



Ottawa Public Library Board

Minutes

Meeting #:	6
Date:	June 13, 2023
Time:	5 pm
Location:	Champlain Room, 110 Laurier Avenue West, and by electronic participation
Present:	Chair Matthew Luloff, Vice-Chair Kathy Fisher, Trustee Jessica Bradley, Trustee Mary-Rose Brown, Trustee Alison Crawford, Trustee Rawlson King, Trustee Harvey A. Slack, Trustee Adam Smith
Absent:	Trustee Catherine Kitts

1. Notices and meeting information for meeting participants and the public
Notices and meeting information are attached to the agenda and minutes, including: availability of simultaneous interpretation and accessibility accommodations; *in camera* meeting procedures; information items not subject to discussion; personal information disclaimer for correspondents and public speakers; notices regarding minutes; and remote participation details.
Note:
 1. The meeting began at 5:03 pm.
2. Recognition of Anishinābe Algonquin Territory
Chair Luloff welcomed members and attendees to the Ottawa Public Library Board meeting and delivered the Indigenous land acknowledgment statement.

3. Roll Call

The Chair proceeded with roll call by voice in random order.

4. Regrets

Trustee Kitts sent her regrets.

5. Declarations of Interest

No Declarations of Interest were filed.

6. Confirmation of Minutes

6.1 Minutes 4 - Tuesday, 9 May 2023

Results: Carried

7. Communications

There were no communications.

8. Chair's Verbal Update

Ādisōke Update

Chair Luloff mentioned that the month of May was a busy and productive month on the Ādisōke project site. Photographs showed dramatic drone shots of the building progress, as well as photos from recent tours of the site by trustees, staff, and the Mayor. Concrete has been poured for the second floor and is progressing on the third floor; elevator shafts are also being installed. Chair Luloff also shared news about two generous gifts by individual donors to the *Unlock Potential* fundraising campaign: he thanked Trustee Harvey A. Slack who made a personal contribution \$10,000, and Mr. Arch Campbell who donated \$10,000 in loving memory of Marg Campbell. Investments in the *Unlock Potential* campaign for the Central branch at Ādisōke “back the success of every person in the city and support a lively, informed, and prosperous community,” noted Chair Luloff.

National Indigenous History Month

The month of June is an opportunity to celebrate and honour the diverse culture and contributions of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples, and for everyone to learn more about Indigenous people. Chair Luloff highlighted that OPL continues to implement the calls to action in the Truth and Reconciliation Report in Library collections, spaces, and programs. To mark National Indigenous History Month, OPL is providing unlimited simultaneous access for clients to the French and

English audio and eBook formats of [Moon of the Crusted Snow by Waubgeshig Rice](#) (*Neige des lunes brisées*). OPL will also be offering a variety of virtual and in-person programs for all ages: for instance, on June 17, Bard Lafortune will be presenting a jigging workshop for families at the St. Laurent branch. The program will present a unique opportunity to incorporate physical activity while learning about the intricacies of Métis culture.

Coming Up

Chair Luloff announced the upcoming launch of the TD Summer Reading Program, Canada's biggest bilingual summer reading program for kids of all ages, interests, and abilities. As part of OPL's programming, kids can attend storytimes, art programs, music sessions, and other special activities at their local branch and online. Chair Luloff noted that the summer reading club program helps prevent the "summer slide," a term used to describe how kids can lose 20% of their school year reading gains over the summer. The Chair added that these losses can be particularly pronounced among vulnerable populations. Chair Luloff mentioned that in Ontario, during the pandemic, close to 80% of Ontario parents said their child had fallen behind at school. In keeping with OPL's value of literacy, the TD Summer Reading Club cultivates the joys of reading, learning, discovering, and creating, and will engage over 10,000 kids with literacy over the next few months. Registration for the club, as well as the programs, opened June 12, and the full calendar of events can be found on BiblioOttawaLibrary.ca.

