



## Ottawa Public Library Board

### Minutes

<b>Meeting #:</b>	<b>20 (REVISED AGENDA - Item 13.2 and 13.3) (ORDRE DU</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>JOUR RÉVISÉ - Points 13.2 et 13.3)</b>
<b>Time:</b>	<b>March 11, 2025</b>
<b>Location:</b>	<b>5 pm</b> <b>Champlain Room, 110 Laurier Avenue West, and by</b> <b>electronic participation</b>
<b>Present:</b>	<b>Chair Matthew Luloff, Vice-Chair Kathy Fisher, Trustee</b> <b>Mary-Rose Brown, Trustee Rawlson King, Trustee Catherine</b> <b>Kitts, Trustee Harvey A. Slack, Trustee Adam Smith</b>
<b>Absent:</b>	<b>Trustee Jessica Bradley, Trustee Alison Crawford</b>

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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.

Note:

1. The meeting began at 5:02 pm.

The Chair noted that a REVISED Agenda was issued on March 7, 2025, to include two correspondence items that were inadvertently omitted from the agenda. These items are responses to queries, one from Trustee Bradley and

another from Trustee Smith (Items 13.2 and 13.3). The revised package was also posted on the OPL website on Friday afternoon for members of the public.

The Chair advised that the Board will be moving In Camera/Closed Session for an additional item, a Collective Bargaining Update from staff.

**MOTION OPL 20250311/1**

**MOTION REQUIRING SUSPENSIONS OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE**

Moved by Vice-Chair Kathy Fisher:

**That the Ottawa Public Library Board waive the Rules of Procedure to approve the addition of the In Camera Item 12.2 - Collective Bargaining Update for consideration at today's meeting pursuant to Section 21(3) of the Rules of Procedure By-law (By-law, November 8, 2022).**

Results: Carried

With unanimous consensus, the Board agreed to discuss Item 12.2 as the first item of business under In Camera items.

(This motion was moved following the Confirmation of Draft Minutes (Items 6.1 and 6.2) on today's agenda).

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

Trustees Jessica Bradley and Alison Crawford sent their regrets.

5. Declarations of Interest

No Declarations of Interest were filed.

6. Confirmation of Minutes

6.1 Minutes 19 - Tuesday, 11 February 2025

6.2 Confidential Minutes 8 - Tuesday, 11 February 2025

Results: Carried

7. Communications

There were no communications.

8. Chair's Verbal Update

**Ādisōke Update**

Chair Luloff provided an update regarding Ādisōke, noting progress on the exterior of the building, with insulation and stonework being installed on the north and west sides. He added that waterproofing for all floors as well as framing were underway: as a result, spaces within the facility are starting to come together. In closing, he encouraged everyone to follow the project at Ādisōke.ca or on the Central branch webpage on OPL's website.

**Freedom to Read Week Recap**

Chair Luloff highlighted recent activities for Freedom to Read Week, including two successful events in partnership with Library and Archives Canada. Clients also engaged with OPL via social media and in-branch displays during Freedom to Read Week, and the Chair underscored the significant engagement on social media with a post promoting Sonia Bebbington's op-ed in the Ottawa Citizen about the importance of open access to knowledge and ideas.

**Rural Branch Hours**

Chair Luloff announced that changes to the opening hours of seven of the Library's rural branches were implemented last week, including at Constance Bay, Greely, Metcalfe, Munster, Osgoode, Richmond, and Vernon. These changes implement recommendations approved by the Board last November and respond to feedback from rural residents. Expanded and more consistent hours means more opportunities for browsing and borrowing, attending programs (including new offerings), accessing library spaces and tools, and engaging with staff expertise ... and more opportunities for staff to engage with the community! During the first week of expanded service, many excited residents visited and were delighted with the changes. He encouraged everyone to visit the Find an OPL Branch page on the library website for a full list of branch hours.

**MOTION OPL 20250311/2**

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

Results: Received

9. Chief Librarian/Chief Executive Officer's Report

**Donor Recognition**

Sonia Bebbington, Chief Librarian and CEO (CL/CEO) announced another significant gift of \$500,000.00 to the *Unlock Potential* campaign for the Central branch at Ādisōke. This gift, from the Josette Robertson and Joan Johnston Family Foundation, a donor-advised fund of the Ottawa Community Foundation, is allocated to the spectacular green wall, one of the most visible eco-elements, and a key educational opportunity for clients and visitors to learn about the importance of environmental sustainability. Philanthropic support for social infrastructure is critical in providing community members with free access to beautiful and sustainable architecture and design. In closing, Ms. Bebbington expressed OPL's sincere gratitude to the Josette Robertson and Joan Johnston Family Foundation for this meaningful and enduring gift to the library, and appreciation to the Ottawa Community Foundation for its support of this gift.

