



Ottawa Public Library Board

Minutes

Meeting #: 9
Date: December 5, 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 Catherine Kitts, Trustee Harvey A. Slack, Trustee Adam Smith

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.
 Notes:
 1. The meeting began at 5:06 pm.
 2. Trustee Brown left the meeting at 6:33 p.m.
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

There were no regrets.

5. Declarations of Interest

No Declarations of Interest were filed.

6. Confirmation of Minutes

6.1 Minutes 8 - Tuesday, 7 November, 2023

Results: Carried

7. Communications

There were no communications.

8. Chair's Verbal Update

Library Month 2023 Wrap Up

The Chair shared highlights from OPL's recent celebrations of Canadian Library Month. Ottawans engaged with online and in-person activities around the OPL theme of "Your Library, your democracy," including the popular book bag giveaway - social media engagement about the book bag promotion was more than double the average engagement rate. During the month, the Library gained more than 4,500 new cardholders and hosted well-attended programs involving thoughtful discussion around intellectual freedom. The Chair thanked the Friends of the Ottawa Public Library Association for their support of Canadian Library Month initiatives at OPL, and thanked staff, clients, and new visitors for their support of public libraries in October.

Reading Recommendations

The Chair reminded clients that in the coming weeks, OPL staff will publish their trend-setting end-of-year booklists for great holiday gift ideas. As in previous years, this includes the most popular books checked out in 2023 and staff recommendations. Also on the website are booklists for the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, Hanukkah, International Migrants Day, and Kwanzaa. The Chair added that clients can always join staff on X (formerly Twitter) every Thursday, including December 28, to ask for recommendations for their next great read during the international lunchtime chat event called #AskALibrarian!

Hours of Operations During the Holidays

The Chair noted that branches will be closed December 25 and 26 for Christmas and Boxing Day, respectively, and January 1 for New Year's Day. He also noted that branches that offer Sunday hours (Beaverbrook, Cumberland, Greenboro, Hazeldean, Main, Nepean Centrepointe, North Gloucester, Orleans, Ruth E. Dickinson, and Stittsville), as well as Info Service, will be open from 10:00 am until 3:00 pm on December 24 and 31. Branches will maintain regular hours from December 27 to 30. In closing, Chair Luloff wished the Board, OPL employees, and the Library's valued clients a very happy holiday season.

MOTION OPL 20231205/1

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

Results: Received

9. Chief Librarian/Chief Executive Officer's Report

Another Extraordinary Year at OPL

Sonia Bebbington, the OPL Chief Executive Officer and CEO took a moment to highlight some of the Library's accomplishments in 2023. In January, the City of Ottawa Council appointed new OPL trustees to the 2023-2026 Board. Ms. Bebbington noted that her senior management colleagues join her in looking forward to continuing to work with this Board, noting their valued and thoughtful input helps shape OPL. Regarding Ādisōke, Ms. Bebbington highlighted that the underground parking garage was completed this year, and trustees joined OPL staff, City colleagues, and Library and Archives Canada in October for the reveal of the Ādisōke branding and a celebration of a major construction milestone in October: the "topping off" of the facility, which marked the completion of the pouring of all five floors. In 2023, OPL also launched the Anishinābemowin language series on its website and social media, featuring vocabulary based on construction terms, to engage residents and get them excited about Ādisōke and language learning. Most importantly, Ms. Bebbington mentioned that OPL has advanced work on developing the services that will be offered at the Central branch at Ādisōke this year. Additional updates about the project can be found on Ādisōke.ca or on the Central branch webpage on the OPL website.

In terms of branch improvements, Ms. Bebbington shared images of the recent shelving replacement project at Rideau branch, which included reconfiguring the branch to improve sightlines and better meet the needs of caregivers and other clients. The renovations honour the architecture and the functionality of the space. The CEO also noted that the branch held a very popular party for families to celebrate the new space with a storytime, magic show, and cake. At

Hazeldean, the addition of a universal washroom will improve access, and inclusivity for clients with a disability as well as caregivers. Several other facilities-related projects are in progress and will be shared with trustees in 2024.

