

## Ottawa Public Library Board Meeting

Minutes 30

Tuesday, 8 February 2022

5:03 p.m.

### Electronic Participation

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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 land acknowledgement statement and proceeded with roll call by voice in random order.

**Present:**

Chair: Matthew Luloff

Vice-Chair: Kathy Fisher

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

### DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No Declarations of Interest were filed.

### CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

Minutes 29 – Tuesday, 30 November 2021

CONFIRMED

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

One communication item was received. Correspondence from Craig Ginther, Division Manager, Central Library. (Status of the stained glass window at the Main branch of the Ottawa Public Library.)

## **MOTIONS REQUIRING SUSPENSION OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE**

### **MOTION OPL 20220208/1**

**That the Ottawa Public Library Board Waive the Rules of Procedure to approve the addition of In Camera item #2 “A proposed or pending acquisition or disposition of land by the Board relating to growth projects and property interests of the Board” for consideration by the Board at today’s meeting, pursuant to Section 21(3) of the Ottawa Public Library’s Rules of Procedure By-law (By-law, December 2018).**

CARRIED

## **CHAIR’S VERBAL UPDATE**

### **OPL Celebrates Black History Month**

Throughout the Month of February, Ottawa Public Library (OPL) is celebrating Black History Month by highlighting programs and resources that honour Black heritage and consider the historical significance and contemporary contributions of Black activities and artists from around the world. The Chair said there will be livestreamed educational and cultural programming for all ages, as well as a social media swap with local influencers through OPL’s Teen Instagram account, highlighting resources from OPL’s collections. The public was encouraged to visit the website to view blogs and booklists for all ages, which will help readers discover the history of Black Canadians and their contributions to our cultural life.

### **Freedom to Read Week**

To highlight this important week for public libraries (February 20-26), branches will have displays of books that have been challenged . OPL will also be publishing a blog post and booklist on the subject of banned books, and the important role Libraries play in ensuring that a diversity of views and information are available to library customers. The

Chair mentioned that staff will present their Annual Intellectual Freedom Challenges during the meeting.

### **Family Literacy Day**

Literacy Day (January 27) raises awareness across Canada of the importance of reading and engaging in other literacy-related activities as a family. The Chair said OPL partnered with local author and illustrator Timm Holmes to create a unique and original “Choose Your Own Adventure” StoryWalk. The Pieced Together virtual StoryWalk fit in perfectly with this year’s Family Literacy Day theme, “Learning the Great Outdoors!”. Families were able to view or listen from the comfort of their own home or stream it on a mobile device while out for a walk. The library also highlighted many resources for family literacy including Tumblebooks and Hoopla, as well as provided Take home storytimes so that families could recreate the magic of storytime together at home.

### **Ontario Library Association (OLA) Annual Conference**

The Chair remarked that, in addition to having several OPL staff making presentations at the most recent OLA Annual Conference, Trustee King moderated a panel session about Ādisōke, and Vice-Chair Fisher attended in her capacity as a member of the Federation of Ontario Public Libraries. He noted that Vice-Chair Fisher will provide a verbal report at the March meeting.

### **MOTION OPL 20220208/2**

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

RECEIVED

## **CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT**

### **OPL Updates**

The CEO noted that the first month of 2022 had been challenging. At the start of the year, there was a surge of the Omicron variant, resulting in Provincial restrictions and staffing pressures, and subsequently, a reduction in OPL service hours. Shortly thereafter, there was a significant winter event, requiring OPL to close branches for one day due to snow accumulation. Most recently, the library experienced disruptions in the

downtown core due to the truck demonstrations, requiring Main and Rideau branches to be closed. The CEO thanked staff and Trustees for their assistance and support in navigating these challenging situations and offered her appreciation to customers for their patience. Finally, the CEO was saddened to learn of the passing of John Curry, Editor of “The Stittsville News”, longtime resident of the Stittsville-Goulbourn community, and strong supporter of the Friends of the Ottawa Public Library Association (FOPLA). She noted that the OPL Board celebrated Mr. Curry’s accomplishments in May 2011 by awarding him the Order of Friendship in recognition of his outstanding support to the Stittsville, Munster, and Richmond Branches of the OPL. The CEO said Mr. Curry will be deeply missed.

