

POUDRE RIVER PUBLIC LIBRARY DISTRICT

AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

Name of Requestor: Holly Carroll
Appearance Date: March 14, 2016
Time Required: 20 Minutes
Date Decision Needed: March 14, 2016

Agenda Item:

- X. UNFINISHED BUSINESS
 - b. Volunteer Background Checks – Staff Recommendation

Objective: Consideration of staff's recommendation concerning payment of volunteer background checks.

Situation: At the February 8, 2016 meeting the Board of Trustees discussed the current management practice of charging library volunteers \$10.00 for the partial cost of medium level background checks. There was some concern expressed that the Library District has adopted a practice that is common to many area non-profits but is in conflict with other libraries and the Poudre School District who do not charge individuals for the checks.

The board requested additional information from the Volunteer Program Manager and a recommendation from the administration. Below are the Volunteer Program Manager's responses to specific questions and the administration's recommendation.

1. How many background checks were completed in 2015, and at what total cost?

2014: 67 background checks

2015: 116 at a cost of \$350

Important points for 2015:

1. In the beginning of the year, we were running a \$10 check, and the volunteer covered the whole cost. We checked youth at this time also.
2. In June, we started running a \$17 check on adults only, with the volunteer being asked to pay \$10.
3. About 30% of these volunteers paid the whole \$17.

2016: 21 background checks so far

2. Of those, how many prospective volunteers were denied due to the background checks? On what grounds?

None were denied due to something returning on their background check. They are told both on the website before they apply and during their interview with me, that we will run a background check. I tell them we split the cost with them, but it will cost them \$10. At that time 100% of them have told me if something will show up. I ask what it is,

and I tell them immediately if they are likely to be denied. About five volunteers have withdrawn at the time of interview, before the background check.

Typical reasons for withdrawal/denial would be charges related to violence, theft or sexual offenses. Warning volunteers that they will pay \$10 encourages them to be honest with me, and saves both their money and ours.

3. What is the monetary value of PRPLD volunteers in 2015? Please note the method selected to best represent this data point.

Our volunteers served 9,310 hours (this does not include 5,680 from the Friends) in 2015. This number is based on the volunteers' self-reporting. According to Independent Sector (which publishes research for the non-profit sector), the value is \$23.07 per hour, for a total of \$214,782.00.

4. Please rank volunteer positions in order of the importance of background checks to the duties assigned.

Because we are protecting both our staff as well as patrons (whether adults or minors), in addition to our assets, we consider all volunteer duties to be equally in need of background checks. Our intention is that all volunteers are supervised all the time, but there may be times when they are left alone to do their work. Volunteers may also choose to take on many roles. For this reason, we run a level 2 background check on all volunteers.

The administration has considered the February 8th board meeting discussion, the information that was presented by the Volunteer Program Manager at both the November 2015 and February board meetings and her response to the above questions.

I would like to note the actual cost of conducting background checks has never been the primary consideration for asking perspective volunteers to pay partial fees. Rather than financial, the reasons for the Library District's current practice are about commitment and capacity. A partial payment requirement helps individuals determine if they are serious about committing volunteer hours to the Library District. On-boarding of each perspective volunteer (application review, interview, background check, input into the management system, scheduling, training and general communication) requires about two hours of our volunteer program manager's time. It is critical to the efficiency of the operation that after completing the on-boarding process, a volunteer actually contributes time to the Library District.

Capacity is also a concern. The Volunteer Program Manager works thirty hours a week and the current volunteer count is manageable with her other responsibilities such as follow-up, promotion of the program and recognition. We do not want to encourage a high number of volunteers that are contributing few or no hours, have limited commitment and create administrative overhead.

In light of the concerns of both staff and board the administration makes the following recommendation:

1. A volunteer continues to pay \$10.00 at time of application.
2. After 6 months, if the volunteer has 10 or more hours of service, a refund of \$10.00 will be made upon request.
3. Every 2 years, if the volunteer has contributed 15 hours per year or more, the Library District will pay the full cost of the renewal.

Requested Action: *Approval of a motion to adopt the recommendation of the administration to continue the current background check procedure with the modifications as listed above.*

Potentially Affected Interest: public, library administration

Level of Public Interest and Participation: medium