

MARKHAM PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD

REGULAR MEETING

Notice of meeting to be held on Monday, March 24, 2025, 7:00 p.m. Virtual Meeting by ZOOM

AGENDA

- 1.0 **Call to Order/Adoption of Agenda**
 - 1.1 Adoption of Minutes: (January 27,2025)
 - 1.2 Declaration of Conflict of Interest
 - 1.3 Delegations
 - 1.4 Chair's Remarks

- 2.0 **Ownership Linkage**
 - 2.1 Reports from Board Members

- 3.0 **Board Education**
 - 3.1 Trends and Issues in Canadian Libraries (D. Walker)

- 4.0 **Information Requested by the Board**
 - 4.1 CEO's Highlights

- 5.0 **Items for Decision**
 - 5.1 Policy Governance Wording Amendments Revision
March 24,2025

- 6.0 **Monitoring Performance**
 - 6.1 **Ends:**
 - 6.1.1 Strategic Plan Update(D. Walker)
 - 6.2 **Executive Limitations:**
 - 6.2.1 EL-2d Financial Condition(H.Manougian/M.Sawh)
 - 6.2.2 EL-2g Emergency Executive Succession
(R.Chan/A.Cecchetto)

7.0 **Consent Agenda**

All items under the Consent Agenda are considered to be routine and are recommended for approval by the Chair.

7.1 **Declaration of Due Diligence by the CEO**

7.2 **Communication and Correspondence:**

7.2.1 Library Journal: New Data From Overdrive

[New Data From OverDrive, “Libraries Break Digital Lending Records in 2024 with Over 739 million Checkouts”](#)

7.2.2 YorkRegion.com: Markham-Stouffville candidates Meet and Greet Feb.19 [Markham-Stouffville candidates Meet and Greet Feb. 19](#)

7.2.3 Stouffville Bullet Point News: Markham-Stouffville Heads to Polls Without a Single Pre-Election Debate [Markham-Stouffville Heads to the Polls Without a Single Pre- Election Debate | Stouffville | Bullet Point News](#)

8.0 **Board Performance and Self-Evaluation**

8.1 Questionnaire Results: The Board and the CEO

8.2 Questionnaire: Feedback to the Chair

9.0 **New Business**

10.0 **In-Camera**

10.1 To discuss a confidential personnel matter

11.0 **Adjournment**

**NEXT MEETING: Monday, April 28, 2025, 7:00 p.m.
Virtual Meeting by ZOOM**

TO: Markham Public Library Board

FROM: Catherine Biss, CEO & Secretary-Treasurer

PREPARED BY: Debbie Walker, Director, Library Strategy & Planning

DATE OF MEETING: March 24, 2025

SUBJECT: Trends and Issues in Canadian Libraries

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Board receives the Board Education Presentation “Trends and Issues in Canadian Libraries”.

BACKGROUND:

Environmental Scan

As advised in the January 2025 3.1 report regarding the strategic planning process, a comprehensive environmental scan will be a key phase of the strategic plan update project, engaging staff in analysis of issues relevant to the public library sector in Canada.

In accordance with the project timeline, staff are conducting and analyzing research and data across a range of issue areas, including:

- Economy and Politics
- Workplace Changes
- Education and Training
- Housing
- Libraries and Non-profits
- Health and Well-being
- Social Development
- Technology
- Transportation

The environmental scan will provide context for the overall strategic planning process, situate the Library in the broader environment, and identify important issues that will inform the community consultation plan and all future phases of the strategic planning process.

Two Phases

Given the uncertainty of the current moment, with global economic shifts and geopolitical turbulence driving a volatile and rapidly evolving landscape, staff are conducting the environmental scan in two phases:

Phase 1 – Macro Issue Research and Analysis:

Macro issues are the global, national and provincial issues¹ that have implications for public library strategies.

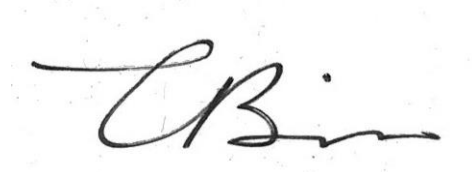
Staff will continue to track macro-level issues as they evolve during 2025 – e.g. the outcomes of the upcoming federal election, and of the ongoing tariff wars.

