



Ottawa Public Library Board

Minutes

Meeting #: 15
Date: September 10, 2024
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.

This draft Minutes document contains a summary of the disposition of items and actions taken at the meeting. This document does not include all of the text that will be included in the final Minutes, such as the record of written and oral submissions. Recorded votes and dissents contained in this draft Minutes document are draft until the Minutes of the meeting are confirmed by the Board. The final draft Minutes will be published with the agenda for the next regular Board meeting and, once confirmed, will replace this document.

Notes:

1. The meeting began at 5:00 pm.
2. Trustees Bradley and Smith participated electronically.
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 14 - Tuesday, 11 June 2024
 - 6.2 Confidential Minute 6 - Tuesday, 11 June 2024

Results: Carried
7. Communications
There were no communications.
8. Chair's Verbal Update

Ādisōke Update

Chair Luloff provided an update regarding the construction progress of Ādisōke, noting work on the building envelope, including the installation of the air vapour barrier, insulation, exterior stone, windows, and skylights. He added that masonry and framing work continues on all levels of the interior, and painting is ongoing in the parking levels and mechanical rooms. He noted that the Chief Librarian and CEO, Sonia Bebbington, and Leslie Weir, Librarian and Archivist of Canada recently welcomed the National Librarians and National Archivists of Australia and New Zealand for a tour of the site. In closing, he encouraged everyone to follow the project at Ādisōke.ca or on the Central branch webpage on OPL's website.

TD Summer Reading Club

Chair Luloff congratulated staff on the success of the TD Summer Reading Club, Canada's biggest bilingual summer reading program for kids of all ages, interests, and abilities. He noted that the Club celebrates Canadian authors, illustrators, and stories, and is designed to inspire kids to explore the fun of reading over the summer months and prevent the "summer slide" in literacy skills, particularly among vulnerable populations. Chair Luloff mentioned that close to 12,000 kids registered for the Club at OPL this year, and more than 14,000 kids participated in over 800 programs during July and August.

National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

Chair Luloff noted that September 30 marks the fourth annual National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, and eight OPL locations (seven branches and InfoService) will be open from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm on Monday, September 30, 2024 to provide a "National Day for Truth and Reconciliation Learning and Action Space" and support OPL clients in understanding and learning more about the history and ongoing impacts of residential schools via resources and activities. OPL will also be welcoming author Tanya Talaga, the critically acclaimed and award-winning author of *Seven Fallen Feathers* for a special event to discuss her new book, *The Knowing* on September 30, in partnership with the Ottawa International Writers Festival and Library Archives Canada. In closing, he encouraged everyone to check out the book displays in branches and booklists on the OPL website highlighting Indigenous voices.

Sad News – Navan Community Member

Chair Luloff noted the recent passing of Gwendolyn Bradley, a neighbourhood leader from Navan, who died in July at the age of 91. Gwen was an avid reader, a volunteer, and an advocate for making reading accessible to the outlying areas of Ottawa via the Bookmobile. The Chair highlighted that the legacy of this work today is the vibrant Cumberland branch of OPL and the network of east-end bookmobile stops. He invited Trustee Kitts to add a few words.

Trustee Kitts spoke about Gwen's deep love of the library and her importance in bringing the Bookmobile to her rural community. She shared an excerpt from Gwen's eulogy that captured her passion for reading, her teaching background, and her emphasis on the importance of access to books for children. Trustee Kitts added in closing how fortunate she is to know the Bradley family and asked the Board to join her in sharing their condolences with them at this time.

MOTION OPL 20240910/1

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

Results: Received

9. Chief Librarian/Chief Executive Officer's Report

Adult Summer Reading Challenge

Sonia Bebbington, Chief Librarian and CEO highlighted a new program this past summer, an adult summer reading club called "Stories of Summer: An Adult Library Challenge." Over 1,700 clients picked up a BINGO card at their local branch in recent months: the cards encouraged them to find out more about our collections, spaces, programs, and resources, and cross off each item when they completed a challenge and expanded their library horizons. Feedback indicates that clients have been inspired to try new things at the Library, including online resources and new spaces. Ms. Bebbington noted that clients have until September 30 to return their completed card to a branch to receive a small prize (while supplies last), thanks to the generous support of the Friends of the Ottawa Public Library Association.

