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NO.	ITEM	PAGE
1.	OTTAWA PUBLIC LIBRARY- 2024 DRAFT OPERATING AND CAPITAL BUDGETS OPLB-2023-1107- 11.1	<b>TWO DELEGATIONS: THE FIRST NOTED CONCERNS REGARDING OPL SERVICES IN RIVER WARD. THE SECOND SPOKE ABOUT THE CURRENT BUDGET NOT ADDRESSING DISPARITIES IN SERVICE TO RESIDENTS OF RIVER WARD.</b>  <b>APPROX. 60 MIN. WORTH OF CONSIDERATION OF THIS ITEM (DELEGATIONS AND Q&amp;A TO STAFF) CARRIED AS PRESENTED</b>

**ATTACHED OPL BOARD DRAFT MINUTES EXTRACT**

**MEETING OF 5 DECEMBER 2023**

**EXTRACT OF DRAFT  
MINUTES 9  
OTTAWA PUBLIC  
LIBRARY BOARD  
6 DECEMBER 2023**

**EXTRAIT DE L'ÉBAUCHE DU  
PROCÈS-VERBAL 9  
C.A. DE LA BIBLIOTHÈQUE  
PUBLIQUE D'OTTAWA  
6 DÉCEMBRE 2023**

**10.1 OTTAWA PUBLIC LIBRARY- 2024 DRAFT OPERATING AND CAPITAL  
BUDGETS**

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Sonia Bebbington, Chief Librarian/Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Anna Basile, Division Manager, Corporate Services presented the Board with a high-level summary of the draft 2024 budget including information regarding operating pressures and capital initiatives. (*Held on file with the Chief Librarian/CEO*). Ms. Bebbington noted the draft budget is financially prudent, responsive to current pressures, and provides for future needs. The budget was developed in collaboration with OPL's partners in City Finance. With Ādisōke on the horizon, OPL is heading into a period of change: the draft budget reflects the growth this board has approved, and does so in a responsible, incremental fashion. This budget will help ensure that library services remain a sustainable part of the ecosystem of learning and literacy for the citizens of Ottawa.

OPL has produced a budget aligning with the Council-directed target of \$2.37M dollars. These budget directions are based on an increase to the city-wide tax levy of no more than 2.5 per cent for 2024. Ms. Bebbington noted that if approved, the OPL budget will be \$61.115M (not including revenues). The total City-funded allocation with capital contributions for lifecycle and accessibility is \$63.620M for 2024.

Ms. Basile noted the funds allocated in the draft budget provide for both immediate and future human resource requirements, including mandatory compensation adjustments, new positions, and a transfer to Library Reserve for future staffing requirements. Additional operating funds are allocated to support Sunday hours based on a review of actual operating costs following the first year of implementation, and to provide enhanced security services. She said the capital allocations for 2024 are predominantly focused on the renewal assets including for lifecycle and accessibility. Additionally, growth funds are allocated for the new Barrhaven branch. Ms. Basile closed the presentation noting that

staff received no requests or concerns through the Library directly, nor through Councillor-led budget consultations.

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 noted his concerns regarding OPL services in River Ward including: the cancellation of a bookmobile stop, the closure of a capital account allocated to exploring the development of a library facility in the Carlington neighbourhood, and the temporary disruption in services at the Kiosk location, and limited interest among his community in the alternative services model. Noting the importance of services outside a branch, including library outreach and programming, Councillor Brockington suggested promotion and advertising of these services should be increased to improve resident awareness.

The Chair thanked the Councillor for his remarks/presentation.

Noting that she sits on the Board's Alternative Services Ad hoc Committee, Trustee Bradley inquired whether there were specific services that Councillor Brockington suggested could be enhanced. Councillor Brockington replied that each community has different needs and services should reflect these needs. He referenced a June community meeting with OPL staff and underscored that he and community leaders looked forward to continued conversations with OPL. Trustee Bradley commented she looked forward to working with the Councillor to

facilitate community engagement with public consultations regarding alternative services.

Chair Luloff inquired regarding the Councillor's suggestions for improving advertising of OPL services. Councillor Brockington suggested school newsletters, the Community Development Framework table (at which OPL sits), and his office as good places to advertise services, noting that the responsibility to increase awareness of services provided by OPL was a shared one. Chair Luloff added that staff would welcome a list of suggested additional contacts.

