

MARKHAM PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD

Regular Meeting

Minutes of Regular Meeting held on Monday, November 27, 2023 7:02 p.m. Virtual Meeting

Present from Board: Ms. Margaret McGrory, Chair
Mr. Raymond Chan, Vice-Chair
Mr. Michael Armes
Deputy Mayor Michael Chan
Mr. Edward Choi
Councillor Ritch Lau
Mr. Harout Manougian
Ms. Winnie Phung
Ms. Lisa Tomjenovic
Ms. Jenny Tung
Ms. Gail Vlahopoulos
Mr. Kenneth Wightman
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. Susan Price, Board Secretary

Regrets: Mr. Steve Hsu
Mr. Robin Choy

Guests: Mr. Morgan Jones, Commissioner, Community Services

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

Ms. Margaret McGrory, Chair called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

Moved by Mr. Raymond Chan
Seconded by Mr. Kenneth Wightman

Resolved that the agenda be approved.

Carried.

1.1 **Declaration of Conflict of Pecuniary Interest**

None.

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1.2 **Delegation** None.

The Chair welcomed Commissioner, Community Services Mr. Morgan Jones.

1.3 **Chair's Remark**

CHAIR'S INDIGENOUS LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We begin today by acknowledging the traditional territories of Indigenous Peoples and their commitment to stewardship of the land. We acknowledge the communities in circle. The North, West, South and Eastern directions, the Haudenosaunee, Huron-Wendat, Anishnabeg, Seneca, Chippewa and the current treaty holders Mississaugas of the Credit peoples. We share the responsibility with the caretakers of this land to ensure the dish is never empty and to restore relationships that are based on peace, friendship and trust. We are committed to reconciliation, partnership and enhanced understanding.

Directors were asked to introduce any "guest" staff members present.

Ms. McGrory 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.

Agenda 4.1 Annual Policy Review will be deferred until after the February 3, 2024 governance workshop.

OLA Super Conference: If anyone is interested in attending to let the Board Secretary know by December 7. The Chair encouraged members to consider attending, particularly the OLBA Trustee Boot Camp on the Saturday.

An In camera meeting will follow the regular meeting and a reminder that these are strictly confidential so Board members were asked to ensure they are in a private location or using headphones.

At the public consultation of the City's corporate strategic plan held November 22, 2023, it was announced that the current plan, Building Markham's Future Together (BMFT), which was set to expire in 2023 has been extended to 2026, and the Mayor invited community input to inform its further development. There is an online survey on the City's official website that Board members are encouraged to complete before the deadline of December 15.

2.0 **Approval of Minutes:**

2.1 Library Board Minutes October 23, 2023

Moved by Ms. Lisa Tomjenovic

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Seconded by Deputy Mayor Michael Chan

Resolved that the minutes of the October 23, 2023 Library Board Meeting be confirmed.

Carried.

2.2 **Consent Agenda:**

Moved by Mr. Kenneth Wightman
Seconded by Ms. Winnie Phung

Resolved that the Consent Agenda comprising Agenda items 2.2 to 2.4.1 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 Media Coverage Islamic Heritage Month-Excel Attachment

Carried.

3.0 **CEO's Highlights:**

The Chair asked the CEO to comment on the highlights and Mrs. Biss noted:

- Timeline for the 2024 Budget Process has been extended due to the *Strong Mayor Powers Act*.
- Regarding the ransomware incident at Toronto Public Library, the City of Markham IT department has excellent processes and safeguards in place to protect library data from such attacks.
- Generational change (dynamics of different generations) and how knowledge of these generational differences provides an opportunity to improve our understanding of residents and staff, and insight into what the future may hold.
 - The Board commented on these generational variances as drivers of future change, the need for library space for residents to work away from their offices and asked staff to investigate fundraising habits of each of the generational groups.
- In the Monitoring section of the report, EL2j, the CEO reported on actions taken to respond to complaints received regarding the temporary removal of Islamic Heritage Month Displays:

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- The policy on requests to reconsider library materials and displays is being revised to keep the collection item or display in place until a decision on the request has been made.
- A process for celebrating heritage and identity recognition dates has been established to take effect in 2024.
- Working with the National Council of Canadian Muslims (NCCM) to develop an anti-Islamophobia training plan to be delivered to all staff

There was a lot of discussion, questions and concerns that all equity-deserving groups be considered in the development of new policies, and that these new policies ensure this kind of incident will not happen again.