As June is also Pride month, Chair Luloff mentioned that OPL will be celebrating with various programs and activities, including a Thursday film series in partnership with the National Film Board to showcase a selection of 2SLGBTQIA+ films. Chair Luloff added that trustees are also invited to walk with employees in the Capital Pride Parade on August 27.

MOTION OPL 20230613/1

That the Ottawa Public Library Board receive the Chair's verbal update for information.

Results: Received

9. Chief Librarian/Chief Executive Officer's Report

June is Employee Recognition Month

Sonia Bebbington, Chief Librarian/Chief Executive Officer opened her report by stating that she was honoured to acknowledge and applaud the work and dedication of OPL employees during her first Employee Recognition Month since

assuming her position. Since she started as Chief Librarian and CEO, she noted that she been fortunate to meet many employees, to learn about their ideas and initiatives, and to listen to their concerns. She is impressed with the breadth of work OPL employees do every day for Library clients. The recently released 2022 Annual Report highlighted the important contributions of employees that help make OPL such a vital part of our communities. While there has been a significant amount of change at OPL in the last year, this change is an opportunity to re-commit to, and renew, our work. She thanked “Team OPL” for their spirit and professionalism, and for their dedication in delivering important services to the community.

Sunday Hours

Ms. Bebbington indicated that Sunday hours at Beaverbrook, Cumberland, Greenboro, Hazeldean, Main, Nepean Centrepointe, North Gloucester, Orleans, Ruth E. Dickinson, and Stittsville branches, and InfoService, will be paused for the months of July and August and will return in September, as in previous years. Clients can refer to BiblioOttawa.ca to verify the hours of their local branch or bookmobile stop.

Ann Archer Retirement

Ms. Bebbington recognized the long and storied career of Ann Archer to mark her upcoming retirement at the end of June. Ann began her career at OPL in 1995 as a casual librarian at Main branch, later became the Coordinator of Collection Development after amalgamation in 2002, then a Branch Cluster Manager, before returning to a leadership role with Content Services. Over the past 10 years, the Content Services Department has seen tremendous change, and Ann’s colleagues have been fortunate to have her at the helm, leading the team with quiet confidence, clear vision, and an undisputed love of reading. Ms. Bebbington noted that Ann has inspired many with her passion for the collection, her eloquence, and her dedication to connecting people and books. Adding that it was a delight to get to know Ann when she started at OPL, having heard of her so often on the radio, Ms. Bebbington recalled that meetings with Ann “felt so steeped in sheer “library-ness” and in the culture of reading, which is so important to OPL’s mission, and in Ann’s unflagging knowledge, warmth, and humor.” She thanked Ann for her years of dedication and commitment and noted that Ann will be greatly missed by the Board, library staff, and readers across Ottawa. In closing, Ms. Bebbington hoped that Ann’s love of reading and uncanny ability to recommend an enjoyable book will find a lucky and appreciative audience with her grandchildren.

Chair Luloff added that he is the president of the Ann Archer fan club and that she will be dearly missed.

MOTION OPL 20230613/2

That the Ottawa Public Library Board receive the Chief Librarian/CEO's report for information.

Results: Received

10. Reports

10.1 Safety and Security

File Number: OPLB-2023-0613-10.1

Chair Luloff left the meeting at 5:25 pm and returned at 5:27 pm.

Anna Basile, Division Manager, Corporate Services provided a presentation (held on file with the Chief Librarian/Chief Executive Officer) that focused on safety and security to apprise the Board of OPL's risk management actions, and in particular, the actions that management is taking to ensure that employees are able to focus on their work in supporting and promoting literacy and library services to the community. The following is a summary of the information presented:

- Explained the authority of the Board in ensuring the safety and security of property, clients, and employees under relevant legislation;
- Provided history and explained catalyst for key changes to OPL's staffing model and technological supports to enhance employee safety and security;
- Summarized OPL's approach to security and roles of key partners, including City of Ottawa Corporate Security, and external Security Guard Services;
- Provided context of changing social landscape and outlined incident trends over the last five years, including incidents per open hour, per location, and types of incidents;
- Provided an overview of impacts of incident trends;
- Discussed Management's commitment to ensuring employees have the capacity to carry out the work they are hired to do in line with their role and expertise, and to mitigation activities;
- Presented an overview of future considerations for continued mitigation; and,

- Recommended the Board direct staff explore additional security supports and to include any recommended costs in the draft 2024 budget; and explore developing partnerships to offer a variety of social services in library facilities, funded through partner agencies.

