

...ranney said. That was just 12 hours after we had removed the water, so you can see how quick how much had absorbed into the walls, and obviously the insulation inside the walls is saturated, as that acts like a sponge." Anything porous and absorbent that made contact with the water will have to

back to it. That situation was different than this current flooding, though, district spokesperson Jen McCulley said. In 1996, the same creek flooded, but the water came from the north side and floated south, running over a bit of grassy play area and into the building.

that building was able to be renovated, it was a huge relief." It worked out well that the Mohawk site was vacant. It previously was being used as one campus for the Williamette Leadership Academy for middle schoolers; however, the academy recently consolidated into one campus, leaving that

pull out same gay and prevent any more from coming in. "It's pretty awe-inspiring," Gorham said. Contact reporter Jordyn Brown at [jbrown@registerguard.com](mailto:jbrown@registerguard.com) or 541-246-4264, and follow her on Twitter @thejordynbrown and Instagram @registerguard.

# Fines

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And it's taxing on staff members to deal with irate patrons, he said.

Miller's presentation quoted unnamed library staff saying that a hostile interaction over fines can "affect a staff person for the rest of the day and make them wary of interacting with that patron in the future" and that it's been "such a relief" not to deal with fines during the pandemic.

The library board has proposed a "happy medium," Miller said, where the library would automatically renew checked-out materials three times then give a 30-day grace period before revoking access. The library wouldn't renew a held item, he said.

People could get access back by returning the item, providing a replacement or paying to replace the item, Miller said. That might mean fees, he said, but those would be to cover actual costs rather than being punitive.

The library will be clear and transparent about the new policy, he said.

Officials generally supported the idea but had some concerns.

Councillor Marilee Woodrow said it's "a good way to go" but confessed that, for her, automatic renewals are a rationale

for being lazy about returning a book.

The new policy "might allow some people to take advantage," Councillor Damien Pitts said, saying he's also worried people might check out books about race, gender or other topics surrounding diversity and equity and not bring them back as a form of protest.

"I hope people are courteous enough to return things if they are physically able to do so," Pitts said.

David said people try to take books from the library even with fines as a possibility.

She also assured other councillors that there will be plenty of notice about the new policy and said the staff tries to have "multiple touchpoints with patrons."

## Eugene library 'showed up through the pandemic for our community'

Eugene library staff also have shifted to adapt during the pandemic, O'Hearn said.

City Manager Sarah Medary gave staff kudos for "how they showed up through the pandemic for our community," saying the library has been "involved in so many things that keep us going."

The library used funding through a five-year levy approved in 2016 to offer more programs and services, more hours and access and more materials and technology as promised, O'Hearn said. The

levy was set at \$2.7 million for 5 years, he said, and the library budgeted and spent \$2.2 million in the most recent fiscal year.

That fiscal year, which ended June 30, 2021, was the final year of the original levy, but voters renewed it for another five years in 2020.

From the first day, he said, the library increased hours at the Bethel and Sheldon branches and restored Sunday morning hours at the downtown library. That's meant an additional 40 hours of hours per week, he said.

Library staff also increased access by:

- Making cards available for free to all 4J and Bethel school district students
- Eliminating fines for youth items
- Installing a special type of sound system for use by people with hearing aids and automatic door openers
- Using bilingual communications
- Adding Wi-Fi tables and charging stations
- Offering counter service

The library also has, with the exception of the pandemic, increased programming by a third, O'Hearn said.

The collection is back to pre-recession levels, too, he said.

Between July 1, 2020, and June 30, 2021, the library added more than 75,000 new materials, O'Hearn said.

That puts the collection size at 128 million items, he said, with around 38.8% available in person and the rest housed online.

Staff now are focused on maintaining and diversifying the collection and expanding digital resources, he said.

As a crucial service to the community that became more important during the pandemic, the library has offered 500 mobile hotspots, O'Hearn said. Half of those are in circulation and "almost all continuously checked out," he said, and the others are loaned to organizations that help people in the unhoused community and other marginalized groups.

That's more than any other library in the state has available, he said. Officials praised the library and the public for supporting services by approving and renewing the levy.

"I think this is a great investment," Councillor Emily Semple said. "It was a really wise decision on the part of the public, and it's paying off in so many ways."

Others praised staff's ability to think outside the box and the host of services offered and otherwise joined in on what Councillor Alan Zelenka called a "choir of kudos."

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