### ***Mars est le mois de la francophonie***

Ms. Bebbington noted OPL's pride in celebrating Francophonie Month, culminating in *Journée internationale de la Francophonie* on March 20. A wonderful variety of activities for all ages will be available, including the Croisée des mots series, with a virtual event featuring Marine Sibileau and Philippe Godoc on March 12 at 7:00 pm. She encouraged everyone check out the We Recommend page each week in March for themed reading recommendations.

### **March Break Programming**

Ms. Bebbington reported that March Break programming is already underway with staff coordinating 53 in person and 11 virtual programs this week. Creativity and adventure is on offer for a variety of interests and ages. Junior spies and detectives are invited to gear up for action for Mission: March Break, and teens can unwind and choose from programs such as Do It Yourself (DIY) clothing upcycling, cooking, credit counselling, writing and illustration. In closing, Ms. Bebbington encouraged clients to visit OPL's programs and events page for more information.

### **MOTION OPL 20250311/3**

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

Results: Received

## 10. Reports

### 10.1 Establishment of OPL Board Standing Committees

File Number: OPLB-2025-0311-10.1

The Chair offered opening remarks, including the context and purpose of the report, which operationalizes mid-term governance recommendations approved by the Board at the December meeting, and based on trustee input.

Alexandra Yarrow, Program Manager, Board and Strategic Services presented the Board with background information, including the legislative and governance structure of the Board and committees, notably the Ottawa Public Library Board (OPLB) Rules of Procedure By-law, as well as an overview of the timeline and findings from the mid-term governance review. In closing, Ms. Yarrow presented the Board with the recommended membership of the OPLB Standing Committees and noted the draft Terms of References for the committees were provided to the Board accompanying the report, for information (*held on file with the Chief Librarian/Chief Executive Officer*).

Trustee Smith stated that he will be voting against the recommendation to adopt a new governance standing committee structure, and outlined his concerns with this structure. Firstly, he indicated that he believed the Board was applying a corporate governance model to a public institution without considering the fundamental differences between the two models; specifically, he noted that replacing the existing committee structure with three committees was a model taken directly from corporate best practices. He did not feel that the corporate governance structure, designed for outcome or profit driven institutions, aligns with the purpose of public institutions such as OPL, which must balance efficiency and effectiveness with a higher purpose, including “building communities and transforming lives.” He was concerned that the shift in structure assumes that an outcome-driven governance structure will improve oversight, but fails to account for the realities of how OPL functions. Secondly, he noted that in eliminating the existing ad hoc committee structure, a necessary safeguard had been removed, which ensured that trustees could closely oversee key areas that would otherwise be lost in bureaucratic inertia. He further noted his concern that the new structure would facilitate making poor decisions quickly. In closing, Trustee Smith noted that the governance model must align with the realities of the organization it serves and not just mimic corporate best practices. He felt that if the Board moves forward with the shift, all trustees and the Chief Librarian and CEO must quickly receive targeted governance training to understand how to operate within the new structure, and the challenges and unintended consequences that he believed will inevitably follow.

Trustee Slack indicated he concurred with Trustee Smith's statements.

Trustee Kitts noted the investment of time and effort by staff and trustees into the mid-term governance review, and felt that due diligence was exercised by staff as well as the consultant. She believed that the new committee structure will allow for more robust conversations, and that the number of ad hoc committees spread the attention of trustees too thin, whereas the new structure will enhance a broader discussion on several topics and a better and effective use of time.

Trustee King concurred with Trustee Kitts, noting that he felt the proposed structure allows for more efficient and effective decision-making. Noting that he is a Certified Association Executive (CAE), he did not feel the model being proposed could be characterized as "corporate." In closing, he noted that he supported the shift to standing committees, and that many other not-for-profit organizations use this structure, which is transparent and accountable.

Chair Luloff replied that he respected Trustee Smith's expertise and opinion, and appreciated members voicing their perspectives in an open manner. Noting that in his role as Chair and as ex-officio on all Ad hoc committees, he felt that often the discussions were narrowly focused on a certain area and did not facilitate trustees seeing the bigger picture. Highlighting the strategic focus of the Board and reiterating that it is not the Board's job to dictate operations, he was confident that key discussions would still occur in committee meetings, and further underscored the importance of trustees developing relationships with staff to facilitate informal discussions about ideas and initiatives. The Chair further welcomed trustees to express interest in a topic being discussed at a standing committee, and offered to facilitate their attendance at that meeting if desired, noting that the final discussions and decisions occur openly at the Board meeting, for which trustees must adequately prepare by reading staff reports. In closing, Chair Luloff re-iterated that the Governance Action Plan, including the transition to standing committees, arose from trustees' own insights, and that the time for discussion of that Plan and its recommendations was at the December 2024 OPLB meeting. The report before the Board this evening was simply seeking approval of committee membership.

