
NEWS RELEASE



Nov. 16, 2020

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Pierce County Library Board budget to reduce burden on taxpayers *Public Hearing on Wednesday, Nov. 18*

PIERCE COUNTY, Washington – The Pierce County Library System Board of Trustees will hold its first of two public hearings on its 2021 budget, which would reduce further tax burdens on taxpayers who are already burdened and stressed with the economic recession. The Board meeting and public hearing is scheduled for **Wednesday, Nov. 18, 3:30 p.m.**

Join the meeting by phone or online:

- Phone: 253-215-8782, webinar identification: 938 4199 8876, passcode: 090783
- Zoom with a Zoom account from a web browser:
<https://zoom.us/j/93841998876?pwd=WDZZTERFa0NSb01tQIROdHlzbERzQT09>
- Zoom with a Zoom account with an app:
<https://zoom.us/j/93841998876?pwd=WDZZTERFa0NSb01tQIROdHlzbERzQT09>

The proposed \$39.4 million operating budget balances the tax impact on the public while maintaining the long-term sustainability of the Library and reinventing services during the COVID-19 pandemic. The proposed budget will reduce expenditures by nearly \$350,000 less than the 2020 budget. A goal of the proposed budget is for the Library to continue its commitment to be good stewards of the taxpayers' investment. Further, the budget maintains the Library's goal to sustain funding from the 2018 reauthorized levy approved by voters, which the Library System projects will provide stable funding up to 2029.

Taxes on houses and other property is the primary source of funding for the Library System. To support the proposed budget, the Board plans to levy property taxes at a lower amount than legally authorized from homeowners and other property owners. By law, the Library could increase taxes by 1% more than it levied the previous year, while not exceeding its legal levy amount of 50 cents per \$1,000 of assessed property value. In 2021 that would have been an increase of \$406,000. By not increasing taxes by 1% in 2021, the Library has an option to levy at a higher rate than 1% in future years.

Also, the proposed 2021 budget shows a loss of about \$400,000 in revenue from fines on overdue books and other materials, while the Library is not charging fines as another action to help alleviate further burdens during the economic crisis from the pandemic.

In 2021, the Library plans to continue curbside service with convenient and safe access to books, movies and other materials. Also, it plans to buy more online e-books and audiobooks and reduce the time people wait for popular reads. The Library plans to pilot new ways to get books and other materials to where people are versus residents having to go to library buildings.

At the December board meeting, the Library Board will hold its second and closing public hearing on the 2021 budget and it will make a final determination on the budget.

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Full board packet: <https://www.piercecountylibrary.org/files/library/board-packet-11182020.pdf>

About Pierce County Library System

The nationally acclaimed [Pierce County Library System](#) serves 620,000 people throughout Pierce County with 20 libraries and online services. The system is the fourth largest in the state and is funded primarily through property taxes. People may choose from 822,000 books, movies and other materials, as well as nearly half a million online/downloadable materials. Pierce County Library is committed to directing services in three primary areas: learning, enjoyment and community connection. Its services and programs spark success for Pierce County residents. More than 2 million people visit Pierce County Libraries each year. The Library provides services and programs directly to people in adult care facilities, people who are homebound, and to children in childcare centers and schools. [Pierce County Libraries are located](#) at Anderson Island, Bonney Lake, Buckley, DuPont, Eatonville, Fife, Gig Harbor, Graham, Key Center, Lakewood, Milton/Edgewood, Orting, Parkland/Spanaway, Pierce County Library Administrative Center, South Hill, Steilacoom, Summit, Sumner, Tillicum and University Place. Pierce County Library is an independent municipal corporation and operates as a junior taxing district.

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