

Library director proposes new service agreement

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The Washington and Scenic Regional libraries' cooperative service agreement may soon be updated.

The two libraries have had a service agreement in place since 2001, which allows Scenic Regional patrons to check out items from the Washington library and vice versa without patrons paying fees. In the original agreement, Scenic Regional would reimburse the Washington library 25 cents for every item checked out by Scenic Regional patrons. The fee later increased to 35 cents, and in 2014 was set at the current rate of 70 cents per item.

At last Monday's Washington Library Board of Trustees meeting, Scenic Regional Library Director Steve Campbell recommended increasing the fee to \$1. If the proposal is accepted, Scenic Regional would implement the change for all of 2024.

"This is kind of our proposal to, at least as a goodwill gesture, try to address the problem of resources moving more online in terms of usage," Campbell said.

Over the last four years, there has been a decline in Scenic Regional patrons borrowing items from the Washington library.

In 2023, Scenic Regional patrons checked out 74,330 items from the Washington library, while Washington library patrons checked out 4,659 items from Scenic Regional. Washington patrons also checked out 38 items through Scenic Regional's Books-by-Mail program.

To calculate the total for the reciprocal agree-

ment, the 4,659 items checked out at Scenic Regional by Washington patrons are subtracted from the 74,330 checked out by Scenic Regional patrons which equates to 69,633 items. At 70 cents per item, Scenic Regional paid Washington Public Library \$48,743.10 for 2023.

In pre-pandemic years, Scenic Regional paid the library as much as \$76,600 under the service agreement. In 2020, the amount plummeted to \$49,778, and has continued to hover in the \$50,000 range since. Campbell said that is most likely due to the number of people transitioning into using digital services through the libraries.

"We want to kind of shore this problem up which has been continuing for the last four years and maybe in the future we can figure out another method, but we can't separate digital usage," Campbell said.

Scenic Regional pays \$382,000 annually for digital services which include ebooks, and databases such as Hoopla, Libby, Creativebug, Freegal, Kanopy, Ancestry.com, and many others. Scenic Regional shares these services with Washington library patrons at no added cost. Campbell said it isn't possible to determine which district the users of the digital programs come from.

Campbell said the two library districts collaborate on many occasions, and that he has "a great relationship" with Washington Public Library Director Nelson Appell.

"We partner on the Missouri Book Festival, This Community Reads, lots of projects," Campbell said. "He is a very easy per-

son to cooperate with and work with on projects."

Although many Washington residents patronize the city's library, not all residents are in the library's taxing district.

In 1965, Missouri Library Association member Stewart Smith helped pass the "Law of 1965," which froze municipal libraries' boundaries. The law was enacted to prevent city libraries from extending their boundaries into county libraries' territories. At that time, Washington's population and geographic boundaries were considerably smaller than they are today.

As housing developments and commercial businesses began to develop along Highway 100, the library district wasn't able to expand and remains the same as it was in 1965 due to the law. This is why a large number of Washington residents are in the Scenic Regional Library district.

Library Board President Carolyn Witt said the cooperative service agreement between the two districts was monumental when it was first implemented, and it still makes a huge difference to this day. The agreement was developed to ensure libraries remained inclusive and would not have to charge those within the Scenic Regional district to use the Washington library, she said.

"We are very fortunate that we have this agreement that benefits us all and that they are willing to share their bounty, like the digital services," Witt said.

Witt told Campbell the board would review the new cooperative service agreement and discuss it at the next meeting.



Mayor's Waldo

Washington Mayor Doug "Waldo" Hagedorn is standing out, during Family Reading Night at Lo Cole, which tells the story of Doris standing out, during Family Reading Night at Middle School.

AMELUNG

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tried to fire him several days before the hearing.

Martin told the court he believes Amelung is not fully mentally competent, "something that I don't think he really wants me to argue here," Martin said. He said he suspected that decades of drug use and a car crash Amelung suffered may have harmed his brain. He mentioned several times during the proceedings that Amelung did not understand what was going on or didn't remember events.

"Concerns for his mental health ... escaped me on the lead-up to the trial, and I don't want them to escape the court when deciding the propriety of punishing him for this accidental overdose," Martin said.

Franklin County Prosecuting Attorney Matthew Becker called this move from Amelung a "delay tactic." Becker, as well as members of Foster's family who spoke at the sentencing,

penalty for the and said Amelung ed every opportunity to express sorrow for what happened to the

"We didn't see anything resembling a man reaction of being up there," Becker

Foster's father about Amelung's "pant attitude" that "every time he spoke was a slap in the face" during the trial. Foster's mother told the court "to see the same computer screen showed Zack: no

On Aug. 21, Amelung was charged with Thomas Foster — who faces charges — and his wife and two children in Washington. Noonan's 12-year-old stepson invited Foster over to the home for a sleepover. The police found the fentanyl and ingested it, killing Foster.

At trial, Becker argued whether the pills constituted a "stash" of