Ms. Bebbington congratulated long-time Carlingwood branch client, Victor Emerson, who took the idea of a summer library challenge to the next level by biking to all OPL locations this summer, including the Bookmobile and the BiblioBike! It took Victor approximately one month to complete the challenge, and he biked 633 kilometers overall. In closing, Ms. Bebbington said Victor hopes his adventures inspire others to visit a variety of OPL branches around the city.

Celebrating Pride

OPL participated in several Pride celebrations this summer, including International Pride Month in June and Capital Pride in August. In June, we welcomed renowned author Kai Cheng Thom, whose talk was both inspiring and hopeful. Ms. Bebbington also noted that library staff, family, and friends also participated in several Capital Pride events in August.

October Library Month

In preparation for Canadian Library Month in October, Ms. Bebbington announced that OPL will celebrate the Joy of Reading next month with contests, giveaways, and two exciting - and definitely joyful - programs planned. On Wednesday, October 9, the Library will welcome beloved children's author and illustrator Marie-Louise Gay for a creative writing workshop in French; on Monday, October 21 witty comedian and actor Steve Patterson will be entertaining Ottawans. In closing, Ms. Bebbington encouraged everyone to check out the OPL website for more information about Library Month.

Branch Hours

As a reminder, Ms. Bebbington underscored the return to OPL's fall hours last week, effective September 3, including Sunday hours for Beaverbrook, Cumberland, Greenboro, Hazeldean, Main, Nepean CentrepoinTE, North Gloucester, Orleans, Ruth E. Dickinson, Stittsville, and InfoService. Ms. Bebbington reminded everyone that eight locations (seven branches and InfoService) will also be open on the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation as mentioned previously by the Chair. She noted that current hours are posted at branch entrances and on the OPL website.

MOTION OPL 20240910/2

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

Results: Received

10. Presentations

10.1 Presentation - Digital Content at OPL

Sarah Macintyre, Division Manager, Client Services introduced Chris Simmons, Program Manager, Content Services. Mr. Simmons provided a presentation (*held on file with the Chief Librarian/Chief Executive Officer*) regarding OPL's digital content with a focus on eBooks and Audiobooks, and on the challenges and opportunities posed by these materials. The following is a summary of the information presented:

- Context: Suppliers and publishers;
- licensing models and challenges;
- Digital Content pricing, usage, and budget trends;
- Collaborations, including reciprocal lending and the Palace Project;

- Advocacy efforts for awareness, fair pricing, and accessibility.

Trustee Crawford inquired regarding the source and outcome of the eBook subsidy mentioned, and Mr. Simmons confirmed that – “Accessible Digital Books Initiative” announced by the federal government in 2019 provided over 5 years for the development of an initiative to support the sustainable production and distribution of accessible digital books by Canadian independent publishers through the Canada Book Fund. With this subsidy now winding down OPL is seeing a decline in audiobook production and availability.

Trustee Crawford further inquired regarding advocacy efforts regarding access to digital collections, and Ms. Bebbington indicated that both the Canadian Urban Library Council (CULC) and the Canadian Federation of Library Associations (CFLA) engage in advocacy on behalf of Canadian public libraries at the national level, and CFLA has led some advocacy efforts related to digital collections. In response to a follow up question about the effectiveness of advocacy efforts to date, Ms. Bebbington underscored the upcoming end date for the subsidy and added that advocacy is still ongoing.

Chair Luloff inquired regarding an anticipated timeline for integrating French and English eAudio content, including from Audible, as mentioned in the presentation when discussing the Palace project. Ms. Macintyre replied that although there is no timeline at this point, OPL has had fruitful discussions with representatives of the Palace project and advocated for the importance of this element in particular to OPL clients.

Chair Luloff thanked staff for the presentation.

There being no further comments or questions, the presentation was RECEIVED as presented.

MOTION OPL 20240910/3

That the Ottawa Public Library Board receive the presentation for information.

