Report to / Rapport au:

Ottawa Public Library Board
Conseil d'administration de la Bibliothèque publique d'Ottawa

Date submitted_ENG / Date submitted_FRE

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SUBJECT: Ottawa Public Library Emergency Plan

OBJET: Plan d'urgence de la Bibliothèque publique d'Ottawa

REPORT RECOMMENDATION

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

RECOMMANDATION DU RAPPORT

Que le Conseil d'administration de la Bibliothèque publique d'Ottawa prenne connaissance de ce rapport à titre d'information.

BACKGROUND

In accordance with the *Public Libraries Act, RSO 1990, c.P.44*, the Ottawa Public Library (OPL) Board has accountability for the full range of decisions affecting the organization. However, the Board has decided to use a policy or strategic model that focuses Trustee attention on strategic elements, while delegating general supervision and direction to the CEO.

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The OPL Board Policy OPLB-002 Delegation of Authority provides a framework regarding the range of decisions a CEO can make, including the provision for flexibility during special circumstances. Specifically, section 2.2 states: "In cases of emergency or special circumstances where it is necessary to act within or outside the normal mandate of the OPL, but such action is not strictly within the terms of the delegated authority, the CEO may take such action as necessary to rectify the situation and all such actions shall be reported immediately to the Chair and then to the Board."

After a city-wide emergency in 2014, OPL staff developed a comprehensive emergency program and reviewed all operational policies, procedures, and guidelines regarding emergency response. In 2016, OPL staff provided the Board with information about the Emergency Program and a status update on the implementation of the various components. The OPL Emergency Plan (the Plan) was received by the Board in June 2017 (OPLB-2017-0603).

To support the CEO in carrying out responsibilities during an emergency situation, the Plan was developed as a functional document providing an overview of the coordinated level of planning and readiness required. The Plan is a key overarching document that ensures OPL is equipped to be prepared for, mitigate, and respond to, emergency situations, and assist employees in continuing to provide services with minimal interruptions during emergency response and recovery activities.

The Plan is supported by a series of subcomponents including the City of Ottawa's (City's) Protective Measures Program as well as the following OPL specific documents:

- Protective Measures Policy
- Emergency procedures (consolidated in the Emergency Information Booklet)
- Emergency Notification and Escalation Procedure
- Emergency Exercise Procedure
- Service Duty Officer Workflow
- Emergency Operations and Incident Command Structure

The purpose of this report is to provide the Board with an overview of OPL's emergency management program, as well as to describe the recent changes made to the Plan to better align it with the city's documentation, to ensure incident command roles align with OPL's structure and actual practices and to simplify the document.

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DISCUSSION

Emergency Management at OPL

In an emergency, clients expect OPL to provide accurate, timely, and coordinated information and guidance, and ensure the continued delivery of service as is possible or expected. The effectiveness with which OPL can contact and inform key parties significantly impacts employee and public safety, as well as OPL's reputation and the public's confidence in the organization.

Given OPL's connection to the City, there are two different scenarios regarding emergency management for the library system. The first scenario is an emergency response that is OPL led, for an emergency that concerns the library system or a branch or department, exclusively. The second, and more likely scenario, is an emergency response that is led by the City for an emergency that affects City services, including library service. This may include a scenario in an OPL-City shared facility. In this second case, OPL senior management may be called upon to contribute to the city-wide emergency response. As part of the City's Emergency Operation Centre Control Group, OPL senior management would also be invited to contribute in the case of an emergency regardless of impacts on library services.

Given this connection with the City, OPL's incident response structure aligns with the City of Ottawa's to better manage and coordinate simple, complex, and unplanned emergencies. This command structure is the foundation in establishing OPL's Emergency Operations and Incident Management Command Centre (EOIMCC). OPL also manages a rotation of Service Duty Officers (SDO). The SDO group is composed of Management and Professional Exempt staff members who have received training in Emergency Management and Incident Command Systems. There is always an SDO on shift who can be reached 24/7. The SDO can support staff members in an emergency, helping to access emergency procedures or to decide that escalation is required.

The OPL's SDO is the single point of contact during an emergency situation, and is responsible for providing situational awareness, guidance, and support to the organization on a 24/7 rotational basis. The on duty SDO is responsible for assessing the situation at hand and determining if notification to OPL's CEO (or delegate) is required. In larger-scale instances the City's Corporate Duty Officer may be contacted.

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The OPL SDO represents the Library within the City's Operations Centre and may be asked to fulfil a functional role on the City's Emergency Operations Centre Operations Group.

The OPL CEO (or delegate) is the senior person responsible for OPL during an emergency situation and represents the Library within the City's Control Group at the Executive Level. Where the SDO is the primary point of contact for emergency response and potential escalation, the CEO (or delegate) is on hand to provide strategic advice or support, and decision-making or direction depending on the nature of the situation.

To assume a role in the command structure, members of the leadership team have received the required training to ensure they understand how the command structure functions and are able to fulfill the roles as may be required.

