
The City of Pickering Public Library Board Meeting Minutes

Held: Thursday September 24, 2020

Location: Virtual meeting

<http://www.picnet.org/libraryboard>

Attendees: M. Anderson, Councillor M. Brenner, R. Coelho, Councillor I. Cumming, M. Fatema, A. Maginley, D. Sharma, S. Beckett, S. Sheehy (Chair).

Absent: D. Barham

Staff: J. Flowers – CEO, E. Bird – Director of Support Services, K. Williams – Director of Public Services, U. Siva – Manager of Technology, R. Coutinho – Administrative Services Assistant

Meeting Commencement Time: 7:02 pm

1. Public Delegations

None

2. Approval of Agenda, Conflict of Interest Disclosure

No interest was declared.

Motion #20.47

Moved by D. Sharma, Seconded by M. Brenner. **Motion** THAT the Agenda be adopted as presented.

Carried.

3. Consent Agenda

Motion #20.48

Moved by D. Sharma, Seconded by M. Anderson. **Motion** THAT the items on the Consent Agenda be adopted as presented.

Carried.

4. Board Education

None

5. Ends Discussion

5.1 Library Information Update

J. Flowers reported that a staff project team has been created to focus on building audience engagement and enhancing the production quality of the Library's online programs and events. This team, nicknamed "The Disruptors", applies prototyping techniques and other design thinking skills to test new programming formats and content.

There has already been improvement in the production quality of the storytime programs provided to clients using new technology. The project is expected to wrap by the end of 2020 with the deliverable of a programming strategy and workplan that will direct the organization in the short to mid-term. It is anticipated that demand for online programming will continue to build during the pandemic and continue even after a vaccine is widely available.

Over the summer, the Library received two grants through the Government of Canada's Emergency Community Support Fund, the United Way Durham Region and the Durham Community Foundation:

- A grant of \$15,000 to buy webcams and lighting equipment to improve our virtual program offerings.
- A grant of \$15,000 to purchase iPads and internet hotspots to support individuals who are experiencing digital barriers. The Library's community partners are connecting the Library to individuals who are experiencing these barriers and would benefit from the loan of a kit. In response to a question, J. Flowers noted that in the event of loss or damage to the hardware this would be disclosed to the funders.
- Both grants will be completed by the end of March 2021.

The new website official launch is scheduled for October 28, 2020. The soft launch of the website will be on October 3, 2020. If any of the Board members or family and friends of the Board members were interested in volunteering to test the website, they were asked to send a message to J. Flowers. The new website will be www.pickeringlibrary.ca.

6. Staff Reports

6.1 2020 Budget update (verbal)

E. Bird reported that the Finance department at the City of Pickering has asked the Library staff to forecast the Library's expenditures for the end of 2020.

It is estimated that the Library would be underspent by 5-7% (approx. \$400,000). Staffing costs are lower due to reduced library service during the pandemic and gapping of vacant positions. There is also expected savings in advertising and program supplies.

Overspending is projected for digital materials (ebooks, eaudiobooks) due to increased demand during the pandemic. The Seminars & Education budget is also expected to be overspent because of the addition of two new training opportunities for staff: de-escalation training for public service staff and anti-black racism training. There is also an expected over expenditure in the software budget for licenses require to provide online programming.

There has also been a reduction in forecasted revenue as the Board had previously agreed to suspend overdue fines for the rest of 2020 and no rooms rental revenue is expected for the remainder of the year.

The Board suggested that the idea of transferring some or all of those surplus funds to a reserve account that can be used next year or for the City Centre Library be explored.

6.2 Fine Free Library Proposal

J. Flowers reviewed her proposal to the Board that PPL implement a permanent fine free model effective January 1, 2021.

Some key factors to her proposal were:

- Amount of current fine revenue is less than 1% of the total Library budget.
- American Library Association reports that charging fines was a form of social inequity and a lot of libraries (in the US and in Canada) are moving away from charging fines.
- 972 PPL clients have fines that exceed \$20, their accounts have been suspended and they are unable to use the library.
- Other libraries have managed to offset their reduction in revenue by going fine free by reducing their expenses.
- There are currently no fines charged for digital materials as they are returned on the due date automatically.
- Digital circulation is increasing, and fines revenues are decreasing every year.
- Since the pandemic began, the amount of physical materials being borrowed has declined considerably.

If approved by the Board, this proposal would allow the Library to:

- Continue to charge clients for lost materials.
- Cancel any outstanding fine balances on all Library accounts.
- Offset the loss in fine revenue through savings.

R. Coelho left the meeting.

Members of the Board discussed the implications of a fine free model which included concerns about materials not being returned on time.

Motion #20.49

Moved by I. Cumming, Seconded by M. Brenner. **Motion** THAT the Board refers the issue back to staff for further study to include hybrid and amnesty options.
Carried.

Motion #20.50

Moved by M. Anderson, Seconded by A. Maginley. **Motion** THAT due to the impacts of the pandemic the Board extends fine free service till the end of 2021.
Carried.

6.3 Innovative Outreach Proposal

J. Flowers presented a proposal for an outreach vehicle. The objective is to bring library services to newer communities, communities experiencing barriers to library access and audiences not currently well served by the Library's physical locations. This would also lead to an increase in library memberships and an increase in brand awareness and loyalty.

