



Ottawa Public Library Board

Minutes

Meeting #:	17
Date:	November 5, 2024
Time:	5 pm
Location:	Champlain Room, 110 Laurier Avenue West, and by electronic participation
Present:	Chair Matthew Luloff, Trustee Jessica Bradley, Trustee Alison Crawford, Trustee Rawlson King, Trustee Catherine Kitts, Trustee Harvey A. Slack, Trustee Adam Smith
Absent:	Vice-Chair Kathy Fisher, Trustee Mary-Rose Brown

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.

Note:

1. The meeting began at 5:02 pm.

2. Recognition of Anishinābe Algonquin Nation 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

Vice-Chair Fisher and Trustee Brown sent their regrets.

5. Declarations of Interest

No Declarations of Interest were filed.

6. Confirmation of Minutes

6.1 Minutes 16 - Tuesday, 8 October 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 and stonework. He added that the east tower crane has been removed and that workers continue to install the elevators. He indicated that mechanical, electrical, and plumbing work are advancing on all floors. In closing, he encouraged everyone to follow the project at Ādisōke.ca or on the Central branch webpage on OPL's website.

Financial Literacy Month

Chair Luloff indicated that November is Financial Literacy Month and OPL will be working with the YMCA's Youth Gambling Awareness Program to offer insightful and engaging workshops about youth gambling awareness aimed at tweens, teens, and parents. He added that OPL's collection includes a wide range of print and online resources for all ages to support financial literacy and help residents reach their financial goals. More details can be found on the OPL website.

Remembrance Day

Chair Luloff noted that Ottawa Public Library branches and administrative offices will be closed on November 11 to observe Remembrance Day. He added that Blackburn Hamlet branch will be hosting a free screening of the National Film Board movie “A Return to Memory” on November 7. He encouraged everyone to take the opportunity to honour the courage and sacrifice of those who have served and are serving this country.

MOTION OPL 20241105/1

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

Results: Received

9. Chief Librarian/Chief Executive Officer's Report

Stittsville Branch 50th Anniversary

Sonia Bebbington, Chief Librarian and CEO announced that the Stittsville branch is marking its 50th anniversary this year and will be celebrating this milestone on November 23. She added that the festivities will kick off at 10:30 am with a special library-themed storytime, followed by face-painting, button making, and games for all ages. A toast to the branch and community will then be followed by speeches and cake. In closing, she mentioned there will be an amazing puppet theatre performance at 2:45 pm, *Superhero Showdown* by Ottawa-based Rock the Arts Puppets. She encouraged everyone to attend this special celebration.

Library Month Wrap-Up

Ms. Bebbington highlighted the recent initiatives for Canadian Library Month – the Joy of Reading/*Le joie de lire* was the focus, with golden ticket treasure hunts, great online engagement, and many new clients signing up for a free library card. She added that while Library Month has been shelved for another year, OPL is open to all Ottawans year-round for them to find their library joy anytime. She looked forward sharing a more fulsome recap of Library Month activities next month.

Coming Up

Ms. Bebbington highlighted a few upcoming November events, including a drop-in Sensory Storytime program at St-Laurent branch, an event with author Peggy Blair at Centennial branch on November 9, whose latest book is *Double Vision*, and a teen writing workshop at Carlingwood branch with Young Adult author Alyssa Delle Palme on November 28.

MOTION OPL 20241105/2

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

Results: Received

10. Presentations

10.1 Community Development Update

Sarah Macintyre, Division Manager, Client Services introduced Robin Gallagher, Program Manager, Client Experience and Community Development. Ms. Gallagher provided a presentation (*held on file with the Chief Librarian/Chief Executive Officer*) on the topic of community development at OPL. The following is a summary of the information presented:

- History: Definition of library community development, launch of the of the OPL Community of Practice and Toolkit, pandemic response, the new Community Development team, and OPL's current approach to community development;
- Recent Project Highlights, including the Ottawa-Carleton Detention Centre Men's Book Club in collaboration with The John Howard Society;
- Next steps: Alignment with the City, building internal capacity, and the 2025 Priority Neighbourhood Project at St Laurent branch.

Trustee King thanked staff for their work, particularly in engaging with partners. He was pleased to see the St Laurent branch selected for the Priority Neighbourhood 2025 Project, and referenced the local challenges. He further recognized the hard and important work of staff over recent years in collaborating with community partners to launch several new community development initiatives in lower-income areas around the city.

