



Ottawa Bibliothèque
Public publique
Library d'Ottawa

11.1

Report to / Rapport au:

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

April 14, 2026 / 14 avril 2026

Submitted by / Soumis par:

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SUBJECT: Ottawa Public Library Board Policy Amendments

**OBJET: Modifications des politiques du Conseil d'administration de la
Bibliothèque publique d'Ottawa**

REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Ottawa Public Library Board:

- 1. Approve the amendments to the following policies as further described in this report:**
 - a. Roles and Responsibilities of the Board and Board Members (Document 2);**
 - b. Board Orientation and Continuing Education (Document 3);**
 - c. Board Member Conduct (Document 4);**
 - d. Board Evaluations and Governance Reviews (Document 5);**
 - e. Board Succession Planning (Document 6);**
 - f. Election-Related Resources (Document 7); and,**

2. Approve the revised OPL Board Document Framework, including renumbering policies 017-021, as further described in this report (Document 1).

RECOMMANDATIONS DU RAPPORT

Que le Conseil de la Bibliothèque publique d'Ottawa :

1. Approuve les modifications des politiques suivantes, tel que décrit dans le présent rapport :
 - a. Rôles et responsabilités du C.A. et de les membres (Document 2);
 - b. Orientation du C.A. et formation continue (Document 3);
 - c. Conduite des membres du conseil (Document 4);
 - d. Évaluations du C.A. et examens de gouvernance (Document 5);
 - e. Planification de la succession du C.A. (Document 6);
 - f. Ressources liées aux élections (Document 7); et
2. Approuve le cadre révisé du document du C.A. de la BPO, y compris la renumérotation des politiques 017-021, tel que décrit dans le présent rapport (Document 1).

BACKGROUND

In keeping with the *Public Libraries Act, RSO 1990, c.P.44* (“the PLA”), and other relevant statutes, laws, and good governance practices, the Ottawa Public Library (“OPL” or “the Library”) Board (“the Board” or “OPLB”) is accountable for the full range of decisions affecting the organization. The Board has adopted a strategic governance model, primarily focused on the long-term needs and goals of the library. In alignment with good governance principles and practices, the Board further develops, reviews, and maintains documentation about its own roles, responsibilities, and processes, to guide how the Board conducts its work, ensures accountability, and supports consistent, transparent, and effective governance.

On October 15, 2014, the Board approved a revised OPLB Rules of Procedure By-law (“the By-law”), and policy framework. Most Board policies were developed in 2015, in line with the transition at the time to a strategic governance model; Board policies are intended to be high-level, providing the Board with the necessary guidance and

parameters to meet the legislative requirements set out in the *Act*. Each policy begins with a clear outline of the legislative background and guidance upon which the policy is based (“Guiding Principles”).

As part of its governance framework, the OPL Board undertakes a review of all Board-level documents during each term of Board. This includes the OPLB By-law (which outlines the rules of order and process by which meetings are conducted, aligned with legislative requirements), Board position statements (which document the Board’s position on high-impact topics and provide guidance for related administrative policy/policies), Board policies (which guide or provide parameters for members’ actions in meeting legislative requirements), as well as Board-approved frameworks and key elements of OPL strategies (which provide a structured approach to making decisions about services based on strategic focus). This review process ensures compliance with the Board Evaluations and Governance Reviews Policy, which requires the Board to “undertake a review of its governance matters in the fourth year of its term [...], including reviewing all Library and Board governance materials.”

The Board has a Document Framework (appended to this report as Document 1) that outlines the position statements, policies, and frameworks that are under the purview of the Board, and each document has set timeline for review. The OPLB By-law and most Board policies were last reviewed and updated in November 2022 (the final meeting of the previous term of Board). Five Board documents have a mid-term review schedule, and one Board policy, Election-Related Resources Policy, must be reviewed prior to May 1 of an election year, per the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* (the MEA).

The purpose of this report is to seek the Board’s approval for revisions to six Board policies and renumbering the OPL Board Document Framework, as described in this report. Remaining documents requiring review before the end of the Board term will be brought forward to subsequent 2026 OPLB meetings.

DISCUSSION

During this term of Board, the following Board documents have been established or revised:

- The Facilities Framework was updated in September 2023 (OPLB-2023-0912-10.2);

- The Intellectual Freedom Position Statement was revised in May 2024 (OPLB-2024-0502-10.5);
- Three policies (008 - Fund Development, 013 - Commemorative Naming, and 022 - Sponsorship) were revised in June 2024 (OPLB-2024-0611-11.1);
- Key elements of OPL Service Strategies were established and approved by the Board in April 2025 (OPLB0-2025-0408-11.2);
- The Content Services Framework was converted into a Collection Development Administrative Policy in June 2025 (OPLB-2025-0610-10.1);
- The Official Languages Policy was updated in October 2025 (OPLB-2025-1014-10.5);
- The Delegation of Authority Policy was revised in February 2026 (OPLB-2026-0210-10.2); and,
- The Mobile Framework was approved in February 2026 (OPLB-2026-0210-10.2).

