

**Report to / Rapport au:**

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

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**Submitted by / Soumis par:**

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**File Number:** OPLB-2016-0122

**SUBJECT: Canadian Library Association (CLA) proposal for dissolution and creation of a Canadian Federation of Library Associations**

**OBJET: Proposition de dissolution de l'Association canadienne des bibliothèques (ACB) et de création d'une Fédération canadienne d'associations de bibliothèques**

#### **REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS**

**That the Ottawa Public Library Board:**

- 1. Approve the use of the five (5) institutional and one (1) associate membership votes to support the dissolution of the Canadian Library Association (CLA), with the intention to redistribute transferable resources to a newly created Canadian Federation of Library Associations (The Federation); and,**
- 2. Name Trustee Sweet as OPL's associate voting member at the CLA Special General Meeting to be held at the Ontario Library Associations (OLA) Super Conference on January 27, 2016.**

## RECOMMANDATIONS DU RAPPORT

**Que le Conseil d'administration de la Bibliothèque publique d'Ottawa:**

- 1. Approuve l'utilisation de les cinq (5) votes institutionnels et de son unique (1) vote de membre associé pour soutenir la dissolution de l'Association canadienne des bibliothèques (ACB), en vue de redistribuer les ressources transférables vers une Fédération canadienne d'associations de bibliothèques (La Fédération); et**
- 2. Nomme Pamela Sweet membre de la BPO votant associé à l'assemblée générale extraordinaire de l'ACB, qui aura lieu dans le cadre de la Super conférence de l'Association des bibliothèques de l'Ontario (ABO) le 27 janvier 2016.**

## BACKGROUND

The Canadian Library Association (CLA)/Association canadienne des bibliothèques (ACB) is a national, not-for-profit, voluntary organization, representing institutional, associate, corporate, and personal members from the school, public, academic, and special libraries' sectors, from across and outside of Canada. CLA has served as a national voice for libraries on a diverse set of library and information-related policy issues for the past 68 years. It has gained recognition from the federal government, as well as international library organizations, as the representative of Canadian libraries.

As CLA is the national voice for Canadian library communities, its members currently:

- champion library values and the value of libraries
- influence public policy impacting libraries
- inspire and support member learning
- collaborate to strengthen the library community

In recent years, CLA's raison d'être has been in question. Declining membership and other factors such as growing regional, provincial, and sector-specific national associations with competing priorities, have significantly diminished CLA's position as the voice of a unified Canadian library community.

Despite several attempts to adjust CLA's focus and activities, it has become evident that restructuring is required. The CLA intends to present a proposal to dissolve, with the intent to redistribute transferable resources to a new federation of library associations. At the upcoming OLA Super Conference in January 2016, staff recommend the OPL and the OPL Board vote in favour of the dissolution of CLA at their Special General Meeting. The proposal seeks to leverage the membership strengths of the many library associations in Canada, with a view to: 1) reinforcing collaboration between associations; and 2) creating opportunities for a unified and coordinated national voice for the library community.

## DISCUSSION

Work was undertaken by library sector leaders, including representatives from provincial, territorial, and national sector associations, to develop a new structure for Canada's national library advocacy voice. A proposed federated model has been developed to rebrand and refocus the CLA as an "association of associations", to be called the Canadian Federation of Library Associations / Fédération canadienne des associations de bibliothèques (CFLA/FCAB).

OPL staff have followed the discussion closely and reviewed the draft proposal. Staff provided feedback to CLA, drawing their attention to a number of items requiring further clarification or consideration. Below are the concerns raised by OPL staff, as well as CLA's proposed actions to address them:

- **Bilingualism:** Staff asked the CLA to ensure a bilingual viewpoint is strongly represented beyond the translation of documents. The final proposal recommends that one Board member of The Federation be from a francophone member library association.
- **Budget:** Staff asked the CLA for a coherent and feasible budget with consistent funding sources. The final proposal includes a reasonable high-level first-year budget, including expense categories and funding for priority projects, as well as a three-year revenue projection.
- **Mission/Purpose:** Staff asked the CLA to narrow the mandate with an emphasis on ensuring that goals are focused, achievable, and measureable, as well as national in focus and importance. The final proposal includes key strategies and deliverables, all national in focus, with two priorities for the first

year: the establishment of a national Key Performance Indicators (KPI)/metrics program; and the development of a government relations strategy and action plan.

