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Report to / Rapport au:

**Ottawa Public Library Board
Conseil d'administration de la Bibliothèque publique d'Ottawa**

February 23, 2023 / 23 février 2023

Submitted by / Soumis par:

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SUBJECT: 2023 Board Continuing Education Plan and Conference Attendance

**OBJET: Plan de formation du Conseil d'administration de 2023 et
participation aux conférences**

REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Ottawa Public Library Board:

- 1. Approve the 2023 Board Continuing Education Plan (Document 1); and,**
- 2. Approve the attendance of trustees at conferences in 2023 as proposed.**

RECOMMANDATIONS DU RAPPORT

Que le Conseil d'administration de la Bibliothèque publique d'Ottawa :

- 1. Approuve le plan de formation continue de 2023 (Document 1);**
- 2. Approuve la participation des administrateurs et administratrices pour les
conférences de 2023, tel que proposé.**

BACKGROUND

In accordance with the Ottawa Public Library (“OPL” or “the Library”) Board Policy 003-OPLB Trustee Orientation and Continuing Education, trustees are encouraged to participate in external educational opportunities such as attending relevant conferences, seminars, and workshops during their term(s). They are also encouraged to participate in industry associations by serving on various committees or working groups, which may serve both an educational purpose and provide trustees with advocacy opportunities. Lastly, trustees are encouraged to participate in internal educational opportunities to learn more about the Library’s programs and services (including field opportunities at OPL locations and educational presentations).

Staff develop an annual Continuing Education Plan (“the Plan”) for trustees, which highlights available continuing education opportunities for the upcoming year and confirms the attendance of trustees at key industry conferences (as known at the time of the report) for that year.

Continuing education for trustees is guided by the principles of fairness (for example, each trustee should have the opportunity to attend a minimum of one library conference during their four-year term) and fiscal responsibility (the Library budget). A trustee who takes an active role in a conference or workshop (for example, who acts as the Board’s representative, gives a presentation, or serves as a panelist) will be given priority for that event.

Participation in continuing education, and the associated expenses, are subject to Board pre-approval, in keeping with two OPL Board policies (002-OPLB Delegation of Authority (“the DOA”) and 007-OPLB Trustee Expense Reimbursement) and the City of Ottawa Travel Guidelines.

Trustees attending a conference of a duration longer than 24 hours are required to provide a written report. The report will be submitted to the Board within two (2) Board meetings immediately following the conference. For conferences of less than 24 hours, trustees are required to provide a verbal report at the meeting immediately following the conference.

The purpose of this report is to outline the 2022 Board Continuing Education Plan, and recommend that the Board approve the attached Plan (Document 1), and further approve the attendance of trustees at 2023 conferences as proposed.

DISCUSSION

The 2023 plan includes three components: Board educational opportunities (presentations at Board meetings called “educationals,” workshops, and field opportunities), webinars, and meetings and conferences, as in previous years. As we continue to navigate through the ongoing pandemic, many external learning organizations are resuming in-person events; some have also retained virtual offerings or begun to offer hybrid options. Recognizing that many library conferences are held in the United States, at the time of the writing of this report, the US required proof of vaccination and a negative COVID test for entry into the country.¹ As a result, the Plan includes both in-person and virtual opportunities. Any trustee attending a conference out of country will be required to comply with any and all regulations from the Government of Canada or the host country regarding travel. Staff will work closely with trustees approved for an in-person event should any travel recommendations change between the time of this report and the scheduled event.

Educationals

Educationals provide trustees with insights into key OPL services activities. In the last few terms of Board, three or four educationals were provided annually, as presentations at the beginning of a regular Board meeting.

During 2022, staff provided two educationals (Friends of OPL, and Communications). Other planned educationals were not conducted due to capacity given key organizational changes during the year.

Staff recommend the following topics for 2023 educationals: Friends of OPL, intellectual freedom, and community development. Given the constitution of the current Board, with six returning members possessing extensive expertise, staff recommend additional educationals be considered outside of Board meetings for select small groups of trustees as prioritized in conversation between staff and trustees. Further details can be found in Document 1 OPL Board - Continuing Education Plan (2023).

¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/international-travel-during-covid19.html#:~:text=Before%20boarding%20a%20flight%20to,do%20not%20need%20to%20test.>

Field Opportunities

On a quarterly basis, trustees are offered various field opportunities to “walk alongside” an OPL employee. These opportunities allow trustees to engage in informal conversations with staff and clients and learn more about the community. Two out of four in-person field opportunities were completed in 2022: trustees visited the Digitization Lab at Beaverbrook branch, and the Imagine Space at Nepean CentrepoinTE branch.

