
**COMMUNICATIONS
GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE**

TORONTO PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD MEETING – February 22, 2021

It is recommended that the Toronto Public Library Board:

1. receives Communication (a) from Sue Graham-Nutter, Chair, Toronto Public Library Board to Mayor Tory and members of City Council, dated February 02, 2021, emphasizing the importance of Community Librarians and Digital Literacy for Seniors, which were not included in the City staff-recommended 2021 operating budget, for information;
2. receives Communication (b) from Vickery Bowles, City Librarian, Toronto Public Library to Councillor Gary Crawford, Chair and Members, Budget Committee, dated January 29, 2021, emphasizing the importance of Community Librarians and Digital Literacy for Seniors, which were not included in the City staff-recommended 2021 operating budget, for information;
3. receives Communication (c) from Fenton Jagdeo, Toronto Public Library Board member to Sue Graham-Nutter, Chair, and Alim Remtulla, Vice Chair, dated February 04, 2021, advising of his resignation from the Toronto Public Library Board, for information.

February 02, 2021

Mayor John Tory and Councillors
City of Toronto
100 Queen Street West, 2nd Floor
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Dear Mayor Tory and City Councillors,

I am writing on behalf of the Toronto Public Library Board with respect to the 2021 operating budget. First and foremost, we would like to express our appreciation for the 3.8% budget increase that will help us serve and support Toronto residents, including vulnerable populations, and address the financial impacts and recovery from COVID-19.

At the January 25, 2021 meeting of the Toronto Public Library Board, it was recommended that I communicate with City Councillors to strongly urge you to reconsider funding for the two enhancements currently not recommended: Community Librarians and Digital Literacy for Seniors. These programs support the City's Poverty Reduction Strategy and the City's Seniors Strategy respectively, and would have a significant positive impact on people's lives in the challenging year ahead.

While working onsite in partner agency locations, **community librarians** work closely with agency staff and clients. The intent is for the 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. Community librarians have worked in many settings including Toronto Shelter, Support & Housing Administration, The Toronto East and South Detention Centres, Toronto Employment and Social Services. A 2021 budget enhancement would allow us to focus on delivering

Library Board

Chair

Sue Graham-Nutter

Councillor Paul Ainslie

Fenton Jagdeo

Sarwar Choudhury

Jennifer Liu

Vice Chair

Alim Remtulla

Andrea Geddes Poole

Alison Menary

Jonathan Hoss

Councillor Gord Perks

City Librarian

Vickery Bowles

the services in shelters, work with agencies to support individuals recently released from the correctional system and focus on confronting anti-black racism by working with agencies dedicated to serving black communities in Toronto.

Digital Literacy for Seniors supports social connectedness by expanding digital literacy programs for seniors, both in branches and in the community. The in-branch program targets disadvantaged seniors who are socially isolated, with low income, and lacking digital literacy and likely both devices and home connectivity. The community-based program is designed in partnership with Toronto Community Housing (TCHC) to engage socially isolated seniors by bringing regularly scheduled library services, delivered by a community librarian, directly to the TCHC seniors' buildings where they reside. Both in-branch and community programs will address the diverse needs and challenges among Toronto's seniors as identified in the City of Toronto Seniors Strategy.

As outlined in TPL's [operating budget submission](#), the Community Librarians' budget enhancement totals \$0.107 million net and gross (2021-2022 total cost of \$0.411 million net and gross) and the Digital Literacy for Seniors budget enhancement totals \$0.212 million (2021-2022 total cost is \$0.723 million net and gross to support eight additional branches each year).

We are asking you to reconsider these budget enhancements because we know the meaningful impact they will have on Toronto and particularly on our most vulnerable residents. If we can answer any questions or provide any information before City Council meets on February 18 and 19, please don't hesitate to let us know.