Updates to OPL's Emergency Management Program

In 2023, OPL initiated a complete revision of the suite of Emergency Management documents. The first phase of the revision focused on the branch / department-level emergency procedures.

The second phase of revision was a complete review of the foundational Emergency Plan and connected documents: the EOIMCC matrix, the Emergency Definitions, and the Response Escalation Guideline. The connected documents are added as appendices to the Plan to create a common language around emergency situations and for ease of use.

The Plan's 2024 update has three objectives to:

1) Align the Plan with the City's Emergency Management program and vocabulary;

2) Ensure the Plan's incident command roles align with OPL's leadership structure and reflect practice; and,

3) Simplify the Plan and ensure that it is appropriately updated.

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Objective 1: Aligning the Plan with the City's Emergency Management program and vocabulary

In December 2023, the City of Ottawa's Emergency Management Program Steering Committee approved the transition from the Incident Management System (IMS, a system put forth by Emergency Management Ontario) to the Incident Command System (ICS, put forth by ICS Canada). A report to the steering committee explained that the City conducted an internal review which identified the need for a single and integrated system that is shared across all City services and consistent with other partners in the National Capital Region. ICS is the most common emergency management framework adopted and used across Canada and recognizes all IMS training programs.

Since there is a likelihood of OPL collaborating with the City to manage an emergency, all efforts have been made in this revision to align the emergency vocabulary in the Plan with the City's use. For example, where there were five Escalation levels in the previous version of the Plan, there are now four, including Monitoring, Enhanced Operations, Activated Operations and State of Emergency.

In the same spirit, the Emergency Definitions now include language around Protective Measures, to harmonize emergency vocabulary across OPL's suite of emergency documents.

Objective 2: Ensuring the Plan's incident command roles align with OPL's senior management structure and reflect practice

The ICS structure is predicated on the understanding that in all incidents there are certain command functions that must be present. As a result, during an emergency, OPL's organizational structure (especially at the management level) is temporarily replaced with the ICS Command Structure. All ICS resources are coordinated so they are scalable and interoperable to achieve common objectives.

A significant update to the Plan is the explicit alignment of ICS command functions, with specific OPL senior management positions. The EOIMCC structure, as described in the Plan, details the roles of each command function (Command, Planning / Communications, Logistics / Human Resources, Finance / Supply). Each role is associated with a specific OPL senior management position and is further supported by a list of alternate trained staff members who could potentially assume the function. The aim of the Plan is to provide the framework for any arrangements and measures that

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may have to be taken, with built-in flexibility to allow available trained staff to step in during a lengthy emergency.

The updated Plan includes a table that maps specific command functions to senior management positions and includes details about Roles and Responsibilities of the ICS Management Functions. It is important to clearly assign functions to avoid confusion in the chain of command during an emergency. In the event of an absence, the identified alternate individual will assume the role.

The SDO role has also been clearly included in OPL's command structure diagram, as a reminder of the SDO's role as liaison during an emergency event.

Objective 3: Simplify the Plan and ensure that it is appropriately updated

The updated version of the Plan has eliminated some repetition and attempted to simplify the language around ICS to ensure that the document is easy to understand and use during an emergency.

Changes have also been made to the plan to align with current OPL terminology (e.g., clients rather than customers).

Sections have been added to align the plan with other OPL policies and procedures, including a "Support Documents" section that lists the relevant internal administrative documents.

A Revision History table has also been added to better track updated changes, as is the practice with OPL's policies and procedures.

CONSULTATION

The OPL Emergency Plan was reviewed in consultation with the City of Ottawa's Office of Emergency Management, OPL Service Duty Officers, and has been reviewed by the Library Senior Management Team.

ACCESSIBILITY IMPACTS

Ottawa Public Library complies with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, (2005)* in its operations. There are no accessibility impacts associated with this report.

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BOARD PRIORITIES

This report aligns with OPL Board Policy OPLB-002 Delegation of Authority and also responds to Board Policy OPLB-010 CEO Reporting and Board Monitoring.

BUSINESS ANALYSIS IMPLICATIONS

There are no business analysis considerations associated with this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications associated with this report.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

Risk management and mitigation is a consideration in all emergency program planning and activities. This update seeks to mitigate the risk of having a Plan that does not align with OPL's actual emergency management practices. More flexibility in the plan will allow senior management to assume command structure roles for which they are trained and available. Simplification of the Plan and the use of terminology consistent with the City's plan also mitigate risks that may otherwise present challenges in responding to emergencies in a quick and concise manner. Timely communication of these changes is critical to allow OPL to appropriately address emergencies. Upon approval, staff will be immediately updated using various avenues of communication including electronic, in-person and printed materials.

TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS

There are no technology impacts associated with this report.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Document 1 - OPL Emergency Plan – 2024 Public

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DISPOSITION

Staff will update the operational and administrative elements associated with OPL's Emergency Plan and all subcomponents, including annual reviews. An update of the Plan will be presented to the Board at the start of next term.