Trustee King asked for additional information regarding community partnerships, and Ms. Macintyre indicated that staff are already doing a great deal of community engagement, and will be focusing on bridging potential gaps and planning for 2025. She noted it is too early in the project to identify any specific community groups that may be involved at this point, and added that each partnership will look different and be built collaboratively.

Trustee King urged staff to tap into the many possible partners, underlining particularly the many organizations housed in the Rideau Community Hub, and the Rideau-Rockcliffe Community Resource Center.

Chair Luloff asked staff to clarify that the priority neighbourhood project will not come at the expense of other community development initiatives. Ms. Macintyre confirmed in the affirmative, adding that staff has seen a significant community engagement in areas like Carlington for example, which will continue.

Trustee Crawford mentioned that several schools are located near the St Laurent area, and inquired about possible collaboration with the Vanier branch nearby as well. Ms. Macintyre clarified that each branch has a dedicated service area and also works collaboratively with nearby branches depending on the initiative. She indicated that this will be considered as the project evolves.

The Chair recognized Ms. Macintyre and the Community Development team for their tremendous accomplishments thus far.

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

MOTION OPL 20241105/3

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

Results: Received

11. Reports

11.1 Hours of Operation Review - Changes to Rural Branch Hours

File Number: OPLB-2024-1105-11.1

Sonia Bebbington, Chief Librarian/CEO provided opening remarks, after which Myra Skaronski, Division Manager, Branch Services, provided a PowerPoint presentation for Board Members with an overview of the changes to rural branch hours of operation to be implemented in 2025. In summary, Ms. Skaronski outlined:

- Community feedback about hours (consistency, longer hours, and additional programs for all ages);
- Planned changes to (Current hours, new hours, and differences);
- Additional programming opportunities; and,

- Next steps (resources and implementation, disbanding the Hours of Operation Ad hoc Committee).

Ms. Skaronski recognized the valuable contributions of three branch managers to this plan: Karen Beiles, Sharon Campbell and Shannon MacGillivray

Trustee Bradley shared her excitement regarding the expansion of services in rural communities, and inquired whether the mandate of the Hours of Operation Ad hoc Committee had been fulfilled. Ms. Bebbington indicated that since staff are not anticipating any further changes to hours of operation through the end of this term of board, it was, and for that reason staff recommend disbanding the Committee.

Trustee Bradley mentioned that there have been delegates before the Board in the past requesting increased hours of operation at branches across the city, particularly on Sundays. She asked what would determine the need for a new Ad hoc Committee, and Ms. Bebbington indicated that a decision to further review hours within existing funds is operational. Ms. Bebbington added that significantly increasing hours would require additional resources and could be a consideration in re-constituting an Ad hoc Committee, but ultimately the subject would appear before the Board.

In response to Trustee Bradley's question regarding efficiencies that funded this expansion of rural hours, Ms. Skaronski noted that staff looked at staffing hours, branch hours in geographically proximate communities, and programming offered by other community organizations to identify the most optimal combination of hours for each branch. She reiterated that the changes demonstrate OPL's commitment to ensuring more consistent access to OPL services.

As a follow-up, Trustee Bradley inquired whether the efficiencies with respect to vacancies included reducing vacancies or vacancy rates for 2025. Ms. Skaronski replied that reviewing needs as positions are vacated occurs on an ongoing basis and occurred as part of this process, with consideration of operational requirements.

Trustee Kitts thanked staff for their tremendous work on the expansion of rural hours. She noted that her presentation regarding this at the recent Rural Summit was well received. She inquired whether staff were exploring this prior to the councillor-led consultations ahead of the Rural Summit, and further inquired whether a fulsome review of this kind had occurred since amalgamation. Ms. Skaronski confirmed that staff were

exploring this project as part of the approved 2024 Corporate Work Plan, prior to the feedback received from councillor-led sessions earlier this year. She further added that it was her understanding that a fulsome review had not been undertaken since amalgamation although some adjustments to rural hours were made in the past five years.

Trustee Kitts noted in closing that rural branches are a hub of activity in communities often without other programming and resources, and that she appreciated staff efforts to serve these communities. Ms. Skaronski thanked Trustee Kitts for her remarks and highlighted that staff confirm the desire for more programming in rural communities.

Chair Luloff thanked staff for the review of rural hours.