A Board member asked if would be possible for the Board to be included in the anti-islamophobia “sensitivity training” and/or see the materials

The CEO also noted that staff receives training pursuant to the City’s Diversity and Inclusion Plan, such as unconscious bias and Anti-Black Racism.

Moved by Mr. Edward Choi
Seconded by Ms. Gail Vlahopoulos

Resolved that the report entitled “CEO’s Highlight’s November 2023” be received.

Carried.

3.1 **Markham Centre Update, November, 2023**

Staff explained that the report on best practices to gain support for a central library is based on best practices identified through a survey of CEOs in library systems with recent experience in building a central library.

The CEO confirmed that the library would be combining funding approved in Capital Budget projects for the library with that of Recreation to hire a consultant to investigate the provision of services in intensification areas including Markham Centre. The project will investigate the service needs of the community, the potential for partnerships and the community’s point of view regarding a central library for the City of Markham.

The Vice-chair suggested a sub-committee be formed in support of a central library and the Chair suggested waiting until after the January meeting to decide on timelines.

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Moved by Mr. Raymond Chan
Seconded by Mr. Edward Choi

Resolved that the report entitled “Markham Centre Update, November, 2023” be received.

Carried.

4.0 **Annual Monthly Policy Review:**
4.1 **Policy Governance Wording Review**

As per the Chair's remarks this process has been deferred.

5.0 **Internal Monitoring Reports:**
(Compliance list of internal monitoring reports and discussion led by members)

5.1 **Executive Limitation: EL-2b Staff Treatment**
(Assigned to Mr. Raymond Chan)

Mr. Chan stated that the report was straight forward and indicated a strong working relationship with staff. He sent an e-mail to Board members and did not receive any questions or concerns.

The report confirmed that the CEO and MPL's practices relative to MPL's Staff Treatment comply with the requirements of EL-2b policy.

Moved by Mr. Raymond Chan
Seconded by Mr. Edward Choi

Resolved that the report entitled “Internal Monitoring Report: Executive Limitation, EL 2b, Staff Treatment” be received.

Carried.

5.2 **Executive Limitation: EL-1 General Executive Constraint**
(Assigned to Mr. Jay Xie)

Mr. Xie noted that the report provides the Board with a high-level description of the Library's general approach to carrying out its activities in the community and found the report to be complete and compliant. He contacted Board members by e-mail and did not receive any questions or concerns.

The report confirmed that the CEO and MPL's practices relative to MPL's General Executive Constraint comply with the requirements of EL-1 policy.

Moved by Mr. Jay Xie
Seconded by Mr. Harout Manouguan

Resolved that the report entitled “Internal Monitoring Report: Executive Limitation, EL-1, General Executive Constraint” be received.

Carried.

5.3 **Executive Limitation: EL-2a, Customer Treatment**
(Assigned to Mr. Harout Manouguan)

Mr. Manouguan noted this annual report outlines the steps MPL takes to ensure customer safety, privacy and dignity. He contacted the Board by e-mail and did not receive any questions or concerns but needed a couple of clarifications on the 2023 numbers that were responded to at the meeting

The report confirmed that the CEO and MPL’s practices relative to MPL’s Customer Treatment comply with the requirements of EL-2a policy.

Moved by Mr. Harout Manouguan
Seconded by Mr. Jay Xie

Resolved that the Report entitled “Internal Monitoring Report: Executive Limitation, EL-2a Customer Treatment” be received.

Carried.

6.0 **Ends**

7.0 **Governance:**

7.1 **OLS Update: Margaret McGrory**

Ms. McGrory attended the OLS Assembly meeting for board members of libraries serving a population of over 75K. There were a number of presentations, an update on the Governance Hub on the OLS website which outlines what is expected of public library boards in each year of the 4-year governance cycle, and a review of OLS publications including Valuing Ontario Libraries Toolkit (VOLT) which she had sent out the Board. Round table discussions included topics such as homelessness, overnight stays in libraries, extended hours and staff-less libraries, new Ontario recycling regulations and how it affects discarding of books, diversity, and board recruitment, and Strong Mayor Powers. Next OLS Assembly meeting is spring 2024.

