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NO.	ITEM	PAGE
1.	2023 DRAFT OPERATING AND CAPITAL BUDGET ESTIMATES AND FOUR –YEAR CAPITAL FORECAST OPLB-2023-0131- 11.2	THREE DELEGATIONS: THE FIRST REQUESTED \$100K FROM RESERVES FOR ADDITIONAL PROGRAMMING AND SERVICES IN RIVER WARD. THE SECOND SPOKE ABOUT THE MATERIALS BUDGET, FEES AND FINES, AND HOURS OF OPERATION, AND THE THIRD ADVOCATED FOR ADEQUATE LIBRARY SERVICES IN THE HUNT CLUB RIVERSIDE PARK AREA (RIVER WARD) APPROX. 90 MIN.-WORTH OF CONSIDERATION OF THIS ITEM (DELEGATIONS, AND Q&A TO STAFF) CARRIED AS PRESENTED

ATTACHED OPL BOARD DRAFT MINUTES EXTRACT

MEETING OF 23 FEBRARY 2023

10.1 2023 DRAFT OPERATING CAPITAL BUDGET ESTIMATES
AND FOUR-YEAR CAPITAL FORECAST

Sonia Bebbington, Chief Librarian and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Anna Basile, Division Manager, Corporate Services presented the Board with a high-level summary of the draft budget including information regarding operating pressures and the recommended 2023 capital initiatives. (*Held on file with the Chief Librarian and CEO*). Ms. Bebbington noted that staff are recommending a change to the proposed fee schedule to reflect replacement costs for various passes. The draft budget indicated that the replacement fee would be set at \$50; however, this is recommended to change to reflect the actual item cost, consistent with the Financial Framework. Ms. Bebbington updated trustees to indicate that staff received no feedback via the OPL's dedicated budget-related email address, nor via Councillor-led budget consultations. Correspondence submitted to the Board was circulated with the Agenda under Communications as follows:

- Library Services in River Ward (Email from Linda Sabine, dated Tuesday, January 24, 2023);
- Kiosk Services at the Hunt Club Riverside Park Community Centre (Emails from Christine Johnson, dated Monday and Tuesday, January 23-24, 2023); and,
- Public Library Branch for Hunt Club Riverside Area (Email from Sabine Khazal, dated Friday, February 10, 2023)

Matthew Pritz, Program Manager, Finance and Business Services and Diana Adjarska-Litzanova, City of Ottawa, Financial Services were in attendance to respond to questions.

The Board heard from the following delegations. Those marked with an asterisk (*) below denote that a written submission or presentation is held on file with the Chief Librarian and CEO.

Riley Brockington, Councillor, Ward 16 (River) represents Carlington, Central Park, Carleton Heights, Mooney's Bay, Riverside Park, and Hunt Club/Uplands. Councillor Brockington outlined to trustees that his ward is in the heart of urban Ottawa and is home to more than 50K residents. River Ward is socially and economically diverse and has the second highest number of Ottawa Community Housing (OCH) units and residents of OCH communities. He noted that the Carlington area has been identified by the City of Ottawa as one of the top three most at-risk neighborhoods in the city, and has an active Community Design Framework committee, which OPL and the Councillor are involved in. The Councillor highlighted that River Ward is the only urban ward, and only one of two wards across the entire city, without an OPL branch. He requested that OPL significantly increase its in-person programming and services in River Ward. Specifically, he requested that \$100,000 from the OPL Reserves (less than 1% of the projected total) be allocated to offer additional programming and services in River Ward, primarily at the Alexander Community Centre and the Hunt Club Riverside Park Community Centre. Working with community partners and his office, the Councillor suggested OPL identify options for programming and implement initiatives by September 2023.

The Chair thanked the Councillor for his remarks and clarified that there are four wards that do not have a branch in the City of Ottawa.

In response to a question from Trustee Smith regarding how the Councillor sees the \$100K being allocated, Councillor Brockington suggested that OPL come into the community to determine what the needs and issues are and develop a plan accordingly.