A list of suggested field opportunities for 2023 can be found in Document 1 OPL Board - Continuing Education Plan (2023).

Webinars

Webinars are often offered by industry associations or cooperatives on a variety of topics. Since 2023 marks the first year of this term of the Board, this Plan emphasizes mandatory webinars offered by OPL / the City of Ottawa such as accessibility training for volunteers required under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), Occupational Safety and Health Act (OHSA) training, and Respectful Workplace, Violence and Harassment training. It also emphasizes webinars related to governance or key strategic topics offered by the Ontario Library Service (OLS), the Ontario Library Association (OLA), and the Urban Libraries Congress (ULC). Many of these webinars are geared towards helping public library trustees understand their roles and responsibilities. Lastly, the Plan also includes training related to reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, including the Anishinābe Algonquin Host Nation, and urban First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people.

Trustees are encouraged to sign up for webinars at their leisure; staff can coordinate participation as needed depending on the registration requirements. In 2022, staff highlighted courses relating to transition planning for a new Board.

A list of suggested webinars for trustees to consider in 2023 (including hyperlinks) can be found in Document 1 OPL Board - Continuing Education Plan (2023).

Meetings and Conferences

Each year, library industry associations at the provincial, federal, and international level host meetings and conferences. Participating in these events provide trustees with

access to best practices among public libraries. In 2022, the Chair attended the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) World Library and Information Congress in person, and the Vice Chair attended the OLA SuperConference virtually and a Federation of Ontario Public Libraries (FOPL) meeting in person.

Vice Chair Fisher continues to serve on the FOPL Indigenous Libraries partnership Working Group: her commitment on this group is until the end of 2023. Her attendance at any related meetings or conferences will continue to be supported by OPL as needed. Staff recommended trustee participation in up to three conferences this year: the American Library Association (ALA) Annual Conference (held in June with in-person and virtual options), the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) World Library and Information Congress (in person), and the Urban Library Council (ULC) Forum (normally held in person).

A call for expressions of interest regarding these conferences was circulated to trustees in January. Taking into consideration the applicable governance framework for continuing education, as well as trustee requests, staff recommend:

- ALA conference (in-person) - 2 trustees: Trustees King and Smith;
- IFLA Conference (in-person) - 1 trustee: Chair Luloff; and,
- ULC Forum (details TBD) – 2 trustees: Crawford and Slack

Details (as known at the time of writing of this report) can be found in Document 1 OPL Board - Continuing Education Plan (2023). Conferences or meetings announced after this report has been approved will be considered by staff and trustees on a first-come, first-serve basis, respecting the principles of fairness and fiscal responsibility.

Information regarding the opportunity to attend the 2024 OLA SuperConference (January 2024) will be shared with trustees in Q4 2023.

CONSULTATION

As part of the consultation process, trustees were provided with details of the key educational opportunities (as available) and encouraged to express interest. The Senior Management Team was also consulted regarding educational and field opportunities.

ACCESSIBILITY IMPACTS

Ottawa Public Library complies with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*, (2005) in its operations. There are no accessibility impacts associated with this report.

BOARD PRIORITIES

The report aligns with OPL's value of Literacy, by cultivating the joys of learning and discovering. It also aligns with the Strategic Directions and Priorities 2020-2023, specifically the direction to build organizational capacity. Lastly, it aligns with OPL Board policy 003: Trustee Orientation and Continuing Education, as well as 002-OPLB Delegation of Authority ("the DOA") and 007-OPLB Trustee Expense Reimbursement.

BUSINESS ANALYSIS IMPLICATIONS

There are no business analysis considerations associated with this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The 2023 Draft Budget includes \$38,000 for costs associated with Board initiatives, including \$10,000 for trustee attendance at conferences and professional services. It is anticipated that conference attendance will exceed this amount in 2023; however, staff expect other areas of the Board budget to be underspent.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications associated with this report.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no risk management implications associated with this report.

TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS

There are no technology implications associated with this report.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Document 1 OPL Board 2023 Continuing Education Plan

DISPOSITION

Upon approval of this report:

- Staff will coordinate educationals, field opportunities, webinar and conference attendance for trustees;
- Trustees participating in conferences will submit reports to the Board upon their return; and,
- Staff will communicate with trustees regarding additional opportunities for professional development activities as they become available, including for the 2024 OLA SuperConference.