

MARKHAM PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD

Regular Meeting

Minutes of First Meeting held on Monday, March 22, 2021 7:07 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 (up to 9.1)
Mr. Ben Hendriks
Councillor Andrew Keyes
Mrs. Pearl Mantell
Mrs. Lillian Tolensky
Mr. David Whetham
Mr. Jay Xie

Guests: Ms. Katherine Grzejszczak, CUPE 905/President
Rayanne Lees, CUPE Local 905/ Vice-President
Me. Gayle Masak, Resident
Mr. Larry Pogue, Retired Staff

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 & Operational Support
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
Mr. Shaun McDonough, Research Analyst
Mr. Harman Malhi, Manager, Thornhill Community Centre Branch/Thornhill Village Branch
Ms. Polly Chan, Financial Analyst
Mr. David, Zambrano, Organizational Transformation Manager
Mrs. Susan Price, Board Secretary

Regrets: Councillor Keith Irish

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

Mr. Alick Siu, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m.

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

Resolved that the agenda be approved.

Carried.

1.1 **Declaration of Conflict of Pecuniary Interest**

None.

1.2 **Delegation:** **Response to Rayanne Lees, CUPE Local 905/ Vice-President**

The CEO laid out the timelines of temporary layoffs. Unionized Part Time and Page staff from MPL were placed on Declared Emergency Leave April 12, 2020 and when the Province ended the State of Emergency order on July 24, 2020 these staff were then placed on temporary layoff as of July 25, 2020 due to ongoing pandemic and library branch closures. In her deputation Ms. Lees expressed staff concerns about the unfairness of the decision and the stress that it was causing to the employees.

Further to the January 25, 2021 Delegation Ms. Lees e-mailed the MPL Board posing an additional 5 questions to the Board which the CEO, Mrs. Biss answered on behalf of the Board. In her response the CEO clarified that “the City owns library facilities and while we were able to reopen standalone facilities, we are unable to open branches that are co-located with the Community Centres. We are in constant contact with our partners at the City on recovery and reopening plans and have every intention of reopening our facilities once the Community Centres reopen and we are able to safely expand hours and services to the community.

MPL has started recalling some staff and we are hoping to recall everyone else on temporary layoff once we are able to safely expand hours, services, and locations.

Finally, MPL has ongoing regular communication with the Union and its members regarding recovery and reopening plans, including the recall of those staff who were placed on temporary layoff.

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

Resolved that the report entitled “Response to Delegation: Rayanne Lees, CUPE Local, 905/Vice-President” be received.

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.

Mr. Siu asked Directors to introduce any staff members present.
The Chair reminded the Board that votes would need to be counted and to keep their hands raised until staff can do so.

AGENDA 2.1

The Chair reminded the Board that the Council Development Services Meeting on Markham Centre Plan Update will be held March 23, 2021 9:00-11:30 am and will be livestreamed.

In January 2021 a letter was sent to all Public Library Boards in Ontario inviting them to appoint to a representative to their Board assembly. Mr. Siu asked Mr. Hendriks to speak to this and Ben advised that it is an opportunity for all Boards to connect with smaller and larger libraries. Margaret McGrory, Vice-Chair has volunteered to attend meetings on behalf of the Markham Public Library Board.

2.0 **Approval of Minutes:**

2.1 Library Board Minutes January 25, 2021

Moved by Councillor Andrew Keyes
Seconded by Mrs. Lillian Tolensky

Resolved that the minutes of the January 25, 2021 Library Board Meeting be confirmed.

Carried.

2.2 **Consent Agenda:**

Moved by Mrs. Lillian Tolensky
Seconded by Mr. Raymond Chan

Resolved that the Consent Agenda comprising Agenda items 2.2 to 2.4.13 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 Markham Economist & Sun: Markham Native Succeeds With Wood in a World of Metal

2.4.2 yorkregion.com: Markham library board in bad books with union over layoffs, "threats" to staff

<https://www.yorkregion.com/news-story/10319829-markham-library-board-in-bad-books-with-union-over-layoffs-threats-to-staff/>

2.4.3 yorkregion.com: Markham Public Library launches bibliotherapy initiative to support mental wellness

