

MARKHAM PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD

Regular Meeting

Minutes of Regular Meeting held on Monday, September 21, 2020 7:03 p.m. Virtual Meeting

Present from Board: Mr. Alick Siu, Chair
Ms. Margaret McGrory, Vice-Chair
Mr. Raymond Chan
Mr. Edward Choi
Deputy Mayor Don Hamilton
Mr. Ben Hendriks
Councillor Keith Irish
Councillor Andrew Keyes
Mr. Anthony Lewis
Mrs. Pearl Mantell
Mrs. Lillian Tolensky
Mr. David Whetham
Mr. Jay Xie

Present from Staff: Mrs. Catherine Biss, CEO & Secretary-Treasurer
Ms. Andrea Cecchetto, Director, Service Excellence
Mrs. Diane Macklin, Director, Community Engagement
Ms. Michelle Sawh, Director, Administration
Ms. Debbie Walker, Director, Library Strategy & Planning
Ms. Polly Chan, Financial Analyst
Mr. Patrick Pan, Manager, Facilities & Workplace Safety
Mrs. Antonella Costa, Manager, Workforce Development
Mr. David Zambrano, Organizational Transformation Manager
Mr. Fred Whitmarsh, Manager, Unionville Library
Ms. Andrea Dunn, Designate Union Representative
Mrs. Susan Price, Board Secretary

Regrets: Ms. Iqra Awan

1.0 **Call to Order/Approval of Agenda**

Mr. Alick Siu, Chair called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

Moved by Mrs. Lillian Tolensky
Seconded by Mr. Ben Hendriks

Resolved that the agenda be approved.

Carried.

1.1 **Declaration of Conflict of Pecuniary Interest**

None.

1.2 **Delegation**

None.

1.3 Chair's Remarks

CHAIR'S INDIGENOUS LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We begin today by acknowledging that we walk upon the traditional territories of Indigenous Peoples and we recognize their history, spirituality, culture and stewardship of the land. We are grateful to all Indigenous groups for their commitment to protect the land and its resources and we are committed to reconciliation, partnership and enhanced understanding.

The Chair asked the Directors to introduce any "guest" staff members present.

Mr. Siu advised the Board that it has been recommended that we count votes at virtual meetings and asked Members if they are in favor of a motion to keep their hands raised until they can be tallied.

The Strategic Planning Workshop will be held virtually Saturday, September 26, 2020, 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Details and agenda to follow within the next couple of days.

The Working Group Presentation to Council has been pushed back from October 19 to November 16, 2020.

2.0 Approval of Minutes:

2.1 Library Board Minutes June 22, 2020

Moved by Deputy Mayor Don Hamilton
Seconded by Mrs. Pearl Mantell

Resolved that the minutes of the June 22, 2020 Library Board Meeting be confirmed.

Carried.

2.2 Consent Agenda:

Moved by Mrs. Lillian Tolensky
Seconded by Ms. Margaret McGrory

Resolved that the Consent Agenda comprising Agenda items 2.2 to 2.4.13 and the same are hereby approved as written and the CEO of the Library is hereby authorized and directed to take such action that may be necessary to give effect to the recommendations as therein contained:

2.3 Declaration of Due Diligence by the CEO

2.4 Communication and Correspondence:

2.4.1 thestar.com: Vaughan's public library is the first in the GTA to go fine-free
<https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2020/06/25/vaughans-public-library-is-the-first-in-gta-to-go-fine-free-heres-why.html>

