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Report to / Rapport au:

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

December 3, 2024 / 3 décembre 2024

Submitted by / Soumis par:

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File Number/Numéro du dossier: OPLB-2024-1203-11.3

SUBJECT: 2025 Board Conference Attendance

OBJET: Participation aux conférences du Conseil d'administration de 2025

REPORT RECOMMENDATION

That the Ottawa Public Library Board approve the plan for 2025 conference participation of trustees, as further described in this report.

RECOMMANDATION DU RAPPORT

Que le Conseil d'administration de la Bibliothèque publique d'Ottawa approuve le plan de participation de les administrateurs et administratrices pour les conférences de 2025, tel que décrit plus en détail dans ce rapport.

BACKGROUND

In accordance with the Ottawa Public Library ("OPL" or "the Library") Board ("the Board") Policy 003-OPLB Trustee Orientation and Continuing Education, trustees are encouraged to participate in external educational opportunities such as attending relevant conferences and webinars during their term(s). They are also encouraged to participate in industry associations by serving on various committees or working groups,

which provide trustees with advocacy opportunities and may also serve an educational purpose. Lastly, trustees are encouraged to participate in internal learning and advocacy opportunities to learn more about the Library's services.

Staff develop an annual Board Continuing Education Plan for trustees, which highlights available continuing education opportunities for the upcoming year and proposes the attendance of trustees at key industry conferences (as known at the time of the report) for that year.

Continuing education for trustees is guided by the principles of fairness (for example, each trustee should have the opportunity to attend a minimum of one library conference during their four-year term) and fiscal responsibility (in alignment with the Library's operating budget). A trustee who takes an active role in a conference or other event (for example, who acts as the Board's representative, gives a presentation, or serves as a panelist) will be given priority for that event.

Participation in continuing education, and the associated expenses, are subject to Board pre-approval, in keeping with two OPL Board policies (002-OPLB Delegation of Authority ("the DOA") and 007-OPLB Trustee Expense Reimbursement) and the City of Ottawa Travel Guidelines.

Trustees attending a conference of a duration longer than 24 hours are required to provide a written report. The report will be submitted to the Board within two (2) Board meetings immediately following the conference. For conferences of less than 24 hours, trustees are required to provide a verbal report at the meeting immediately following the conference.

The purpose of this report is to recommend that the Board approve the attendance of trustees at 2025 conferences as proposed. The 2025 Board Continuing Education Plan will be delivered separately to the Board for consideration in Q1 2025.

DISCUSSION

The 2025 Continuing Education Plan is normally presented to the Board in Q4 of the year and includes internal opportunities for learning and advocacy (including presentations at OPL Board meetings and other OPL activities), online webinars, and several conferences. Given Recommendation 4 in the OPLB Governance Evaluation Report and Action Plan, also presented to trustees at the December 3, 2024, Board

meeting (OPLB-2024-1203-11.2), which seeks to engage the Governance Standing Committee (once struck in Q1 2025) in the development of plans for trustee continuing education, staff advise that the 2025 Continuing Education Plan be developed subsequent to that engagement and presented to the Board at a later time in Q1/Q2 2025.

Conferences

Each year, library industry associations host key conferences. Participating in these events provides trustees with valuable learning opportunities and the ability to connect with public library leaders including other trustees.

In 2024, Trustee King attended the Ontario Library Association (OLA) Super Conference, Trustee Bradley attended the Public Library Association (PLA) Conference, and Trustee Kitts attended the American Library Association (ALA) Conference. Due to unforeseen circumstances, Chair Luloff and Vice Chair Fisher were unable to attend the OLA Conference as approved, and Trustee Smith was unable to attend the Urban Libraries Council (ULC) Annual Forum as approved. Trustees participating in conferences submit reports as noted above.

In accordance with past practice, all members of the Board were provided with an opportunity earlier this fall to signal interest in conferences. Staff recommend planning for trustee participation in two key conferences in 2025 as follows:

- 1. Ontario Library Association (OLA) Super Conference**

Theme: Building Bridges

Date: January 29 – February 1, 2025

Location: Toronto, Ontario

Attendees: Trustee Crawford

Note: Vice-Chair Fisher will also attend the OLA Super Conference with OPL's support, in her role as a member of the Board of Directors of the Federation of Ontario Public Libraries (FOPL) and as a member of FOPL's Indigenous Libraries Partnership Working Group.

- 2. American Library Association (ALA) Annual Conference and Exhibition**

Theme: Not known at this time

Date: June 26-30, 2025

Location: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Attendees: Chair Luloff, Trustees King and Smith

Staff will advise trustees should the above plan need to be adjusted; for example, should a trustee be unable to attend a conference for which they have been registered, staff will identify a substitute or seek reimbursement of costs. Trustees participating in conferences submit a written report summarizing their experiences, to be included on a Board Agenda upon their return.

CONSULTATION

As part of the consultation process, trustees were provided with details of the key continuing education opportunities (as available) and encouraged to express interest. The Senior Management Team was also consulted regarding internal learning and advocacy opportunities.

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.

BOARD PRIORITIES

The report aligns with OPL's value of Literacy, by cultivating the joys of learning and discovering. It also aligns with the Strategic Directions and Priorities 2023-2028, specifically the direction to strengthen community relationships and advocacy. Lastly, it aligns with OPL Board policy 003: Trustee Orientation and Continuing Education, as well as 002-OPLB Delegation of Authority ("the DOA") and 007-OPLB Trustee Expense Reimbursement.

BUSINESS ANALYSIS IMPLICATIONS

There are no business analysis considerations associated with this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are funds available within the 2025 budget for the approved conference attendance.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications associated with this report.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no risk management implications associated with this report.

TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS

There are no technology implications associated with this report.

DISPOSITION

Upon approval of this report, staff will:

1. Coordinate attendance for trustees, including registration and travel arrangements; and,
2. Return to the Board with the 2025 Board Continuing Education Plan in Q1/Q2 2025.