

Ottawa Public Library Board Meeting

Minutes 18

Tuesday, 13 October 2020

5:02 p.m.

Electronic Participation

-
- Notes:
1. *Underlining indicates a new or amended recommendation approved by the Board.*
 2. *The Ottawa Public Library Board Members participated virtually.*

Prior to the Agenda business, Chair Luloff welcomed Members and attendees to the Ottawa Public Library Board virtual meeting; he also explained the legislative reasons for Members' electronic participation and the provisions governing the Meeting. The Chair proceeded with Roll Call by voice in reverse alphabetic order.

Present:

Chair: Matthew Luloff
Vice-Chair: Kathy Fisher

Trustees: Steven Begg, Riley Brockington, Mary-Rose Brown,
Allan Higdon, Carol Anne Meehan, Harvey A. Slack, Tim Tierney

DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No Declarations were filed.

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

Minutes 17 – Tuesday, 8 September 2020

Confidential Minutes 4 – Tuesday, 8 September 2020

CONFIRMED

CHAIR'S VERBAL UPDATE

Resiliency Speaker Series

In the coming weeks, the Ottawa Public Library (OPL) will be hosting motivational speakers on topics related to resiliency. The events are geared towards an older adult audience, but inspiring for all ages. October 14, Peter Katz, a singer-songwriter and Juno nominee will talk about Resiliency and Dealing with Changes; and, on October 20, Bruny Surin, quadruple Olympian will speak in French to “Le sprint de la vie”.

Coming up

Chair Luloff said staff have added 71,000 new physical items to the collection since June. Permanent online library card registration to borrow hot new titles is expected to be available before year-end. Customers who are in a hurry can now check out “book bundles” of pre-selected titles for a variety of ages, available at open branches. Chair Luloff shared that staff have also provided Take Home Storytimes and Make-It-Kits, and have joined community programs or meetings as “virtual guests”. An e-chat feature with staff will also be launched later this fall.

Fall Home Cooking Series

To inspire those who are cooking more at home, OPL will be hosting online classes featuring recipes developed by local chefs during the month of October. On October 14, it will be Chef Elle Crevits making sourdough bread; on October 21, Chef Bruce Wood will make honey and cider roasted root vegetable cobbler; on October 28, it will be Chef Guy Dongué making salmon and quinoa salad; lastly, on November 4, Chef Trudy Metcalfe-Coe will be making a dish yet to be determined.

Croisée des mots

Chair Luloff said the Croisée des mots month-long reading and conversations series with francophone authors continues. These events are offered in partnership with l'Association des auteures et auteurs de l'Ontario français (AAOF). The next event will be held October 14 with Sylvie Bérard, an academic science fiction author.

Chair Luloff thanked all the Trustees who have provided opening remarks for past virtual and in-person events.

MOTION OPL 20201013/1

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

RECEIVED

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

October is Library Month

The CEO explained that Library Month looks a little bit different in 2020. The campaign is scaled down and is on the theme of kindness – la gentillesse, which is particularly important in these difficult times. She mentioned that kindness is interwoven in the public library's work and is aligned with OPL's mandate. Being kind means contributing to the community and being inclusive of all its members, both key OPL values. The CEO indicated that the OPL website will feature a blog post and booklist introducing the theme, and weekly blog posts will encourage everyone's participation in Library Month kindness initiatives. She said branches will also distribute a printed Library Month calendar with 31 prompts for every day in October inviting people to respond with a thought, photo, or anecdote. Although there will not be a giveaway this year, we hope that the campaign will get everyone thinking about the role, and the Library's role, in the community, and help encourage the compassionate, inclusive, and socially responsible approach to help everyone get through the unprecedented situation together. She encouraged people to follow OPL's social media account and invited everyone to join the conversation tagging @opl_bpo and including the hashtag #kindness, #gentillesse, and/or #COVIDkind.

Ottawa Book Awards Ceremony

The Ottawa Book Awards recognize the best books published respectively in French and English during 2020. The CEO said this year's October 21 ceremony is happening virtually for the first time and OPL will be hosting the event online on Zoom and streaming through Facebook Live. The selected finalists receive \$1,000 and the winner wins a prize of \$7,500. As always, OPL is partnering with Mariella-Gallegos and her team at the Cultural Department at the City of Ottawa on this initiative.