In response to a question J. Flowers reported that it would not be possible to lease the vehicle because of the interior customization needed. She also noted that the vehicle will provide the ability to drive to a site which will bring the library services to the community. For example, maker space programming could be set up using a tent and tables in a park.

Motion #20.51

Moved by M. Brenner, Seconded by M. Fatema. **Motion** THAT the recommendations in the report be adopted as presented.

Carried.

6.4 Budget 2021 highlights (verbal update)

J. Flowers informed the Board that the 2021 budget would see a moderate increase in the operating budget. Per direction from the City, only new projects that will be completed in 2021 are included in the capital budget. The capital and operating budgets are due to the City by October 9, 2020.

The 2021 budget will see an increase in digital collection expenses and cleaning costs. There will also be a reduction in the revenue earned through fines & room rental charges. The offset of the increase in expenditures and reduction in revenue will be made possible through savings in gapping positions and reduced casual and taskforce hours.

The Board asked that funds be available in 2021 to ensure Sunday service at George Ashe and the Central Library can be offered if there is community demand for this service.

6.5 Anti-Black Racism Working Group (verbal update)

A community survey issued over the summer received responses from over 100 participants. Some common themes from the community were a desire to see the community reflected in our library staff and collections, and additional programs & events to promote Black culture and heritage year-round.

S. Yung is developing a community panel to build the Anti-Black Racism Working Group. The panel will have both library representatives and representatives from organizations that work with the Black community in Pickering. Any Board member who is interested in joining the panel was asked to contact J. Flowers.

The first meeting of the Working Group is expected to take place at the end of October. To meet that deadline, the notice of the application process will be distributed in early October.

6.6 Recovery and COVID preparedness plan (verbal update)

J. Flowers reported that all Library locations are now open per the Province's Stage 3 Recovery Plan. Client traffic and purpose of visit is being tracked on a daily and hourly basis. Purpose of visit to the library breaks down as follows: 75% come to pick up holds and browse the collection, 16% come to use the computers, and the remaining number are engaged in group and individual work.

As part of a pandemic contingency planning exercise, an internal plan has been developed to direct Library leadership in the event that a Library staff were to test positive for Covid-19.

7. Monitoring Reports

7.1 EL #6 Financial Condition

S. Beckett reported that the policy and report was satisfactory.

Motion #20.52

Moved by S. Beckett, Seconded by D. Sharma. **Motion** THAT the Board adopt Monitoring Report Executive Limitation #6 Financial Condition as presented and THAT the Board adopt Policy Executive Limitation #6 Financial Condition as presented, the Policy being complete, sound and effective.

Carried.

7.2 EL #5 Financial Planning

Board members reported that the policy and report were satisfactory.

Motion #20.53

Moved by S. Sheehy, Seconded by A. Maginley. **Motion** THAT the Board adopt Monitoring Report Executive Limitation #5 Financial Planning as presented and; THAT the Board adopt Policy Executive Limitation #5 Financial Planning as presented, the Policy being complete, sound and effective.

Carried.

8. Board Committee Reports

8.1 Report of the Community Linkage Committee

No meetings held.

8.2 Report of the Board Building Committee

No meetings held.

9. Governance

9.1 Previous Board Meeting Self Evaluation

M. Brenner reported that there had been 5 evaluations submitted for the July meeting. All the responses were positive. It was felt by all that the Board's time was well spent and that there was sufficient time for discussion and decision making.

10. Board Policy Review for next meeting

Note: The following Executive Limitation policies will be discussed at the next Board meeting. All members are to review prior to the meeting. The Board member listed will review any evidence they feel is necessary and lead the discussion at the meeting

EL #9 Compensation and Benefits

EL #2 Treatment of Clients

R. Coelho

M. Fatema

11. New Business

11.1 Member Community Reports

None.

11.2 Board Training in 2020

The Board was informed that there was still funds available in the training budget for Board learning in 2020. If anyone has any suggestions about training that is needed by the Board, please let J. Flowers know.

11.3 Update on City Shared Services

S. Sheehy reported that in early 2020, the Library's People and Culture staff were moved to the City HR Department. There was also discussion about moving the IT department and the programming staff and marketing staff into City departments.

However, with the events of the last year it has become clear that there could be disadvantages in this approach. For example, at the outset of the pandemic, the Library's IT team was very quick to respond to the needs of the organization to transition staff to working from home. This highlighted the benefit of having in-house capacity and capabilities.

It was agreed that the Board would end further discussion of other Library departments moving under the City Shared Services at this time.

12. Confidential Matter

None

13. Board Meeting Self Evaluation (complete online)

The Board Chair requested that the Board members complete the Board Meeting Self Evaluation for this meeting online.

14. Date of Next meeting and Adjournment

The next Board meeting will be held on Thursday October 22, 2020 at 7 pm as a Virtual meeting.

Motion #20.53

Moved by D. Sharma, Seconded by M. Brenner. **Motion** THAT the meeting be adjourned.
Carried

The meeting was adjourned at 9:31 pm.

The City of Pickering Public Library Board Meeting Minutes

Signature of Library CEO:

Date:

Signature of Library Board Chair:

Date:

Alternate formats available upon request. Contact Kathy Williams at kathyw@picnet.org or 905-831-6265 ext. 6251.