

MARKHAM PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD

First Meeting

Minutes of First Meeting held on Monday, January 27, 2025, 7:00 p.m. Virtual by ZOOM

Present from Board: Ms. Margaret McGrory, Chair
Mr. Edward Choi, Vice Chair
Deputy Mayor Michael Chan
Mr. Raymond Chan
Mr. Robin Choy
Councillor Ritch Lau (from 3.1)
Mr. Harout Manougian
Ms. Winnie Phung
Ms. Jenny Tung (from 1.6)
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. Debbie Walker, Director, Library Strategy & Planning
Ms. Megan Garza, Senior Manager, Organizational Transformation
Mrs. Anthea Baillie, Manager, Collections & Technical Services
Mrs. Jenny North, Manager, Cornell Library
Mr. Ken Cheung, Manager, Angus Glen Library
Mrs. Susan Price, Board Secretary

Guest: Mr. Morgan Jones, Commissioner, Community Services,
City of Markham

1.0 Call to Order/Adoption of Agenda

Mrs. Catherine Biss, CEO called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

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

Resolved that the agenda be approved.

Carried.

1.1 Election of Board Chair and Vice-Chair:

The CEO invited nominations for the position of Chair.

Mr. Edward Choi nominated Ms. Margaret McGrory for the position of Chair.

Ms. McGrory accepted the nomination.

Ms. Gail Vlahopoulos seconded the nomination.

There were no other nominations for the position of Chair. Nominations for the position of Chair were closed.

Moved by: Mr. Edward Choi

Seconded by: Mr. Jay Xie

Resolved that the nominations for the position of Chair be closed and that Ms. Margaret McGrory is hereby elected to the position of Chair for the term ending January 2026.

Carried.

The CEO invited nominations for the position of Vice Chair.

Mr. Raymond Chan nominated Mr. Edward Choi for the position of Vice Chair.

Mr. Choi accepted the nomination.

Ms. Margaret McGrory seconded the nomination.

There were no other nominations for the position of Vice-Chair. Nominations for the position of Vice Chair were closed.

Moved by: Ms. Gail Vlahopoulos

Seconded by: Mr. Jay Xie

Resolved that the nominations for the position of Vice Chair be closed and that Mr. Edward Choi is hereby elected to the position of Vice Chair for the term ending January 2026.

Carried.

1.2 Confirmation of the Results of the Election of Chair and Vice Chair:

Moved by Ms. Gail Vlahopoulos

Seconded by Ms. Winnie Phung

Resolved that the election of Ms. Margaret McGrory to the position of Chair held at the First Meeting January 27, 2025, be confirmed and that Ms. Margaret McGrory be appointed as Chair for the term ending January 2026.

And that the election of Mr. Edward Choi to the position of Vice Chair held at the First Meeting January 27, 2025, be confirmed and that Mr.

Edward Choi be appointed as Vice Chair for the term ending January 2026.

Carried.

The Chair, Ms. Margaret McGrory presided over the remainder of the meeting starting at 7:07 p.m.

- 1.3 **Adoption of Minutes:**
Library Board Minutes November 25, 2024

Moved by Mr. Raymond Chan
Seconded by Ms. Gail Vlahopoulos

Resolved that the minutes of November 25, 2024, Library Board Meeting be confirmed.

Carried.

- 1.4 **Declaration of Conflict of Interest**
None.

- 1.5 **Delegations**
None.

- 1.6 **Chair's Remarks:**

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.

Ms. McGrory asked the Directors to introduce any guest staff members present.

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The Chair reminded the Board that we need to count votes at virtual meetings and to keep hands raised until tallied.

Something new: MPL will host its first Black Owned Markham Market providing exposure to local Black owned businesses and inspiring others in their entrepreneurial journey. The event will take place at Milliken Mills Library, Saturday, February 22 10:30 am to 3:00 pm.

The Chair advised the Board and congratulated Andrea Cecchetto on her OPLA Lifetime Achievement Award. “The Ontario Public Library Association’s Award is presented each year to a library staff member who has given lifelong service to the profession and has contributed significantly to the growth and innovation of public libraries in Ontario. Recipients of the OPLA Lifetime achievement award must clear a very high bar” and Andrea has demonstrated a lifetime of services to public libraries at every level. Ms. Cecchetto thanked the Board and the CEO, Mrs. Biss for their support and encouragement.

2.0 **Ownership Linkage:**

2.1 Reports from Board Members

The Chair mentioned the Events Q1 2025 attachment in the Board package and suggested that if convenient, Board members might like to attend one or more of them.

On January 23, 2025, the Chair, attended the Special Council Meeting on the Markham Official Plan Review. Stakeholders were given the opportunity to provide input on the new plan. Her brief presentation on behalf of the Board focused on the positive and essential contributions that public libraries make to a community.

2.2 Markham Public Library Board 2025 Annual Agenda

Moved by Mr. Raymond Chan

Seconded by Mr. Edward Choi

Resolved that the report “Markham Public Library Board 2025 Annual Agenda” be received.

Carried.

3.0 **Board Education:**

3.1 Strategic Planning: The Director of Strategy and Planning gave a synopsis of the comprehensive Strategic Planning report included in the Board package. The presentation highlighted trend focus areas, project timelines and the role of staff and the Board in developing the plan.

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There was a lot of discussion. Board suggestions included an Economic Impact Study update to show ROI, and a review of emerging and rapidly changing technologies such as AI. The Board noted political and economic uncertainty, school funding, social isolation, homelessness, the reading crisis and unemployment as important considerations for the Strategic Plan.