**John D. Reid**, resident of River Ward, noted the current budget did not address disparities in service to residents of River Ward. Noting that library cardholder numbers have not increased at a rate proportional to the general population, he added that the Board-approved distance metric from the Facilities Framework (three kilometres from a branch) is greater than in any other major Canadian city. Citing OPL's Economic Benefit Study from 2016, which concluded that OPL provided \$4.17 in benefits for every dollar invested, he observed that among 14 Canadian cities, OPL is 11<sup>th</sup> on the list in terms of return on investment. He suggested that the funding allocated to mobile security could be better used elsewhere. Mr. Reid also highlighted several other requests, including a longer timeline for the release of Board documents prior to the meeting date, and for the recordings from Board meetings to be made available after the meeting concludes. Noting Toronto Public Library's recent significant budget increase, Mr. Reid urged the Board to consider its standing in relation to other libraries, and to also consider an arms-length study of OPL's operations.

Chair Luloff clarified that the amount Toronto Public Library's budget allocation was in part due to the need to address a structural deficit.

Vice-Chair Fisher asked staff to respond to a question raised by the delegate regarding the extent of community development work. Ms. Bebbington replied that many activities have occurred and will continue in 2024, bolstered by the recent investment in staffing the Community Development department. She

referenced the presentation made by Sarah Macintyre, Acting Division Manager of Client Services, at the November Board meeting, which highlighted recent community development activities and future plans.

Trustee Bradley asked if staff participated in the OC Transpo service review of bus routes. Ms. Basile reminded the Board of the letter sent to the General Manager, OC Transpo requesting consideration of library locations as part of the service review. Ms. Bebbington confirmed that their service review is complete, and information regarding routes received. Staff will analyse the changes and their subsequent impact.

Trustee Bradley inquired whether there were specific funds in the draft 2024 budget allocated to support Homebound Services, noting this service is operating at capacity. Ms. Bebbington described how Homebound Services has been prioritized in the Mobile Services Framework as the first element for staff and the Ad hoc Committee to review, adding that this Committee recently held its first meeting. The review will inform future potential resourcing requests that may come forward as part of a subsequent budget.

Trustee Slack urged staff to follow-up with the General Manager, OC Transpo with respect to library routes in their service review. Ms. Bebbington indicated that OC Transpo undertook a holistic review of routes over a six-month period and reiterated that initial correspondence with OC Transpo began in June and that data has been received from OC Transpo but staff have not yet analysed the information. She confirmed that staff expect to have this completed in 2024.

Vice-Chair Fisher asked staff to further expand on the extensive community development work undertaken by OPL staff. Sarah Macintyre, Acting Division Manager, Client Services advised the Board that OPL has now onboarded a new Manager of Community Development and Client Experience. She further explained that staff have focused on developing a strategy for city-wide community development, complementing the work undertaken by OPL over previous years. She highlighted exciting 2024 projects such as the food literacy

and youth wellness kits, and added that when planning, Library staff strive for a “one city” approach, working in tandem with City partners to reach residents.

Trustee Kitts inquired whether staff are concerned about filling the roles identified in the budget. Ms. Bebbington indicated that the positions intended to be filled in the shorter term are those for which job descriptions already exist, which will simplify the process. Ms. Basile added that staff anticipate that the excitement around Ādisōke will help attract excellent candidates.

In response to a question from Trustee Kitts regarding whether the increase in Sunday hours was due to demand, Ms. Bebbington noted that Sunday hours are not expanded in this budget, rather the allocation is to adjust costs based on a year of expanded hours, implemented in 2022. As a follow-up, Trustee Kitts inquired whether staff are conducting an evaluation of the success of these additional hours, and Ms. Bebbington replied that staff can certainly return with some observations in the future, noting staff analyze patterns in the numbers of visitors, the circulation of materials, and attendance at programming, as applicable.

Trustee Kitts inquired whether one additional mobile security resource is sufficient to address the concerns raised by staff regarding security. Ms. Basile replied that the pilot project will permit staff to assess and evaluate resources, and determine next steps as needed.

Observing the legislative changes to development funds, Trustee Kitts inquired whether the Board should be considering the implications of these changes when discussing future OPL budgets. Ms. Basile responded in the affirmative, noting that staff will map out some of these implications in a report in early 2024.