Phase 2 – Analysis of Issues through a Local Lens

Through consultation with community partners, Phase 2 will empower the local voice regarding the impact of macro issues within the boundaries of Markham. This Phase will be community-driven, contextualizing the evidence and elevating the community perspective.

Timing – Reporting the Environmental Scan to the Library Board

Given the heavy Agenda for the March Board meeting, and to provide adequate time for Board discussion, staff will roll out the initial results of the Environmental Scan at the April Board meeting. The project timeline has been adjusted to reflect this change in timing. (See Appendix A.)



Catherine Biss

CEO & Secretary-Treasurer

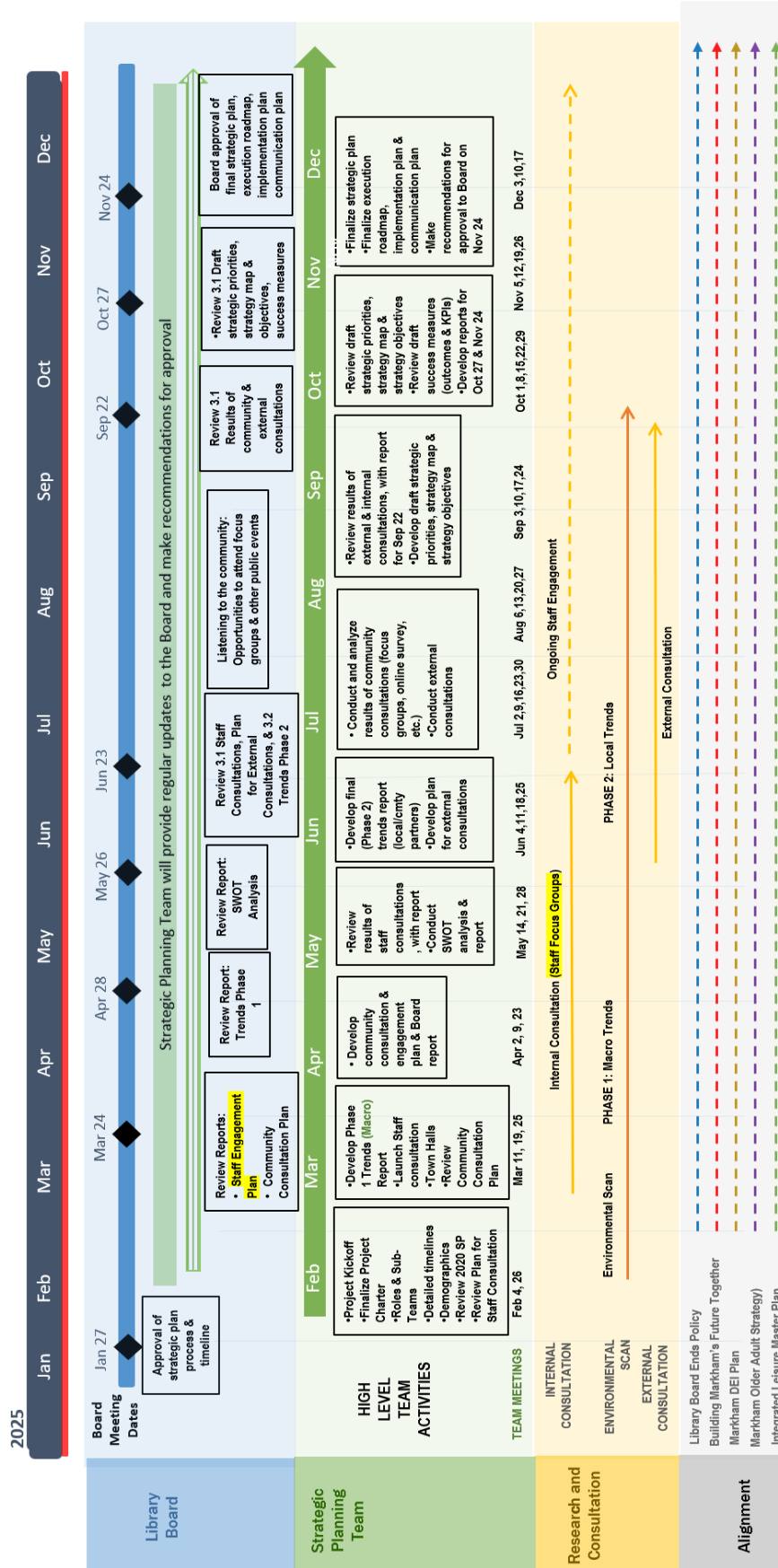
APPENDIX A: TIMELINE March 14, 2025

¹ For example, changing federal and provincial policies regarding international students will have ripple effects for the postsecondary sector and more broadly, for the pipeline of skills and talent in Markham and beyond.

APPENDIX A: TIMELINE March 14, 2025

MPL Strategic Plan Update Process 2025

March 14, 2025



AGENDA 6.1.1

TO: Markham Public Library Board
FROM: Catherine Biss, CEO & Secretary-Treasurer
PREPARED BY: Deborah Walker, Director, Strategy & Planning
DATE OF MEETING: March 24, 2025
SUBJECT: **Strategic Plan Update**

RECOMMENDATION:

That the report “Strategic Plan Update” be received.

BACKGROUND:

In accordance with the project timeline, and to ensure a successful and effective strategic plan, staff have commenced work on three foundational elements of the strategic planning process:

1. Environmental Scan:

Update and progress are reported in Report 3.1.

2. Community Participation Plan

A thorough community participation process will enable MPL to develop an impactful Strategic Plan that will continue to fulfill its legislated mandate to provide a comprehensive and efficient public library service reflecting the unique needs of the community. It will ensure that, as the city continues to grow and evolve, the Library is positioned to play an increasingly important role in providing the vital ingredients that Markham residents need to thrive.

The Community Participation Plan is attached to this Report as Appendix A.

3. Staff Engagement Plan

To provide staff with opportunities to participate in the creation of the library’s new Strategic Plan, a robust staff engagement plan is in the process of implementation.

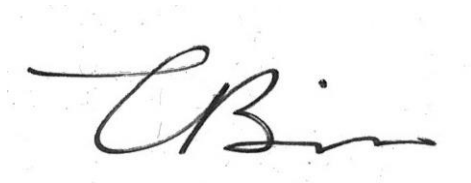
