



Ottawa Public Library Board

Minutes

Meeting #: 16
Date: October 8, 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

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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. Chair Luloff and Trustee Brown participated electronically.
2. Recognition of Anishinābe Algonquin Territory
Chair Luloff welcomed member 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 15 - Tuesday, 10 September 2024
 - 6.2 Confidential Minutes 7 - Tuesday, 10 September 2024

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

Ādisōke Update

Chair Luloff provided an update regarding Ādisōke, noting the installation of windows, ongoing structural steel work on the roof, and waterproofing work. He added that masonry and electrical work continues, and stud wall framing is being installed through the building. In closing, he encouraged everyone to follow the project at Ādisōke.ca or on the Central branch webpage on OPL's website; and he also encouraged people to drive, bike, walk by and see the exciting progress in person.

Canadian Library Month

Chair Luloff indicated that October is Canadian Library Month, a time when Canadians celebrate the valuable role libraries play in our lives. He mentioned

this year's theme at OPL is the "Joy of Reading," adding that reading brings joy in countless ways, and for many, the public library is where that joy comes to life. He noted upcoming programs including an event with award-winning children's author and illustrator, Marie-Louise Gay on October 9, and another with comedian, media host, and author Steve Patterson on October 21. Chair Luloff announced the return of both the book bag giveaway and Golden Tickets: new clients who get a card (and current clients who refer someone to the library) will receive a book bag, and Golden Tickets are hidden around the city (including in the Library's 33 branches and on the bookmobile) and can be redeemed for a book bag as well as bragging rights on social media. In closing, the Chair thanked the Friends of the Public Library Association for their support of OPL's Library Month activities.

Cumberland Branch 25th Anniversary

Chair Luloff noted that the Cumberland branch will be celebrating its 25th anniversary later this month. Cumberland Township library services first started with a bookmobile stop, then moved to several school locations before the current branch location opened in the Ray Friel Centre in 1999. He encouraged fellow trustees, OPL staff, and the community to join him and the Chief Librarian and CEO on October 19th to celebrate the anniversary, which will be celebrated with various activities, including a magic show, traditional Métis jigging, and a puppet show. More details can be found on the OPL website.

MOTION OPL 20241008/1

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

Results: Received

9. Chief Librarian/Chief Executive Officer's Report

Public Engagement for Service Planning

Sonia Bebbington, Chief Librarian and CEO mentioned that OPL is encouraging clients to share their stories via public engagement online and in-person to help inform OPL's service strategies until November 4. She noted that clients can describe how the Library has made a difference in their life (in words, drawings, conversations, interviews, or videos) at select branches and bookmobile stops. She shared some comments received thus far: "The Library saved my life," from a client who discovered audiobooks with the help of OPL staff after experiencing challenges with their vision; and, "The Library is my home away from home," and, "My happy place". She noted that others have shared that they found a safe

place to study, a space to meet other new parents, a warm place, and a haven – all at the Library. The feedback also includes thoughtful suggestions about programs and services. In closing, clients can find out how to share their story by visiting the public engagement page of the OPL website.

Programming in November at OPL

Ms. Bebbington noted that OPL is getting ready to launch the 2024 series of Ottawa Reads Young Adults (YA) in November, which connects readers and fans of all ages with YA authors. Participants can learn more about books and the writing process from some fantastic writers, including Eisner Award-winning Canadian cartoonist Faith Erin Hicks at the Beaverbrook branch on November 4th. Ms. Hicks will give a drawing demonstration with audience participation to encourage young creators to make their own comics with simply a pencil, paper, and an idea. Visit the OPL website to register and learn more about Ottawa Reads YA.

Thanksgiving Day Closure

Ms. Bebbington noted that Ottawa Public Library locations will be closed on October 14 to observe Thanksgiving. She encouraged everyone to check out OPL's online resources over the long weekend, as the Library boasts a huge collection of recipe books for amazing dishes to make for Thanksgiving, the upcoming Halloween season, or beyond. She recommended two cookbooks: [*“Roast Chicken and Other Stories”*](#) by Simon Hopkinson (endearingly written), and [*“Salt, Fat, Acid, Heat”*](#), by Samin Nosrat (endearingly illustrated). Visit BiblioOttawaLibrary.ca for more information and resources – OPL's virtual branch is open on the Thanksgiving holiday and all year round.

MOTION OPL 20241008/2

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

Results: Received

10. Reports

10.1 2025 Board Meeting Schedule

File Number: OPLB-2024-1008-10.1

MOTION OPL 20241008/3

That the Ottawa Public Library Board approve the 2025 regular meeting schedule, as proposed in Document 1.