### **OLITA Technology Advancing Libraries Award**

The CEO was pleased to announce that OPL was awarded the Ontario Library Association’s Technology Advancing Libraries Award for its Chromebook Lending Program. She noted that Courtney Mellor accepted the award during last week’s OLA Super Conference. Ms. Mellor led OPL’s Community Development activities during the pandemic. Ms. Mellor, along with colleagues in Technology Services and in the branches, coordinated the delivery of Chromebooks and hotspots throughout the community to help meet the technology needs of our most vulnerable populations, and forged strong relationships with partners working in high-risk areas of the city. The CEO congratulated Courtney and the many employees who contributed to this deeply impactful initiative.

### **Family Day Closure**

The CEO noted that OPL and its branches will be closed February 21, 2022, to celebrate the importance of families and family life to people and their communities, including chosen families.

### **Gift in Appreciation**

The CEO noted that in December 2021, staff received a thoughtful gift from a customer named Kathleen Kot. Ms. Kot told OPL staff that, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, she was fortunate to learn how to operate the laser cutter located in the Imagine Space at the Nepean CentrepoinTE branch. Using the laser cutter skills she developed, Ms. Kot created a piece entitled “The Queen’s Gates”. The work has a background painting of the Parliament Building, Queen’s gates located at the entrance, and includes a wooden

frame surrounding her work. The laser image of the Gates as well as the frame were made using the laser cutters at the Imagine Space. Ms. Kot expressed that she feels fortunate to live in Ottawa where she has access to this type of technology, in addition to many other excellent programs and services at the library. Ms. McDonald thanked Ms. Kot for the lovely art piece and noted that the piece is now hanging by the Imagine Space at the Nepean CentrepoinTE branch.

**MOTION OPL 20220208/3**

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

RECEIVED

**PRESENTATIONS**

1. FRIENDS OF THE OTTAWA PUBLIC LIBRARY ASSOCIATION (FOPLA) -  
PRESENTATION

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Sarah Macintyre, Program Manager, Board and Strategic Services, provided a verbal presentation regarding some changeover at the FOPLA Board level and re-introduced the dedicated volunteers on the FOPLA Board, who have had to handle challenges caused by the pandemic over the past few years. (*Held on file with the Chief Executive Office.*) Ms. Macintyre was thrilled to announce that OPL received a donation of \$35K from FOPLA on January 31, 2022, stating OPL has been tremendously fortunate, that, prior to the pandemic, FOPLA would regularly donate over \$250K per year. She noted that FOPLA's operations were significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, which makes the donation of \$35K all the more generous, considering the hardship they have seen over the last few years. Shari Hill, President, FOPLA said a few words, specifically that she enjoys volunteering with FOPLA because she believes strongly in supporting OPL programs and services. Ms. Hill was looking forward to a better 2022.

Chair Luloff thanked the volunteers' tenacity and passion, and noted that barring the pandemic, OPL would have likely seen another historic donation. He remarked that the Board is grateful for the very generous donation, which will

enrich the lives of OPL customers.

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

**MOTION OPL 20220208/4**

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

RECEIVED

2. OPL COVID-19 RECOVERY PLAN - UPDATE

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Donna Clark, Division Manager, Branch Operations, provided a verbal presentation regarding an update on the Library's COVID-19 Recovery Plan. *(Held on file with the Chief Executive Office.)* She discussed resumption of a service plan, which factors in staff and customer safety, Ottawa Public Health Advice, and aligns with the City of Ottawa. She spoke to continued staffing pressures at branches, at InfoService, and in Program Development. Ms. Clark stated that recruitment is in progress, however, there are delays with onboarding (as service partners continue to experience staffing pressures). She mentioned that strides have been made with new hires who will be starting soon. There are plans in place to continue recruitment to address staffing pressures.