The Staff Engagement Plan is attached as Appendix B to this report.

Progress to date includes:

- Rollout of a Welcome to Strategic Planning video to staff, to explain the basics of what strategic planning at MPL will be and why it is important.

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- Staff Town Hall meetings to further discuss our plans, answer questions, and gather initial feedback, with in-person sessions scheduled for March 17 and 19, and a Virtual Town Hall meeting, which will be recorded for those who are unable to attend in-person.
- Staff Focus Groups scheduled for mid-May.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Biss', is centered on the page. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Catherine Biss
CEO & Secretary-Treasurer

APPENDIX A: Community Participation Plan

APPENDIX B: Staff Engagement Plan

Appendix A Strategic Plan: Community Participation

Public participation in the strategic planning process is necessary to ensure a plan that accurately reflects the community we serve. Community engagement needs to recognize and value the experiences, expertise, knowledge, skills, and passions of everyone in our community. To ensure inclusive and meaningful engagement, the plan will incorporate best practices in community engagement including the Capire Engagement Triangle and the International Association of Public Participation's (IAP2). The Community Engagement Plan will take a multi-pronged approach to listening and learning from the many voices of Markham including users, non-users and equity deserving groups, to inform the future direction of MPL.

The engagement plan identifies three high level target audiences including:

1. Those who are affected by a new Strategic Plan and for whom the Strategic Plan is being developed, namely community residents and those who work or go to school in Markham.
2. Those who have influence on the Plan including influence over resourcing. This group experiences MPL from a different vantage point than users and can provide unique insights that have potential strategy implication. This group includes the Library Board, Council and City Departments.
3. Those who have an interest in the Strategic Plan include community groups, organizations, and special interest groups whose work serves the Markham community. This group represents various community stakeholders particularly at-risk, marginalized and equity-deserving communities. They offer unique perspectives about the community, local needs, and opportunities for MPL.