The Governance Standing Committee has begun reviewing the OPLB By-law and the remaining Board documents. Updates to the Financial Framework and a draft Virtual Framework are expected to rise to the Board prior to the end of term (end of 2026). Board policies are being reviewed by the Governance Standing Committee in groups by related subject matter, beginning with six policies related to the responsibilities of the Board (001 - Roles and Responsibilities of the Board and Trustees, 003 - Trustee Orientation and Continuing Education, 004 - Trustee Conduct, 015 - Board Evaluations and Governance Reviews, 017 - Board Role in Advocacy, 016 - Board Succession Planning) and 021 - Election-Related Resources, which must be updated in advance of the upcoming municipal election.

Guiding principles for all revisions proposed in this report included the following:

- Improve logical sequencing of policy elements (for example, place the most important elements first; group related ideas);
- Provide clarification (for example, define key terms, add thematic “header” sections, and note links to related policies);
- Reorganize, rephrase, or remove certain sections or appendices, and remove redundant and operational detail;
- Standardize formatting (for example, revise the footer boxes for each policy); and,

- Align terminology with applicable legislation (for example, replace “trustee” with “Board member,” in alignment with language in the *PLA*) or relevant municipal documents.

Previously approved versions of each policy considered in this report are available to Board members via the Board cloud storage tool, and to members of the public via the November 8, 2022 Board agenda on the OPL website (Item 10.3, Report #OPLB-2022-1108-10.3).

Proposed drafts of each policy are available as appendices to this report (Documents 2-7). Key proposed revisions are summarized below.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Board and Trustees

- Re-name this policy “Roles and Responsibilities of Board and Board Members;”
- Re-structure the lists of roles and responsibilities including adding headers (Governance; Finance; Strategic Leadership); and,
- Incorporate key elements of Policy 017 - Board Role in Advocacy into this policy, noting feedback from the Governance Standing Committee, and delete Policy 017.

Trustee Orientation and Continuing Education

- Re-name this policy “Board Orientation and Continuing Education;”
- Remove names of proprietary tools and specific organizations;
- Remove Appendix A and integrate high-level outline into policy content; and,
- Articulate both the onboarding and the orientation process, noting feedback from the Governance Standing Committee, previous members of the Board, and staff regarding the challenging nature (specifically timing) of the orientation process, the need for a more holistic onboarding plan including individualized support (for example, understanding of parliamentary procedure) and a shorter orientation session.

Trustee Conduct

- Re-name this policy “Board Member Conduct;”
- Align with City of Ottawa By-law No. 2018-399 (Code of Conduct for Members of Local Boards);
- Expand sections related to confidentiality, use of Board resources, communications, and conflict of interest; and,
- Introduce new sections relating to: harassment and discrimination; gifts, benefits, and hospitality; election-related activities (referring to the related Board policy); and, compliance.

Board Evaluations and Governance Reviews

- Revise “Informal discussions” section to remove content that relates to member conduct (addressed in Policy 004); and,
- Revise questionnaires (Appendices A and B): format for use electronically rather than as a paper questionnaire, remove rating scale from policy, revise questions to improve logical sequencing, eliminate redundant text, clarify questions relating to Board or operational elements, noting feedback from the Governance Standing Committee and previous members of the Board regarding confusion related to some questions, and align headings with Board Policy 001 to clarify the context and scope of the questions.

Board Succession Planning

- Clarify the applicability of the City Appointment Policy – Council-Appointed Public Members of Committees, Boards and other External Authorities, regarding the restriction on term limits; and,
- Revise Appendix A to reflect the Board’s strategic governance model, and to better articulate the qualities that every prospective member must demonstrate, the balance of skills that the Board as a whole must have, and the need for diverse perspectives and experiences among members.

Board Role in Advocacy

- Deleted
- Content related to strategic leadership and engagement integrated into Policy 001.

As this policy is being deleted, policies 018-022 will be renumbered 017-021.

Election-Related Resources

- Update terminology from 'neutral' to 'non-partisan;'
- Align with City Election-Related Blackout Period Procedures;
- Align practices related to meeting room rentals with 2024 revisions to the applicable administrative policy at OPL; and,
- Align practices related to the distribution of election or campaign material around library facilities with applicable City by-laws.

The next review of these policies will occur during the next term of Board (prior to end of year 2030).

CONSULTATION

The OPLB Governance Standing Committee was consulted during the development of this report. The Office of the City Clerk was also consulted.

ACCESSIBILITY IMPACTS

Ottawa Public Library supports and considers the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2005)* in its operations. There are no legislative accessibility impacts associated with this report.

BOARD PRIORITIES

The recommendation in this report aligns with the value of integrity by upholding a commitment to accountability in the Board's operations and interactions.

BUSINESS ANALYSIS IMPLICATIONS

There are no business analysis considerations associated with this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal impediments to approving the recommendations in 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.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Document 1 – OPL Board Document Framework

Document 2 – 001 - Roles and Responsibilities of the Board and Board Members Policy

Document 3 – 003 - Board Orientation and Continuing Education Policy

Document 4 – 004 - Board Conduct Policy

Document 5 – 015 - Board Evaluation and Governance Reviews Policy

Document 6 – 016 - Board Succession Planning Policy

Document 7 – 020 – Election-Related Resources Policy

DISPOSITION

Upon approval, staff will:

1. Provide Board members with the updated framework and policies via the Board's cloud storage tool; and,
2. Translate and post the revised policies on the OPL website.