In response to a question from Trustee Brown with respect to what precipitated the increase in incidents between 2019 and 2018, Ms. Basile highlighted initiatives that resulted in more vigilant reporting by staff.

In response to questions from Trustee Brown regarding the increase in drug use-related incidents and OPL's intentions regarding Naloxone kits, Ms. Basile indicated that several public library systems offer Naloxone kits in their facilities. She clarified that Naloxone kits are for voluntary use by anyone (a member of the public or an employee), similar to how automated external defibrillators (AEDs) are currently offered in public facilities. She added that OPL is working with Ottawa Public Health regarding details, and applying lessons learned from best practices at other public library systems. She noted that it is her understanding that City facilities do not currently offer Naloxone kits. Ms. Basile mentioned OPL has noted paramedics response techniques including asking whether Naloxone kits are available, and that guard services have kits available at the two locations where they work (Main and Rideau branches). In response to Trustee Brown's question regarding the impact of drug use-related incidents on employees, Ms. Basile commented that some employees already carry their own kits, but that OPL did not want to put employees in an uncomfortable position or create a negative psychological impact on them by requiring them to administer Naloxone. If an employee is comfortable doing so, however, the kits will be available in the future.

Vice-Chair Fisher asked whether the penalties imposed by trespass notices are flexible. Ms. Basile indicated that trespass notices may be appealed, and may, as a result of this appeal, be revoked.

Trustee Bradley expressed her disappointment that Greenboro branch was experiencing higher numbers of incidents in recent years, and that security may be necessary, but added that she was glad to see OPL seeking proactive solutions to this to ensure everyone's safety, including expanding security services. She urged staff to work with the local councillors in locations with higher numbers of incidents to discuss

measures that may be implemented. Ms. Basile indicated in the affirmative, and added that staff are taking a holistic approach to reviewing incidents, including seeking input from employees, and partners including councillors, before returning to the Board.

Trustee Bradley asked whether staff will be bringing back a report with specific recommendations regarding next steps to the Board, or whether any changes to security measures will be requested through the budget process. Ms. Basile indicated that the intent of the report this evening was to provide context for any subsequent budget requests, and added that if there is a desire for staff to provide additional information prior to the budget, this could be explored, but noted the tight timing required before 2024 budget tabling in November. Ms. Bebbington confirmed that any subsequent requests would be made through the budget process with an associated report to provide detail as necessary.

Trustee King noted that security is a crucial concern for libraries, and thanked staff for circulating a recent article from *The Walrus*, which discussed challenges Canadian public libraries are facing with respect to mental health, substance use, and other issues related to safety and security. In light of the mention of a future Peer Support Network for employees, he asked staff to describe the current supports OPL offers for employees after a security incident. Ms. Basile outlined a number of supports including the Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP) for counselling services or other supports regarding either a workplace or personal matter. Recently, OPL management introduced a change in the EFAP process whereby a manager can now connect with EFAP to ensure that a counsellor reaches out to an employee directly; a counsellor was also recently brought into Main and Rideau branches to facilitate group discussions regarding recent incidents and supports available. Ms. Basile added that all senior managers as well as branch services managers receive and review incident reports.