8.0 **Ownership Linkage:**

8.1 **Input from Board Members**

The Chair noted that the CEO and a number of Board members attended the Mayor's strategic planning meeting, Building Markham's Future Together (BMFT). The event provided the opportunity to meet and speak with elected officials and members of the community. One of the attendees commended the Library for its resilience during the pandemic; thanking the library for staying open at some facilities to provide services and access to materials that were a lifeline to her and her family.

9.0 **Board Advocacy:**

9.1 **Winter 2024 Library Programs**

Staff gave a brief overview of Library Programs, mentioning the Family Literacy Day event January 22, 2024. Staff advised the Board about how to attend an event and indicated that if they were to attend they would be introduced as members of the Library Board. Attendance provides an opportunity for Board members to interact with the community, and advocate for library programs and services.

Moved by Ms. Gail Vlahopoulos
Seconded by Mr. Kenneth Wightman

Resolved that the report "Winter 2024 Library Programs" be received.

Carried.

10.0 **Education:**

10.1 **Welcome to the MPL Board Part III: The Public Library Sector in Ontario**

Staff gave a comprehensive review of the Library legislation, parameters of Board composition, areas of responsibility, shared services, funding and the various associations relevant to public libraries. In addition, staff provided an overview of top concerns and priorities of public libraries by association. There was also an explanation of the different influences on funding.

Moved by Mr. Kenneth Wightman
Seconded by Mr. Harout Manougian

Resolved that the Board receives the Board Education Presentation entitled “Welcome to the MPL Board, Part III: The Public Library Sector in Ontario”.

Carried.

10.2 **Welcome to the MPL Board Part IV: Advocacy and Community Leadership**

Staff provided an overview on library and municipal priorities based on issues each faced: legislative changes, affordability, development and growth, sustainability and climate adaptation. With a greater understanding of the community, Library Board advocacy will have a better chance of aligning with municipal priorities to achieve the common goal of meeting the community’s needs. Attending events and even casual conversations can help the Board become more aware of what is required to serve the residents of Markham and how to add value and effectiveness.

There was lots of interest and discussion. Staff to send out links contained in the advocacy presentation.

Moved by	Ms. Lisa Tomjenovic
Seconded by	Mr. Michael Arnes

Resolved that the Board receives the Board Education Presentation entitled “Welcome to the MPL Board, Part IV: Advocacy and Community Leadership”.

Carried.

10.3 **OLA Super Conference 2024: January 24-27, 2024**

Ms. McGrory informed the Board that the Super Conference will be held January 24-27, 2024 and asked Members to review the conference information and consider attending.

11.0 **Incidental Information:**

11.1 **2024 Board Meeting and Agenda Planning Dates**

The Chair asked the Board if there were any issues with the stated dates. There were none.

Moved by	Mr. Edward Choi
Seconded by	MS. Gail Vlahopoulos

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Resolved that the schedule of the 2024 Board meeting and Agenda Planning dates be received.

Carried.

12.0 **New Business**

There was a question about the status of hybrid meetings. At this time there is no budget (proposed 2024) for the technology that would be required to make this a viable option. The CEO responded that they are still working toward a hybrid model as soon as possible.

13.0 **Board Evaluation:**

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

The Chair thanked Members for completing the questionnaire and providing feedback. After the February 3, 2024 governance workshop on Board Ends, it is anticipated that there will be a rework of the agenda format and content to provide more time for the Board to focus on its priorities, particularly for discussion on progress towards achieving Board Ends.

Moved by Mr. Raymond Chan
Seconded by Ms. Winnie Phung

Resolved that the report entitled “Questionnaire Results; “The Conduct of the Board” be received.

Carried.

14.0 **In Camera Agenda (after adjournment)**

15.0 **Adjournment**

Moved by Ms. Gail Vlahopoulos and seconded by Mr. Edward Choi that the meeting be adjourned 8:48 p.m.