

Ottawa Public Library Board Meeting

Minutes 25

Tuesday, 8 June 2021

5:02 p.m.

Electronic Participation

Notes: 1. *The Ottawa Public Library Board members participated virtually.*

Chair Luloff welcomed members and attendees to the Ottawa Public Library Board meeting. The Chair delivered the Indigenous territorial recognition and proceeded with roll call by voice in random order.

Present:

Chair: Matthew Luloff

Vice-Chair: Kathy Fisher

Trustees: Steven Begg, Riley Brockington, Allan Higdon,
Rawlson King, Carol Anne Meehan, Harvey A. Slack

Regrets:

Trustee Mary-Rose Brown

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

Minutes 24 – Tuesday, 11 May 2021

CONFIRMED

CHAIR'S VERBAL UPDATE

National Indigenous History Month

The Chair indicated that June is National Indigenous History Month, which is an

opportunity to honour the heritage, contributions, and cultures of Indigenous people in Canada. He said that OPL's commitment as settlers to implementing the calls to action in the Truth and Reconciliation Report and continuing to learn from and listen to the stories of Indigenous people in Canada is more important than ever in light of the recent discovery at the Kamloops residential school of the remains of 215 children who were killed. (*The Chair then asked for a moment of silence*). He then highlighted OPL's weekly Storytimes for children in June, which will feature a selection of Indigenous stories, in both English and French. Also highlighted was a talk on June 7th with author Richard Van Camp, where he speaks with Karen McBride about his latest book, "*Gather*". Finally, a series of creative writing workshops was mentioned, whereby Sarabeth Holden, the author of "*Please Don't Change My Diaper*", will guide young writers between the ages of 9-12 and 13-17. Chair Luloff indicated that more information was available on the OPL website.

OPL Employee Recognition Month

Chair Luloff mentioned that June is Employee Recognition Month, and on behalf of the Board and the CEO, he thanked all employees for their tremendous contribution to OPL. In the past year, staff overcame challenges while delivering the services that OPL customers are passionate about. Despite those challenges, employees served customers in new ways with the same care and commitment as always. He indicated that the impact that the employees and their work has had on the community was highlighted last month in the 2020 Annual Report. He shared that heartfelt and thoughtful comments from customers continue to be received, which reinforces the dedication of OPL employees. He said that in a regular year, OPL staff would gather in June to celebrate their accomplishments; however, due to ongoing provincial restrictions, management is planning to recognize staff in the Fall, when small, in-person gatherings could potentially be allowed.

Rosemount Branch Reopening Virtual Celebration

The Chair was thrilled to emcee the virtual opening and video tour of the revitalized Rosemount branch just prior to the Board meeting. During the event, he spoke to the history of the branch, its recent revitalization, and the key role that local branches play as community hubs across the city. He said it is truly remarkable that the revitalization of the much-loved branch was able to proceed, despite COVID-19 restrictions in 2020 and 2021. The branch opened with curbside services on the lower level in December 2020. He was joined by Mayor Jim Watson and Councillor Jeff Lieper, Kitchissippi

Ward, at the event, and recognized their support and dedication to the project. The Mayor spoke about the importance of libraries to local communities in Ottawa, and unveiled the plaque, which is to be placed in the front entrance lobby at the branch. During the event, Councillor Leiper spoke about the vibrant life and culture that the Rosemount branch supports, and the value of the services offered to residents. Councillor Leiper also had the honour of cutting the ribbon during the ceremony. Chair Luloff mentioned that the virtual tour of the upgraded branch had been narrated by OPL CEO Danielle McDonald, who presented each space, highlighting renovations and new features. She also described examples of Rosemount branch's community partnerships and thanked everyone involved for their collaboration and support. The Chair went on to say that they were very fortunate to have had Joshua Nutt from READ, as well as Dan Wojcik, the architect, present at the event. On behalf of the Board, Chair Luloff thanked Mayor Watson, Councillor Jeff Leiper, and Danielle McDonald for their participation in the celebration. He also thanked Mr. Nutt of READ, and other library champions and customers in the Rosemount community for their engagement and enthusiasm. Chair Luloff shared a final kudos to staff, and everyone involved in organizing the event, as well as for the work involved in completing the revitalization project itself.