Orange Shirt Day

A few week ago, OPL honoured survivors of Canada's residential and day schools with special programming on Orange Shirt Day. The CEO said OPL offered a variety of programming for children, teens and adults, including an online Storytime in English and French, with storyteller Daniel Richer that reached over 4000 children, and a live musical performance for teens and young adults with Samian, a rapper from in Pikogan, a small Indigenous community in Abitibi-Témiscamingue. Orange Shirt Day at OPL concluded with a panel event about Fostering a Legacy of Reconciliation in Canada with guests Teresa Edwards, Gorden Spence and Irene Goodwin, who spoke about their experiences as residential school survivors and their work with Legacy of Hope, a national Indigenous charitable organization that helps create awareness and understanding about the Residential School System, and its intergenerational impacts . The CEO thanked FOPLA and the Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition for supporting OPL's Orange Shirt Day programming.

Thank you Dymon Storage

Ms. McDonald recognized Dymon Storage who recently agreed to donate 300 KN-95 disposable face masks that can be distributed to OPL customers who may not have access to a mask of their own. As soon as the disposable face masks are delivered, the certified, commercial grade protective masks will be distributed in the branches to share with customers. The CEO noted that while staff requested 200 masks from Dymon, the community partner in fact supplied OPL with 300 masks. Dymon Storage has donated over 100K of their Dymon Face Masks to charitable organizations and community groups across Ottawa.

MOTION OPL 20201013/2

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

RECEIVED

ITEMS

1. OPL COVID-19 RECOVERY PLAN - UPDATE

Danielle, McDonald provided a verbal presentation regarding the Library's COVID-19 Recovery Plan. Ms. McDonald provided an update on OPL's ongoing response, highlighting additional Chromebook and wifi loans via community partners, the successful outdoor wifi pilot, collaboration with multiple partners in the library and the municipal fields, and the online customer survey conducted by staff with 16,000 respondents. Catherine Seaman, Division Manager, Customer Experience reported on the preliminary results from the customer survey. Anna Basile, Division Manager, Corporate Services provided updated workforce numbers, including vacancies and absenteeism, and highlighted the staffing challenges the Library faces during the pandemic. Donna Clark, Division Manager, Branch Operations discussed the recent performance data (circulation, PC usage, and overall usage by branch, day of the week, and hour of the day), as well as preliminary plans to "Scale Up" the Library's services and locations. Ms. McDonald outlined the "big picture" regarding scenario planning and the proposed next steps in OPL's response. *(Presentation held on file with the Chief Executive Officer).*

Chair Luloff thanked employees for their commitment, customers for following protocols, and his Council colleagues for their support.

Trustee Tierney congratulated staff for their all their efforts to provide services; he was particularly happy to hear about the Bookmobile service resuming. He asked if staff have concerns with employees residing in Gatineau crossing the border, given recent "red zone" announcements? Ms. Basile said senior staff fully examine each provincial regulation to analyze

the implications for OPL. At this point, none of the interprovincial bridges are closed; if this were to change, we expect that staff can show their Library work badge and will be permitted to attend work. Staff have prepared plans and backup options are in place to address should issues occur.

Further to a question from Trustee Tierney on OPL's financial impact for the Rosemount branch delay, Ms. Basile shared that the project is on track and on budget (set to come on or just slightly under budget).

Trustee Slack congratulated staff for their tremendous work.

In response to a question from Trustee Meehan regarding Bookmobile services in Hunt Club Riverside South, Ms. Clark said as soon as the Bookmobile is ready, staff resume natural normal routes as much as possible. Services may continue to be limited: Ms. Clark noted that returns and hold pickups may be the only services available on board until gathering limits increase and staff can allow more people on the Bookmobile to browse.

Vice-Chair Fisher asked whether staff are currently planning for a return to library services offered in the Province's Stage 2 (contactless) or considering scaling back? Ms. Clark indicated that libraries were not mentioned in the list of industries that are affected by the recent "Modified Stage 2" regional restrictions imposed by the Province. Staff will continue offering "Enhanced services." She added that staff have options in place should they be needed, and are monitoring the situation in Quebec, where libraries have scaled back to contactless services.

In response to a question from Trustee Brockington on what the annual attrition rate is for OPL and whether staff are factoring the 2021 numbers in the current hiring process, Ms. Basile said the 2020 attrition rate is slightly higher than normal as some individuals have taken advantage of the opportunity to retire this year. In terms of 2021, staff are not able to account numbers as hiring is merit based and slightly more intensive, as it cannot be actioned until notice of vacancy is given. Ms. Basile then provided some details on OPL's hiring process. She further explained that staff are playing catch-up with vacancies as hiring was put on pause earlier in the year due to the pandemic. She concluded by stating that OPL is expediting the process

by looking at the highest classifications and attempting to fill those and then move to other classifications recognizing that OPL typically promotes employees from within the organization – which leaves gaps in other areas.

