

MARKHAM PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD

First Meeting

Minutes of First Meeting held on Monday, January 26, 2026, 7:02 p.m. Virtual by ZOOM

Present from Board: Ms. Margaret McGrory, Chair
Mr. Edward Choi, Vice Chair
Deputy Mayor Michael Chan
Councillor Ritch Lau (from 1.6)
Mr. Harout Manougian
Ms. Winnie Phung
Ms. Gail Vlahopoulos
Mr. Kenneth Wightman
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 & Operational Support
Ms. Debbie Walker, Director, Library Strategy & Planning
Ms. Megan Garza, Senior Manager, Organizational Transformation
Mrs. Anthea Baillie, Manager, Collections & Technical Services
Ms. Frieda Meyer, Manager, Aaniin Library
Mrs. Angela Tse, Manager, Markham Village Library
Mr. Amir Feridooni, Manager, Milliken Mills Library
Mr. David Zambrano, Senior Manager, Virtual Services
Mrs. Susan Price, Board Secretary

Regrets: Mr. Raymond Chan
Youth Representative, Ms. Amani Patel

Guest: Mr. Morgan Jones, Commissioner, Community Services,
City of Markham

1.0 Call to Order/Adoption of Agenda

Mrs. Catherine Biss, CEO called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

Moved by Mr. Kenneth Wightman
Seconded by Ms. Margaret McGrory

Resolved that the agenda be approved.

Carried.

1.1 Election of Board Chair and Vice-Chair:

The CEO invited nominations for the position of Chair.

Mr. Kenneth Wightman nominated Ms. Margaret McGrory for the position of Chair.

Ms. McGrory accepted the nomination.

Ms. Gail Vlahopoulos seconded the nomination.

There were no other nominations for the position of Chair.

Ms. McGrory thanked Board members for their continued support and highlighted priorities for the coming year especially the new Strategic Plan.

The Chair asked the Board if they have any concerns about how Board business is conducted to let her know. Nominations for the position of Chair were closed.

Moved by: Mr. Jay Xie

Seconded by: Mr. Edward Choi

Resolved that the nominations for the position of Chair be closed and that Ms. Margaret McGrory is hereby elected to the position of Chair for the term ending January 2027 or until a new Chair is elected at the First Meeting of the New Board in 2027.

Carried.

The CEO invited nominations for the position of Vice Chair.

Ms. Gail Vlahopoulos nominated Mr. Edward Choi for the position of Vice Chair.

Mr. Choi accepted the nomination.

Mr. Jay Xie seconded the nomination.

There were no other nominations for the position of Vice-Chair. Mr. Edward thanked the Board for the opportunity to continue to work together to achieve their goals. Nominations for the position of Vice Chair were closed.

Moved by: Ms. Gail Vlahopoulos

Seconded by: Mr. Kenneth Wightman

Resolved that the nominations for the position of Vice Chair be closed and that Mr. Edward Choi is hereby elected to the position of Vice Chair for the term ending January 2027 or until a new Vice Chair is elected at the First Meeting of the Board in 2027 .

Carried.

1.2 Confirmation of the Results of the Election of Chair and Vice Chair:

Moved by Mr. Kenneth Wightman

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Seconded by Mr. Harout Manougian

Resolved that the election of Ms. Margaret McGrory to the position of Chair held at the First Meeting January 26, 2026, be confirmed and that Ms. Margaret McGrory be appointed as Chair for the term ending January 2027 or until a new Chair is elected at the First Meeting of the New Board in 2027.

And that the election of Mr. Edward Choi to the position of Vice Chair held at the First Meeting January 26, 2026, be confirmed and that Mr. Edward Choi be appointed as Vice Chair for the term ending January 2027 or until a new Vice Chair is elected at the First Meeting of the New Board in 2027.

Carried.

The Chair, Ms. Margaret McGrory, presided over the remainder of the meeting beginning at 7:07 p.m.

1.3 **Adoption of Minutes:**
Library Board Minutes November 24, 2025

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

Resolved that the minutes of November 24, 2025, Library Board Meeting be confirmed.

Carried.

1.4 **Declaration of Conflict of Interest**
None.

1.5 **Delegations**
None.

1.6 **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, Anishnabeg, Seneca, Chippewa and the

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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.