Author Event in Partnership with Ottawa International Writers Festival

Chair Luloff announced two upcoming events which wrap up OPL's partnership with the Ottawa International Writers Festival for spring festivals.

MOTION OPL 20210608/1

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

RECEIVED

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

iCanada iPods at the Ottawa Mission

The CEO indicated that OPL is partnering with the Ottawa Mission to lend iCanada iPads for use in their rehabilitation and stabilization program. The iCanada iPods, created as a Canada 150 project at OPL, will be loaned out for six months and have

been pre-loaded with music, audiobooks, and programs that clients can listen to. She said the project aims to benefit clients who struggle with noise and chaotic moments in the shelter, as well as feelings of isolation. The CEO thanked Tristen Villanyi Bokor, the Librarian who initiated the iCanada iPods project back in 2017, and Courtney Mellor, the Librarian currently working with this community partner.

Seniors' Month

The CEO reminded the Board that this June marks the 37th annual province-wide Seniors' Month celebration and presents an opportunity to celebrate and honour the contributions that older adults make to our communities. She announced the Aging Well Together at the Library program, offered in partnership with the City of Ottawa, and funded by the Older Adult Plan. She mentioned that the Wellness Fridays programs for seniors start this June and continue through to December. She said the programs are held on Zoom Friday mornings every week in English, and twice a month in French. Participants may be able to join the Zoom program by phone if they do not have access to a computer or the internet. The themes for the program topics will include drawing, movement, writing, and journaling. The program provides participants with complimentary activity kits, including supplies and instructions. She mentioned that because supplies and spaces are limited, she advised customers to register early to book a spot.

Orleans Branch Reopening

The CEO informed the Board that the Orleans branch refresh project is nearing completion. A fresh coat of paint has been applied, new carpets have been installed throughout the branch, and books are finally back on the shelf. She said that the branch is having a new fire alarm system installed the week of June 14, and that the branch will reopen on June 21. She mentioned that Orleans staff look forward to being able to welcome customers inside the branch again.

Branch Staff Registering the Public for Vaccines

The CEO said that as part of their regular work, OPL employees often provide support to community members with online services, including guiding them through how to complete online forms for various social services benefits. She was pleased to say that library employees will support Ottawa Public Health (OPH) one day a week by helping community members register for their vaccine appointments, as part of OPH's

neighbourhood-level registration drives. She indicated that OPH provided an information session to staff where they shared basic information about the vaccines to support OPL employees when speaking with residents, provided an overview of the booking systems, as well as community support agencies that Library staff can refer customers to if they require assistance to get to their vaccine appointment. Using the mini bookmobile (sprinter van), Library employees will be going out into the community to designated locations across the city assisting OPH in the coming weeks. She thanked all those involved at OPH and OPH for their collaboration and creativity.

MOTION OPL 20210608/2

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

RECEIVED

PRESENTATIONS

1. SERVICE OPL - PRESENTATION

Ann Archer, Acting Division Manager, Customer Experience introduced Kent Raymond, Portfolio Manager, Customer Experience who provided a presentation about Service OPL. (*Held on file with the Chief Executive Office.*) Mr. Raymond indicated the three components and purposes of Service OPL, which include: InfoService, Web Governance, and Customer Experience. In addition, he provided InfoService statistics, information about partnerships within the department, and highlighted customer service changes during the pandemic.

Vice-Chair Fisher asked what led staff to decide to no longer require customer identification when registering for a library card with on-line registration. Mr. Raymond responded that staff do verify identity in the system through the back end, as part of the process.

Further to a question from Vice-Chair Fisher regarding what type of questions are asked of InfoService, and the approximate response time with the new Chat service, Mr. Raymond said that the questions are similar to

those received pre-pandemic, and cover a wide variety of topics. Currently, many questions posed are inquiring about when branches would reopen, and about provincial restrictions and plans. He noted the average response time for chats is between 40 seconds to one and a half minutes.