Staff are committed to listening to a range of community voices and will take a structured approach to gathering their insights, ideas, and feedback. Staff will reach out to the community with a variety of opportunities for participation that provide both qualitative and quantitative information to ensure a Strategic Plan that reflects the values and priorities of the community.

- Surveys that gather quantifiable data and insights into the preferences, attitudes, and behaviours of the community
- Community conversations, based on tools developed by the Harwood Institute for Public Innovation and ALA's Libraries Transforming Communities initiative. The format facilitates open dialogue, putting the community first in planning and fostering a sense of ownership and involvement in MPL's future.
- Focus groups and one-on-one interviews that explore and clarify survey and community conversation findings. Small groups representing specific

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demographics or user types will provide deeper insight into topics that arise during the community engagement process.

- Passive activities within the branches and in the community provide a low barrier to participation for those who may not have the interest or time for more in-depth engagement opportunities. While offering a low-pressure involvement, these passive activities also provide an opportunity to promote more active participation and the exploration of specific library services.

With the key responsibility for setting MPL's direction, and as representatives of the community at large, the Library Board will be actively engaged in the development of the Strategic Plan. Engagement opportunities for Board members include:

- Observation and participation in community conversations provide an opportunity to connect and hear from the community.
- A Board specific focus group in which the Board identifies top priorities based on trend reports, use analysis, survey analysis and community engagement observations.
- A Board specific focus group reviewing and approving draft priorities before objectives and actions are developed.
- Board approval of a finalized Strategic Plan

To promote participation and engage as wide and diverse an audience as possible, staff will use a multi-channel approach that includes:

- MPL's website
- MPL's social media channels
- MPL's and the City's Electronic Information Boards
- Your Voice Markham, the City's online tool for communication and consultation with the community
- Local media
- Posters in the branches and in the community
- Targeted outreach particularly to non-users and underrepresented groups including youth, seniors and non-English speakers.
- Pop up activities in the community
- Collaboration with local organizations, partners, and community influencers for wider reach.

Throughout the community engagement process staff will evaluate the audiences being reached, assess who is being left out and determine how the Library can create space for their participation. In evaluating engagement success, the Library will consider the

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number and variety of engagement opportunities, the number of participants, social media engagement, anecdotal stories, and the diversity of participants involved.

6.1.1 APPENDIX B

STAFF ENGAGEMENT PLAN STRATEGIC PLANNING CYCLE 2025 MARKHAM PUBLIC LIBRARY

PHASE 1: AWARENESS BUILDING:

Purpose: Build staff awareness about strategic planning including:

- What a strategic plan is
- Why a strategic plan is important for an organization
- What this process looks like at MPL
- How staff can be involved.

- **Deliverable:** Video of overview of strategic planning
- **Due:** End of February
- **Deliverable:** Town Hall meetings for in-person opportunity to ask questions about the process.
- **Due:** Mid-March

PHASE 2: STAFF INVOLVEMENT & INPUT

Purpose: Gather input from staff about current SWOT in frontline service in the library as well as their experience as Markham residents.

- **Deliverable:** In-person focus group meetings at the branches
- **Due:** April-May
- **Deliverable:** Report back results from staff focus groups.
- **Due:** End of May

PHASE 3: PREPARING FOR NEW PLAN

Purpose: Introduce the new plan to staff and gain an understanding of staff needs to support the new plan.

- **Deliverable:** Town Hall to preview the new strategic plan.
- **Due:** TBD
- **Deliverable:**
- Staff involvement in working groups to determine what is needed to support the new strategic plan going forward.
- Provide an overview of workplans and support that will be available to implement the plan in the new year (training, resourcing, etc.)
- **Due:** TBD

AGENDA 6.2.1

TO: Markham Public Library Board
FROM: Catherine Biss, CEO & Secretary-Treasurer
PREPARED BY: Michelle Sawh, Director, Administration
DATE OF MEETING: March 24, 2025
**SUBJECT: INTERNAL MONITORING REPORT: Executive Limitation EL-2d,
Financial Condition**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This report provides the Board with an update on the year-to-date financial condition of the Library.