In terms of non-facility improvements to the client experience, OPL introduced mobile printing at all branches in the spring of 2023, providing a more convenient printing option for clients. OPL also made great strides in its community development work in 2023, reducing barriers to library services and building relationships with residents and future clients. Staff met with many community groups across the city for conversations and noted residents are interested in early literacy, teen programs, and services for marginalized groups including seniors, racialized residents, and those speaking languages other than English and French. Ms. Bebbington noted that staff look forward to continuing community conversations in the new year, working collaboratively to increase the reach of library services. In closing, she announced that OPL was recognized this year with the Award of Merit from the Ottawa Branch of the Ontario Genealogical Society (OGS) for its collaboration with the OGS including the genealogy drop-in program at Nepean CentrepoinTE branch and will receive the award on December 9.

Ms. Bebbington also highlighted several meaningful programs delivered in 2023, including the “One Book Can Change a Life” events in October, which both inspire a love of reading and help improve social well-being and foster a sense of community belonging. Ms. Bebbington also shared comments from a client who attended Sensory Storytime programming about the impact it had on her family; this program will be expanded in 2024. Lastly, Ms. Bebbington noted that OPL was honoured to collaborate this year with the National Art Centre, Elder Dumont from Kitigan Zibi, and local author and musician Phil Jenkins, to host a performance of the play “Bloodline” this year. Two attendees of this program commented that they learned a lot about the impacts of the Indian Act at this event and were interested in learning more by checking out OPL’s books and other resources and attending future library programs on this topic. Picking up on the Chair’s comments earlier in the meeting, Ms. Bebbington also noted OPL’s Canadian Library Month activities, including a panel discussion about the right to read and a stimulating talk by CNN’s fact checker Daniel Dale.

Lastly, in terms of the contributions of trustees to OPL this year, Ms. Bebbington shared photos of trustees attending several events in 2023, and noted they participated in branch storytimes, toured the Nepean CentrepoinTE branch and Info Service, and provided opening remarks at Library programs or events. Trustees also attended a workshop about intellectual freedom and another about strategic planning, which helped develop the 2023-2028 Strategic Plan, approved

at a Board meeting in October. The Chief Librarian and CEO noted that this Plan incorporates ongoing elements from the previous Plan, includes new strategic initiatives, and emphasizes the value of all library activities, including those which do not require a library card. The Plan also aligns with the City of Ottawa Strategic Priorities for the 2023-2026 Term of Council, which include working towards “a city that is more liveable for all,” noting that OPL provides access to resources for well-being and recreation, helps reduce social isolation, and promotes literacy, which is correlated with positive social, economic, and health outcomes. The 2023-2028 Strategic Plan will carry OPL past the opening of Ādisōke, and provides guidance for the meaningful work that OPL does every day.

In closing, Ms. Bebbington thanked the Board for their guidance, wisdom, and support of the Library in 2023.

MOTION OPL 20231205/2

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

Results: Received

10. Reports

10.1 2024 Draft Operating and Capital Budget Estimates and Four-Year Capital Forecast

Please refer to the 7 November 2023 OPL Board meeting for the documents.

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, 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.

Noting that she sits on the Board's Service Framework 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 promotion of OPL services. Councillor Brockington suggested school newsletters, the Community Development Framework table (at which OPL sits), and his office as good places to promote 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 11th 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 efficiency 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 Client Experience and Community Development. 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 clarified 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 raised in conversation with staff before this meeting.

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 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 Bookmobile stops (seven out of 21 stops) are in River Ward. With respect to the kiosk holds lockers, Ms. Bebbington reminded the Board that new lockers have been ordered, and that trustees were advised in September 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 cardholder 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 Ottawa Public Library; and,**
- 2. Upon the Ottawa Public Library Board's approval of the 2024 Draft Budget, 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.**

Results: Carried

10.2 Contracts Requiring Board Approval: Security Services and the Integrated Library System

File Number: OPLB-2023-1205-10.2

Trustee Bradley stated that she met with staff to discuss this matter and asked staff to comment on recent trends in incidents at the Greenboro branch. She noted that while she recognizes the importance of prioritizing safety at the branches, she felt that the incidents at this branch are not verging on dangerous. Ms. Bebbington confirmed that incidents at Greenboro are not trending as consistently as at other locations, and further noted that the proposed contract contained very flexible "post orders" which could be adjusted based on the observed trends, including incident locations and volumes. Ms. Basile also confirmed that Greenboro incidents have decreased, and added this could be due to several factors including changes made to some of the branch spaces, where incidents had been occurring more frequently.

Trustee Bradley thanked staff for the information and asked if they would agree to remove Greenboro from the pilot at this time and reassess if needed, to which Ms. Bebbington replied that this could be arranged. Ms. Bebbington further indicated that staff will continue to track incident trends at all locations and bring forward any recommended changes as necessary, adding that the safety of clients and staff, guided by the numbers, is the highest priority.