Results: Carried

10.2 Central Branch at Ādisōke - Service Planning Update and Impacts

File Number: OPLB-2024-1008-10.2

Craig Ginther, Division Manager, Service Planning (participating remotely) and Anna Basile, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, and Division Manager, Corporate Services provided a presentation (*held on file with the Chief Librarian/Chief Executive Officer*) regarding service planning for the Central Branch at Ādisōke and associated operational requirements. Laura George Fernandes, Portfolio Manager, Special Projects, was also in attendance to respond to questions. The following is a summary of the information presented:

- Summarized the client-centric and data-driven planning approach;
- Described the Visitor Experience Principles (seamless, intentional, inclusive, and transformational);
- Provided the Service Model;
- Highlighted Staffing Requirements (including resources for traditional and new services);
- Provided Operating Costs (Plan for funding to be secured via combination of existing funding, efficiencies, new pressures, and off-set savings upon decommissioning of the current Main branch);
- Outlined Furniture, Fixtures and Equipment (FF&E) Refinements (Strategy to address increased costs, including anticipated request via the 2025 budget process to withdraw \$2M from the Library Reserve); and,
- Summarized Next Steps (Developing detailed plans for each service category, elements to be included in the 2025 draft Budget).

In response to Trustee Bradley's question regarding the pressure from the \$5M FF&E gap (increases from \$11M to \$16M) and whether staff will be procuring FF&E in 2025, Ms. Basile confirmed in the affirmative that procurements will occur over the course of 2025 and as such, there is an immediate need to address the funding gap.

Trustee Bradley asked for additional clarification regarding sources for the remaining \$3M gap (after \$2M is taken from Reserves). Ms. Basile indicated that staff have identified sources for the remaining \$3M and these will be incorporated into the draft 2025 Budget.

In response to Trustee Bradley's subsequent question regarding what funding options staff considered and ultimately did not proceed with, Ms.

Basile noted that staff considered securing funding through debt, which is atypical, would require City collaboration, and would have significant operational impacts in terms of interest. She added that another option was to address the \$5M funding gap entirely through the Library Reserve, and further elaborated that staff felt that a combination of sources was the best approach to not exhaust one avenue of funding.

Sonia Bebbington, Chief Librarian and CEO noted that the approach mentioned also aligns with the Ottawa Library Reserve Fund Policy ([By-law](#) no. 2019-205), in ensuring the use of reserves respect recommended thresholds and their intended purpose, which are for one-time costs.

Trustee Bradley asked when staff will be providing the information on the plans for the remaining \$3M gap, and Ms. Basile noted the detailed information will be provided in the draft 2025 Budget, adding that Board authority will be required to transfer funds.

In response to Trustee Bradley's question regarding whether the 2025 budget directions from City Council will be sufficient for OPL's staffing requirements, Ms. Basile noted that staff are confident that they can bring forward a budget that respects the direction by City Council and which simultaneously allows the Board to achieve its requirements for the organization.

Trustee Kitts commented that she was impressed with the consultation and research invested in the service planning. She highlighted the intentionality of the visitor experience principles may be just as impressive as the building's architecture.

In response to Trustee Kitts' question regarding whether the budget pressures identified this evening were considering a projected 2.9% increase (2025 budget directions), Ms. Basile stated that the funding requirements presented this evening are independent of the 2025 budget directions. She noted that requirements for compensation, as well as the provision of library services and facilities have been developed independently of the budget directions. She added that staff are confident that with the draft budget this year and through the use of strategic approaches, OPL will be able to achieve funding requirements in 2025 and 2026, with the 2025 Budget remaining aligned with the direction established by Council.

Trustee Kitts asked when recruitment will begin for the positions identified, and Ms. Basile noted that all recruitment will take place in 2025, with some

initiated in early 2025, and others towards Q4. Trustee Kitts inquired whether staff were confident these numbers of employees and timelines could be achieved, and Ms. Basile replied in the affirmative. She mentioned there is a lot of excitement, historically the Performance Measurement Framework average applicants per job posting turned a positive result with an upward trend, indicating a growing interest in library jobs and employment with OPL.

Trustee Crawford asked staff to continue to consider the needs of neighbourhood organizations near the Central branch, including the unique student population at the nearby Centennial School, which includes a high number of students who have a different range of abilities. Mr. Ginther noted that Main branch staff have a great relationship with the school staff and students. He said staff have explored how best to start building excitement about the Central branch Ādisōke with the students and staff at this school, in participation with the project team and the intention is to continue that engagement. Mr. Ginther noted that staff are committed to ongoing engagement with many organizations and as staff continue detailed planning for the different services in the building, the relationship and engagement with Centennial School will continue.

Trustee Crawford inquired whether the \$5M cost increase was due to inflationary pressures, and Mr. Ginther replied that there were two primary reasons for the cost increase: inflation, as the trustee mentioned, as well as the fact that initial costs were determined prior to refinement of the service model. He added that staff are noting pressures of five to seven percent per year and are accounting for those pressures within the estimated increases, as well as carrying some additional contingency in the updated estimates to ensure an additional buffer.

Trustee Crawford asked staff to confirm whether funding for Ādisōke has been received to date from the province. Mr. Ginther confirmed that province has not provided funding for the project.

Vice-Chair Fisher suggested the Board formalize a direction to staff to include in the draft 2025 Budget a \$2M withdrawal from the Library Reserves to fund FF&E related to the Central branch at Ādisōke. Chair Luloff concurred, and the Board unanimously consented to the following direction:

That staff be directed to include a transfer of \$2M to the Library Reserve in the 2025 Operating Budget to fund furniture and equipment (FF&E) related to the Central branch of the Ottawa Public Library at Ādisōke.