- **Representation:** Staff asked the CLA to provide a venue for interest groups such as LGBTQQIA, Aboriginal groups, and other cultural organizations that make up the diverse nature of Canada. The final proposal recommends that one Board member be a member-at-large of Indigenous ancestry who is a member of a member library association, as well as the possibility of a limited number of additional members. Members of member associations could also participate in Board committees, working groups, networks, and other means in which individuals could collaborate.

Based on the final proposal issued on December 18, 2015, OPL staff support the dissolution of CLA and the subsequent creation of a Canadian Federation of Library Associations.

### **Benefits**

The benefits of a federated model to member library associations and their direct members include,

- Well-researched advocacy and policy development work at all levels in the library community;
- Development and promotion of visionary and practical library competencies and standards, such as position and policy statements;
- Regular reports on the state of Canadian libraries;
- Reduced duplication of efforts across library associations;
- Increased support in own advocacy work and a voice on the national stage;
- National engagement opportunities for members of associations without individuals or institutions having to pay a full membership fee, as currently required by CLA.

OPL's voice would be significantly strengthened in a federated model thanks to its on-going memberships in the Ontario Library Association (OLA), the Canadian Urban

Libraries Council (CULC), the Federation of Ontario Public Libraries (FOPL), and other library associations, each of which is likely to be a member and strong advocate of the Canadian Federation of Library Associations.

### **Membership Fees**

The Ottawa Public Library Board holds an Associate membership, and the OPL holds an Institutional membership, with fees based on operating expenses of the institution. Current CLA membership fees for the OPL and the Board are \$6,020.

In a new federated model, OPL would not pay membership fees directly to The Federation. OPL fees would be included through membership in other associations such as CULC, FOPL, and OLA. It is at this time unknown if these associations would seek membership in The Federation, nor how these associations would offset increases in their membership fees. It is, however, unlikely that either levies or increases in membership fees to these associations would exceed what OPL currently pays for their CLA memberships, given the proposed revenue targets of The Federation and the large number of memberships within each association.

### **Voting**

Institutional membership provides for five voting memberships, and the Associate membership affords one named voting member. The five (5) institutional membership votes are held by Danielle McDonald as CEO, who will attend the OLA Super Conference. With respect to the associate membership, staff recommend Trustee Sweet be identified as the named voting member. With her participation on OLA's Ontario Library Boards' Association (OLBA) Council, Trustee Sweet will be in attendance at the OLA Super Conference.

### **CONSULTATION**

The draft proposal for the dissolution of CLA and the creation of the Canadian Federation of Library Associations was issued to CLA members in the fall of 2015. The draft proposal was circulated to OPL's management team, followed by a survey to staff posing the same questions as CLA. OPL staff provided feedback to CLA through its survey process. Initial feedback from the CLA survey was shared with CLA members in early December, with results demonstrating broad support for the proposal in general,

and the need to address specific themes of interest. The final version of the proposal was released on December 18, 2015 with themes of interest sufficiently addressed.

### **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no legal impacts in implementing the recommendations in this report.

### **RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

There are no risk management impacts in implementing the recommendations in this report.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial impacts in implementing the recommendations in this report.

### **ACCESSIBILITY IMPACTS**

There are no accessibility impacts in implementing the recommendations in this report.

### **TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS**

There are no Technology impacts in implementing the recommendations in this report.

### **BOARD PRIORITIES**

The Board is fulfilling its strategic direction to: “Strengthen and promote the Library's reach and value” by helping ensure a unified national voice to advocate for libraries.

### **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

<http://www.cla.ca/>

[http://www.cla.ca/wp-content/uploads/Proposal\\_Cdn\\_federation\\_library\\_associations\\_Final\\_2015\\_12\\_18\\_EN.pdf](http://www.cla.ca/wp-content/uploads/Proposal_Cdn_federation_library_associations_Final_2015_12_18_EN.pdf)

### **DISPOSITION**

Representatives from OPL and the OPL Board will attend the Special General Meeting at the OLA Super Conference on January 27, 2016, and submit their votes accordingly.