<https://www.yorkregion.com/news-story/10317604-markham-public-library-launches-bibliotherapy-initiative-to-support-mental-wellness/>

2.4.4 MarkhamReview.com: MPL celebrates Black History Month

<https://markhamreview.com/mpl-celebrates-black-history-month/>

2.4.5 yahoo!news: Markham Public Library launches bibliotherapy initiative to support mental wellness

<http://yhoo.it/3e70bHx>

2.4.6 yorkregion.com: Here's what you need to know about Markham's return to red zone

<https://www.yorkregion.com/news-story/10337376-here-s-what-you-need-to-know-about-markham-s-return-to-red-zone/>

2.4.7 MarkhamReview.com: Five reasons reading can make you happier
[Five reasons reading can make you happier – Markham Review](#)

AGENDA 2.1

- 2.4.8 MarkhamReview, com: MPL launches Kanopy streaming service
[MPL launches Kanopy streaming service – Markham Review](#)
- 2.4.9 Markham Economist & Sun: Letters; Municipalities Must Protect Public Libraries
- 2.4.10 Toronto Star: Markham Public Library’s mental wellness programs
[Seeds, walks, mystery bags and more: How GTA libraries are bringing communities together](#)
- 2.4.11 Markham Review: MPL’s April Break Activities
[MPL’s April Break activities – Markham Review](#)
- 2.4.12 OLA and FOPL Pre-Budget Submission
- 2.4.13 Isolation of Library Materials: Letters to the Province

Carried.

3.0 **CEO’s Highlights:**

The Chair asked the CEO for her comments, Mrs. Biss noted the following:

- **Municipal Priorities in 2021:** An update to Council regarding the City’s BMFT Strategic Plan as implemented through the Departmental Business Plans is planned for April and the Board report regarding Municipal Priorities for 2021 has been moved to the April Board Agenda, to follow the council meeting
- **Milliken Library Renovation:** Pursuant to the Milliken Mills Community Centre Lobby enhancement Project, the entry and adjacent spaces of the Milliken Library will be renovated in 2021. The scope of the renovation includes:
 - A new sorter room with 3-5 bin automated sortation systems
 - A self-service material return unit (the customer induction unit)
 - Two exterior walls mounted material return drop/slots for 24x7 manual returns
 - A universal/family washroom –which will be well received

The library will remain closed as long as it takes to complete the renovations.

- **Content Strategy and Policy: 6 Dr. Seuss Books removed from Publication**
The estate of Dr. Seuss has decided to cease publication of 6 titles because of racist content. The basic theme of caricature across these six books are people of African descent, Asian descent, Middle Eastern descent and Indigenous descent. Of the six MPL holds 4.

Due to the very public nature of this announcement there has been a lot of interest in the titles from the public. Normally such material would be moved to Advanced Picture Book or Adult collection, however the price for these items has skyrocketed to the point it has made them a theft risk.

There was a lot of discussion about possible outcomes.

Moved by Mrs. Pearl Mantell

Seconded by Mr. Ben Hendriks

Resolved that the report entitled “CEO’s Highlight’s March 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)

- 5.1 **Executive Limitation: EL-2d Financial Condition**
(Assigned to Ms. Margaret McGrory)

Ms. McGrory advised that this is a report on Actual and Budgeted Operating expenditures for the twelve-month period ending December 31, 2020. This is the final of the three financial reports to the Board covering fiscal year 2020 (Jan-Dec). She reviewed the report and found it to be complete and compliant.

The Vice-Chair received a couple of queries from the Deputy Mayor Hamilton, clarification on what makes up Travel expenses and Professional Services. Staff explained the different expenses.

There was a question about further line item breakdowns on the reports and the CEO confirmed that although these breakdowns exist within the accounts, the reports are maintained according to City guidelines.

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 Ms. Margaret McGrory
Seconded by Deputy Mayor Hamilton

Resolved that the Report entitled "Internal Monitoring Report -Executive Limitation EI-2d, Financial Condition" be received.

Carried.

- 5.2 **Executive Limitation: EL-2g Emergency Executive Succession**
(Assigned to Mr. David Whetham)

Mr. Whetham stated that this annual report provided the Board with the assurance that the CEO will not have fewer than two other executives familiar with Board and CEO issue and processes in order to protect the Board from sudden loss of the CEO services, MPL currently has four.

