

MARKHAM PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD

Regular Meeting

Minutes of Regular Meeting held on Monday, April 27, 2020 7:15 p.m., Virtual Meeting

Present from Board: Mr. Alick Siu, Chair
Ms. Margaret McGrory, Vice-Chair
Ms. Iqra Awan
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. Shaun McDonough, Research Analyst
Mr. Patrick Pan, Manager, Facilities & Workplace Safety
Mrs. Antonella Costa, Manager, Workforce Development
Ms. Evelyn Pringle, Manager Programs
Mrs. Jennifer North, Manager Angus Glen Library
Mrs. Hilary Murphy, Manager, Markham Village Library
Mrs. Angela Tse, Manager, Aaniin Library
Mr. Fred Whitmarsh, Manager, Unionville Library
Mr. David Zambrano, Organizational Transformation Manager
20 Additional Staff Members
Mrs. Susan Price, Board Secretary

Regrets: Youth Representative: Ms. Timea Gergely

Guests: Delegation: Mr. Nick Bludov, Unit Chair, CUPE Local 905, Markham Library Unit
Ms. Eleni Goulioras, Staff Thornhill Library
Ms. Krista Tallis, Staff, Aaniin Library

1.0 Call to Order/Approval of Agenda

Mr. Alick Siu, Chair called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m.

Moved by Mr. Raymond Chan
Seconded by Mr. Ben Hendriks

Resolved that the agenda be approved.

Carried.

1.1 **Declaration of Conflict of Pecuniary Interest**

None.

1.2 **Delegation:**
Nick Bludov, Unit Chair, CUPE Local 905, Markham Library Unit

Mr. Bludov began his presentation by giving an overview of the composition of employees and the ratio of full-time staff to part-time staff at Markham Public Library. He reminded the Board that MPL's Pages have recently certified and joined the CUPE union. Mr. Bludov advised that staff have expressed a lot of different concerns, including the most recent issues of Declared Emergency Leaves and mandatory inter-branch transfers. Unionized staff are speaking up about their concerns; 183 of them signed the petition that was member-driven regarding rotations and the current timing of them.

Mr. Bludov explained to the Board that these concerns were already brought forward to Management in March, prior to closing the Library and that staff felt that even though they got a response from Management, they felt that the core issues were not being addressed.

Regarding the staff placed on Declared Emergency Leave, Mr. Bludov explained that staff have concerns surrounding what re-entry would look like and the possibility of more precarious work and public sector cuts as a result of COVID-19.

Mr. Bludov had several suggestions on bringing the library back to the community (phoning customers, digital pathfinders etc.) and reallocating resources (more online activities) that would garner goodwill and public support.

Two other staff members provided their input:

Eleni explained that she is a part time Library Services Associate and described her role within her community. She is finding being placed on leave difficult as she can no longer interact with customers. She understands the stresses and concerns around being a part-time worker and would appreciate more ongoing communication and information on benefits.

Krista is a full time Library Services Associate and thanked the Board for the opportunity to speak. She asked that they not forget the human element when making decisions and the effect that recent events (COVID-19 and staff transfers) have had on employees.

There were clarifications from the Board as to what the Delegation is looking for. Mr. Bludov advised that they are looking for a LOU (letter of understanding) with clearer terms as to what the future will look like and the parameters for reopening to the public.

Moved by Mrs. Lillian Tolensky
Seconded by Deputy Mayor Don Hamilton

Resolved that the Board receive the presentation from the Delegation conducted by Mr. Nick Bludov, Unit Chair, CUPE Local 905, and Markham Library Unit;

And that Staff prepare a report for the Board to review at the next meeting.

Carried.

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 addressed the many current issues surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic including the ongoing changes that make it difficult for everyone to adjust and changes to the way business is conducted. He emphasized that there are a lot of vulnerable people in the community including those that are homeless and in long-term care that are frustrated and upset. Mr. Siu commended the Library for the manufacture and contribution of PPE equipment to the various facilities in Markham.

Mr. Siu asked the CEO and staff to introduce guest staff members on the call, approximately 30 in total.

2.0 **Approval of Minutes:**

2.1 Library Board Minutes February 24 2020

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

Resolved that the minutes of the February 24, 2020 (Agenda 2.1) Library Board Meeting be confirmed.

Carried.

2.2 Library Board Minutes April 2, 2020

Moved by Deputy Mayor Don Hamilton
Seconded by Mrs. Lillian Tolensky

Resolved that the minutes of the April 2, 2020 (Agenda 2.2) Library Board Special Meeting be confirmed.

Carried.