It was stated that the 2025 Strategic Plan will be a “living” document, subject to regular review and flexibility to respond to shifts in the operating environment.

Moved by Mr. Edward Choi
Seconded by Deputy Mayor Michael Chan

Resolved that the Board receives the Board Education Report and Presentation entitled “Strategic Planning: Preparing for the Strategic Planning Process.”

Carried.

4.0 **Information Requested by the Board:**

4.1 CEO’s Highlights, January 2025.

The CEO noted the following item in the report:

Girls in STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics)

- MPL launched the first annual *Girls in STEAM* program in the fall. The initiative, part of MPL’s Digital Literacy Strategy, is a mentorship program to encourage young women’s interest in and confidence with science and technology. The project also originated as a means of addressing gender inequities in the STEAM sector. Over a six weeks period, twelve girls participated in workshops including training in MPL’s makerspace technologies.

MPL evaluated participants’ level of confidence and interest in STEAM before and after the program and logged an over 30% increase in confidence. One program mentor noted, “As the weeks progressed, the participants became more involved, more social, more confident. MPL created a unique platform that was inclusive, supportive, and safe, that allowed the girls to grow and display their STEAM skills with confidence and creativity.”

A Graduation Ceremony at City Hall offered participants the opportunity to showcase their finished projects to family, friends and senior staff from the City of Markham, including the Mayor.

Moved by Ms. Gail Vlahopoulos

Seconded by Mr. Edward Choi

Resolved that the report entitled “CEO’s Highlights, January 2025” be received.

Carried.

5.0 **Items for Decision**

5.1 Board-CEO Linkage BCL Policy: Chief Executive Officer Performance Review

The Chair reviewed the annual Performance Review (PR) process with the Board. She will prepare a DRAFT PR report and distribute to the Members for discussion at the March in Camera meeting.

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

Resolved that the Board receives the “BCL Chief Executive Officer Performance Review Policy” documentation in preparation for the March In camera Performance Review meeting.

Carried.

5.2 Board Meeting Attendance Records, 2024

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

Resolved that “Board Meeting Attendance record, January to November 2024” be received.

Carried.

5.3 Policy Governance Wording Review

There were several amendments made to the policies that will be presented and approved by the Board at the March meeting.

Moved by Ms. Gail Vlahopoulos
Seconded by Ms. Jeny Tung

Resolved that the Board has reviewed the policies under Policy Governance: Governance Process GP-1 to GP-2k, Board-CEO Linkages BCL-1 to BCL-2e and Executive Limitations EL-2a to EL-2j and accepts

the amendments proposed and discussed. The updated Policy to be approved at the March Board Meeting.

Carried.

6.0 **Monitoring Performance**

6.1 **Ends:**

6.1.1 Global Ends Report Level 1 and Level 2 (2024)

The Chair advised Members that the report was self-explanatory and followed the format that had been approved by the Board. All strategies towards the Ends are rated by their compliance status at year end in one of three categories: **Compliant**, **Partially Compliant**, **Non-Compliant**. Most strategies have met their targets and those that were in the yellow category were items that were ongoing, delayed with cause or due to circumstances beyond MPL control.

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

Resolved that the Board receives the “Global Ends Report Level 1 and Level 2 (2024)”

Carried.

6.2 **Executive Limitations:**

6.2.1 Executive Limitations; Internal Monitoring Reports

The Chair asked members to review the schedule and to let the Board Secretary know if they have any issues with the timing of assignments.

Moved by Ms. Gail Vlahopoulos
Seconded by Ms. Winnie Phung

Resolved that the “Executive Limitations: Internal Monitoring Report Schedule 2025” be received.

Carried.

6.2.2 **Internal Monitoring Report: Executive Limitation, EL-f, Protection of Services** (assigned to Ms. Winnie Phung)

Ms. Phung reviewed the report and did not have any questions; however, one Member expressed concern about the repeated flooding in the children’s area of the Thornhill Community Centre Library. There was a lot of discussion as to

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the reasons for the flooding and possible solutions. Staff to continue follow up on resolving the issue.

The report confirmed that the CEO and MPL's practices relative to MPL's Protection of Services comply with the requirements of EL-2f policy.

Moved by Ms. Winnie Phung
Seconded by Ms. Jenny Tung

Resolved that the report entitled "Internal Monitoring Report: Executive Limitation EL-2f, Protection of Services" be received.

Carried.

7.0 **Consent Agenda:**

Moved by Ms. Gail Vlahopoulos
Seconded by Ms. Winnie Phung

Resolved that the Consent Agenda comprising Agenda items 7.0 to 7.3 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:

CONSENT AGENDA:

7.1 Declaration of Due Diligence by the CEO

7.2 Communication and Correspondence:

7.2.1 YorkRegion.com: A customer with dementia struggles in a grocery store . Now what? [Vince's Market staff trained to help customers with dementia](#)

7.3 Board Statistics-Detail

Carried.

8.0 **Board Performance and Self-Evaluation:**

8.1 Questionnaire: The Board and the CEO

The Chair asked Members to complete the questionnaire and return to the Board Secretary as requested.

9.0 **New Business**

(none)

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10.0 **In Camera**
(none)

11.0 **Adjournment**

Moved by Mr. Edward Choi that the meeting be adjourned at 8:57 p.m.