Trustee Crawford asked what branches River Ward residents frequent at present. Councillor Brockington responded that ward residents commute to many

branches. The four main branches that are primarily visited by River Ward residents are Alta Vista, Carlingwood, Emerald Plaza, and Greenboro; he noted that none of these have a direct bus route to his residents.

Trustee Kitts asked the Councillor whether he had spoken directly to OC Transpo regarding the bus routes in his ward? Councillor Brockington said he has not spoken directly to OC Transpo.

Trustee Kitts followed up to inquire regarding the approximate distance to a branch for River Ward residents? Councillor Brockington provided some estimations, adding that a branch is in walking distance for some.

In response to a question from Trustee Slack regarding whether River Ward is in a unique situation compared to other areas in the city, Councillor Brockington said that this question could be best addressed by staff; however, he alluded to the gap analysis that is forthcoming as part of the OPL Facilities Framework.

Trustee King asked if the delegate is seeking a one-time funding allocation, also noting the gap analysis that is forthcoming later in 2023. Specifically, Trustee King asked if Councillor Brockington's request was sufficient or whether he would return to the Board with additional requests given that it will take time after the gap analysis to decide regarding future facilities. Councillor Brockington said that his current request is for the 2023 year and mentioned he may return at the next budget cycle. He also mentioned several opportunities for further OPL involvement in his ward, including the Alexander Community Centre expansion and empty retail locations in the Hunt Club area.

Vice-Chair Fisher asked is if the Councillor anticipates returning to the Board to request for subsequent annual funding? Councillor Brockington reiterated that the short-term needs of River Ward can be addressed through the 2023 budget, adding that the gap analysis report will be very helpful and will inform discussion

going forward. He also added that as long as these gaps continue to exist, he will continue to speak up on behalf of his residents.

Chair Luloff thanked the Councillor for his presentation.

Alayne McGregor* a long-time client of the library and a former trustee prior to and shortly after amalgamation, commented that OPL is one of the most beloved services in the city. She highlighted her concerns and questions regarding the draft 2023 budget, specifically: the \$59K decrease in the Materials budget for the purchase of collections, and the importance of resuming pre-pandemic hours of operation.

Chair Luloff asked staff to respond to the concerns raised by the delegate.

Ms Bebbington thanked Ms. McGregor and the previous delegate for their obvious care and concern for library services. She mentioned that financially, the OPL is ready to return to pre-pandemic operating hours, however, there are still staffing shortages as there are in many sectors across Canada. She reiterated that once staffing shortages are improved, hours of operation will return to pre-pandemic levels, and future expansion will be considered prior to subsequent budgets.

With respect to the \$59K decrease in the Materials budget, specifically the Materials and Services expenditures line on page 5 of Document 2, Ms. Basile explained that this category encompasses a variety of different items, including purchases for the collection. She noted that the \$59K amount noted is a reversal of one-time funding that was available in the past for other expenditures. Ms. Basile confirmed that this accounting calculation does not impact the collections budget.

John D. Reid, resident of River Ward, asked the Board to approve the short-term measure proposed earlier by Councillor Brockington to fill a gap that will provide equitable services in the ward. He provided background regarding legacy

gaps he felt exist in his area. Mr. Reid mentioned a motion that was carried by the Board of the former OPL in 1994 directing staff to enter into a discussion and agreement with the City of Ottawa for a location for a library branch on the Hunt Club Community Centre property, noting that this initiative did not proceed. Noting that the kiosk technology is obsolete and Bookmobile service is a fraction of the service a branch provides, he felt that it was not fair to allocate funds in the budget to support superior service at existing branches, and to develop new suburban branches which in his opinion would contribute to future greenhouse gas emissions, while the legacy gaps remain and the Library continues to run a surplus. Mr. Reid felt that a modest local branch in River Ward is possible, as there is space available for lease in the area. He suggested that resources could also be made available by reducing some existing branch services during the most underused periods of the week. Mr. Reid indicated that the original allocation for community development funding (now \$50K) was at the request of former Trustee Brockington, but the funds were expended city-wide, and no funding was used for Hunt Club in 2022. In closing, Mr. Reid indicated that he believed the \$100K requested by Councillor Brockington was the fair share for the underserved River Ward.