2.3 **Consent Agenda:**

Moved by Mr. Ben Hendriks
Seconded by Mr. Raymond Chan

Resolved that the Consent Agenda comprising Agenda items 2.3 to 2.5.9 and the same are hereby approved as written and the CEO of the Library is hereby authorized and

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directed to take such action that may be necessary to give effect to the recommendations as therein contained:

- 2.4 **Declaration of Due Diligence by the CEO**
- 2.5 **Communication and Correspondence:**
 - 2.5.1 Globe and Mail: Modern concept signals next chapter for Ottawa “super Library”
 - 2.5.2 canadianarchitect.com/ Editorial: The New Public Library
 - 2.5.3. markhamreview.com:
<https://markhamreview.com/markhamwearspink/>
 - 2.5.4 globeandmail.com:with a library card here’s what you can access and stream from home
 - 2.5.5 Volunteer Letter 2019
 - 2.5.6 markhamreview.com: Tips for Homeschooling
<https://markhamreview.com/tips-for-homeschooling-during-covid-19/>
 - 2.5.7 markhamreview.com: Providing support during Covid-19 pandemic
<https://markhamreview.com/providing-support-during-covid-19-pandemic/>
 - 2.5.8 yorkregion.com: York Regional Libraries offer virtual storytime
<https://www.yorkregion.com/news-story/9940669-coronavirus-shutdown-york-region-libraries-offer-virtual-story-time-online-programs/>
 - 2.5.9 newsroom@ontario.ca:
[Health Experts Say the COVID-19 Outbreak Has Likely Peaked in Ontario](#)

Carried.

There were some comments on the MPL website and social media about new programs offered on line.

A positive outcome of the library closures is that the new Markham Public Library website was launched (April 20, 2020) ahead of schedule.

3.0 **CEO’s Highlights:**

The CEO had the following comments on items contained in the report:

- **Toronto Public Library Self-Service Hours Pilot Project**
Several staff completed an investigation of TPL’s Self-Service Hours pilot Project.
The TPL Pilot installed Open+ at its two smallest branches to allow them to operate on a self –service basis during prescribed hours.
Toronto has no plans to expand the initiative and Markham currently does not have appropriate facilities to attempt a similar pilot at this time.
- **Enterprise Risk Management –Risks Related to COVID-19**
IT Risk-working from home meetings on ZOOM and SKPE
Personnel Risk-staff reductions, increase stress on staff and management team
Financial Risk-loss of revenue from program cancellations and fines
Reputational Risk-confidence in library space and materials
Strategic Risk –timelines pushed out
- **Initiatives to Improve Virtual Services**
This is a stressful time for staff and they have many concerns which has a negative effect on morale.

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MPL is working on a business recovery model but needs to work in tandem with the City as to opening actual facilities.

The current closures mean a significant loss of revenues.

MPL is also working with many organizations to make sure that materials are considered safe before loaning out to the general public again.

There were comments on the success of digital circulation and several questions and suggestions on timing of reopening. The timing of reopening which may need to be progressive and will depend on how long the provincial emergency measures last. Hopefully programs might resume in the latter half of the summer which would benefit revenues.

Moved by Mrs. Pearl Mantell

Seconded by Mr. Ben Hendriks

Resolved that the report entitled “CEO’s Highlight’s April 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-2g, Emergency Executive Succession**
(Assigned to Mr. Anthony Lewis.)

Mr. Lewis stated that this report provides the Board with the assurance that the CEO will not have fewer than two other executives familiar with Board and CEO issues and processes in order to protect the Board from sudden loss of CEO services. Mr. Lewis contacted the Board and did not receive any questions.

Emergency executive succession insures that leadership will continue and the report is clear on who will step in. The CEO has made several provisions for emergency succession staffing.

Mr. Lewis provided a detailed overview of measures in place to move other staff into critical positions in the future.

The report confirmed that the CEO and MPL’s practices relative to MPL’s Emergency Executive Succession comply with the requirements of EL-2g policy.

Moved by Mr. Anthony Lewis

Seconded by Mrs. Lillian Tolensky

Resolved that the internal monitoring report entitled “Executive Limitation: EI-2g, Emergency Executive Succession” be received.

Carried.

5.2 Executive Limitations/Internal Monitoring Reports Schedule-Revised

Moved by Councillor Andrew Keyes
Seconded by Mrs. Pearl Mantell

Resolved that the “Revised Limitations/Internal Monitoring Reports Schedule 2020” be received.

Carried.

5.3 Executive Limitation: EL-2e Asset Protection

(Assigned to Mr. Edward Choi)

Mr. Choi advised that the Asset Protection report addresses security, intellectual property and insurance and found the report to be complete and thorough.

There were some concerns raised about current security and the ramifications of closures due to COVID-19. The Board was assured there is increased patrolling of facilities and Branch managers have been doing physical checks of standalone facilities as well.

Mr. Choi did not receive any questions from the Board but did have some himself that were clarified by Staff.

The report confirmed that the CEO and MPL’s practices relative to MPL’s EI-2e, Asset Protection comply with the requirements of EL-2e policy.

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

Resolved that the internal monitoring report entitled “ Executive Limitation: EI-2e, Asset Protection” be received.

Carried.

6.0 Ends:

6.1 Strategic Plan Timelines

Staff explained that this report was to advise the Board about adjusted timelines due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Given the unprecedented nature of the crisis and the significant business disruption it is clear that MPL may need to make further adjustment to the strategic planning timelines going forward.

Staff advised the Board that a leading consultant has been contacted and would like to conduct a workshop on Board Strategic Planning to be held on a Saturday morning in September. At this time Board members are available September 26 and the Board secretary will send a meeting request.