Mr. Whetham advised that the report is good and complete and he did not receive any questions or concerns from Board members.

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. David Whetham
Seconded by Deputy Mayor Don Hamilton

Resolved that the internal monitoring report entitled "Executive Limitation: EI-2g, emergency Executive Succession" be received.

Carried.

5.3 **Executive Limitation: EL-2j Communication & Counsel to the Board**
(Assigned to Mr. Jay Xie)

Mr. Xie advised that this report provides the Board with triannual affirmation that the Board is informed and supported in its work and covers the period October 2020 to February 2021

Mr.Xie contacted the Board and did not receive any questions or concerns.

The report confirmed that the CEO and MPL's practices relative to MPL's Communication & Counsel comply with the requirements of EL-2j policy.

Moved by Mr. Jay Xie
Seconded by Deputy Mayor Hamilton

Resolved that the internal monitoring report entitled "Executive Limitation: EL-2j Communication & Counsel to the Board (October 2020 to February 2021), be received.

Carried.

6.0 **Ends:**

6.1 **Strategic Plan Update**

Staff provided a brief overview of the implementation plan for MPL's 2021 Strategic Plan. The report provided the following:

- the three goals: Reading to Transform, Limitless learning and Community Social Cohesion
- the Objectives relative to each
- the Actions (initiatives and projects) to be undertaken to achieve these objectives
- and the expected outcomes or results to be achieved.

Strategic Planning Next Steps-Q2 2021

1. Confirm timelines for action items
2. Report full implementation plan to board in April.
3. Public Launch of the MPL Strategic Plan for 2021 to 2026.

Staff cautioned that depending on the pace of COVID recovery, some steps may have to be delayed.

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

Resolved that the report "Strategic Plan Update" be received.

Carried.

7.0 **Governance:**

7.1 **Update from OLBA-Ben Hendriks**

Mr. Hendriks advised the Board that he had attended an OLS/OLBA session today on Municipal relations emphasizing the importance of being connected to Municipal partners.

AGENDA 2.1

He reminded Board members about an upcoming OLBA Chat on March 25, 2021, **Leaving No One Behind: Ensuring Representation and Accessibility on Your Board**. Ben stressed that Board members should make sure they are on the e-mail list and have access to resources. He suggested that anyone who attended the OLA Super Conference and specifically OLBA Boot camp should email comments to the Board Secretary for insertion in the April Board package. OLBA focused on inclusivity and diversity. There are concerns that libraries are not as diverse as the communities they serve.

7.2 2021 Library Capital Budget Report

Staff explained that this was a standard report that requires Board approval for the purpose of the annual Audit.

Moved by Mrs. Pearl Mantell
Seconded by Councillor Andrew Keyes

Resolved that the Library Board adopts the 2021 Capital Budget of \$2,772,400 for the Library's portion of the City of Markham's 2021 Capital Budget; and,

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

Carried.

7.3 2021 Library Operating Budget Report

Staff advised that this was also a standard report requiring Board approval for the annual audit. Staff indicated that this was the Operating Budget that had been approved by Council. There was some discussion and clarifications on expectations going forward. Staff advised that MPL is currently involved with "Scenario Planning" utilizing the best and most current information.

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

Resolved that the Library Board approves the 2021 City of Markham Grant in the amount of \$13,541,673; and,

That the Board approves the 2021 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 \$14,683,362; and,

That upon finalization of the 2020 Library audited financial statements, the 2021 Operating Budget be adjusted to reflect the 2020 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**

There were no reports from Board members attending events at this time.

9.0 **Board Advocacy:**

9.1 **CELA Advocacy Campaign**

The CEO, Mrs. Biss asked that the letter be removed. The situation is a fluid one with additional funding being provided in the short term. The federal government announced March 16 that they would fund 1M for the next year with ongoing monitoring. Mrs. Biss asked the Vice-Chair Ms. McGrory to provide the Board with her understanding of the reasons behind these changes. Ms. McGrory advised the Board that CELA and NNELS receive government funding to support the production of accessible formats of published works for people who cannot read conventional print. The ultimate goal is to have publishers assume responsibility for the accessible publishing of their product. However, this transition will take time and it is likely publishers will require some funding assistance themselves in order to make this possible. In the meantime CELA and NNELS require this government funding to continue.