This is a report on Actual and Budgeted Operating Budget expenditures for the Twelve-month period ending December 31, 2024. This is the last of three financial reports to the Board covering fiscal year 2024 (Jan – Dec).

The Library ended the period in a favourable position with a net surplus of **\$11,710** based on Library Income and Expenditures that were both below budget.

RECOMMENDATION

That the report entitled “Internal Monitoring Report: Executive Limitation EL-2d, Financial Condition” be received.

POLICY TYPE: EXECUTIVE LIMITATIONS

POLICY TITLE: FINANCIAL CONDITION (EL-2d)

[Report on actual expenditures compared with budget]

GLOBAL POLICY LIMITATION:

With respect to the actual, ongoing financial condition and activities of the organization, the CEO shall not cause or allow the development of fiscal jeopardy or a material deviation of actual expenditures from Board priorities established in Ends policies.

CEO RESPONSIBILITY:

Consistent with statutory obligations and prudent financial management, funds will be allocated and expended in a manner that is consistent with Board priorities established in the Board Ends policies.

ASSERTION OF COMPLIANCE

Per the Report below, I assert that I am in compliance with this Global Policy Executive Limitation.



Catherine Biss
CEO & Secretary-Treasurer

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1. **POLICY LIMITATION:** *The CEO may not expend more funds than have been received in the fiscal year to date unless the debt guidelines (below) are met.*

CEO RESPONSIBILITY:

The CEO shall not operate in a deficit situation at any time during the fiscal year that cannot be repaid within 60 days.

EVIDENCE OF COMPLIANCE:

- The CEO is in compliance. As of December 31, 2024, the Library had a net budgetary surplus of **\$11,710** based on an unfavourable variance in Library Income of **\$(161,232)** and a favourable variance in Expenditures of **\$172,942**. See Appendix "A" (Statement of Revenue and Expenditures – Twelve Months Ended 12/31/2024).
- **Library Income** – The 2024 Actual was \$985,888 against a Budget of \$1,147,120 creating an unfavourable variance of \$(161,232). (Note that the Actual in 2023 was \$844,839 – therefore, Income in 2024 has increased by 16%)
- **Expenditures** – The 2024 Actual was \$15,709,758 against a Budget of \$15,882,700 creating a favourable variance of \$172,942.
- All figures in this Report are based on the Financial Statement dated December 31, 2024, received from the City of Markham's Financial Services Department on January 31, 2025.

2. **POLICY LIMITATION:** *The CEO may not indebted the organization in an amount greater than can be repaid by certain, otherwise unencumbered revenues within 60 days, or hold the controllable expenditures to avoid overspending funds.*

CEO RESPONSIBILITY:

The CEO shall not enter any commitment that cannot be fully paid from unencumbered revenues or monitor the expenditures to ensure commitments are covered, without jeopardizing the Library's financial stability.

EVIDENCE OF COMPLIANCE:

- There are no commitments beyond those identified in the current Operating Budget.

3. **POLICY LIMITATION:** *The CEO may not allow payroll and debts to be handled in an untimely manner.*

CEO RESPONSIBILITY:

The CEO shall ensure the timeliness of all payroll and accounts payable activities.

EVIDENCE OF COMPLIANCE:

- The Library's payroll and accounts payable activities are undertaken by the City's Financial Services Department. The Library authorizes and submits payroll and payables information,

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and Finance then carries out the actual transactions. When the Library receives invoices, they are processed and submitted to the Accounts Payable Department in a timely fashion. The actual timing of payments to vendors and suppliers is determined by Accounts Payable through its internal processes.

4. **POLICY LIMITATION:** *The CEO may not withhold, nor otherwise delay, from the Board the results and recommendations of the auditors and the Administrative response thereto.*

CEO RESPONSIBILITY:

The Library's financial statements will be evaluated by an independent auditor on an annual basis, who will then express an opinion based on the audit, and present it to the Board.