Upcoming Events of Note:

Tamil Heritage Month will be celebrated from 3 to 5 at the Aaniin Community Centre & Library on Saturday, January 31st. The event celebrates Pongal (the Hindu harvest festival) and Tamil Heritage Month. Several local students will be performing, acting as emcees for the event and sharing their Tamil culture. The Mayor will be present, and I plan to attend as well.

Celebrating Black History Month there are two programs of special interest:

Markham Village Library will host Jephina Lueche, a Hakka-Jamaican social media influencer and storyteller. She'll share stories of identity, the beauty and complexity of holding dual cultures, and talk about how heritage shapes who we become. (Saturday Feb 21 at 11:00 am)

Our second Black-Owned Business Market will take place at Milliken Mills Library. The event will spotlight and showcase products and services of local Black entrepreneurs. As well as providing exposure, the event is intended to inspire others in their entrepreneurial journey, and increase awareness of library and community supports. (Saturday, Feb 28 12 to 4 pm)

Markham Advisory Board and Committee Members: As a City Advisory Board we hold an important role of trust and leadership. Please review the Policy document in 7.2.2 and if you are unsure how it applies to you please contact the Board Secretary and she will obtain further clarification.

IN CAMERA: Reminder that Members need to be in a private area or wearing headphones.

2.0 **Ownership Linkage:**

2.1 Reports from Board Members

There were no reports from Board members this month.

2.2 Markham Public Library Board 2026 Annual Agenda

Moved by Mr. Edward Choi
Seconded by Mr. Kenneth Wightman

Resolved that the report “Markham Public Library Board 2026 Annual Agenda” be received.

Carried.

3.0 **Board Education:**

3.1 2026: Look Ahead at MPL’s Priorities

Each of the Directors highlighted the 2026 goals and focus of their respective areas of responsibility.

Debbie Walker, Director, Library Strategy and Planning

- Ms. Walker gave an overview of working with the consultant in the second phase of the Strategic Planning process and next steps.
- Trend Tracking: Mental Health Crisis, Reading Crisis, Economic Uncertainty, Geopolitical Chaos
- Library Facility Planning and the challenges faced.

Diane Macklin, Director, Community Engagement

- The department focus in 2026 will be strengthening community connection by adapting existing program structures and descriptions to highlight opportunities for social and volunteer engagement.
- Review promotional tactics in order to increase public awareness by improving discoverability of all MPL has to offer.

Michelle Sawh, Director, Administration & Operational Support

- Implement MPL’s Content Strategy, specifically objectives and action items identified for year 1 of the multi-year plan.
- Develop a technology roadmap to determine the priorities for the Library in the upcoming years and support the transformation of library services.
- Implement process improvements across administrative workflows to enhance efficiencies and improve service quality.

Andrea Cecchetto, Director, Service Excellence

- *Branch Experience*: Improve wayfinding, space use, study rooms, repurpose spaces
- *Operations*: Projects in the following areas: Health, Safety and Security, Accessibility and IDEA, Digital Literacy, Cultural Transformation, Organizational Development, Customer Service Refresh and Customer Experience

Moved by Mr. Edward Choi
Seconded by Councillor Ritch Lau

Resolved that the Board receives the Board Presentation “2026: Look Ahead at MPL’s Priorities.”

Carried.

4.0 **Information Requested by the Board:**

4.1 CEO’s Highlights, January 2026.

The CEO noted that the most significant items had been covered under 3.1.

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

Resolved that the report entitled “CEO’s Highlights, January 2026” be received.

Carried.

4.2 Trend Report on Artificial Intelligence

The presentation provided an overview of Community Perceptions, Benefits and Risks, Equity of Access, the Role of Public Libraries in AI and summarized the framework and programs MPL provides to support proper and positive use.

The Board asked for a copy of the presentation and the MPL Artificial Intelligence Policy for their reference.

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

Resolved that the Board receives the Trend Report Presentation on Artificial Intelligence.

Carried.

5.0 **Items for Decision**

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5.1 Board-CEO Linkage BCL Policy: Chief Executive Officer Performance Review.

The Board asked the Chair to prepare a DRAFT P.R. report.

Moved by Mr. Harout Manougian
Seconded by Deputy Mayor Michael Chan

Resolved that the Board receives the “BCL-2e Chief Executive Officer Performance Review Policy” documentation in preparation for the March In Camera Performance Review meeting.