2.4.2 Markham.snapd.com: Great Summer Book Pics from MPL
<https://markham.snapd.com/events/view/1323191>

2.4.3 yorkregion.com: Why you should try audiobooks

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- <https://www.yorkregion.com/opinion-story/10017967-why-you-should-try-audiobooks/>
- 2.4.4 yorkregion.com: books to brighten your summer
<https://www.yorkregion.com/whatson-story/10057466-5-books-to-brighten-your-summer/>
- 2.4.5 markhamreview.com: library preserves local history of living through a pandemic
<https://markhamreview.com/library-preserves-local-history-of-living-through-a-pandemic/>
- 2.4.6 Covid19 Story Gallery: [105.9 The Region Radio interview](#)
- 2.4.7 Covid19 Story Gallery: [CityTV and 680 News interview](#)
- 2.4.8 Markhamreview.com: Markham Reads moves online:
<https://markhamreview.com/markham-read-moves-online/>
- 2.4.9 yorkregion.com: How Markham Public Library is preserving history
<https://www.yorkregion.com/community-story/10076333-how-markham-public-library-is-preserving-history/>
- 2.4.10 yorkregion.com: Markham Reads The Glass Hotel under virtual library program
<https://www.yorkregion.com/news-story/10078211-markham-reads-the-glass-hotel-under-virtual-library-program/>
- 2.4.11 The Globe and Mail: How libraries play a vital role in restoring the economy
- 2.4.12 The Globe and Mail: Are libraries a net harm to literature and book publishing?
<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/letters/article-what-next-grocery-stores-taking-income-away-from-chefs-readers/>
- 2.4.13 The Globe and Mail: There is a reading crisis in Canada
<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/article-there-is-a-reading-crisis-in-canada-the-pandemic-will-make-it-worse/#comments>

Carried.

3.0 **CEO's Highlights:**

The Chair asked the CEO to comment on any content of the Highlights.

Mrs. Biss mentioned the following highlights:

- **COVID and Recovery Operations**

MPL launched its curbside service on July 15 at three locations, Markham Village, Thornhill Village and Unionville. Since its inception, over 5,300 curbside appointments have been made, over 50,000 items borrowed or renewed and 43,476 returns have been processed. Staff have responded to over 8,000 questions online and conducted 7,316 chats resulting in over 1,000 hours of individual instruction with customers. Since March, 385 programs have been offered virtually serving over 87,000 participants. In addition, MPL staff utilized Makerspace technology to support local healthcare workers and City employees in printing universal protective equipment. MPL worked with Markham Fire to supply face shields and masks to staff at Participation House and Markham Stouffville Hospital. In total 390 face shields were manufactured and donated and 1,425 fabric masks produced.

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Curbside service has offered an important opportunity to remain connected to the community, however it is highly labour intensive and not sustainable in the cold winter months (see 7.2 for Next Stage of Reopening)

- **Enterprise Risk Management**

The CEO cited certain higher risk aspects of the report including:

- Embargos and pandemic impacts overseas are disrupting access to multilingual collections
- Ongoing branch closures resulting in cancellation of library programs and reduced revenues
- Closures of branches and limited access to physical collections resulted in rapid transition to digital library service
- Staff still laid off

- **Consequences of Childhood Literacy Deficiencies**

A recent opinion piece in the Globe and Mail addresses the issue of children's literacy in relation to academic and economic success. Author Julie O'Sullivan notes that of the 400,000 five-year-olds enrolled in kindergarten in 2020, 25% will, by the time they finish grade 3, be "unable to read and write well enough to keep up in grade 4. Most will never 'catch up' and that was before the pandemic."

- **Complaints**

MPL is again receiving questions and complaints that it is not yet providing full access to its branches and physical services as in other municipalities Staff continue to address concerns by stressing that Markham is taking a measured approach to reopening to prioritize the safety of staff and customers.

There were some comments on the threat to childhood literacy. It was asked if there had been any discussions at the City about permanent closures to physical properties. Councillor Keyes responded that there were none that he was aware of and the current shut downs in facilities are considered temporary, although some administrative staff may continue to work from home.

Moved by Mr. Edward Choi

Seconded by Mr. David Whetham

Resolved that the report entitled "CEO's Highlight's September 2020" be received.

Carried.