EVIDENCE OF COMPLIANCE:

The "Financial Statements of the Markham Public Library Board, December 31, 2023" were presented to the Board in its meeting of May 27, 2024. The minutes of the meeting records the following resolution:

Staff introduced and welcomed Mr. Ben Haak, Manager, Audit, KPMG. The financial statements of the Markham Public Library Board, as at December 31, 2023, have been prepared in accordance with Canadian generally accepted accounting principles established by the Public Sector Accounting Board (PSAB) of the Chartered Professional Accountants of Canada.

Mr. Haak briefly reviewed the audit findings, noting that there were no significant changes, no fraudulent actions identified, no issued noted, no significant risks, and that the Financial Statements presented fairly the consolidated financial position of the Library.

He did point out the recent adoption of new public sector accounting standards and noted that they did not have a significant impact on the financial statements of the Library Board.

The Chair asked if there were any questions.

There were some questions and clarifications, and the Board also proposed that additions/clarifications to the Financial Statements be considered, if possible. Mr. Haak will discuss these suggestions with the City/KPMG prior to finalizing the Financial Statements.

The Chair thanked Mr. Haak for attending the meeting and for all of the work done in the preparation of the Financial Statements.

Moved by Mr. Ken Wightman
Seconded by Deputy Mayor Michael Chan

Resolved that the report entitled "Financial Statements of the City of Markham Public Library Board, December 31, 2023" be received; and,

That the suggestions raised this date relating to: "opening statement"; "continuity schedule" and "preamble statement" be considered by KPMG and the City of Markham prior to the finalization of the Financial Statements; and

That the Board approves the Financial Statements of the City of Markham Public Library Board December 31, 2023; and,

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That the Board Chair be authorized to sign the approved 2023 Financial Statements on behalf of the Board; and,

That the Board authorize Staff to issue the final audited Financial Statements for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2023,

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

Carried.

- 5. POLICY LIMITATION:** *The CEO may not acquire, lease, rent, encumber or dispose of real property.*

CEO RESPONSIBILITY:

For the purpose of acquiring, leasing, renting or encumbering, this means new property not currently under Board ownership, lease, or rental. Real property is interpreted to mean real estate, space and facilities. Disposal would mean the sale of real property.

EVIDENCE OF COMPLIANCE:

- The Library Board does not own real property, nor does it currently lease or rent any spaces. It is responsible for all services, programs and related activities provided to the public within library buildings located on municipal properties. The real property is owned by the City of Markham.
- The Library pays to the City "Occupancy Costs" for branches located within community centres, which constitutes a funding transfer to the Recreation Services Department. This transfer effectively pays for support provided to the Library by Recreation for building-related services including cleaning, utility usage, telecommunications (e.g. telephone, cable TV, etc.), and basic building maintenance and repairs.
- MPL has eight branch locations, including three stand-alone buildings (Markham Village / Thornhill Village / Unionville) and five community centre branches (Aaniin / Angus Glen / Cornell / Milliken Mills / Thornhill Community).

- 6. POLICY LIMITATION:** *The CEO may not fail to aggressively pursue receivables, fines and fees, after a reasonable grace period.*

CEO RESPONSIBILITY:

The CEO shall ensure receivables, fines, and fees are recovered through the most current methods.

EVIDENCE OF COMPLIANCE:

- The Library recovers receivables, fines and fees on an ongoing basis. Fines and fees are incurred after customers have borrowed physical collection items and then kept them beyond the authorized loan period or have lost and failed to return borrowed items. These receivables are usually paid by the customers voluntarily in order to keep their records in good standing. (MPL also provides customers with several options to assist them in keeping track of due dates, including pre-due notices, thereby enabling them to avoid the assessment of overdue fines.)
- MPL has an agreement with Unique Management Services (UMS), a specialized collection

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agency that pursues suspended customer accounts with amounts owing of greater than \$40.00 in fines, fees and lost material values, and where the customer has failed to respond to multiple MPL contact attempts over a minimum of 45 days. UMS is an international company providing service to thousands of library system clients utilizing a “gentle nudge” approach which helps to maintain customer goodwill.