Carried.

5.2 Board Meeting Attendance Records, 2025

Moved by Ms. Gail Vlahopoulos
Seconded by Mr. Edward Choi

Resolved that “Board Meeting Attendance Record, January to November 2025” be received.

Carried.

5.3 Policy Governance Wording Review

There was one amendment made to the policy EL-2c which was approved by the Board. A concern was raised about the election process for the Chair position involving a possible tie vote. Further, the Chair suggested that the 2027 Board should consider extending the Chair’s term to more than one year, possibly two.

Moved by Mr. Harout Manougian
Seconded by Ms. Winnie Phung

Resolved that the Board has reviewed the policies under Policy Governance: Governance Process GP-1 to GP-2k, Board-CEO Linkages BCL-1 to BCL-2e and Executive Limitations EL-2a to EL-2j and accepts the proposed change (E-2c Budgeting/Forecasting timing from May to June)

Carried.

5.4 Proposed Amendments to the City of Markham Terms of Reference for New Markham Public Library Board Members

Moved by Mr. Edward Choi
Seconded by Deputy Mayor Michael Chan

Resolved that the Board approves the proposed amendments to the City of Markham Terms of Reference for the Markham Public Library Board, and that;

The approved terms of Reference be forwarded to City Clerks Department for Council Approval to become effective for the incoming Library Board 2026/2027.

Carried.

6.0 **Monitoring Performance**

6.1 **Ends:**

6.1.1 Global Ends Report Level 1 and Level 2 (2025)

The Chair requested that this be deferred to the March meeting in the interest of time.

6.2 **Executive Limitations:**

6.2.1 Executive Limitations; Internal Monitoring Reports

The Chair asked members to review the schedule and to let the Board Secretary know if they have any issues with the timing of assignments.

Moved by Mr. Kenneth Wightman
Seconded by Ms. Winnie Phung

Resolved that the “Executive Limitations: Internal Monitoring Report Schedule 2026” be received.

Carried.

6.2.2 **Internal Monitoring Report: Executive Limitation, EL-f, Protection of Services** (assigned to Ms. Gail Vlahopoulos)

Ms. Vlahopoulos reviewed the report and did not have any concerns, and did not receive any from Board members prior to the meeting.

There was a question about MPL’s closure policy. Staff provided an overview of the policy and indicated that all decisions on closures are arrived at in conjunction with the City.

The report confirmed that the CEO and MPL’s practices relative to MPL’s Protection of Services comply with the requirements of EL-2f policy.

Moved by Ms. Gail Vlahopoulos

Seconded by Mr. Harout Manougian

Resolved that the report entitled “Internal Monitoring Report: Executive Limitation EL-2f, Protection of Services” be received.

Carried.

7.0 Consent Agenda:

Moved by Mr. Kenneth Wightman
Seconded by Ms. Winnie Phung

Resolved that the Consent Agenda comprising Agenda items 7.0 to 7.3 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:

CONSENT AGENDA:

7.1 Declaration of Due Diligence by the CEO

7.2 Communication and Correspondence:

7.2.1 MarkhamReview.com: Community marketplace highlights excellence and creativity in Markham [Community marketplace highlights excellence and creativity in Markham – Markham Review](#)

7.2.2 City of Markham: Use of Corporate Resources for Election Purposes Policy

7.3 Board Statistics-Detail

Carried.

8.0 Board Performance and Self-Evaluation:

8.1 Questionnaire: The Board and the CEO

The Chair reminded the Board that this is an essential tool in the annual CEO evaluation and reminded Members to complete the questionnaire and return to the Board Secretary by email as requested.

9.0 New Business (none)

10.0 In Camera:

To discuss a confidential personnel matter.

Moved by Mr. Edward Choi
Seconded by Mr. Jay Xie

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Resolved that the Board move in camera at 8:51 p.m. to discuss a confidential personnel matter.

Carried.

The Board returned to its regular meeting at 9:29 p.m.

Moved by Mr. Edward Choi
Seconded by Councillor Ritch Lau

Resolved that the motions approved In Camera be ratified.

Carried.

11.0 **Adjournment**

Moved by Mr. Edward Choi that the meeting be adjourned at 9:30 p.m.