Seeing no questions for the third delegation, the Chair then opened the floor to questions from trustees regarding the draft budget.

Trustee Crawford commented that she looked forward to the upcoming gap analysis to assist communities such as those in River Ward. She asked how the Library can continue to provide services considering the grant from the provincial government, for example, had not been increased in many years. As a follow-up, she inquired regarding what advocacy regarding this grant had been done with the provincial government. Ms. Bebbington stated that the Public Library Operating Grant (PLOG) amount has been static for quite some time. She mentioned that the Federation of Ontario Public Libraries (FOPL) is engaged in advocacy on this matter on behalf of its members, including OPL. She further indicated that OPL has made budget delegations to the province in the past, and

requested to delegate this year, however OPL was not selected. Ms. Basile added that OPL has been fortunate to receive capital funds from the provincial government, (that is, for the future Barrhaven branch).

Trustee Bradley asked staff to clarify the change to the proposed fee schedule and whether there is an impact to revenue as a result. Ms. Basile clarified that the draft budget indicated that the replacement fee would be set at \$50; however, the recommended change will reflect the actual item costs of the various passes and is consistent with the Financial Framework.

In response to a further question from Trustee Bradley regarding a complete list of passes and replacement costs, Ms. Basile indicated that a complete list will be made available to the public on the OPL website and provided examples.

In terms of the Financial Framework, Trustee Bradley asked whether there would be a revenue increase as a result, and how many clients pay this replacement cost. Ms Basile said staff will follow up on this inquiry and return to trustees with the information.

Trustee Bradley asked staff to clarify further with respect to the comment from a delegate that OPL has not returned to pre-pandemic hours and advise the Board regarding recruitment efforts. Ms. Basile indicated that OPL recruitment is improving compared to earlier trends at the height of the pandemic, and that the organization has gone from approximately 85 vacancies to approximately 60 currently (noting an average vacancy amount would be approximately 40 at any given time given the nature of the workforce). She indicated that the biggest challenge has been vacancies in supervisory and leadership positions, which take greater time to onboard staff into, and have a greater impact on the organization when vacant, compared to an entry-level position. Ms. Basile said OPL is perceived to be a desirable employer with well-paid employees. She noted that additional challenges include recruiting bilingual staff, but that the organization has made some significant strides in hiring in recent months. In

closing, she indicated that staff expect vacancy numbers to continue to decrease in the coming months.

Vice-Chair Fisher inquired regarding the technology capital investment at the Metcalfe village branch, specifically regarding the purpose of the pilot to increase community access to the branch after hours. She wondered whether other innovations could be considered for other branches? Ms. Basile provided some context for the new trustees regarding the Metcalfe village facility, specifically noting that the Metcalfe village branch is structurally unsound and has been vacated by OPL, the branch is temporarily located in the Osgoode Town Hall for the next five years, of which staff are most appreciative to the community for sharing this space with us. She indicated that the after-hours access was a way to be good community partners since the branch space is open 23 hours a week. Ms. Basile said OPL wanted to provide an opportunity for the community to access the space for their purposes while ensuring that the facility remains safe and secure. Ms Basile added that funds for this initiative that are not used will be allocated into the Capital Works Project, close-out process that is brought to the Board every year.

Trustee King acknowledged the important delegations from the community and Councillor Brockington regarding the Community Development Base Funding. Noting that the draft budget had already been developed and that it would be late to talk about the Councillor's request, he inquired whether staff would be willing to take as direction the requirement to engage in a conversation with the community about the potential for community development investment in River Ward. Ms. Bebbington reminded the Board that the initial \$40K community development allocation in 2022 was assigned system-wide not in a ward-specific manner, and the same was true for the base operating budget amount of \$50K, as included in the draft 2023 budget. The 2023 draft budget further provides for full-time staff positions dedicated to community development, increasing that staff complement. Ms. Bebbington underscored that staff are by far the most valuable resource that OPL can dedicate to the function of community

development. She said part of the expectation of the expanded community development function is precisely to have the kinds of conversations that Trustee King and Councillor Brockington referred to.

