



Local 4948

Affiliated with CUPE and the
Toronto & York Region Labour
Council

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re:#9 - distributed at meeting

Toronto Public Library Workers' Union

Local 4948 (CUPE)

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October 17, 2011

Good evening.

My name is Maureen O'Reilly and I have the great privilege to represent the men and women who work on the front-lines of Toronto Public Library.

Since amalgamation, as library workers we have been asked to give more and more and produce greater and greater efficiencies. We have been doing this for the past 13 years.

We have met every obligation since amalgamation.

The questions I have been continually asking the last several months through these deputations and public presentations (and have never received an answer for) are:

- At what point can the library service no longer sustain more cuts?
- What is the minimum staffing model for the delivery of library service in Toronto?
- What is the basic service delivery model that we will tolerate?

When is enough, enough?

To suggest that the library can undergo another 5.7% decrease totalling over \$9.717 million and call it an efficiency is misleading.



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- Fewer librarians providing story hours to our children
- Fewer books, fewer reference materials, fewer magazines fewer newspapers
- Fewer library workers delivering books to our seniors and others who are confined to their homes due to physical limitations
- Fewer access points to our libraries through a reduction in open hours
- Fewer staff assisting new comers in our neighbourhoods to give them the skills they need to flourish in our society
- Fewer neighbourhood library hours and the elimination of a community refuge
- Fewer public service assistants at the check out desk resulting in longer lines and wait periods
- Just fewer everything

I am telling you tonight,

- we cannot sustain these cuts any longer
- Our foundation has been severely compromised

Mayor Ford through the City Librarian has asked you to deliver a 10% budget reduction. You are to pull this off over the next 8 weeks and 2 meetings. You have been on the library board for 1 hour.

The TPL has been delivering service to its community since 1833. She is the busiest public library system in the world. 18 million Torontonians came through our doors last year. Doesn't she deserve a little more respect? A little more consideration? A little more time and effort



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before you totally gut her and forever change her and the library service here in Toronto?

You have been given a responsibility here to act on a special purpose body and advocate on behalf of the library service so it does not become victim to the vagaries of political whims:

And what are those political whims?

Did you hear the Mayor's speech to the Empire Club? He praises the City Librarian for bringing forth a 10% budget cut and delivering on his mandate.

Did you know that the Mayor threatened to fire the City Librarian last February because she wouldn't deliver on a minus 5% budget? Now she has delivered a minus 10% cut so I guess her job security is more important than the integrity of maintaining the library service.

Did you know that Councilors' Ainslie, Palacio and Robinson sit on the Mayor's powerful Executive Committee and are the chief gravy finders for the city but have all asked for special consideration for the branches in their wards to be enhanced over the past year?

Did you know that Councilor Ainslie has a new library being built in his ward but has not once asked for the construction to end so that those savings can help the city achieve a balanced budget?



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Did you know that the Sunshine List of managers in TPL has grown from 6 in 1998 at a cost of \$678,120 to 55 managers in 2010 at a cost of \$6,479, 284.90 (and that cost doesn't include the other 30 or so managers who didn't make the exulted list) but that staff have been cut by 10% and that senior management are asking that another 163 library workers be eliminated which only includes 6 management and/or exempt positions.

We are dismantling, dare I say, destroying our world class library one brick at a time.

I have been a front-line librarian for 25 years and I have never been more worried for the library's future. Not due to threats of technology or the Internet. (We have embraced all of those opportunities and have been made stronger by it).

We are the most efficient city service. Our staffing costs have been cut by 10%, our business has increased by 24%. I challenge you to find another department in the City of Toronto that is more efficient.

The proposed cuts to the library budget would reduce taxes by about \$6.50 per year per resident, or about two cents a day. Think about it.

13,000 Torontonians participated in the public consultation process at the city last June and rated the public library very high. They said it was a core



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service for the city and that it contributed to a livable and prosperous city. Almost 50,000 Torontonians have signed our petition to keep libraries open and say no to its privatization and outsourcing. Hundreds came and gave deputations over two long nights in support of the library. Some of our greatest writers, like Atwood, Ondaatje, Lam and Fong-Bates have stood up in support of the library.

It is now your time to stand up.

I also challenge you to listen to our citizens first hand. Create a real consultation process where you hear from Torontonians directly. Many of our library patrons, despite all the hoopla, still don't have the means and capabilities to fill out electronic surveys. Talk to them, face to face. They deserve that.

Heather Reisman in the business section of the *Globe & Mail* the other day described Indigo as a lifestyle store for booklovers. Quite frankly, the candles are more important than the books.

Let's not make the Toronto Public Library a lifestyle community hub for booklovers.

Let's keep the library, a library.

Thank you.



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Yours sincerely,

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