

MARKHAM PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD

Regular Meeting

Minutes of Regular Meeting held on Monday, September 27, 2021 7:02 p.m. Virtual Meeting

- Present from Board:
- Mr. Alick Siu, Chair
 - Ms. Margaret McGrory, Vice-Chair (from discussion before 3.0)
 - Ms. Iqra Awan (up to discussion before 3.0)
 - Mr. Edward Choi
 - Deputy Mayor Don Hamilton
 - Mr. Ben Hendriks
 - Councillor Keith Irish
 - Councillor Andrew Keyes
 - 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. Megan Garza, Senior Manager, Organizational Transformation
 - Mrs. Hilary Murphy, Manager, Planning & Reporting
 - Mr. Patrick Pan, Manager, Facilities & Workplace Safety
 - Mrs. Anthea Bailie, Manager, Collections & Technical Services
 - Mrs. Angela Tse, Manager, Markham Village
 - Mrs. Antonella Costa, Manager, Workforce Development
 - Ms. Polly Chan, Financial Analyst
 - Mrs. Marianne Wickremarachi
 - Ms. Pat Boon
 - Mr. Larry Pogue, Retired Staff, Special Contract
 - Mrs. Susan Price, Board Secretary
- Regrets:
- Mr. Raymond Chan
- Guests:
- Mr. Morgan Jones, Commissioner of Community Services
 - Ms. Claudia Storto, City Solicitor and Director of Human Resources

1.0 Call to Order/Approval of Agenda

Mr. Alick Siu, Chair called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

Moved by Mrs. Pearl Mantell
Seconded by Mrs. Lillian Tolensky

Resolved that the agenda be approved.

Carried.

1.1 Declaration of Conflict of Pecuniary Interest

None.

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- 1.2 **Delegation**
None.

- 1.3 **Years of Service Recognition Event:**

Mr. Siu asked staff to introduce the honorees.
The following were honored:

30 Years

Pat Boon:

Manager Angela Tse told the Board that Pat has been working at Markham Village Library since 1989. She has held several roles and currently is Borrower Services Supervisor. During the pandemic she worked curbside as well. In addition to her role at the library Pat is also a foster parent and she will be missed when she retires at the end of this week.

Georgina Perrier: Who has more than 25 years of service could not attend this evening.

Marianne Wickremarachchi:

CEO Catherine Biss introduced Marianne, the current CEO's Executive Assistant, a position she held prior to her becoming CEO. Marianne has vast knowledge and experience at MPL. After varied careers that covered several continents Marianne settled in Markham and MPL. Marianne attributes much to her personal faith and beliefs and her kindness and compassion for those around her are a testament to it.

- 1.4 **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.

Directors were also asked to introduce any "guest" staff members present and there were several this evening. .

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 Presentation to Council is scheduled for November 15, 2021. The content of the presentation will be discussed under Agenda 9.2. Working Group members will be contacted to set up virtual meetings prior to then.

- 2.0 **Approval of Minutes:**

- 2.1 Library Board Minutes June 28, 2021

Moved by Mr. Ben Hendriks
Seconded by Mr. David Whetham

Resolved that the minutes of the June 28, 2021 Library Board Meeting be confirmed.

Carried.

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2.2 **Consent Agenda:**

Moved by Mrs. Pearl Mantell
Seconded by Mr. David Whetham

Resolved that the Consent Agenda comprising Agenda items 2.2 to 2.4.4 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: [Markham public libraries to reopen in August](#)

2.4.2 Markham Review: [Zoom with author Angeline Boulley – Markham Review](#)

2.4.3 yorkregion.com: Markham public libraries to reopen in August
<https://www.yorkregion.com/whatson-story/10446471-markham-public-libraries-to-reopen-in-august/>

2.4.4 NewmarketToday.ca: Abuse Hurts joins agencies across region in readying for Take Back the Nights
[Newmarket's Abuse Hurts joins agencies across region in readying for Take Back the Night...](#)

Carried.

In advance of the CEO's Highlights, the CEO advised that two guests from the City were there to answer questions about mandatory vaccinations in public spaces in Markham: Ms. Claudia Storto, City Solicitor and Director of Human Resources and Mr. Morgan Jones, Commissioner of Community Services.