Trustee King inquired regarding what security training is offered to branch employees. Ms. Basile highlighted several training programs, including:

- Safe and secure workplace (Teaches vital skills to help diffuse situations and reduce the chance of verbal assault or physical violence);
- Respectful workplace training (Explores roles and responsibilities with respect to discrimination, harassment, and violence in the workplace);

- Several specific training modules such as those related to working with individuals without permanent housing;
- Client services and de-escalation training techniques (Provided by the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health); and,
- Incident completion training, etc.

Trustee King commended staff for their approach, and for exploring community support options for clients who need services that go beyond the library's mandated role. He mentioned that Ottawa Community Housing (OCH) may be a useful partner to connect with as they face similar concerns. Ms. Bebbington underscored that on the issue of training referenced in the trustee's question, the guard services contracted by the Library are selected specifically to have an empathetic approach and be trained in de-escalation skills.

Trustee Crawford suggested another potential partnership with legal identification clinics that may also assist in increasing library memberships. She also inquired whether staff feel they have adequate support from the City of Ottawa and other community partners to engage in the collaborative initiatives mentioned in the report. Ms. Basile recognized several City departments and agencies, including the Corporate Security branch of Emergency and Protective Services; Recreation, Cultural, and Facility Services; Ottawa Police Services; Ottawa Paramedics; and Ottawa Public Health who work with OPL and recognize that we are all in this together. Ms. Basile also noted that, for example, at the Rideau branch staff have been working with several community groups. She thanked her Facilities team (Megan Birchfield and Simon Legault) for building those relationships to improve collaboration and the safety of clients and employees. Ms. Basile noted that OPL welcomes the work that the City's Community and Social Services department and the Ottawa Police Services will be doing around mental health responses within the next year as this will help ensure that OPL employees feel confident that when an issue arises and they pick up the phone, a trusted partner will respond.

Recognizing the tremendous compassion that OPL employees have for community members, Trustee Crawford noted that the library cannot be everything to everyone. She inquired whether OPL would seek additional funding, for example from the provincial government, to partner to support social services. Ms. Basile said staff could explore that suggestion.

In response to a question from Trustee Smith regarding additional information about violent and non-violent incidents, Ms. Basile indicated that while some information is not readily available at this time, staff are considering additional revisions to the reporting template to improve data collection for analysis and internal reporting.

Trustee Smith further inquired regarding whether the footage from closed circuit television cameras (CCTV) is monitored in real time, and Ms. Basile indicated that the monitoring varies.

Trustee Smith wondered how the work of trustees may intersect in the future with the expansion of services to social services going forward, and Ms. Basile clarified that any social services offered in the future would be through partnerships, and not directly funded or provided by the OPL Board. She clarified the mandate of the public library under the applicable legislation in Ontario, the *Public Libraries Act*, which is to provide material for use and circulation, and provide reference and information services. In order to ensure OPL employees are able to complete the work they were hired to do, the Library is exploring partnerships to offer services that fall outside of this mandate. As an example of a similar partnership, Ms. Basile noted OPL's successful collaboration with OPH to offer a community wellness clinic at the Greenboro branch.

Trustee Smith expressed concern that these partnerships may attract people to OPL facilities who are not there for OPL services. Ms. Basile said the primary focus in developing these partnerships is to address the needs of clients currently using our facilities, and ensure employees who refer clients to services can be confident that these services are available at the time and place of need.

Vice-Chair Fisher inquired whether there would be an impact on meeting room use and library programming if OPL spaces were used for social services. Ms. Basile noted that any social services partnerships would be of mutual benefit, including to OPL in allowing employees to focus on their work and provide the services they need to provide.

Continuing on the topic of meeting room use, Chair Luloff asked whether OPL is responsible for additional security that may be required for events that risk a disruption in services, and Ms. Basile indicated that additional security and associated costs are dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

Vice-Chair Fisher inquired regarding how OPL measures the use of library spaces, including associated revenues. Ms. Basile replied that when rooms are made available as part of a partnership with OPL, they may not always be meeting rooms, and that no fees are associated with room uses by partners.

