general fund instead of to the Killingly Library Budget. I have discussed this issue with prior seated Town Council members too.

It is with this background I have some questions and remarks about the above article and the December 14 Town Council discussion reported in it.

1. Why wasn't this discussion item clearly listed on the agenda posted on the website?
2. Why wasn't adequate information brought to the Council for consideration before it was a discussion item?
3. When will the Town Council address this issue again, and will there be further public comment and how can stakeholders be effectively notified?
4. What is the annual amount of the collected fines?
5. Does the costs of labor and accounting justify managing this income stream?
6. Why isn't that income returned to the Killingly Library budget to offset the expenses to replace the item?
7. Why can't this nominal fund decision be changed to be under the purview of the Town Manager and Library Director instead of using valuable council time and resources.
8. How many Council Members have active library cards?

I don't know how often Town Council members patronize the Killingly Public Library or visit to appreciate our little gem or take an opportunity to speak to a cross section of residents. I am there at least 3 times a week. I am a former member of the Friends of the Killingly Library. I can attest to the remarkable improvements made under Library Director Stockwell's leadership. I have witnessed the unfortunate exchanges between library personnel and patrons when fees need to be collected. What I've seen fall into a couple of groups:

- Patrons like myself, late with library materials, raised to consider it a moral lapse or character flaw; quickly, remorsefully paying the fine. The biggest fine I remember paying is \$.60. That was in Westport. In my lifetime 2 libraries had the temerity to suggest I lost 2 books. Not surprisingly I disputed both. 1 was found, the other fine waived after I purchased a replacement. These are the

type of patrons Mr. Whitehead seeks in the community. He wants the library playing a parental role in society.

- The marginal patrons who just don't have the skills to keep track of their own person or property. These are the patrons the library encourages to use "as desired" choices. Materials donated that are not in the library circulation system that can be taken out and returned "as desired".
-
- Lastly the socioeconomically challenged, harried parents with exuberant children in tow, clutching their carefully made book choices. The unemployed. The functionally illiterate. What is the percentage of the town's base population, 5%,10%, in this category? These are the patrons and residents who truly need the library. We want people to read, study, learn -avidly. If you could see the teary eyes of the children disappointed because they couldn't take out "Pete the Cat" or another book of interest, and the mortification on the parent's face because they can't pay whatever paltry, to us, amount the fine it is. Wracking their brain to recognize whatever title is now adding fines on their account and about to cause their child's meltdown. I have wrongly offered to pay those fines, causing further insult. I speculate that that fine could deter use of the library for a long time. That isn't a why a community has a library.

Please feel free to contact me at your convenience,

Kathy Fedor
107 Primrose Crossing
Dayville, CT 06241-2155