

MARKHAM PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD

Regular Meeting

Minutes of Regular Meeting held on Monday, November 24, 2025, 7:01 p.m.
Virtual by ZOOM

Present from Board: Ms. Margaret McGrory, Chair
Mr. Edward Choi, Vice Chair
Deputy Mayor Michael Chan
Mr. Raymond Chan
Councillor Ritch Lau
Mr. Harout Manougian
Ms. Winnie Phung
Ms. Gail Vlahopoulos
Mr. Kenneth Wightman
Mr. Jay Xie

Youth Representative: Ms. Amani Patel

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
Mrs. Anthea Baillie, Manager, Collections & Technical Services
Ms. Megan Garza, Senior Manager, Organizational Transformation
Mr. Amir Feridooni, Manager, Milliken Mills Library
Ms. Frieda Meyer, Manager, Aaniin Library
Ms. Naveen Malik, Collections Strategist
Mr. Jim Chan, Data & Research Analyst
Mrs. Susan Price, Board Secretary

1.0 Call to Order/Adoption of Agenda

Ms. Margaret McGrory called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

Moved by Mr. Kenneth Wightman
Seconded by Ms. Gail Vlahopoulos

Carried.

AGENDA 1.3

1.1 **Adoption of Minutes:**

Library Board Minutes October 27, 2025.

Moved by Deputy Mayor Michael Chan
Seconded by Mr. Jay Xie

Resolved that the minutes of October 27, 2025, Library Board Meeting be confirmed.

Carried.

1.2 **Declaration of Conflict of Interest:**

None.

1.3 **Delegation:**

None.

1.4 **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, Anishinabeg, 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.

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

A link has been provided to the OLA 2026 Super Conference. If anyone is interested in attending, please let the Board Secretary know by November 30.

Agenda 5.2: Annual Policy review: Board members were asked to review the Policies. If they would like to suggest any changes, please advise the Chair and Board Secretary no later than the second week in January in order for them to be considered at the January meeting.

2.0 **Ownership Linkage:**

2.1 Reports from Board Members

The Chair, Ms. McGrory advised that she and Vice Chair Choi attended the closing event for Girls in STEAM program where the Mayor handed out graduation certificates to participants.

The Chair gave an overview of the many projects undertaken and mentioned that the program has been nominated for an OLA award.

Mr. Choi also commented on the very impressive work of the program participants.

3.0 **Board Education:**

3.1 Biennial Collections Strategy

Staff presented the Collections survey results; 4,884 responses were received over 53 days. Their presentation included an overview of the responses received. Findings centering on the following:

- Demographics: Age and gender
- Languages Spoken and Read
- Level of Education
- Library membership and use

The purpose of the survey was to ascertain the usage and appropriateness of current collections and inform future collection considerations.

There was some discussion and questions about demographic usage, top circulating branches and allocation of resources. Staff noted that many of the issues and concerns raised will be addressed in the Library's Business Plans for 2026.

Moved by Mr. Harout Manougian
Seconded by Mr. Kenneth Wightman

**Resolved that the Board receives the Board Education Presentation
"Biennial Collections Strategy Survey Results."**

Carried.

3.2 OLA Super Conference

The Chair encouraged Board members to attend either in-person or virtually. If unable to attend the entire conference, the Saturday Boot Camp for public library board members is particularly relevant.

4.0 **Information Requested by the Board:**

4.1 CEO's Highlights, November 2025

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The CEO noted the following items in the report:

- At a Special Council meeting held on October 31st no amendments to the Mayor's 2026 budget proposals were approved and so the budget was deemed approved.
- Ontario's Bill 60 was passed in the legislature to create conditions for accelerated development of housing and transportation infrastructure. City staff are now completing an in-depth review and analysis of the legislative changes proposed.
- The Impact of smartphones and social media on mental health continues to be covered in news cycles. The impacts of AI on a wide range of library-relevant interests is another trend being monitored. Staff will deliver an AI trend report for the January 2026 Board meeting.
- Staff connected with several agencies with regard to hosting flu clinics in the library. The response was that it was not feasible.
- Financial Literacy Month: During the month of November, the Library offered a wide range of workshops to address the community's concerns.