Ms. Bebbington highlighted for the Board that many such conversations are already occurring in River Ward, and that the outcomes have been OPL storytimes, as referenced by an earlier delegation this evening, and visits to playgroups. OPL has also partnered with Ottawa Community Housing on workshops for teens in transitional housing and engaged in digital inclusion initiatives. While some work was interrupted due to the pandemic and staffing challenges, community development activities will pick up again. She pointed out that 37% of outreach and community development activities undertaken by staff from Alta Vista, Emerald Plaza, and Greenboro branches were provided to River Ward residents and groups. She appreciated the passion of residents and their desire for increased service and reiterated that more work was occurring. Ms. Bebbington closed by stating that the proposed budget provides what she believes to be the most valuable resource: the dedicated staff positions to and guide support this work.

Trustee King thanked the Chief Librarian and CEO for those investments as he had made inquiries the last term regarding equitable services for vulnerable communities and he does want to see this work increase. He urged staff to ensure continued communication with the Councillor and his community, and to increase investments in community development for vulnerable residents.

In response to a question from Chair Luloff regarding the process to allocate one-time funding from reserves, Ms. Bebbington reiterated that she believed dedicated employees were the most valuable investment, and noting the Board's commitment, to ensure any investment is sustainable. In terms of the mechanics, Ms. Basile said staff have never had a request during the budget process to allocate funds from the Reserves. Staff would need to assess the request from a financial and governance perspective as typically; the use of reserves are

discussed as part of the review of the fourth quarter financials annually. She noted that the current size of the reserve fund is largely due to the pandemic-related staffing shortages.

Ms. Basile said that at this juncture, pulling from the reserves would require staff to adjust the report and would require some discussion with Finance and the City Clerk's Office to determine the appropriate governance process.

Trustee Slack asked if, perhaps the request was indeed too late for this budget cycle. Ms. Bebbington noted that since the additional staff positions were not yet approved, there are not yet incumbents in these roles to guide and support additional community development work. She was hopeful that these positions would be staffed in the summer of 2023, and that these employees would develop strategies and consistency around community development work. Without this structure in place, Ms. Bebbington recommended no change to this budget, reiterating that the request for staff in this draft budget set a foundation for future growth and success in community development work.

The Board paused the meeting for several minutes as Trustee Brown had questions but was experiencing audio issues.

When the meeting resumed, Ms. Bebbington responded to a question from Trustee Brown regarding whether \$50K is sufficient for the Community Development portfolio by noting the core tasks can be completed with staffing resources.

Trustee Brown inquired whether the Board will be receiving regular updates regarding community development, and Ms. Bebbington suggested regular updates to the Board starting in 2024, once the team was operational.

In closing, Chair Luloff thanked the Chief Librarian and CEO, Senior Management, and all staff for their tremendous work on the budget. He commented how proud he is of the work that OPL does in promoting literacy,

removing barriers, providing inspiration, and defending the right to read and access information.

There being no further discussion, the OPL 2023 Draft Budget was CARRIED as presented.

MOTION OPL 20230223/3

That the Ottawa Public Library Board:

- 1. Approve the 2023 Draft Budget for the Ottawa Public Library; and,**
- 2. Direct staff to forward the report to Ottawa City Council, for consideration on March 1, 2023 as part of the City Council's approval of the City of Ottawa 2031 Draft Operating and Capital budget.**

CARRIED

Note: The change to revising the fee in the user fees chart for Museum and Ski passes does not impact any financials or rudimentary part of the budget. Document 1 – OPL 2023 Draft Operating and Capital Budget Estimates and Four-Year Capital Forecast and Document 2 – OPL 2024 Draft Operating and Capital Budget Book were revised to reflect this proposed fee schedule change.