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**COMMUNICATIONS  
GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE**

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**TORONTO PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD MEETING – June 22, 2021**

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It is recommended that the Toronto Public Library Board:

1. receives Communication (a) from Vickery Bowles, City Librarian, Toronto Public Library, to Heather Taylor, Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer, City of Toronto, dated June 03, 2021, regarding funding for additional service enhancements from the TPL 2021 Operating Budget, for information.

June 3, 2021

Heather Taylor  
Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer - City of Toronto  
Toronto City Hall  
4th Floor, East Tower  
100 Queen Street West  
Toronto, Ontario  
M5H 2N2

Dear Heather:

**Re: Toronto Public Library Board – 2021 Operating Budget additional enhancements**

Pursuant to Council Motion EX21.2 Motion 10 adopted at the City Council meeting on February 22, 2021 and to recommendations endorsed by the Toronto Public Library (TPL) Board at its meeting on May 25, 2021, I am writing on behalf of the Library Board to provide you with details for your report to the July 6, 2021 meeting of the Executive Committee. The Board endorsed proceeding with the implementation of the *Digital Literacy for Seniors and Community Librarians Outreach* service enhancements in 2021, to be funded from TPL's 2021 operating budget underspending with an approximate cost of \$0.459 million.

Attached you will find the full Council motion, a description of the proposed service enhancements, their financial impact, and recommendations adopted by the Board related to the service enhancements.

The *Digital Literacy for Seniors and Community Librarians Outreach* service enhancements will have meaningful impact on Toronto residents and, in particular, on the city's most vulnerable, while supporting the City's Poverty Reduction and Seniors Strategies. These services are even more critical at this time, as the City continues its recovery from COVID-19 and works to address the vast inequities that have only been exacerbated by the pandemic. Whether it is broadening access to technology, the internet, and digital literacy skills to navigate increasingly online-only services and resources, or providing vulnerable populations (particularly seniors)

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with opportunities for social inclusion, these enhancements will enable TPL to help these populations – and the city – recover from the pandemic faster and more equitably.

The Board appreciates your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Vickery Bowles." The signature is fluid and cursive, with a period at the end.

Vickery Bowles  
City Librarian

Attachments:

- Extract from the [Operating Budget Monitoring Report – March 31, 2021](#) report presented at the May 25, 2021, TPL Board Meeting - 'Attachment 1'

## Attachment 1

### Toronto Public Library - Implementation of additional 2021 Service Enhancements

#### **Adopted recommendations from Library Board meeting on May 25, 2021, Operating Budget Monitoring Report – March 31, 2021:**

1. endorses the implementation of the Digital Literacy for Seniors service enhancement in 2021, which includes an increase of four positions over two years and incremental budget pressures of \$0.317 million in 2022 and \$0.100 million in 2023, subject to Council approval;
2. endorses the implementation of the Community Librarians Outreach service enhancement in 2021, which included an increase of four positions over two years and incremental budget pressures of \$0.314 million in 2022 and \$0.100 million in 2023, subject to Council approval; and
3. authorizes staff to seek Council approval to implement the Digital Literacy for Seniors and Community Librarians Outreach service enhancements, to be funded from the TPL 2021 operating budget underspending, as detailed in Attachment 1.

#### **Council Motion EX21.2 Motion 10**

At its meeting on February 22, 2021, City Council approved the 2021 budgets and also adopted the following motion:

*EX21.2 Motion 10: City Council request the Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer, in consultation with the City Librarian, to report to the July 6, 2021 meeting of the Executive Committee on:*

- a. *the Toronto Public Library 2021 Operating Budget variance, and in particular, underspending due to the COVID-19 related public health measures' impacts on Toronto Public Library service hours and programming; and*
- b. *the feasibility of reinvesting any positive Toronto Public Library budget variance into further new enhancements including community librarian outreach and / or digital literacy for seniors, as public health measures permit.*

For the three-month period ended on March 31, 2021, TPL is reporting a net favourable variance of \$2.575 million, mainly due to the impact on library operations of public health measures in response to COVID-19. In response to EX21.2 Motion 10, Toronto Public Library Board is requesting Council approval for the 2021 implementation of the Digital Literacy for Seniors and Community Librarians Outreach with funding from Council-approved 2021 operating budget. If implemented by September 2021, and subject to public health guidelines, the estimated cost of the enhancements would be \$0.459 million, comprised of staffing and equipment costs.

The service enhancements, to be implemented over two years, would include an increase of eight positions and future year budget pressures as shown in the table below.

**Cost of New Service Enhancements (\$ millions)**

<b>Service</b>	<b>2021 Funded from approved budget</b>	<b>2022 Base Budget Pressure</b>	<b>2023 Base Budget Pressure</b>
<b>Digital Literacy for Seniors -</b> 4 positions (2 positions in each of 2021 and 2022)	0.385	0.317	0.100
<b>Community Librarians -</b> 4 positions (2 positions in each of 2021 and 2022)	0.074	0.314	0.100
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.459</b>	<b>0.631</b>	<b>0.200</b>

### ***Digital Literacy for Seniors***

A service enhancement to support social connectedness by expanding digital literacy programs for seniors in libraries will address the diverse needs and challenges among Toronto's seniors through two complementary programs as identified in the [City of Toronto's Seniors Strategy 2.0 medium-term recommendation within 2020-2022](#):

- In-branch Digital Literacy for Seniors, and
- Community-based Digital Literacy for Seniors.

### ***Community Librarians***

TPL's community librarianship emphasis on reaching out to vulnerable communities aligns with the City of Toronto's Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) and is an exciting new concept that moves librarians out of traditional library settings into a new community-based framework for providing library service. While working onsite in partner agency locations, community librarians work closely with agency staff and clients. The intent is for the community librarians to learn about and understand these clients' information needs, and respond by providing the best possible mix of the full range of library services and programs.