Sincerely,



Sue Graham-Nutter
Chair, Toronto Public Library

cc: Vickery Bowles
City Librarian

January 29, 2021

Budget Committee
City of Toronto
Toronto City Hall
10th Floor, West Tower
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Dear Chair Crawford and Members of the Budget Committee:

Re: Toronto Public Library Board – 2021 Operating Budget

Pursuant to recommendation 4 endorsed by the Library Board at its meeting January 25, 2021, the *2021 Operating Budget - City Staff Recommended* report is being forwarded to Budget Committee for consideration. Pursuant to recommendation 1 of the report, the Library Board gratefully acknowledges the continuing support provided by Council as reflected in the recommended 2021 operating budget of \$204.117 million, which represents a 3.8% increase. Pursuant to recommendation 2 of the report, the Library Board requests Budget Committee to consider funding for two service enhancements totaling \$0.319 million in 2021 for Community Librarians Outreach and Digital Literacy for Seniors programs, as these were not included in the recommended budget before you.

Please find attached to this letter:

- an extract from the draft Minutes of the January 25, 2021 meeting of the Toronto Public Library Board; and
- Report: 2021 Operating Budget - City Staff Recommended

Community Librarians Outreach

While working onsite in partner agency locations, community librarians work closely with agency staff and clients. The intent is for the 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. Community librarians have worked in many settings including Toronto Shelter, Support & Housing Administration, The Toronto East and South Detention Centres, Toronto Employment and Social Services. A 2021 budget enhancement would allow TPL to focus on delivering services in shelters, work with agencies to support individuals recently released from the correctional system and focus on confronting anti-black racism by working with agencies dedicated to serving black communities in Toronto. The Community Librarians Outreach program would add

Office of the City Librarian

2 positions in 2021 and an additional 2 positions in 2022, for a cost of \$0.107 million in 2021, and the full year cost of \$0.411 million in 2022.

Digital Literacy for Seniors

This supports social connectedness by expanding digital literacy programs for seniors, both in branches and in the community. The in-branch program targets disadvantaged seniors who are socially isolated, with low income, and lacking digital literacy and likely both devices and home connectivity. The community-based program is designed in partnership with Toronto Community Housing (TCHC) to engage socially isolated seniors by bringing regularly scheduled library services, delivered by a community librarian, directly to the TCHC seniors' buildings where they reside. Both in-branch and community programs will address the diverse needs and challenges among Toronto's seniors as identified in the City of Toronto Seniors Strategy. The Digital Literacy for Seniors program would add 2 positions in 2021 and an additional 2 positions in 2022, for a cost of \$0.212 million in 2021 to support the community-based program in TCHC locations, and equipment for eight branches would support the expansion of the in-branch program, with the full year cost of \$0.723 million in 2022.

The Community Librarians Outreach and Digital Literacy for Seniors will have meaningful impact on Toronto residents and in particular, the most vulnerable, while supporting the City's Poverty Reduction Strategy and the Seniors Strategy. The Board appreciates your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Vickery Bowles".

Vickery Bowles
City Librarian

Attachments:

Board Minutes No.: 21-014
Board Report No. 14: 2021 *Operating Budget - City Staff Recommended*

Sue Graham-Nutter + Alim Remtula
Chair + Vice-Chair, Toronto Public Library Board

C.

Hey Folks,

I have some good news, and I have some bad news.

The good news is that I've been appointed to the Toronto Transit Commission as a Commissioner to the board. It's an exciting opportunity to contribute to a system that keeps the city (myself included), moving. The bad news is that appointment bylaws dictate that citizens can only serve on one board at a time, as a measure to diversify thinking and ideas.

With that, I'm resigning from the TPL board, effective February 4th, 2021. This tugs at my heart strings because of my passion for the library, but I know public transit is more aligned with my professional interests.

It was a privilege to chair the Strategic Planning Committee, liaise with the youth, advocate for Ontario libraries as a delegate on FOPL, and contribute to making our library a world class example in excellence over the last two years. I'll be rooting from a far and supporting where I'm wanted.

If there's anything I can do to smooth the transition, let me know— but I know you both have it under control.

P.S. I recommend the board advocates for a new member that brings an even more youthful perspective, i.e., someone who's under the age of 24. There's incredible benefit to this diverse thinking play that shouldn't be overlooked.

Best of luck,

Fenton Jagdeo