Results: Received

11. Reports

11.1 2023 Financial Statements

File Number: OPLB-2024-0910-11.1

Trustee Smith inquired regarding the cause of the reversal noted in Appendix 1 (reported revenue of more than \$16M from federal grants), and asked staff to comment on any steps taken to prevent this from occurring again. Ms. Bebbington replied that this amount was funding related to Ādisōke: a shared OPL, City of Ottawa, and Library and Archives Canada (LAC) project, with shared costs. Ms. Basile added that this was an accounting error that saw monies for the Ādisōke project that should have gone to the City of Ottawa funneled through OPL's accounts that was not caught in time to rectify. She underlined that City Financial Services staff, without knowing the details of the governance agreement between the City and LAC, may not have been able to identify that this funding should have been allocated directly to the City of Ottawa.

Trustee Smith asked whether the external auditors made any recommendations for OPL to inform future financial reports. Ms. Basile indicated that the external auditors would not have had the knowledge to address this, however, staff have had discussions with the City about ensuring OPL staff review at an earlier stage in the overall process.

There being no further comments or questions, the report was RECEIVED as presented.

MOTION OPL 20240910/4

That the Ottawa Public Library Board receive the 2023 Financial Statements.

Results: Received

11.2 Second Quarter 2024 Financial Status Report

File Number: OPLB-2024-0910-11.2

Prior to questions from trustees, the Board heard from the following delegation:

Shawn Menard, Councillor, Ward 17 Capital, thanked the Chief Librarian and CEO as well as the Board for their work for Ottawans, and noted Ms. Bebbington's excellent leadership of the organization. Councillor Menard addressed the modest surplus projected for 2024, and underlined the importance of thoughtful planning decisions by trustees, including considering enhancements to the accessibility of library services through minor investments. Specifically, he suggested expanding Sunday hours of operation, considering criteria such as equity and proximity to adequate transportation. In Capital Ward, the Councillor highlighted that the

Sunnyside branch of OPL serves residents with diverse income levels and currently is not open on Sundays. He noted that when Ādisōke and the Central branch opens, Sunnyside branch will be a closer branch for many of the populations in the core, and usage will increase. In closing, Councillor Menard underscored the importance of access to print resources, the Internet, family activities, washrooms, as well as shelter from extreme weather conditions – all at the public library. Noting the importance of libraries to building community, he said that he could think of “no greater bang for your buck” than investment in library staff to expand hours of operation.

Chair Luloff thanked Councillor Menard for advocating for library services, for sharing OPL information in his Ward newsletters, and for championing the Library’s services.

Trustee King echoed the Chair’s sentiments and added that many councillor colleagues are strong advocates for OPL. He added that the Board notes the stated desire for more services.

Trustee King further inquired of staff regarding the projected use of the 2024 surplus. Ms. Bebbington, first noting appreciation for the support for library services, not only from the delegate this evening but also from Councillors Carr and Lo, who have both asked questions about hours, stated that the 2024 estimated surplus is \$1.377M as per Appendix F of the report. She indicated that approximately \$1M is already committed for compensation for new positions to prepare for the Central branch. Given the time it takes to describe, classify, and then to staff these positions, it was expected that some surplus would accumulate over 2024. Ms. Bebbington further added that staff are committed to examining equity considerations when contemplating potential expansions for Sunday hours, as per the November 30, 2021 direction to staff.

Trustee King thanked staff for their thorough response. He commented on the small amount of provincial support provided to public libraries in Ontario for many years and underscored that despite continued and determined advocacy among library industry organizations on this matter, there were limited resources to support additional services. In closing, he noted the Board’s appreciation of efforts by staff to provide additional services through community development initiatives, for example, in recent years.

There being no further comments or questions, the report was RECEIVED as presented.

MOTION OPL 20240910/5

That the Ottawa Public Library Board receive the 2024 second quarter financial reports.

Results: Received

11.3 Ottawa Public Library Emergency Plan

File Number: OPLB-2024-0910-11.3

In response to a question from Trustee King regarding the process for notifying trustees during emergency situations, Anna Basile, Deputy CEO, Corporate Services noted that staff refer to the OPL Board Policy OPLB-002 Delegation of Authority Policy to guide their plans. This policy includes a provision for emergency decision-making by employees to manage the emergency situation and then report to the Board; she cited the pandemic email messages as an example of this type of reporting. Highlighting OPL's coordination with partners such as the City, she noted that in cases where an emergency affects an OPL location co-located with a City facility, notification to trustees would occur at the same time as notification to City Council, for example.