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

MOTION OPL 20241105/4

That the Ottawa Public Library Board:

- 1. Receive this report for information; and,**
- 2. Approve disbanding the Hours of Operation Ad hoc Committee, as further described in this report.**

Results: Received and Carried

11.2 2025 Draft Operating and Capital Budget Estimates and Four-Year Capital Forecast

File Number: OPLB-2024-1105-11.2

Sonia Bebbington, Chief Librarian and CEO provided opening remarks, after which Anna Basile, Deputy CEO and Division Manager, Corporate Services, provided a PowerPoint presentation for Board Members with an overview of the 2025 Draft Budget, including directions, efficiencies, operating pressures and staff requirements, capital allocations, the four-year budget projection, funding for Central branch for Furniture, Fixtures, and Equipment (FF&E), and recommendations. Matthew Pritz, Program Manager, Finance and Business Services and Diana Adjarska-Litzanova, City of Ottawa Financial Services were also available to respond to questions of clarification. A copy of the presentation is held on file with the Chief Librarian and CEO.

The budget report outlined funding approaches to advance OPL's key priorities, and to table the 2025 draft budget identifying operating pressures for deliberation and consideration at the meeting on December 3, 2024. Following the presentation, staff responded to two questions of clarification from Board Members as follows:

Chair Luloff asked staff to confirm whether they have assurances from the City of Ottawa that OPL will receive the budget required in 2026 (that is, a minimum of \$3M for the cost-of-living allowance (COLA) and other operating pressures, considering the 2025 budget allocates new hiring to Q4 2025). Ms. Bebbington confirmed that this risk to the 2025 draft budget was raised with City colleagues and the current strategy was co-developed with them, noting OPL and the City are aware the strategy places greater pressure on COLA for 2026. She said the proposed approach is more prudent from a financial planning perspective and aligns with general accounting rules and principles.

Trustee Bradley requested clarification regarding the process of approval for use of the Reserve. Ms. Basile confirmed to Trustee Bradley that the Board will be asked to approve a \$2M draw on the Reserve for FF&E for the Central branch at the December Board meeting.

Chair Luloff stated that he looked forward to more detailed deliberations at the next meeting. As a reminder, Chair Luloff reiterated budget timelines:

- The OPL Budget English and French links can be found under the "About Us" Web page on the OPL website;
- "Budget 2025" and the email box for Budget-specific public feedback is: BudgetOPLBPO@BiblioOttawaLibrary.ca;
- The OPL draft budget will be tabled at Council, with a presentation by OPL staff;
- Councillor-led budget consultations will be held over the next month, OPL staff will attend upon request;
- Comments from consultations and public feedback will be compiled and reported to the Board at the December 3 meeting; and,
- Members of the public can register to make a public delegation at the December meeting, regarding the budget, at any time following tonight's meeting up until the times identified on the Board Web page of the OPL website.

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

Note: The report was tabled at the meeting. Documentation was posted publicly upon commencement of item.

MOTION OPL 20241105/5

That the Ottawa Public Library Board:

1. **Receive and table the 2025 Draft Budget for Ottawa Public Library, and the four-year capital forecast; and,**
2. **Direct staff to forward the 2025 Draft Budget for Ottawa Public Library to Ottawa City Council on November 13, 2024, as part of Ottawa City Council's tabling of the City of Ottawa 2025 Draft Operating and Capital budget.**

Results: Received and Tabled

12. In Camera Items

There were no *in camera* items.

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

December OPL Board Meeting Seating Arrangements:

That staff be directed to randomize seating arrangements for the Budget approval meeting in order for Board members to have the opportunity to sit beside different people.

Trustee Slack is reading [*“Music and Mind”*](#), by Renée Fleming. Matthew Pritz, Program Manager, Finance and Business Services will be reading another novel by Daniel Silva. Karen Beiles, Public Services is reading [*“Tom Lake”*](#), by Ann Patchett. Sharon Campbell, Public Services is reading [*“By Any Other Name”*](#), by Jodi Picoult. Shannon MacGillivray is reading [*“Briar Club”*](#), by Kate Quinn. Chair Luloff thanked everyone for promoting literacy and looked forward to checking out some of the titles mentioned.

17. Adjournment

Be It Resolved that the Ottawa Public Library Board meeting be adjourned at 6:22 pm.

18. Next Meeting

Tuesday, December 3, 2024

Original signed by Matthew Luloff,
Chair

Sonia Bebbington, Recording
Secretary