Prior to the discussion the CEO presented background information on MPL's current position on Proof of Vaccination (P.O.V) in its stand-alone branches explaining that in the provincial directives vaccinations are not required to enter the library. Mrs. Biss explained all the Health & Safety protocols that MPL is currently observing and that the subject libraries would not be considered a high-risk setting. Public Libraries are a valuable resource to all residents as they support equity of access. Concerns are that mandatory vaccinations in all branches would create further barriers to access for populations that are more vulnerable. Mrs. Biss advised the Board that she had sought a legal opinion as well.

From the City Perspective:

Mr. Jones explained that currently the City of Markham requires vaccinations in all facilities. Although the province has not listed public libraries as facilities requiring P.O.V, the City's position is that it would prefer the policies should be consistent. Both Ms. Storto and Mr. Morgan attested that they have received a lot of positive feedback from the community regarding Markham's vaccine policy.

Moved by Deputy Mayor Hamilton
Seconded by Mr. Edward Choi

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Markham Public Library Board aligns itself with the City of Markham COVID vaccination policy, which requires that all visitors 12 years of age and over will need to

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provide proof of full vaccination (P.O.V) in order to enter municipal premises. Valid proof of defined exemptions (medical and religious) will apply;

AND that staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

Carried.

3.0 **CEO's Highlights:**

The Chair called upon the CEO for her comments on the September Highlights. Mrs. Biss noted the following items contained in the report:

2022 Municipal Budget Process:

- Meetings have been scheduled and the process is expected to be completed by December.

Summer Programs 2021

- Summer reading programs were very successful. The MPL TD Summer Reading Club collaborated with 16 other York Region and Durham public libraries to plan a series of author events as part of the SRC. This year 345 active and unique registrants in MPL's Reader Zone app read a total of 74,983 minutes.

2021 Action Plan for a Markham Centre Library/Central Library-Update

- Preliminary consultation with colleagues in Recreation, Culture and Planning has been scheduled for September 29, 2021.

Milliken Mills Community Centre Lobby Enhancement Project

- The project is progressing well. Construction is due to begin late October with a projected completion date of the end of January.

Trend Report: Learning Recovery

- There is a lot of information on the impact of the pandemic including the inequity of learning across the country and the need to recover from significant learning losses. The public library sector (MPL) is positioned to play an important role in the recovery and mitigating the damaging effects through programs, services and spaces.

There was a comment that certain elements of the Strategic Plan may need to change and there was one question clarifying how the one-on-one tutoring was allocated fairly.

Moved by Mr. Edward Choi
Seconded by Mrs. Lillian Tolensky

Resolved that the report entitled "CEO's Highlight's September 2021" 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)

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5.1 **Executive Limitation: EL-2d Financial Condition** (Assigned to Mr. Jay Xie)

Mr. Xie gave a brief overview. The report provides the Board with an update on the year to date financial condition of the Library. This is the second of three financial reports on Actual and Budgeted Operating expenditures for the eight- month period ending August 31, 2021.

Jay sent an e-mail to Board members and did not receive any questions or concerns about the report and there were none from the floor.

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. Jay Xie
Seconded by Mrs. Pearl Mantell

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

Carried.

6.0 **Ends:** 6.1 **Strategic Plan Update**

Staff indicated that MPL is reopening very gradually and highlighted the accomplishments made over the summer:

- Launched the MPL eCard (and discontinued the OverDrive Instant digital card the end of July 2021)
- Created a plan to develop a curated collection to support neurodiversity and ASD in 2022
- Introduced the summer bike lending program with a community partner
- Completed the 2021 *Markham reads* program, featuring Firekeepers Daughter by Angeline Boulley
- Completed the fully virtual 2021 *TD Summer Reading Club*, including an author event series, developed in collaboration with 16 other York Region and Durham libraries
- Developed remote learning resources for grades 1-5
- Ran summer outdoor STEAM programs
- Offered, in partnership with Community Family Services of Ontario, a *Returning to school safely program* in Mandarin
- Offered programs about children and anxiety with a focus on anxiety related to online learning
- Planned re-opening the business hub at Aaniin
- Completed a revised Study Room policy
- Issued a General Contractor RFP for Milliken Mills
- Supported the Federal Election by ensuring the community was able to make informed choices through a series of initiatives, including a Get Ready to Vote information page and Candidates Q&A Sessions

There was a question if the curated Black Heritage collection review would receive additional input from the appropriate community and staff answered that there would be.

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

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Resolved that the report “Strategic Plan Update” be received.

Carried. .