Vice Chair Fisher asked for clarification regarding whether the pilot was for three additional branches or four, and whether locations are flexible depending on future data. Ms. Bebbington clarified that funding would be for up to four branches, and that the report provides the delegated authority to effect that contract without specifying the locations on a permanent basis. The Chair further inquired whether staff will inform the

councillors representing wards in which the chosen branch locations are situated. Ms. Bebbington confirmed that this has been done.

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

MOTION OPL 20231205/4

That the Ottawa Public Library Board:

1. **Delegate authority to the CEO to finalize the procurement process (including awarding of contract) for security services, as further described in the report; and,**
2. **Approve a five-year, \$1,142,717.77 agreement with SirsiDynix for the provision, support, and maintenance of the Integrated Library System, as further described in this report.**

Direction to staff:

That staff remove Greenboro branch from the pilot and reassess if needed at a later date.

10.3 2024 Board Continuing Education Plan and Conference Attendance

File Number: OPLB-2023-1205-10.3

MOTION OPL 20231205/5

That the Ottawa Public Library Board:

1. **Approve the 2024 Board Continuing Education Plan (Document 1); and,**
2. **Approve the attendance of trustees at conferences in 2024 as further described in this report.**

Results: Carried

11. Trustees' Items

11.1 Urban Libraries Council (ULC) 2023 Annual Forum – Trustees Alison Crawford and Harvey A. Slack Reports

File Number: OPLB-2023-1205-11.1

Upon being invited by the Chair to share brief reflections on the Forum, Trustee Crawford commented that it was a fabulous gathering of many trustees, CEOs, and senior library directors; attendees also included some library fundraising executives. As mentioned in her report, Trustee Crawford indicated that public libraries across North America are facing

shared challenges in meeting the needs of their local communities. She noted that the insights she gained at Forum sessions will contribute to her role as an advocate for OPL and thanked the Board for approving her attendance.

Trustee Slack echoed Trustee Crawford's sentiments and commented that he was humbled to have the opportunity to attend the Forum as an OPL trustee. He enjoyed meeting participants and sharing experiences. He underlined several key insights, including observations about the epidemic of loneliness in society and the use of the word "starchitect" to describe architects who design flagship central libraries. Trustee Slack concluded his remarks by adding that he enjoyed touring the downtown Seattle Public Library branch, an iconic building with an iconic design.

MOTION OPL 20231205/6

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

Results: Received

12. In Camera Items

MOTION OPL 20231205/7

Moved by Vice-Chair Kathy Fisher:

THAT, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE *PUBLIC LIBRARIES ACT*, THE OTTAWA PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD RESOLVE IN CAMERA PURSUANT TO 16.1 (4)(A), SECURITY OF THE PROPERTY OF THE BOARD, TO RECEIVE A CYBER SECURITY UPDATE - REPORTING OUT DATE: 5 DECEMBER 2023.

Results: Carried

Upon resuming in open session at 7:33 pm, the Board moved the following:

MOTION OPL 20231205/8

Moved by Vice-Chair Kathy Fisher:

That the Ottawa Public Library Board receive the update regarding cyber security for information as part of regular reporting to the Board regarding risk management.

Results: Received

13. Information Previously Distributed

13.1 Memo - City Reporting on Ādisōke

14. Notices of Motions (For Consideration at Subsequent Meeting)

There were no Notices of Motion.

15. Inquiries

There were no Inquiries.

16. Other Business

The Chair is reading [“The Revolt of the Public and the Crisis of Authority in the New Millennium”](#) by Martin Gurri, which chronicles the rise of nihilism in light of the public’s increasing distrust of authority. Trustee Crawford is reading [“Manipulating the Message: How Powerful Forces Shape the News”](#) by her former journalistic mentor, Cecil Rosner, which describes the communication techniques used by agencies to manipulate messages and thwart journalists. In closing, the Chair encouraged everyone to choose a great book from OPL’s collections, as the holiday season is a wonderful time to finish a great read or pick up a new book.

17. Adjournment

Be It Resolved that the Ottawa Public Library Board meeting be adjourned at 7:42 pm.

18. Next Meeting

Tuesday, 13 February, 2024

Original signed by Matthew Luloff,
Chair

Sonia Bebbington, Recording
Secretary