Ms. Clark mentioned that customers not wearing, or improperly wearing, their masks in branches is an issue that is causing concern. The incidents vary by branch, and Ms. Clark noted that some are more volatile. Since November 2021, there have been 20 incident reports, resulting in 13 evictions. Staff continue to track incidents at each location to aid enforcement. Next, she provided an update on progress since November and spoke about recent service reductions in branches, as well as recently expanded open hours for the Kiosk. Ms. Clark then provided an overview of the plans to temporarily suspend service at several bookmobile stops. Specifically, she reviewed those stops that will be maintained with modified hours, stops that will be served by a maintained stop, and stops that will be paused altogether. She noted that bookmobile stops could resume

earlier, should staffing levels in that department improve. Ms. Clark then discussed the plans to resume and expand services from February through to June, specifically, the return to regular operating hours, Chromebook and PC access increases, creative spaces opening, museum pass lending, and in-person programming where possible.

Chair Luloff said it is difficult for Senior Management and staff who have been asked to work longer hours and to manage with low levels of staffing. He welcomed new employees that have joined OPL during these difficult times. Chair Luloff thanked Vice-Chair Fisher and Trustee Brockington, members of the COVID-19 Ad hoc Committee, for their guidance and sage input.

In response to a question from Vice-Chair Fisher regarding clarification on the incidents related to mask-wearing that led to thirteen evictions, Ms. Clark said that the term “evictions” is an internal term used when customers are asked to leave the premises when they break the customer code of conduct, or if employee directions are not adhered to after repeated warnings. She explained the eviction process and examples of penalty timelines.

Trustee Meehan asked a question about whether it is primarily casual and part-time employees impacting vacancy rates. Ms. Clark replied that the vacancy numbers include both Full-time, Part-time, and Casual positions. She explained that normally there is a healthy number of casual staff to pull from, but that this is not the case right now. She said that staffing challenges could be due to employees resigning or not returning. Ms. Clark spoke to an ongoing recruitment plan and methods staff have taken to recruit.

Trustee Meehan commented that everyone is experiencing staffing shortages and urged staff to continue active recruitment. She noted that she would be happy to share job postings in her newsletter. Chair Luloff agreed and noted that social media is an excellent platform to recruit.

Anna Basile, Division Manager, Corporate Services clarified the current vacancy numbers. She referenced some of the challenges related to recruitment, specifically identifying that more clarity is needed in terms of education requirements. She said staff are working on this clarification, and this will be folded into current recruitment initiatives, including sharing information with Members of Council, hoping they can help support recruitment efforts by sharing

the information with their constituents.

Trustee Brockington said there was a healthy discussion at the Ad hoc Committee Meeting regarding the broad range of positions available. He asked whether customers had been informed of the upcoming changes to the Bookmobile stops service, and Ms. Clark confirmed in the affirmative.

In response to a question from Trustee Brockington regarding opportunities to rotate stops should staffing challenges continue for Bookmobile longer-term, Ms. Clark said that the Manager of Alternative Services has created a matrix that realigns stops to serve as many regular stops close by as possible, where high usage stops and communities that exhibit high prevalence of low-income markers will be prioritized, and multiple stops that serve the same community will be combined. She said the manager does not have the luxury of pulling from branch staff to offer services, due to the unique qualifications for the Bookmobile positions. Once staffing stabilizes, the manager can shift to enhancing services once again.

In response to a question about whether hiring in this area was a priority, Ms. Clark confirmed in the affirmative and explained the position requirements.

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

**MOTION OPL 20220208/5**

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

RECEIVED

3. **ANNUAL INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM CHALLENGES**

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Ann Archer, Program Manager, Content Services provided a presentation on the 2021 library materials challenges. This presentation was made at this particular meeting because in February, Canadian libraries observe Freedom to Read Week (February 20-26). Ms. Archer walked through the reconsideration of Library Materials processes at OPL in 2021 and highlighted requests for



reconsideration since 2016. She provided the 2021 English and French titles that were requested for reconsideration and elaborated on why they were challenged. Ms. Archer noted that the professional librarians in Content Services research and review each formal request, look at reviews, verify whether other Canadian libraries have the title, and look to see if there has been a court ruling on criminal grounds. She spoke to OPL's commitment to intellectual freedom and remarked that Freedom to Read Week spotlights intellectual freedom as a fundamental value for libraries and read the Canadian Federation of Libraries Association's statement on intellectual freedom.