7.0 **Governance:**

7.1 **OLBA Update: Ben Hendriks**

Mr. Hendriks advised that at this time there was not a lot to report and that OLBA is currently working on resources for the fall; OLS meetings coming up and a new “Cut to the Chase” for 2022

8.0 **Ownership Linkage:**

8.1 **Input from Board Members**

Mrs. Tolensky attended a MPL book club and found it interesting.

Ms. McGrory attended an OLS (Ontario Library Service) full day virtual conference with over 300 attendees. The focus of the conference was “Rethinking your Library”. She thought it was well worth attending and that other members might wish to attend in the future. Ms. McGrory recommended a book that was discussed “A Trauma-Informed Approach to Library Services” by Rebecca Tolley.

9.0 **Board Advocacy:**

9.1 **October 2021 Library Programs**

Staff advised that the list of programs for October would be virtual. Also planning programs continues to be on a month-to-month basis.

There was a question on how partners are chosen and screened and if the presenters have a vested interest. Staff explained that partners are screened and are required to sign an agreement that they will not promote their business.

Moved by Mr. Edward Choi
Seconded by Ms. Margaret McGrory

Resolved that the report “October 2021 Library Programs” be received.

Carried.

9.2 **Working Group Presentation to Council**

Staff reviewed the proposed format for the presentation explaining that the presentation to General Committee is scheduled to take place on Monday, November 15, 2021. This annual event is a critical channel for Library Board advocacy regarding MPL’s budget and our unique role in the community. The recommended time limit for the presentation is 20 minutes, down from 40 minutes last year. The focus of the presentation will be on signature achievements and the Work plan for 2022.

Moved by Ms. Margaret McGrory
Seconded by Mrs. Pearl Mantell

Resolved that the report “Working Group Presentation to Council” be received.

Carried.

10.0 **Education:**

10.1 **Board Education Plan-2022**

There was limited discussion and the suggested topics were commended and accepted.

Moved by Mrs. Pearl Mantell
Seconded by Mr. Ben Hendriks

Resolved that Board members identify outreach initiatives and education topics for 2022 to comply with Governance Process GP-2 f policy.

Carried.

10.2 **Library Sector Advocacy Priorities**

Staff explained that most advocacy happens at the local level and the OLA and FOPL are provincial lobbyists.

Current Advocacy Priorities are:

School Libraries

- Current shortages in staffing and funding and a decline in facilities increases the strain on public libraries

First Nations Libraries

Public Libraries

CELA

- Services to individuals with print disabilities-funding cuts during a time when the need increases

Minister of Canadian Heritage Round Tables and Archives

1. Impacts of COVID
2. Sustainability for the sector
3. Diversity and Inclusion
4. Environmental Impact/Greening the Sector

Advocacy in Action

- OLA/FOPL Queens Park Days
- CELA Toolkit
- OLS Governance Hub/Community and Municipal Relations
- OLA advocacy alert

The Chair asked about the funding issues for CELA and the Vice-Chair explained that over the years the Federal Government has provided financial support, originally to CNIB Library, now to CELA, to support the production of publishers' works in alternative formats (such as braille and narrated audio) for those with print disabilities. The Government announced it planned to cut \$1million from this year's funding and cut an additional \$1 million each year until all federal funding is eliminated in 2025. While \$1 million was subsequently restored for this year, advocacy is required to ensure funding continues until such time as the publishers are able to produce all of their works in accessible formats.

Moved by Mr. Ben Hendriks
Seconded by Mr. Jay Xie

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Resolved that the Board receives the verbal Board Education Report entitled “Library Sector Advocacy Priorities”

Carried.

11.0 **Incidental Information**

11.1 **Board Meetings 2021/2022**

The Board Secretary explained that given concerns expressed by some Board members that a brief discussion was in order. The only input was from members who would prefer to meet virtually for the time being and revisit again at a later date. There was also a suggestion that the Board develop a hybrid model going forward.

Moved by Mr. Edward Choi
Seconded by Mrs. Lillian Tolensky

Resolved that the discussion on virtual versus in person meetings be received and the consensus at this time would be to remain virtual, and that the Board will revisit the situation at the January 2022 meeting.

Carried.

12.0 **New Business**

- (none)

13.0 **Board Evaluation:**

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

The chair asked members to complete the questionnaire by e-mail and return to the Board Secretary.

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

15.0 **Adjournment**

Moved by Mrs. Lillian Tolensky and seconded by Mr. Edward Choi that the meeting be adjourned at 9:00 p.m.