4.0 **Annual Monthly Policy Review**

(To be undertaken at the January meeting)

5.0 **Internal Monitoring Reports:**

(Compliance list of internal monitoring reports and discussion led by members)

5.1 **Executive Limitation: EL-2d Financial Condition**

(Assigned to Mr. Edward Choi)

Mr. Choi advised the Board that he had reviewed the report EL-2d Financial Condition and that it is the second of three financial reports for fiscal year 2020. Edward sent an e-mail to Board members and did not receive any questions or concerns.

He stated that the Library is in a favorable position with a year-to date surplus of \$1,539,225.

Mr. Choi reviewed the Global Policy Limitation and the seven Policy Limitations.

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The report confirmed that the CEO and MPL's practices relative to MPL's Financial Condition comply with the requirements of EL-2d policy.

Moved by Mr. Edward Choi
Seconded by Mr. Anthony Lewis

Resolved that the report entitled "Internal Monitoring Report-Executive Limitation EL-2d, Financial Condition" be received.

Carried.

6.0

Ends:

6.1

Strategic Plan Update

Staff reviewed the report with Board members and pointed out areas of the plan that had moved ahead during the COVID-19 pandemic and others that were deferred or delayed.

Accomplishments and Innovations

- Launched online information and chat services
- Launched "Keeping Connected" service: 'care' phone calls to isolated/vulnerable residents
- Developed and launched "Share Your Story" a community engagement project capturing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on lives of residents
- New website
- Moving Ahead: Re-opening Phase 2 (opening branches for limited services) is currently being planned for early October
- In addition to planning and oversight for the delivery of library services, the MPL management team has carried on administrative functions including labour relations, training, workforce management, budgets, strategic planning, capital projects, IT capital projects, facility maintenance, business recovery planning and service planning. Managers have provided ongoing staff communication through weekly virtual town halls
- Library eCards/Overdrive eCard
- Implemented Digital Markham Strategy-Update to Council

Deferred or Delayed

- Replacement of Markham's system for program registration and facility bookings (CLASS) –In Progress under the project management of the City's IT Dept.
- LMS-Deferred by the Human Resources Department at the City
- Staff scheduling software-In progress as part of a City-wide project.
- DML at Angus Glen-Delayed due to branch closure
- Library Strategic Planning-In progress
- Implementation of 2019 ILMP-Deferred to 2021
- Markham Centre Library Consultation-Deferred to 2021 due to Covid-19
- Library content plan update-In progress
- Library Makerspace Music creation and instruments lending-Deferred due to branch closure
- Markham Brain Project-Deferred
- Library Ecards-self-service-In progress awaiting legal sign off and then technical work
- WIFI Mobile Printing-Deferred to 2021
- Update Markham's DIAP-In progress
- City-wide User fee assistance-Deferred
- City older adult Website-Deferred
- Community Hub Model-In progress in partnership with Recreation
- Markham Centre secondary Plan-In progress
- Milliken Mills expansion-still waiting for results of the Infrastructure Grant program

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Upon approval of the Library's new Strategic Plan for 2021, the projects listed above will be reviewed in the context of our new strategic priorities and carried forward where appropriate into the 2021 Work Plan.

The Vice-Chair asked if Members would be receiving any preparatory work for the Strategic Planning Workshop to be held Saturday, September 26, 2020. Staff responded that they would be sending out an agenda and information for the Board's review and consideration in advance of the work shop.

Moved by Mr. Ben Hendriks
Seconded by Ms. Margaret McGrory

Resolved that the report "Strategic Plan Update" be received.

Carried.

7.0 **Governance:**

7.1 **OLBA Update: Ben Hendriks**

Mr. Hendriks advised the Board that although activities had slowed over the summer, things are picking up and they are working on building stronger relations with SOLS and OLS-North. OLBA is planning on three webinars, October, November and December that will focus on current issues affecting libraries and developing concepts for recruiting new Library Board members for the 2022-2026 term.

There was a question about the OLA Super Conference usually held early in 2021. Mr. Hendricks responded that they are working on a virtual conference and an announcement will be coming out soon.