Chair Luloff thanked Ms. Basile and her team for the incredible work on the report and appreciated the care taken in ensuring the continued safety and security of clients and staff.

There being no further discussion, the report was RECEIVED and CARRIED as presented.

MOTION OPL 20230613/3

That the Ottawa Public Library Board:

- 1. Receive this report for information;**
- 2. Direct staff to explore additional security supports, as further described in this report, and to include any recommended costs in the draft 2024 budget; and,**
- 3. Direct staff to explore developing partnerships to offer a variety of social services in library facilities, funded through partner agencies, as further described in this report.**

Results: Received and Carried

10.2 Permanent Modification of Hog's Back and Carleton Heights Bookmobile Stops

File Number: OPLB-2023-0613-10.2

In response to a question from Vice-Chair Fisher regarding what is meant by “crowding” as one of the reasons for eliminating the Hog’s Back stop to improve client and staff safety, Ms. Bebbington clarified that the word “crowding” referred to vehicular crowding in the parking lot, especially during the winter when there are fewer spots available due to snow piles. Crowding of vehicles in the lot prevents the bookmobile from parking and prevents clients from entering the lot. She added that the property owner has also requested that OPL seek another location for this stop. As a result, staff undertook a review of various locations to select the most suitable alternative for clients and OPL.

There being no further discussion, the report was CARRIED as presented.

MOTION OPL 20230613/4

That the Ottawa Public Library Board, effective Thursday, July 6, 2023:

1. **Approve permanently modifying the Hog's Back bookmobile stop by discontinuing this stop; and,**
2. **Approve adding the Hog's Back time to the existing Carleton Heights bookmobile stop.**

Results: Carried

10.3 2022 Annual Report on Ottawa Public Library Related Fraud Claims

File Number: OPLB-2023-0613-10.3

MOTION OPL 20230613/5

That the Ottawa Public Library Board receive this report for information.

Results: Carried

11. In Camera Items

There were no *in camera* items.

12. Information Previously Distributed

12.1 Intellectual Freedom Implementation Update #2

15. Other Business

Trustees and staff shared reading recommendations. Ann Archer, Program Manager, Content Services is reading [*Truth Telling, Seven Conversations About Indigenous Life in Canada*](#). Myra Skaronski, Division Manager, Branch Services has been reading [*Outlive, the Science & Art of Longevity*](#). Trustee King shared that he generally reads several books at the same time. He said he was pleased to have recently met Marc Morial, President of the National Urban League and former Mayor of New Orleans and his wife during their recent visit to Ottawa, and that they both have recently released books. He said he is also reading [*Belonging: Remembering Ourselves Home*](#), an autobiography by Michelle Miller. Noting that he was honored to be invited by OPL to provide opening remarks at the recent Juneteenth event with Nicole A. Taylor, Trustee King added that he is also reading her cookbook, [*Watermelon and Red Birds*](#). Lastly, Trustee King said

he also attended the Rockcliffe Park Children’s Book Sale and picked up a few political biography books: [Spare](#), by Prince Harry, , and [Ernest Hemingway, A Biography](#). Trustee King said the challenge is trying to read six books at the same time while he also has many City reports to read. Ms. Bebbington said she is also reading [Watermelon and Red Birds](#); she commented that it is a beautiful mix of recipe writing and creating writing: the author starts each recipe with an essay, and sometimes includes some journalism as well. DG Stringer, Executive Assistant to Mayor Mark Sutcliffe is reading [The Great Experiment: Why Diverse Democracies Fall Apart and How They Can Endure](#).

The Chair closed the conversation by adding that he hopes everyone gets to pick up a terrific book or two at OPL to ready over the summer.

16. Adjournment

Be It Resolved that the Ottawa Public Library Board meeting be adjourned at 6:19 pm.

17. Next Meeting

Tuesday, July 11, 2023 (Held)

Original signed by Matthew Luloff,
Chair

Sonia Bebbington, Recording
Secretary