Trustee King thanked staff for elucidating the communication elements. He also was appreciative of the library's due diligence with respect to timely communications.

There being no further comments or questions, the report was RECEIVED as presented.

MOTION OPL 20240910/6

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

Results: Received

11.4 2024 Fund Development Update

File Number: OPLB-2024-0910-11.4

MOTION OPL 20240910/7

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

Results: Received

12. Trustees' Items

12.1 2024 American Library Association Annual Conference and Exhibition - Trustee Catherine Kitts' Report

File Number: OPLB-2024-0910-12.1

Trustee Kitts commented that it was a pleasure to attend the ALA conference and that she will be applying what she had learned over the remainder of the term of Board. He highlighted important conference sessions about intellectual freedom (in light of rising numbers of book challenges in the United States), as well as the worthwhile nature of a tour of several libraries in San Diego, including the San Diego Central Library, accompanied by the architect. In closing, Trustee Kitts thanked the Board for the opportunity to attend, learn from sessions, and be surrounded by passionate and inspiring library professionals.

MOTION OPL 20240910/8

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

Results: Received

13. In Camera Items

13.1 Labour Relations Update - In Camera - Reporting Out Date: Not Reporting Out

That, in accordance with the *Public Libraries Act*, the Ottawa Public Library Board resolve to move In Camera pursuant to 16.1(4)(d), to close part of a meeting to members of the public as the subject matter considered is "Labour Relations or Employee Negotiations", to receive a Labour Relations Update, which will not be reported out.

A confidential presentation was circulated to the Board via email prior to the meeting that consisted of a brief Labour Relations Update. The Board Members had no questions to staff, and therefore did not require to go In Camera/Closed Session for this item.

MOTION OPL 20240910/9

That the Ottawa Public Library Board received the update with respect to Labour Relations.

Results: Received

13.2 Chief Librarian and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Mid-Year Review - Reporting Out Date: Not Reporting Out

Note: The In Camera meeting began 5:55 pm.

That, in accordance with the *Public Libraries Act*, the Ottawa Public Library Board resolve to move In Camera pursuant to 16.1(4)(b), to close part of a meeting to members of the public as the subject matter considered relates to "Personal Matters about an Identifiable Individual", to receive a confidential presentation on the Chief Librarian and CEO's Mid-Year Review, which will not be reported out.

Results: Carried

Upon resuming in open session at 7:25 pm, the Board moved the following:

MOTION OPL 20240910/10

Moved by Vice-Chair Kathy Fisher:

That the Ottawa Public Library Board receive the Mid-Year Review presentation from the Chief Librarian/CEO for information.

Results: Received

14. Information Previously Distributed

14.1 Memo - Mobile Framework and Bookmobile Services Update

14.2 Memo - Hybrid Meetings Debrief

14.3 Memo - Administrative Updates to the Management and Professional Exempt Terms and Conditions of Employment

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

There were no Notices of Motion.

16. Inquiries

There were no Inquiries.

17. Other Business

Sonia Bebbington, Chief Librarian and CEO is reading "[Proof](#)", by Beverley McLachlin, Trustee Crawford is reading "[Cold People](#)", by Tom Rob Smith, Trustee Brown is reading "[Grief Is For People](#)", by Sloane Crosley. Julie

Tremblay, Library Board Assistant is reading "[Ru](#)", by Kim Thú. Sarah Macintyre is reading "[Babel](#)", by R.F. Kuang. Myra Skaronski, Division Manager, Branch Operations is reading "[My Effin' Life](#)", by Geddy Lee. Cathy Bourgoin, administrative assistant is reading "[Meet Me At The Lake](#)", by Carley Fortune.

18. Adjournment

Be It Resolved that the Ottawa Public Library Board meeting be adjourned at 7:33 pm.

19. Next Meeting

Tuesday, October 8, 2024

Original signed by Matthew Luloff,
Chair

Sonia Bebbington, Recording
Secretary