Chair Luloff noted the Central branch at Ādisōke is a significant project and asked staff to provide additional information about how they are working to ensure services and priorities are balanced across the OPL system. Ms. Bebbington noted staff are mindful of needs system-wide and intend to deliver Ādisōke successfully while maintaining a balance of services and resources across the system. She noted ongoing work such as reviewing rural branch hours as an example of other projects currently undertaken to ensure responsive, city-wide services. Trustees can expect to hear more about rural branch hours at the November 5th OPL Board meeting.

Trustee Bradley asked a point of clarification regarding whether staff have the delegated authority to make the decision to withdraw the \$2M from the Library Reserve. Ms. Basile stated that staff do not have the delegated authority, as such the Board and City Council must approve the \$2M withdrawal from the Library Reserve.

Further to the point of clarification, Trustee Bradley asked if the current direction to staff on the floor is adequate. Through Alexandra Yarrow, Project Manager, Board and Strategic Services, Ms. Basile confirmed in the affirmative that a direction to staff is sufficient at this time, as they build the draft 2025 Budget for tabling in November, and which the Board will then subsequently consider for approval at the December 3rd meeting.

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

MOTION OPL 20241008/4

That the Ottawa Public Library Board:

1. **Receive this report for information;**
2. **Approve visitor experience principles for the Central branch;**
and,
3. **Approve the service model, as further described in this report.**

Results: Received and Carried

Direction to staff:

That staff be directed to include a transfer of \$2M to the Library Reserve in the 2025 Operating Budget to fund furniture and equipment (FF&E) related to the Central branch of the Ottawa Public Library at Ādisōke.

10.3 Semi-Annual Performance Measurement - January to June 2024

File Number: OPLB-2024-1008-10.3

The Board heard from the following delegation:

John D. Reid noted that active cardholder numbers increased two percent in the first half of 2024, compared to the same period in 2023. He further noted that the number of active cardholders represents approximately 22 percent of the city's population, and his view was that this percentage has remained generally unchanged over the last ten years. Mr. Reid observed that while key performance indicators track progress over time, top performing institutions regularly benchmark against their peers to identify areas for improvement. He then commented regarding the average distance to a library branch in several Canadian cities. Noting the average distance to a branch in urban Ottawa is 2.7 kilometers (km) and 3.3 km for the city as a whole, this is higher than in Toronto (1.2 km), Montreal (1.5 km), Vancouver (1.9 km), Calgary (2.1 km), Edmonton (2.5 km), and Winnipeg (2.7 km). Mr. Reid felt that based on this analysis, citizens in Ottawa are not getting the standard level of service that is common across the country. He added that the Facilities Framework Gap Analysis report highlighted specific underserved areas such as his own community in River Ward and those adjacent that also face equity challenges. He suggested that staff acknowledge these needs and lack of funding to address them directly in the budget. He highlighted that OPL has adhered to the City's budget directions for years, despite pressures such as those identified tonight for FF&E, and at previous meetings for eBooks and expanded Sunday hours. In closing, Mr. Reid suggested that the 2025 OPL Draft Operating and Capital Budget should be transparent by acknowledging service gaps to City Council, so they are informed of the potential deficiencies that arise due to budget constraints.

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

MOTION OPL 20241008/5

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

Results: Received

11. In Camera Items

There were no *in camera* items.

12. Information Previously Distributed

12.1 Memo - Proposed 2025 Budget Timelines and Directions

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

There were no Notices of Motion.

14. Inquiries

There were no Inquiries.

15. Other Business

Trustee Smith is reading [*"The Creative Act: A Way of Being"*](#), by Rick Rubin and [*"The Master and Margarita"*](#), by Mikhail Bulgakov. Trustee King is reading [*"Autocracy, Inc"*](#), by Anne Applebaum and [*"Oh Tyranny: Twenty Lessons From the Twentieth Century"*](#), by Timothy Snyder. Vice-Chair Fisher is reading [*"A Thousand Splendid Suns"*](#), by Khaled Hosseini. Laura George Fernandes, Portfolio Manager, Special Projects is reading [*"Proof \(Jilly Truitt #3\)"*](#), by Beverley McLachlin. Chair Luloff is reading [*"Unveiled: How Western Liberals Empower Radical Islam"*](#) by Yasmine Mohammed and [*"All Out War: The Full Story of How Brexit Sank Britain's Political Class"*](#), by Tim Shipman.

Chair Luloff wished a belated happy new year to Jewish friends and colleagues who celebrated Rosh Hashanah last week, and a happy Diwali in advance to friends and colleagues celebrating the Hindu festival of lights later this month.

16. Adjournment

Be It Resolved that the Ottawa Public Library Board meeting be adjourned at 6:04 pm.

17. Next Meeting

Tuesday, 5 November 2024 (Budget Tabling)

Original signed by Matthew Luloff,
Chair

Sonia Bebbington, Recording
Secretary