

Notice of Motion

Date: November 27, 2013

To: Toronto Public Library Board

Topic: **Fact Check and Correction of the Public Record**

Moved By: Michael Foderick, Vice-Chair

Seconded By: Ross Parry

Background:

CUPE Local 4948 has undertaken an advertising campaign centred around the City of Toronto budget process called “Our Public Library.” The campaign includes, among other things, a website, social media and flyers.

Although the intent behind the campaign, to increase support for the Toronto Public Library, is admirable, the literature and website appear to misrepresent many basic facts to the public. These errors or inaccuracies of fact include:

- The statement that “Major service reductions are planned for 2014 and beyond” (in fact, the Board has approved a budget that includes several different types of service improvements such as expanded operating hours, the introduction of study halls, and the opening of two new branches);
- The statement that “The TPL’s acquisition budget has been cut in each of the last four years...” (in fact it has been increased over the last three years);
- Misrepresenting a City Council vote on January 17, 2012 on whether or not Council should draw \$3.890 million from the Tax Stabilization Reserve Fund as a vote “to cut \$17,000,000 from the Toronto Public Library Budget”;
- The statement that “Altogether, our public library has absorbed more than \$800 million in cumulative funding cuts.” (in fact the TPL’s entire operating budget is only approximately \$184 million);
- The statement that “What has happened to the Toronto Public Library over the last 20 years?... \$52 million less for new books, CDs, DVDs, etc.” (in fact the TPL’s entire collections budget is only approximately \$18 million).

The campaign also explicitly describes several Council members of the City of Toronto Budget Committee and Library Board, including the Chairs of both, as “Villains”, and the materials appear to use the official City of Toronto logo, which may misrepresent to the

public the ownership and origins of the materials and may be in contravention of City policies relating to authorized use of official logo.

Recommendations:

The Toronto Public Library Board hereby:

1. clarifies, for the public record, that many of the statements and allegations portrayed as facts in the “Our Public Library” advertising campaign orchestrated by CUPE Local 4948, are misleading, inaccurate, and in some cases completely false;
2. directs staff to comprehensively review and fact check the claims made by CUPE Local 4948 in its current “Our Public Library” campaign relating to the TPL's current budget requests, past budget decisions, previous budget reductions and budget allocations, including allocations for acquisitions and document any errors or inaccuracies;
3. directs staff and the Chair to undertake the following actions where errors and inaccuracies are found and documented:
 - i) correspond with CUPE to correct the record with respect to errors or inaccuracies;
 - ii) issue a media release correcting the record with respect to errors and inaccuracies;
 - iii) correspond to all City Councillors correcting the record with respect to errors and inaccuracies; and
 - iv) update the Toronto Public Library website to correct the record with respect to errors and inaccuracies;
4. requests staff to advise the City Solicitor of this unauthorized use of the City logo for appropriate action;
5. clarifies that the views expressed by the “Our Public Library” campaign do not reflect those of the Toronto Public Library or represent an official or unofficial position of the Library in any way.