Trustee Brockington asked if 24-hour returns service (via book drops) could resume at some branches, and if not, what would be required for OPL to offer this again? Ms. Clark indicated that the biggest challenge to re-opening book drops is the requirement to quarantine returned materials for 72 hours (as per the provincial guidelines developed by the Federation of Ontario Public Libraries). She explained that the machines that do the bulk of the work (sorting materials) have to be shut down in order to ensure non-quarantined and quarantined items do not mix, and so that items “in quarantine” for which there are waiting lists do not appear to be available for the next customer on the list immediately. Staff are working with the Ontario Library Association and Federation of Ontario Public Libraries (who are, in turn, working with the Province) to determine whether any changes should be made to the quarantine period going forward. She said it would certainly be less labour-intensive and a huge advantage to OPL, and certainly to customers as well, to resume using sorter machines and re-open the book drops.

Trustee Brockington asked which branches would open in 2021? Ms. Clark said Rosemount, Sunnyside, Orleans, and potentially others.

In response from a question from Trustee Brockington with respect to the hold lockers opening in Hunt Club Riverside South, Ms. Clark is hopeful the service will up in a few weeks. Staff need some time to notify customers to redirect their holds to the lockers and once that communication is out, the service can start up.

Trustee Brockington asked if there is any COVID community spread in OPL branches noted by Ottawa Public Health? Ms. McDonald said she has heard nothing on this matter. Trustee Brockington urged staff to be prepared as the provincial government may close other entities with no evidence of community spread in those entities as they did last week. He said communities know how valuable and important libraries are and we need to speak up as OPL staff have done a phenomenal job. Trustee Brockington said he has been in many branches and has seen first-hand how organized

and well staff are doing but is also worried that if the provincial government gets more concerned about the City of Ottawa numbers, they may mistakenly target valuable services in the community, such as libraries, for closure or reduced services. If this should occur, we need to be prepared to speak up.

Chair Luloff said the Board is incredibly proud of the work the OPL employees and Senior Management have been doing. He shared Trustee Brockington's sentiment that libraries should not be targeted.

Trustee Begg asked what service model is the Bookmobile currently offering? Ms. Clark said currently due to capacity limits and to ensure proper spacing, Bookmobile is offering "contactless service" as there is only room for a single person/family at any time to access the material on the Bookmobile. Customers may pick up holds and drop off returns; however, when OPL has more leeway in terms of spacing and social distancing, additional services such as browsing can resume. At this point, contactless may continue until the new year, and staff are looking at creative ways to allow browsing in such a small space. Trustee Begg was worried about how Bookmobiles will be able to operate effectively during the winter months with contactless service, but was confident that staff and the Ad hoc Committee will discuss that further.

Trustee Begg commented that he is surprised at how few negative comments have been received regarding customers being disappointed that certain branches are not open, or material cannot be dropped off. He said OPL has a great user base and are very understanding of the reality of the complexity of the services OPL delivers. He thanked staff and the Ad hoc Committee for the great work.

Chair Luloff said OPL has done an incredible job, pivoting during the pandemic, offering services to ensure individuals in all neighbourhoods across the city have access in some way to library services. He thanked the Ad hoc Committee, comprised of staff, Trustee Brockington and Vice-Chair Fisher. He said the Ad hoc Committee has done an incredible job making difficult decisions based on evidence and resources at their disposal and getting us to where we are today. Chair Luloff summarized that OPL has an aging workforce and one that is primarily female, who receive the burden of

far more responsibility and a lot of these times when it comes to the lack of childcare, this falls to women. He thanked OPL staff for the incredible hard work, Senior Management team for their leadership and guidance. It has been the most difficult year for OPL, the city, and entire society and it isn't fair to anyone, to our staff having to shoulder additional burdens. Chair Luloff said staff and the Board want to open every branch as soon as possible and will as soon as it is possible.

He thanked Councillors Dudas and King for joining the virtual meeting and being great supporters of the OPL.

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

MOTION OPL 20201013/3

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

RECEIVED

2. OTTAWA PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD RULES OF PROCEDURE BY-LAW
AMENDMENTS

OPLB-2020-1002

Following advice that questions of technical nature could be posed as the item is tabled, Trustee Brockington decided to not hold the item. He will follow-up with staff and pose the questions at the next meeting.