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

Resolved that the report entitled "CEO's Highlights, November 2025" be received.

Carried.

5.0 Items for Decision

5.1 2026 Board Meeting and Agenda Planning Dates

Ms. McGory asked Members to let the Board Secretary know if any of the dates would be problematic for them.

Moved by Mr. Kenneth Wightman
Seconded by Mr. Jay Xie

Resolved that the schedule of the 2026 Board meeting and Agenda Planning dates be received.

Carried.

5.2 Policy Governance Wording Review

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

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Resolved that all the policies under the Governance Process and Board-CEO Linkage sections of the Governance Policies and EL Policies be reviewed and that proposed amendments be presented to the Board at its regular meeting in January 2026 as required.

Carried.

6.0 **Monitoring Performance**

6.1.1 Strategic Plan Update

The update focused on the hiring of a consultant to support the completion of the strategic planning project. Two qualified candidates will submit proposals for consideration with a probable start date of December 2025.

The successful candidate will be present at the April 2026 (target project completion) Board meeting.

The Chair requested the wording clarification at the end of the report that the Board would review the new Strategic Plan to ensure that it aligns with the current Board Ends Policy.

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

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

Carried.

6.1.2 Economic Impact Study

Staff presented the study utilizing the V.O.L.T (Valuing Ontario Libraries Toolkit) system, an adaptive tool to measure the dollar value of services or social return on investment, which is provided by Ontario Library Service to Ontario public libraries free of charge.

Benefits were assigned a dollar value broken down into 7 categories. The largest benefit is Entertainment and Leisure at \$90.4M and the lowest is Civic engagement at \$103K. These and other benefits translate into a SROI (Social Return on Investment) to the Markham community of \$177,995,298M. This means that for every dollar the City invests in the library, each household receives \$1,516.00 in SROI and for every person the SROI is \$9.96.

The findings were received with enthusiasm. The Board asked staff if this information could be made available to the community.

The Deputy Mayor suggested that the information be shared with various levels of government.

Moved by Mr. Raymond Chan
Seconded by Mr. Harout Manougian

Resolved that the Board receives the Presentation “Economic Impact Study.”

Carried.

6.2 Executive Limitations:

6.2.1 Internal Monitoring Report: Executive Limitations, EL-2a, Customer Treatment (assigned to Mr. Kenneth Wightman)

Mr. Wightman reviewed the report and did not have any concerns. He emailed the Board and received one request for clarification that was responded to in full prior to the meeting

The report confirmed that the CEO and MPL’s practices relative to MPL’s Customer Treatment comply with the requirements of EL-2a policy.

Moved by Mr. Kenneth Wightman
Seconded by Mr. Raymond Chan

Resolved that the report entitled “Internal Monitoring Report: Executive Limitation EL-2a, Customer Treatment” be received.

Carried.

6.2.2 Internal Monitoring Report: Executive Limitations, EL-2j, Communication & Counsel to the Board (November 2024 to October 2025)(assigned to Ms. Winnie Phung)

Ms. Phung reviewed the report and found it to be in full compliance and did not receive any questions or concerns in response to her email to Members.

The report confirmed that the CEO and MPL’s practices relative to MPL’s Communication & Counsel to the Board (November 2024 to October 2025) comply with the requirements of EL-2j policy.

Moved by Ms. Winnie Phung
Seconded by Mr. Edward Choi

Resolved that the report entitled “Internal Monitoring Report: Executive Limitation EL-2j, Communication & Counsel to the Board (November 2024 to October 2025)” be received.

Carried.

7.0 Consent Agenda:

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Moved by Ms. Gail Vlahopoulos
Seconded by Mr. Jay Xie

Resolved that the Consent Agenda comprising Agenda items 7.0 to 7.1 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

Carried.

8.0 **Board Performance and Self-Evaluation:**
(none this month)

9.0 **New Business:**
(none)

10.0 **In Camera Agenda:**
Ratification of In Camera Motions October 30,2025

Moved by Deputy Mayor Chan
Seconded by Mr. Edward Choi

Resolved that the motions approved at the Special In Camera meeting held October 30,2025 be ratified.

Carried.

11.0 **Adjournment**

Moved by Mr. Edward Choi that the meeting be adjourned at 8:33 p.m.