
**COMMUNICATIONS
GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE**

TORONTO PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD MEETING – September 26, 2016

It is recommended that the Toronto Public Library Board:

1. receives Communication (a) from The Honourable Eleanor McMahon, Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport to Ron Carinci, Chair, Toronto Public Library dated July 22, 2016 regarding the launch of Ontario's first Culture Strategy, for information;
2. receives Communication (b) from Ron Carinci to The Honourable Eleanor McMahon dated August 2, 2016 welcoming her to the position of Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport, for information;
3.
 - a. receives Communication (c) from Pierre Mercier, President, Ontario Library Board Association (OLBA) dated August 29, 2016 to The Secretary, Toronto Public Library Board; and
 - b. endorses the proposed change to the electoral regions of the Ontario Library Association (OLA) as outlined in Pierre Mercier's communication to modify the alignment of the OLBA Council regions to include the Greater Toronto Area and to ensure multiple library boards in each region.

Background Information:

The Toronto Public Library Board provided representatives to OLBA for a number of years after amalgamation in 1998. In 2004, the Library Board made a decision to focus resources instead on participation in the Federation of Ontario Public Libraries (FOPL). The TPL Board is currently a four-member caucus in FOPL, which includes two Board members.

The proposal to modify the alignment of the regions to include the Greater Toronto Area will result in improved representation and increased participation within the OLBA Council and would mean that a representative from the Toronto Public Library Board to serve on OLBA Council is still a possibility.

4.
 - a. receives Communication (d) from Susan Benton, President/CEO, Urban Libraries Council (ULC) dated September 7, 2016 to Vickery Bowles, City Librarian, Toronto Public Library;
 - b. expresses recognition and profound appreciation to the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation for its groundbreaking work in support of public libraries, its contribution to building the capacity of public libraries and, in particular, its funding to the Toronto Public Library in the amount of \$1.9 million; and
 - c. requests City of Toronto Council to pass a resolution recognizing the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's support for the Toronto Public Library.

Background Information:

In 1997, Bill and Melinda Gates established a foundation for libraries in North America. Since that time, the Toronto Public Library has received \$1.9 million in funding from The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to install 588 Internet accessible workstations throughout the library system, including 100 workstations at Toronto Reference Library, along with applicable software and network upgrades, two learning centres at the Cedarbrae and Richview branches and a public Internet training program.

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation established itself as the 21st Century Andrew Carnegie for public libraries and the people and communities they serve. The Gates Foundation was a pioneer in understanding the risks of the digital divide and the importance of digital inclusion. The Gates Foundation challenged public libraries to become technology leaders and provided millions of dollars to help libraries become go-to resources and trusted guides in an increasingly digital world.

The Gates Foundation provided a significant investment to develop Edge, a national technology benchmarking system created to ensure that public libraries have the right technology to meet today's needs and the promise of tomorrow; and with its commitment to ensuring that all people have access to the opportunities they need to succeed in school and life, the Gates Foundation has had a profound impact in communities across the country.

The work of the Gates Foundation has enhanced the capacity, value, and power of public libraries as vital community assets; and the Toronto Public Library and the residents of Toronto have benefited from the vision, commitment, and support of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.