MOTION OPL 20201013/4

That at its meeting of October 13, 2020, the Ottawa Public Library (OPL) Board:

1. **Receive and table the OPL Board Rules of Procedure By-law Amendments report.**

That at its meeting of November 3, 2020, the OPL Board:

- 2. Approve the amendments to the OPL Board Rules of Procedure
By-law amendments as further described in this report.**

RECEIVED and TABLED

3. ORDER OF FRIENDSHIP NOMINATION – THE UNITED MUSLIM
ORGANIZATIONS OF OTTAWA-GATINEAU (UMOOG)

OPLB-2020-1003

MOTION OPL 20201013/5

That the Ottawa Public Library Board approve The United Muslim Organizations of Ottawa-Gatineau (UMOOG) for the Order of Friendship, in recognition of their impact in the community via their partnership with the Ottawa Public Library to deliver Summer Reading Club Make-It-Kits to vulnerable children aged 6 to 12.

CARRIED

4. MATERIALS RECOVERY MODEL

OPLB-2020-1004

Ms. McDonald, CEO advised Trustees that the presentation this evening concerns a staff recommendation to move from an Overdue Fines Model to a Materials Recovery Model, thereby eliminating late fees - something that she has wanted to bring forward for a long time. She thanked Anna Basile, Division Manager, Corporate Services for her leadership in getting this report to the Board and Catherine Seaman, Division Manager, Customer Experience for her support on this initiative. Ms. Seaman provided background and context, specifically related to barriers to service and race and social equity, and explained the Materials Recovery Model process. Ms. Basile provided information about the financial aspect of moving to the new

model, including administrative costs, fees as “revenue,” and the financial impacts of either a full or a partial transition to the new model in 2021.

(Presentation held on file with the Chief Executive Officer).

Trustee Tierney said staff have done tremendous work on this file.

Trustee Slack congratulated staff on the hard work over the last few years and hoped the report will be received by everyone.

Trustee Meehan asked if staff are requesting the Board to approve one additional full-time position as part of this report. Ms. McDonald, CEO said that the report was in fact indicating that, if the full implementation is approved, there will be a savings of one full-time position as part of the budget process.

With respect to a question from Trustee Meehan regarding whether staff had considered retaining a nominal late return fee, for instance in the amount of one dollar, Ms. McDonald said a nominal fee was not considered as the Board previously approved a reduction in the amount of fees. She indicated there is enough evidence to remove fees as ultimately fees are a barrier to service, and retaining a nominal fee would not align with the Strategic Priority to reduce barriers to access. She added that OPL wants to ensure equal access to the services. Ms. Basile mentioned that late fees are currently approximately 10 cents (depending on the material), on certain materials per day (therefore already quite low); however, the bigger issue for many residents is how late fees accumulate into larger amounts.

Ms. Meehan commented that a nominal fee would be reminder that materials need to be returned.

Trustee Higdon said he initially had trepidations about the model, however, this is the direction that many library systems have recently gone. He said staff have put in place financial protections if customers take advantage of the model.

Vice-Chair Fisher said she supports the model. Although she appreciated remarks that fees help ensure rules are followed, she said there are other ways to do so. The model is a good alternative as it about raising customers' awareness about their responsibilities, using technology solutions. The Vice-

Chair is committed to support staff's racial and social equity initiatives. She thanked the CEO and staff as much thought and analysis was put into the report.

Trustee Brown was encouraged that OPL and other library systems are eliminating fees, as she agrees they are a barrier. She urged staff to be cognizant of residents' financial literacy skills when making decisions, and the impact of customers' accounts going to a collection agency. She asked staff to clarify the timeline in which a customer is sent to a collection agency, and whether the proposed changes make this period longer or shorter. Ms. Seaman said the proposed model extends the period before a customer's account is sent to collections, and that staff will also be increasing the number of messages to the customers before an account is sent to collections.

Further to a question from Trustee Brown about whether the new model will be applied to all items that customers can borrow, including specifically Chromebooks and musical instruments, Ms. Seaman indicated that this is correct. Staff will be monitoring very closely going forward and bring changes accordingly.

Trustee Brockington stated he was startled by the statistics in the report with respect to the number of customers with outstanding late fees. He agrees it is incumbent on the Board to eliminate as many barriers as possible, as libraries are for everyone. He was concerned that the model was restricting the Board to one option. He indicated that research he had done found that six-week amnesty periods have also been successful (such as the one conducted by San Francisco Public Library). He added that fees are a motivator to bring materials back; regardless of whether there are fees or not, some items will continue to be returned late or lost. He suggested the Board approve the model for children and youth only in the 2021 budget, and continue to monitor late fees, and see if there is a positive impact on customers as a result. He urged the Board to proceed with caution, but he acknowledged that he does not want to vote against the model, as it has strong merits. Ms. McDonald thanked Trustee Brockington for his comments. She said staff considered an amnesty, however, she felt that that an amnesty model is a one-time solution and does not address the root of the

problem, which is achieving long-term access for everyone.