Chair Luloff said he was aware of some of the titles and took the opportunity to get more of a sense of why the titles were challenged. He stated it is important to uphold intellectual freedom, because reading and researching content is important in the polarized world we live in today.

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

**MOTION OPL 20220208/6**

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

RECEIVED

## REPORTS

### 4. OTTAWA PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD WORK PLAN

OPLB-2022-0204

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Trustee Brockington asked the CEO to comment on outreach to underserved communities, specifically regarding the November 30, 2021 Board approval to address the needs of the vulnerable communities and communities without a local branch who would benefit from connections to library programs and services. He indicated that he would like to see this become a stated 2022 Board workplan item. Ms. McDonald, CEO, noted that staff will be drawing those new funds for outreach into the communities this year, and the intention is to bring back a report to the Board on this matter. Trustee Brockington remarked that although staff have already begun work, having this item added explicitly would highlight the importance of this work. Ms. McDonald pointed out that this is a corporate work plan item, rather than a Board work plan item, and agreed that it would be added to the corporate plan and that staff would report back on the \$40K outreach into the communities.

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

### **MOTION OPL 20220208/7**

**That the Ottawa Public Library Board:**

- 1. Receive the report for information;**
- 2. Approve the 2022 Board Work Plan (Appendix 1); and,**
- 3. Receive the 2022 Corporate Work Plan (Appendix 2) for information.**

RECEIVED and CARRIED

Trustee Brown left the meeting at 6:09 p.m.

**\*IN CAMERA ITEMS**

**THAT, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE *PUBLIC LIBRARIES ACT*, THE OTTAWA PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD RESOLVE IN CAMERA PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION 16.1 (4)(B) PERSONAL MATTERS ABOUT AN IDENTIFIABLE INDIVIDUAL, TO CONSIDER THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER 2021 PERFORMANCE REVIEW AND RELATED EMPLOYMENT MATTERS – IN CAMERA – REPORTING OUT DATE: 8 FEBRUARY 2022. THE SPECIFIC MATTERS RELATED TO THE CEO'S 2021 PERFORMANCE REVIEW WILL NOT BE REPORTED OUT AS THEY RELATE TO PERSONAL MATTERS ABOUT AN IDENTIFIABLE INDIVIDUAL.**

Upon resuming in open session at 8:42 p.m., the Board moved the following:

**MOTION OPL 20220208/7**

Moved by Vice-Chair Fisher:

**That the Ottawa Public Library Board:**

- 1. Receive the CEO's 2021 Performance Review and 2022 Plan; and,**
- 2. Approve the Ad hoc Committee's confidential recommendations regarding the CEO's performance.**

**Note: The specific matters related to the CEO's 2021 performance review will not be reported out as they relate to personal matters about an identifiable individual.**

RECEIVED and CARRIED

The Board, having reached the three-hour scheduled time following the first In Camera meeting, moved the following motion at 8:00 p.m.:

**MOTION OPL 20220208/9**

Moved by Vice-Chair Fisher

**Whereas pursuant to Section 35(4) of the Ottawa Public Library Board's Procedure By-law 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?"**

CARRIED

**ADDITIONAL IN CAMERA ITEM**

**That, in accordance with the *Public Libraries Act*, the Ottawa Public Library Board resolve in Camera pursuant to 16.1 (4)(c), a proposed or pending acquisition or disposition of land by the Board relating to growth projects and property interests of the Board – In Camera – Reporting Out Date: 8 February 2022.**

Upon resuming in open session at 8:42 p.m., the Board moved the following:

**MOTION OPL 20220208/10**

Moved by Vice-Chair Fisher:

**That the Ottawa Public Library Board receive the information relating to growth projects and property interests of the Board.**

RECEIVED

*While In Camera no votes were taken and no decision was made.*

Trustees Begg and Meehan left the meeting at 8:41 p.m.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION OPL 20220208/11**

**Be It Resolved that the Ottawa Public Library Board meeting be adjourned at 8:45 p.m.**

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**Chair**

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**Recording Secretary**