

MEMO / NOTE DE SERVICE



To / Destinataire OPLB Trustees

From / Expéditeur Sonia Bebbington, Chief Librarian and CEO

Subject / Objet Fundraising Update

Date: December 16, 2022

The purpose of this memo is to provide trustees with an update on the environmental scan undertaken related to Ottawa Public Library (OPL) fundraising, and to provide an update on donations received since the last report (OPLB 2022-0913-10.5).

The findings of the environmental scan are outlined below; in the latter half of 2022, the OPL fundraising function secured an additional donation of \$250,000 to the *Unlock Potential* campaign. 2022 fundraising continues through the OPL annual strategy; a complete fundraising report for the year will be provided in early 2023.

Context of the environmental scan

With direction from a market readiness report by KCI in 2018, OPL initiated a multi-year investment in fundraising in 2019. Developing and implementing a fundraising plan was included in the 2020-2023 Strategic Directions and Priorities.

At the September 2022 Board meeting, the Board received staff report OPLB 2022-0913-10.5, in which staff identified post-pandemic challenges to meeting the identified fundraising target. During deliberation of the report, staff committed to conduct an external environmental scan of the library fundraising market, and an internal assessment of OPL's plan to achieve the fundraising target.

OPL engaged a consultant with a background in marketing, libraries, and foundation management. The consultant conducted an evaluation across two areas:

1. Environment
 - Assessment of the fundraising market as it relates to library fundraising
 - Assessment of Ottawa's specific context
2. Internal Assessment
 - Review OPL's fundraising strategy and approach, as developed in 2019
 - Review of progress to-date

Evaluation

Key findings from the environmental scan report include those related to both external and internal aspects of the fundraising program:

External findings:

- The pandemic had a significant negative impact on major gift fundraising for causes not directly involved in the COVID response, such as hospitals; and,
- With the pandemic receding, many local institutions (with established fundraising programs) have launched capital campaigns, all of which are competing with OPL's prospecting outreach.

Internal findings:

- While OPL entered thoughtfully into fundraising work, the KCI report underplayed the significant investment of resources that would be required by OPL;
- Over time it became clear that the fundraising function at OPL, as developed in 2019, was not optimally structured nor scoped for the time, resources, and skills required to ensure fundraising success; and,
- A gap existed within OPL in terms of strategic oversight of the fundraising program, including overseeing the development of a fundraising program (the start-up work to launch the campaign and position it within the organization); further, the OPL's senior leadership team's time and attention were diverted to urgent pandemic-related priorities.

Consultant's conclusion

To continue the current campaign, the consultant advises adding a strategic fundraising position to the OPL staff complement; confirming the feasibility of the campaign target a would be a priority for the strategic position.

Next steps

- Upon the establishment of the 2023-2026 term of Board, reconstitute the Fundraising Ad-hoc Committee.
- Fundraising Ad-hoc Committee to review the key findings from the environmental scan, and advise staff regarding the importance, targets, and resourcing for fundraising. Any recommendations arising from these discussions will be brought forward to the Board via a report in 2023.

SONIA BEBBINGTON

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