Following these remarks from the Chair, Trustee Slack said he would support the recommendation in this report.

Chair Luloff then invited the Chief Librarian and CEO to provide additional comments. Ms. Bebbington first indicated that the committee structure reflects feedback from Board trustees. As CEO, Ms. Bebbington observed key benefits of the standing committee structure, including the ability to ensure consistency and diligence, the ability to review multiple strategic items or initiatives, the facilitation of in-depth generative discussions in small groups, and the reduction of potential silos. She further commented that while Trustees may experience that staff relied on the cadence of an Ad hoc meeting to ensure key initiatives are advanced, staff are always diligent in ensuring that work progresses, and she was confident that priorities will not slip through the cracks. In closing, Ms. Bebbington noted she looked forward to discussing further with trustees.

Chair Luloff added that this transition to standing committees aligned with the strategic governance model that the Board had adopted more than a decade ago, and that given the recent mid-term review and the input of trustees, the timing and support aligned at present to make this change.

Trustee Smith thanked staff for the presentation and noted the conscientious stewardship of the governance process, but again underscored his opinion that that the consultant's report was flawed. He felt that the new committee structure assumes a level of operational maturity. Trustee Smith further noted that he has a designation in corporate directorship and felt that the recently approved committee structure represented a corporate governance model based on best practices for corporate directorship. This structure would, in his view, lead to different interactions between trustees and staff and changed fiduciary responsibilities, given the pace of operations. He suggested that trustees would need to improve their governance expertise, particularly in understanding their role as corporate directors.

Chair Luloff thanked Trustee Smith and asked staff if they would be open to a direction regarding the exploration of developing trustee governance training; Ms. Bebbington agreed to this direction.

The Chair asked whether the Board could suggest changes, should trustees feel that the new committee structure is not providing what they need. Ms. Yarrow replied in the affirmative.

In closing, the Chair urged his fellow trustees to make an effort to operate within the approved new structure, and that the option remained to re-assess as required in the future.

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

**MOTION OPL 20250311/4**

**That the Ottawa Public Library Board:**

- 1. Approve the membership of the OPL Board Standing Committees, as further described in this report; and,**
- 2. Receive for information the draft Terms of References for the OPL Board Standing Committees (Document 1).**

For (6): Chair M. Luloff, Vice-Chair K. Fisher, Trustees M.R. Brown, R. King, C. Kitts, and H.A. Slack

Against: (1): Trustee A. Smith

Results: Received and Carried (5 to 1)

*Direction to staff:*

*That staff explore developing governance training options for trustees.*

10.2 2025 Board Continuing Education Plan

File Number: OPLB-2025-0311-10.2

**MOTION OPL 20250311/5**

**That the Ottawa Public Library Board approve the 2025 Board Continuing Education Plan (Document 1).**

Results: Carried

10.3 Fourth Quarter 2024 Financial Status Report

File Number: OPLB-2025-0311-10.3

In response to a question from Trustee King regarding what the timeline will be to purchase a new Bookmobile should the Board approve the report, Anna Basile, Deputy CEO and Division Manager, Corporate Services indicated that if approved, staff will proceed with a request for information (RFI) followed by a full request for purchase (RFP). She said the entire process (selection, purchasing, customization, etc.) would take approximately 18 months in total, with the new Bookmobile anticipated to be in service in 2026.



Chair Luloff took a moment to acknowledge Algonquin College students in the gallery and highlighted the importance of checking primary sources when conducting research, noting a recent media article about the bookmobile that incorrectly suggested this purchase was for an additional bookmobile. It is in fact a replacement unit for a 10-year old bookmobile currently in use.

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

**MOTION OPL 20250311/6**

**That the Ottawa Public Library Board:**

- 1. Receive this report for information;**
- 2. Approve the disbursement of the 2024 operating surplus of \$1,857,404 as follows:**
  - a. \$357,404 of the 2024 operating surplus in Ottawa Public Library (OPL) be transferred to the Library Reserve; and,**
  - b. \$1,500,000 of the 2024 operating surplus in Library Services be appropriated for the purchase of a new Bookmobile through the creation of a new capital account, as further described in this report; and,**
- 3. Upon the Ottawa Public Library's Board's approval of the transfer and use of the Library operating surplus, direct staff to work with the City's Financial Services Unit to forward the report to the Ottawa City Council, for consideration as part of the Disposition of the 2024 Tax and Rate Supported Operating Surplus / Deficit report through the City's Finance and Corporate Services Committee.**