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

MOTION OPL 20210608/3

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

RECEIVED

2. OPL COVID-19 RECOVERY PLAN - UPDATE

Danielle McDonald, CEO and Donna Clark, Division Manager, Branch Operations provided a verbal presentation regarding the Library's COVID-19 Recovery Plan (*Held on file with the Chief Executive Office.*) They discussed the current situation, including applicable regulations and the legislative context, and presented an overview of forthcoming service changes and proposed dates. They also provided an update about book return service, digital inclusion activities (Chromebooks and printing services), highlighted upcoming programs and services, and outlined next steps.

There being no questions, the presentation was RECEIVED as presented.

MOTION OPL 20210608/4

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

RECEIVED

REPORTS

3. ACCESSIBLE COLLECTIONS ADVOCACY

OPLB-2021-0603

Vice-Chair Fisher expressed her support for this report and its recommendations and provided some context. She remarked that only five to seven percent of material currently published is accessible to Canadians with a print disability. Many works are converted to accessible formats after publication, most notably by two non-profit organizations in Canada: The Centre for Equitable Library Access (CELA) and the National Network for Equitable Library Service (NNELS). Vice-Chair Fisher noted that OPL has a collection of 6,000 items in the CELA collection available by request. These collections are regularly used by the over 600 registered customers of OPL who have a print disability. She expressed concerns regarding the Federal government's 2020 Fall Economic Statement, indicating that funding for CELA and NNELS was being phased out over the next four years in order to move towards production practices that are inclusive from the start, commonly known as "born-accessible" publications. She said while "born-accessible" publications are a laudable goal, no roadmap for this process has been developed. Vice-Chair Fisher said that by carrying the recommendations in this report, this will ensure that as the largest bilingual English-French library in North America, and a key partner of CELA since its inception, OPL will play a role as a key advocate for continued access to accessible material, through stable funding and a concrete, realistic plan involving all stakeholders to move towards "born-accessible" publishing within a reasonable timeframe. She indicated that through her work with the Federation of Ontario Public Libraries, she sees the importance of accessible collections for all Ontarians and supports the advocacy work on this issue of national and provincial library associations, such as the Canadian Urban Libraries Council (CULC) and the Ontario Library Association (OLA).

In response to a question from Trustee Meehan regarding the roadmap towards "born-accessible" publishing, and what role the Board has to facilitate this process, Vice-Chair Fisher said that the organizations previously mentioned are engaged in this work. Alexandra Yarrow, Program

Manager, Board and Strategic Services indicated that many stakeholders are involved in these efforts for community access to accessible formats, including CELA, NNELS, the federal government, the Association of Canadian Publishers, and organizations representing individuals with a print disability.

Further to a question from Trustee Meehan on whether or not accessible collections will be available while this work is ongoing, and what the impact would be of the funding cuts. Ms. Yarrow said that while the funding has been restored for the 2021-2022 fiscal year, the appeal is for continued, sustainable funding going forward. Ms. Clark mentioned that the French accessible collections will be the hardest hit if sustainable funding is not met. Ms. McDonald expects that lobbying and messaging federal partners about the importance of this issue will work towards the goal of continued and sustainable funding.

Chair Luloff supports the recommendation and thanked staff for bringing this to the Board's attention.

There being no further discussion, the recommendations were CARRIED as presented.

MOTION OPL 20210608/5

That the Ottawa Public Library Board:

- 1. Receive this report for information; and,**
- 2. Express support for Centre for Equitable Library Access (CELA) and National Network for Equitable Library Service (NNELS) in their request for continued, sustainable funding.**

RECEIVED and CARRIED

4. GOVERNANCE EVALUATION REPORT AND ACTION PLAN

OPLB-2021-0604

Trustee Brockington felt that the current Board has sound governance practices, questioned the need to engage a consultant, and expressed concern about the cost of engaging a consultant. He asked, with approximately a year and a few months left in the current term of Board, whether hiring a governance consultant to work on the action plan recommendations is necessary, and whether or not the work could be done in-house? Ms. McDonald said the request for proposal contract will have a very minimal cost. She noted there were a few key areas that were not particularly clear in the survey responses and that engaging a governance expert was recommended. Ms. Yarrow said that Trustees may feel more comfortable sharing feedback with an independent expert. Staff highlighted that some results in the survey, such as Risk management and Succession management, were divergent, and would like the consultant to interview trustees to further clarify feedback in these areas. She noted the two appendices in the policy: Board Meeting Evaluation and Board Performance Evaluation were developed with the same consultant, and thus further expertise may assist in clarifying some of the responses and making any necessary adjustments to the survey questions.