Moved by Mr. Edward Choi
Seconded by Mr. Ben Hendriks

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

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Carried.

7.0 **Governance:**

7.1 **OLBA Update: Ben Hendriks**

Mr. Hendriks has been busy with various organizations and at this time, while they would normally be holding individual smaller meetings with SOL's members, they are currently holding single large virtual meetings

Current discussions are focused on layoffs of staff and different types of leaves.

There was a question about how other libraries have handled the situation and if there had been any other options for MPL under the circumstances.

7.2 **Proposed Wording Amendments to By-laws 2.7 (Disqualification), 28. (Youth Representative) and 5.4 (Notice of Motion)**

Moved by Mr. Edward Choi
Seconded by Deputy Mayor Don Hamilton

Resolved that the Board approve the proposed wording changes to By-law 2.7 Disqualification, 2.8 Youth Representative and 5.4 Notice of Motion.

Carried.

7.3 **Resignation of Mr. Les Chapman from the Markham Public Library Board**

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

Resolved that the resignation of Mr. Les Chapman from the Markham Public Library Board effective February 26, 2020 be received.

And that Council will not need to replace Mr. Les Chapman for this term as its membership is currently within the range identified in the Terms of Reference. Markham Public Library Board will continue with fourteen members.

Carried.

7.4 **2020 Library Capital Budget Report**

Staff explained the numbers in the reports are those approved by Council in 2019. The Chair asked if there was opportunity to reallocate funds due to the current situation, and a question if e-book vendors had made any concessions due the pandemic.

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

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Resolved that the Library Board adopts the 2020 Capital Budget of \$3,085,900 for the Library's portion of the City of Markham's 2020 Capital Budget; and,

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

Carried.

7.5 **2020 Library Operating Budget Report**

There was a question if these numbers would be revised; Council has already approved the amounts in 2019 but MPL will be working with the City's finance department on any adjustments to the 2020 budget that may be needed due to COVID-19 situation.

Moved by Mrs. Margaret McGrory
Seconded by Mr. Anthony Lewis

Resolved that the Library Board approves the 2020 City of Markham Grant in the amount of \$13,538,620; and,

That the Board approves the 2020 Library Operating Budget consisting of Library Income in the amount of \$1,141,689, and Operating Expenditures (excluding Personnel Ramp-ups) in the amount of \$14,680,309; and,

That upon finalization of the 2019 Library audited financial statements, the 2020 Operating Budget be adjusted to reflect the 2019 operating results; and,

That the above figures be subject to further adjustment as required throughout the year based on information received from the City of Markham; and,

That Staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

Carried.

8.0 **Ownership Linkage:**

8.1 **Input from Board Members**

Alick Siu attended the Mayor's "virtual" meeting regarding the concerns at Participation House in Markham.

9.0 **Board Advocacy:**

9.1 **Events (Virtual Programs) for the Next Quarter**

Staff explained that the April/May calendar of events is very different than originally planned due to the COVID-19 pandemic and library closures.

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During this period MPL is currently running 3-4 virtual programs per day and continually adding programs as they are developed.

There is a demand for storytimes and other programs geared to younger children in order to assist parents as they support children who are no longer in school. Wellness programs are also in great demand.

There was a question about seniors programs as well.

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

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

Carried.

10.0 **Education:**
10.1 **Digital Literacy & Digital Equity**

Staff explained that the presentation would be presented by several staff members. Objectives of the Digital Literacy Strategy are to

1. Promote Digital Equity
2. Contribute to a digitally literate community

Presenters focused on the impact of COVID-19 and MPL's Rapid response to the crisis. Although physical libraries are closed, staff have been occupied with several initiatives some of which are listed below

- Customer Service Online
- Expanded digital content
- Ask MPL
- Book a librarian and more...
- Ongoing support
- Programs are free
- Feature Discovery and Experiential Learning
- Self-paced learning
- Website content
- Health and Safety
- MPL Edu and MPL Procedures
- Improved content from Makerspace
- Building capacity sound recording studio
- Angus Glen makerspace

What's next?

- Makerspace expansion Phase II
- Digital Literacy and Recovery Strategic Planning-gradual recovery, great deal of work happening as MPL continues to support the community

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

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Resolved that the presentation “Digital Literacy & Digital Equity” be received.

Carried.

11.0 **Incidental Information**
(None)

12.0 **New Business**
(None)

13.0 **Board Evaluation:**
13.1 **Questionnaire: Feedback to the Chair**

The Chair asked Board members to e-mail the questionnaires to the Board secretary as requested.

14.0 **In Camera Agenda**

Moved by Mr. Ben Hendriks
Seconded by Mr. Edward Choi

Resolved that the Board meet in Camera at 9:33 p.m. to discuss a confidential personnel matter.

Carried.

The Board returned to its regular meeting at 10:19 p.m.

Moved by Mr. Edward Choi
Seconded by Mr. Ben Hendriks

Resolved that the motions approved In Camera be ratified.

Carried.

15.0 **Adjournment**

Moved by Deputy Mayor Don Hamilton that the meeting be adjourned at 10:20 p.m.