7.2 **Report to the Board on the Next Stage of Reopening**

Staff explained that this report expands on a previous one sent to the Board. Highlights include discontinuation of curbside services at UL, MV and TV. Opening in-branch access at 4 locations (tentatively TC, MV, AL and AG) for holds pick up, limited access to computers, printing and copying by appointment and Proctoring services by appointment. MPL is working closely with Recreation at the City. When it is clear which facilities will be opening, then MPL can expand services as well.

Moved by Mrs. Pearl Mantell
Seconded by Mr. Edward Choi

Resolved that the report "Markham Public Library Service Recovery Plan Stage II" be received.

Carried.

8.0 **Ownership Linkage:**

8.1 **Input from Board Members**

There were no reports from Board members attending events at this time.

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9.0 **Board Advocacy:**
9.1 **Events (Virtual Programs) for the Next Quarter**

Staff explained that the events will be virtual and that some programs will be revenue based. The current programs focus on wellness and stress management, support for parents with children returning to school and those with children continuing to learn virtually and programs related to entrepreneurship.

Concerning business programs, Mrs. Macklin advised that they had lost a few long-term partners because of challenges programming in the virtual environment. However, they have also developed some new partnerships for STEAM programs and newly popular programs related to cooking and baking. There were questions about newcomer issues and suggestions on offering workshops for English skills development, both conversational and business related. Staff explained that these workshops are traditionally in person and not possible to do at this time; however, there are other community organizations offering these services for the community. It was suggested that printed materials be available in branches listing these external resources. Staff responded that MPL is very limited as to what kind of print items can be handed out due to community concerns about virus transfer. Resources are currently posted on the MPL website.

Moved by Mrs. Pearl Mantell
Seconded by Mr. Edward Choi

Resolved that the report “Events (Virtual Programs) for the Next Quarter” be received.

Carried.

10.0 **Education:**
10.1 **Board Education Plan-2021**

Staff advised the Board that the educational topics listed are suggestions and that instead of strictly staff speakers or reports, they would be endeavoring to bring in guest experts. Ms. Cecchetto asked that if anyone had any comments or suggestions to pass them on to the Board Secretary. The list would be finalized for the October meeting.

Moved by Mrs. Lillian Tolensky
Seconded by Mr. Raymond Chan

Resolved that the Board members identify outreach initiatives and education topics for 2021 to comply with Governance process GP-2f Policy.

Carried.

11.0 **Incidental Information**
(None)

12.0 **New Business:**
12.1 **Cornell Parking Garage and Library Development Charges**

The CEO explained that she is seeking support from the Board to assist with a capital budget shortfall for essential repairs to the Cornell Parking Garage. The impact for the Library will be \$117,405, a potential loss of 235 square feet of space in future library facilities. The CEO explained that over the next few years this loss will be recovered through community benefit

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payments by developers as they build new homes in Markham. Overall, Recreation will cover 85% of the shortfall and MPL 15%. This is based on the square footage of each within the facility.

There were several questions about warranties and if these repairs would be permanent. At this time it is expected that the repairs will significantly improve the structure but there is always a finite lifespan for these types of non-roofed structures.

There was a lot of discussion and questions on the warranties and life cycle repairs and the allocation of the expenses.

Moved by Deputy Mayor Don Hamilton
Seconded by Mr. Ben Hendriks

Resolved that the Board approve the allocation of Development Charges of \$117,405 to the repair of the Cornell Parking Garage and that the CEO of the Library is hereby authorized and directed to take such action that may be necessary to give effect to this recommendation.

Carried.

13.0 **Board Evaluation:**
13.1 **Questionnaire: The Conduct of the Board**

The Chair asked the Board to complete the Questionnaire sent out by e-mail and return to the Board Secretary.

14.0 **In Camera Agenda:**
(None)

15.0 **Adjournment**

Moved by Mrs. Pearl Mantell and seconded by Deputy Mayor Don Hamilton that the meeting be adjourned at 8:17 p.m.