No recommendation was put forward at this time, however the Board indicated it was in favour of any future advocacy required.

10.0 **Education:**

10.1 **Governance Resources for Library Boards**

Staff explained that this was one of the Board Education topics identified for ongoing Library Board development. The list is not comprehensive but does include the following resources:

Library Sector Resources:

- Governance Hub and Ontario Library Service resources
- Ontario Library Board Association
- United for Libraries

Non-Profit Sector Resources

- Canadian Society of Association Executives
- Imagine Canada
- Charity Village
- BoardSource

Moved by Ms. Margaret McGrory

Seconded by Mr. Ben Hendriks

Resolved that the Board receives the report entitled “Governance Resources for Library Boards”

Carried.

10.2 **Markham Centre Update**

Key points were noted in the report including the City Planning Department’s support for walkable urbanism, the significant increase in geographical area now planned for and options for the library location that had been explored to date.

The report was broken down under sub-sections.

AGENDA 2.1

1. **Markham Centre Secondary Plan Update**

Two milestone events in the Markham Centre Secondary Plan Update process will take place on March 23, 2021: The Update will go to the Development Services Committee for discussion in the morning and in the afternoon the Toronto chapter of the Urban Land Institute will host an event entitled "ULI Toronto: Global Leadership: Markham's latest big urban vision-Markham Centre"

Markham Centre has been the focus of an intensive planning process since the 1990s. In its latest iteration the scale and boundaries of the Study Area have expanded (now 3kms wide), the population projections have grown to over 100,000 residents and the concept of a network of 15-minute (walkable) communities has been introduced.

2. **Markham Centre-Library Timeline**

The concept of a Library in Markham Centre has been explored since 2010

3. **2021 Recent Developments**

4. **MPL's Initial 2021 Work plan for Markham Centre Library**

5. **Change of Plans: Revised Workplan for the Markham Centre Library Community Consultation**

- Community Survey
- In-person Consultation
- Focus Groups

6. **Library Facility Design trends and Example**

- **Regenerative Design**
- **Design for All**
- **Flexible Design**
- **Community Co-Design**
- **Civic Renewal**
- **Partners in Planning**
- **Pedagogical Powered Houses**

7. **Central Libraries**

Staff presented several newer Central Libraries, highlighting the advantages of each and the benefits each provided to their communities. Featured in the presentation were:

- **Ottawa**
- **Halifax Central Library**
- **Calgary Central Library**
- **Vancouver Central Library**
- **Austin, Texas Central Library**
- **Oslo Public Library**

There was significant discussion and enthusiasm for the proposed project. The Board discussed the importance of ensuring that the survey give residents options. They felt there would also be a need for broad-based public consultations. They noted that the work would be complex due to the number of unknowns.

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

Resolved that the Board receives the report entitled "Markham Centre Library Update".

Carried.

AGENDA 2.1

11.0 **Incidental Information**

N/A

12.0 **New Business**

N/A

13.0 **Board Evaluation:**

13.1 **Questionnaire Results: The Board and the CEO**

Moved by Councillor Andrew Keyes

Seconded by Mrs. Pearl Mantell

Resolved that the report entitled “Questionnaire Results; “The Board and the CEO” be received.

Carried.

13.2 **Questionnaire: Feedback to the Chair**

The Chair asked the Board to complete the questionnaire and return to the Board Secretary by e-mail as directed.

14.0 **In Camera Agenda**

Moved by Mrs. Lillian Tolensky

Seconded by Mr. Raymond Chan

Resolved that the Board meet in Camera at 8:36 p.m. to discuss a confidential personnel matter.

Carried.

The Board returned to its regular meeting at 9:21 p.m.

Moved by Mrs. Lillian Tolensky

Seconded by Mr. Jay Xie

Resolved that the motions approved In Camera be ratified.

Carried.

15.0 **Adjournment**

Moved by Mr. Edward Choi that the meeting be adjourned at 9:22 p.m.