There being no further questions, the recommendations were CARRIED as presented.

MOTION OPL 20210608/6

That the Ottawa Public Library Board:

- 1. Receive the Governance Evaluation Report (2021) for information (Document 1); and,**
- 2. Approve the Governance Evaluation Action Plan.**

RECEIVED and CARRIED

5. 2021 BOARD MEETING SCHEDULE

OPLB-2021-0605

MOTION OPL 20210608/7

That the Ottawa Public Library Board approve the rescheduling of its meeting of 7 December to 30 November to accommodate the anticipated City of Ottawa budget timelines.

CARRIED

6. ELMVALE ACRES BRANCH LEASE RENEWAL

OPLB-2021-0606

Trustee Brockington asked whether Elmvale Acres branch is considered a temporary or permanent branch, and Anna Basile, Division Manager, Corporate Services, replied that it is a permanent branch.

Trustee Brockington was curious as to how staff factors in financial considerations, customer service, and physical space requirements when determining whether to lease a retail establishment versus building a new facility. Ms. Basile replied that through the Facilities Master Plan, staff will explore in the next five years what, if any, land is available, development opportunities for future space, identify whether there is a continued service need, and complete a value for money assessment for continued lease or new build. She indicated that OPL will work with the landlord over the next five years, to see what sort of redevelopment will occur in the plaza.

Trustee Brockington wanted clarification as to how OPL makes the decision for a permanent stand-alone facility option. Ms. Basile said there must be a clear business case, that is a value for money proposition, that comes after confirming the service need, the neighbourhood and site location, as per the Financial Framework. She offered to provide Trustee Brockington with the Rosemount branch business case as an example if so desired.

Further to a question from Trustee Brockington on whether staff determines the need on a case-by-case basis, Ms. Basile confirmed in the affirmative.

In response to a question from Chair Luloff as to how many locations are rented, Ms. Basile said that there are currently five branches that are leased (non-City partnered, including Main branch) and would be four in the future (once the current Main branch location is vacated). Chair Luloff said he likes the location of the branch, because of ongoing redevelopment, a good mix of residential and commercial access, and a great site location, and as a result, felt that this was a good business case for rented space.

There being no further questions, the recommendations were CARRIED as presented.

MOTION OPL 20210608/8

That the Ottawa Public Library Board:

- 1. Approve the lease renewal for the Elmvale Acres Branch (1910 St. Laurent Blvd) effective February 1, ~~2024~~ 2022 for a five-year term expiring January 31, 2027. The total consideration for the term is estimated to be \$957,075.00 plus HST; and,**
- 2. Delegate authority to the Chief Executive Officer to finalize and execute the lease extension agreement in accordance with the terms and conditions detailed in this report.**

CARRIED, as amended

7. 2020 ANNUAL REPORT ON OTTAWA PUBLIC LIBRARY RELATED FRAUD CLAIMS

OPLB-2021-0607

MOTION OPL 20210608/9

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

RECEIVED

OTHER BUSINESS

Virtual meetings: Chair Luloff observed that the Board has seen its fair share of Zoom bombers, and that staff continue to look for ways for Board meetings that have fewer disruptions, while remaining accessible. He noted that the Library does not have the same resources as the City to allocate to this issue. He underlined the importance of continuing with an open platform for dialogue while mitigating disruptive behavior, so that the public and staff could attend.

Trustee Higdon mentioned that he is hopeful to meet in person in the near future, and the Chair agreed that there will be a chance to meet in-person at some point in the future.

The Chair thanked staff and the Board for their patience and wished everyone a good summer.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION OPL 20210608/10

Be It Resolved that the Ottawa Public Library Board meeting be adjourned at 6:28 p.m.

Chair

Recording Secretary