- The table below is a summary of 2024 (Jan – Dec) information related to MPL’s UMS transactions.

	Description	Amount
A	# of customer accounts submitted to collection agency	539
B	Fines/fees received from customers following UMS contacts	\$13,589
C	Returned items following UMS contact (value)	\$47,253
D	Subtotal – Fines/fees plus returned items (B + C)	\$60,842
E	Fees paid to UMS by MPL	\$6,770
F	Net benefit to MPL (D – E)	\$54,072
G	Net benefit ratio (Benefit per \$1 investment in service) (F/E)	\$7.99

- While the relationship with UMS has been successful financially, the primary benefit is a higher return rate for overdue books and materials, making them available to other customers and ensuring that the Library can better achieve its service mandate within the community. The arrangement ensures that resources purchased through taxpayer-based funding remain public assets and that community access to them is maintained.

- 7. POLICY LIMITATION:** *The CEO may not allow tax payments or other government-ordered payments or filings to be overdue or inaccurately filed.*

CEO RESPONSIBILITY:

The CEO shall ensure that the Library submits all tax payments, filings, and other government-required payments in an accurate manner and in compliance with mandated timelines.

EVIDENCE OF COMPLIANCE:

The CEO is in compliance. The Library met the deadline of June 30, 2024, in filing its annual Charity return for 2023 with the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA).

The Library met the deadline of Jan 31, 2025, in filing its Q4/2024 (Oct - Dec) Public Service Bodies Rebate Claim with the CRA. This submission is required for rebate of the federal portion of the HST. All other government filings and requests were satisfied within the required timelines throughout 2024.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Appendix “A” – Statement of Revenue and Expenditures – Twelve Months Ending 12/31/2024.
- Appendix “B” – Variance Report
- Appendix “C” - Statement of Revenue and Expenditures Comparative Data for 2024 & 2023

AGENDA 7.0

TO: Markham Public Library Board
FROM: Catherine Biss, CEO& Secretary-Treasurer
PREPARED BY: Susan Price, Board Secretary
DATE OF MEETING: March 24 ,2025
SUBJECT: **CONSENT AGENDA**

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Consent Agenda comprising Agenda 7.0 to 7.2.3 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:

7.0 CONSENT AGENDA:

7.1 Declaration of Due Diligence by the CEO

7.2 Communication and Correspondence:

7.2.1 Library Journal: New Data From Overdrive

[New Data From OverDrive, "Libraries Break Digital Lending Records in 2024 with Over 739 million Checkouts"](#)

7.2.2 YorkRegion.com: Markham-Stouffville candidates Meet and Greet Feb.19 [Markham-Stouffville candidates Meet and Greet Feb. 19](#)

7.2.3 Stouffville Bullet Point News: Markham-Stouffville Heads to Polls Without a Single Pre-Election Debate [Markham-Stouffville Heads to the Polls Without a Single Pre- Election Debate | Stouffville | Bullet Point News](#)



Catherine Biss
CEO & Secretary-Treasurer

MARKHAM PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD

DECLARATION OF DUE DILIGENCE BY THE CEO

I, Catherine Biss, Chief Executive Officer of the Markham Public Library Board (the “Board”), hereby declare that to the best of my knowledge and belief, Markham Public Library is in compliance with the following from January 22,2025 to March 18,2025.

- 1) All wages owing have been paid to all employees of the Board;
- 2) All payroll remittances, consisting of income tax, CPP, EI premiums and Employers Health Tax relating to employee remuneration have been appropriately calculated and withheld, and promptly remitted;
- 3) All the Harmonized Sales Taxes owing have been appropriately calculated based on the Board’s current operating procedures and promptly remitted on a quarterly basis;
- 4) All federal and provincial regulatory filings have been made;
- 5) The Board has been informed of any complaints of harassment, including sexual harassment, involving a staff person;
- 6) The Board has been informed of any contraventions of the Occupational Health and Safety Act;
- 7) Other than as previously disclosed to the Board, there are no actual, threatened or potential claims against the Board or its Directors.



Catherine Biss, CEO & Secretary-Treasurer

March 18,2025
Date