Trustee King inquired whether the lifecycle accessibility funds provided through the City addressed specific deficits in OPL facilities. Ms. Basile replied that the funds are allocated to address deficits identified through accessibility audits and highlighted upcoming work at North Gloucester and Alta Vista branches

(universal washrooms), as well as Vanier branch shelving reconfigurations to address accessibility concerns. She noted that 20 percent of the City's total budget for the accessibility lifecycle program was allocated to OPL. As a follow-up question, Trustee King inquired whether this addresses all identified barriers, or whether there were outstanding items to address, and Ms. Basile replied that there continue to be outstanding items and she would report back to the Board regarding the specific numbers. In closing, Trustee King thanked staff for their important work in increasing accessibility both through this work and through programming and community development.

Trustee Smith acknowledged the thorough responses he received to questions he had raised in conversation with staff.

Responding to a concern raised by a delegate regarding budget priorities, Trustee Crawford spoke in support of allocating funds for mobile security personnel, noting the need particularly in urban branches and adding that these concerns were raised by others at the Urban Libraries Council Annual Forum that she recently attended. She asked staff to comment further on this item. Ms. Bebbington underscored the importance of supporting a safe environment for staff and a welcoming environment for clients. She noted that security services engaged by OPL are trained in an empathetic approach including de-escalation techniques. She added, as described in a report being discussed later this evening, security personnel are permanently located at the Main and Rideau branches. Ms. Basile further clarified that staff have recommended an increase of \$150,000 in 2024 budget to address increased costs of current services as well as for the piloting of mobile services.

Trustee Kitts inquired regarding the intentions for the future use of the funds in the Library Reserve. Ms. Bebbington said the intention is to manage reserves in line with the Board By-law, noting that some funds were recently committed to Furniture, Fixtures, and Equipment for Ādisōke, in accordance with a previous Council motion. Ms. Basile added that in the Frameworks which will be

presented to the Board in the future, there may be opportunities for investment using Reserves, for instance for growth or legacy gap projects. As a follow-up question, Trustee Kitts asked if the Board could consider asking staff to allocate Reserves to expedite new construction. Ms. Basile indicated that this could be explored further but cautioned that this discussion should include a consideration of the operational costs for new facilities as well as the capacity of staff to undertake additional concurrent facilities projects.

In closing, Chair Luloff asked staff to comment further on several concerns raised by delegations. Specifically, he inquired regarding the number of bookmobile stops in River Ward and the temporary disruption in kiosk locker service. Ms. Bebbington replied that River Ward currently has seven bookmobile stops, a reduction of one stop from their previous total of eight. The Board received a memorandum in June to advise them of the discontinuation of a stop at one location due to construction, and the re-allocation of this timeslot to a nearby stop in the same neighbourhood. She reminded the Board that this resulted in a 15-minute increase in library service in this area and added that one-third of the total number of Bookmobile stops (seven out of 21 stops) are located in River Ward. With respect to the kiosk holds lockers, Ms. Bebbington reminded the Board that new lockers are on order, and that trustees were advised in October of a security risk, which staff prioritized and addressed. She referred to a Board report in 2018 that recommended cessation of the service at end of life of the previous locker technology and noted that in the absence of a Mobile Framework, staff prioritized service continuity for that community until the Framework is completed.

In response to a comment by the delegate regarding cardholder growth, Ms. Bebbington noted that the interruption in service during the pandemic affected growth and added that many library activities do not require a card.

Chair Luloff inquired whether the draft budget supports increased programming efforts and the ability to test programming for Ādisōke at branches. Ms.



Bebbington replied that this budget supports increased programming, including both setting the stage for programming at Ādisōke by building capacity now to ensure success before the Central branch opens, and supporting programming across the OPL system.

There being no further discussion, the OPL 2024 Draft Budget was CARRIED as presented.

**MOTION OPL 20231205/3**

**That the Ottawa Public Library Board:**

- 1. Approve the 2024 Draft Budget for the Ottawa Public Library; and,**
- 2. Direct staff to forward the report to Ottawa City Council, for consideration on December 6, 2023 as part of the City Council's approval of the City of Ottawa 2024 Draft Operating and Capital budget.**

**CARRIED**