Trustee Begg worried that by removing barriers at one place may create an additional one in another place and urged staff to have a solid implementation monitoring process in place to ensure there are no unintended impacts. For instance, Trustee Begg was eager to ensure that placing a customer's account in collections will not have an unduly negative impact on a customer. He was also worried that without late fees, customers may treat the overdue period as an extended loan period, particularly for Express items, and that staff will need to monitor this carefully. He asked staff to elaborate on how overdue items may decline with this model. Ms. Seaman said that based on data from other libraries, staff may see a decrease both in the average number of days materials are returned beyond their due date and in the number of items that "age" to lost. Other libraries that have adopted similar models have not reported an increase in materials returned late, longer hold times or gaps in their collection, nor any concerns with their Express collections. In fact, Salt Lake Public Library saw a decrease of items returned late and a circulation increase of 14%, and an 11% increase in cardholders after their first year. As well, Chicago Public Library had an increase of 240% of materials returned in just three weeks of going late-fee-free. She said OPL's process is very much aligned with other library systems. Staff will be monitoring the numbers for all collections and, if needed, will adjust the process accordingly.

Trustee Begg asked if the somewhat "bland" format of the emails sent to customers will be improved, particularly overdue notification emails. Ms. Basile indicated that staff recently acquired a new tool that will allow messages to be formatted differently and provide increased functionality in the messages.

Further to a question from Trustee Begg regarding whether staff are looking at eliminating other fees that are punitive in nature, Ms. Basile said to the best of her knowledge, OPL does not have other punitive fees. Other fees that OPL collects are with aligned with cost recovery (for example, fees for meeting rooms, use of Image Space equipment, and so on).

Vice-Chair Fisher said staff's comments regarding the monitoring that will take place were reassuring. She was not in favour of rolling out the model to

youth and children only as other groups such as seniors, newcomers, and different communities would then continue to be impacted by late fees. She urged the Board to commit to racial and social equity and re-iterated the value the model will bring to customers. Although there is a budget implication, she fully supports staff recommendations.

Written correspondence was submitted to the Board prior to the start of the meeting, as noted:

- Vladimir Uher, President, Friends of the Ottawa Public Library Association (FOPLA).
- George Macdonald, President, Barrhaven Food Cupboard.
- Monique Doolittle-Romas, Executive Director, The Good Companions Centre.
- Martine Dore, Interim Executive Direction, Cornerstone Housing for Women.

Trustee Tierney called for yeas and nays.

YEAS (9): Chair Luloff, Vice-Chair Fisher, Trustees Begg, Brockington, Brown, Higdon, Meehan, Slack, Tierney
Nays (0)

Chair Luloff summarized by saying the Board has made a historic decision this evening, setting the policy direction to go late late-fees-free. Regardless of someone's income, situation or background, the Library exists to support learning, and ensure knowledge and ideas are available to everyone. He mentioned that research shows that late fees affect disadvantaged or vulnerable communities disproportionately and create a barrier that prevents people who could greatly benefit from using libraries from using them. He said that overdue fees for him run contrary to the overall mission of the Library to serve everyone – inclusively. He said this policy will be built into the proposed OPL 2021 budget, which Council will be asked to approve.

Following the vote, Trustee Brockington indicated that removing late fees does not address the underlying access issue in the City: the lack of long-term access for everyone in the City in particular those in high-risk

communities. He urged the Board to have a broader discussion about this issue in the future.

Trustee Brockington left the meeting at 7:20 p.m.

Chair recognized the contribution of Trustee Tierney as previous Chair of the OPL Board. He thanked staff for the unanimous decision and the work of the CEO and incredible staff.

Trustee Meehan left the meeting at 7:21 p.m.

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

MOTION OPL 20201013/6

That the Ottawa Public Library Board:

- 1. Adopt a Materials Recovery Model as further described in this report, and;**
- 2. Direct staff to address the revenue adjustment as part of the 2021 Draft Operating and Capital Budget, as further described in this report.**

CARRIED

5. OTTAWA PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD 2019 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
OPLB-2020-1005
-

MOTION OPL 20201013/7

That the Ottawa Public Library Board receive the 2019 Financial Statements.

RECEIVED

6. SEMI-ANNUAL PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT – JANUARY TO JUNE

2020

OPLB-2020-1006

MOTION OPL 20201013/8

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

RECEIVED

INFORMATION PREVIOUSLY DISTRIBUTED

A. 2021 BUDGET TIMELINES AND DIRECTIONS

OPLB-2020-10A-IPD

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION OPL 20201013/9

Be It Resolved that the Ottawa Public Library Board meeting be adjourned at 7:22 p.m.

Chair

Recording Secretary