Results: Received and Carried

11. Trustees' Items

11.1 Ontario Library Association 2025 Conference – Vice-Chair Kathy Fisher and Trustee Alison Crawford Reports

File Number: OPLB-2025-0311-11.1

Vice-Chair Fisher thanked the Board for including her as one of the participants at this conference. She highlighted key takeaways: the important networking opportunities, opportunities to learn from industry leaders, and the ability to connect on key issues such as intellectual

freedom and Board/municipal council relationships. She noted particularly Ms. Bebbington's presence on a panel discussion, as well as the Trustee Boot Camp. In closing, Vice-Chair Fisher encouraged everyone to read the report that she and Trustee Crawford provided.

There being no further discussion, the report was RECEIVED.

**MOTION OPL 20250311/7**

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

Results: Received

12. In Camera Items

**Item 12.1 - Chief Librarian and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) 2024 Performance**

**That, in accordance with the *Public Libraries Act*, the Ottawa Public Library Board resolve in camera pursuant to 16.1 (4)(b), Personal matters about an identifiable individual, to consider the Chief Librarian/Chief Executive Officer (CEO) 2024 Performance - Reporting out date: Noting that the specific matters related to the Chief Librarian/CEO's 2024 performance will not be reported out as they relate to personal matters about an identifiable individual**

**ADDITIONAL ITEM**

**Item 12.2 - Collective Bargain Update**

**That, in accordance with the *Public Libraries Act*, the Ottawa Public Library Board resolve in camera pursuant to 16.1 (4)(d), Labour Relations or Employee Negotiations, to receive a Collective Bargaining Update - Reporting out date: not reporting out / Upon Collective Agreement Ratification**

*Note: The In Camera meeting began 6:02 pm.*

Moved by Vice-Chair Kathy Fisher:

**MOTION OPL 20250311/8**

**That, in accordance with the *Public Libraries Act*, the Ottawa Public Library Board resolve in camera to:**

1. **Consider Labour Relations or Employee Negotiations, with respect to a Collective Bargaining Update (Item 12.2); and,**

**2. Consider Personal Matters about an identifiable individual, with respect to the Chief Librarian and CEO 2024 Performance (Item 12.1).**

Results: Carried

The Board, having reached the three-hour scheduled time for the meeting, moved the following motion at 7:58 pm:

Moved by Vice-Chair Kathy Fisher:

**MOTION OPL 20250311/9**

**Whereas pursuant to Section 35(4) of the Ottawa Public Library Board's Rules of Procedure that upon the expiration of three hours after the scheduled time for the commencement of a meeting, the Chair shall put the following motion without debate, amendment or any procedural motion: "Shall this meeting be continued for a further hour?"**

Results: Carried

Upon resuming in open session at 8:14 pm, the Chair advised the following:

Please let the record show that the Board went *In Camera/Closed Session*. The matters dealt with included receiving a Collective Bargaining Update and the Chief Librarian and CEO's 2024 Performance.

The specific details of these items cannot be reported out for the reasons stated previously. **No votes were taken and no decision made in camera**; staff were provided with direction regarding the CL/CEO performance rating.

Moved by Vice-Chair Kathy Fisher:

**MOTION OPL 20250311/10**

**That the Ottawa Public Library Board approve the 2024 Chief Librarian and CEO's Performance Rating identified in the Closed Session and forward it to the City of Ottawa's Human Resources department to be included in the Chief Librarian and CEO's personnel file.**

Results: Carried

13. Information Previously Distributed

13.1 Memo – 2024 Ottawa Public Library Related Fraud and Waste Claims

13.2 Query - Library Operations

13.3 Inquiries - Trustee Adam Smith

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

There were no Notices of Motion.

15. Inquiries

There were no Inquiries.

16. Other Business

Gale Galloway, "Executive Assisant is reading "[Brothers](#)" by Alex Van Halen. Trustee Smith is reading "[Razor's Edge](#)", by Matha Wells. Trustee Slack is reading "[Value\(s\)](#)", by Mark Carney. Craig Ginther, Division Manager, Facility and Technology Services is reading "[Time of the Child](#)", by Niall Williams. Chair Luloff is reading "*The Harr*", by David Sodergren.

17. Adjournment

**Be It Resolved that the Ottawa Public Library Board meeting be adjourned at 8:19 pm.**

18. Next Meeting

**Tuesday, April 8, 2025**

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Original signed by Matthew Luloff,  
Chair

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Sonia Bebbington, Recording  
Secretary