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Memo to: Toronto Public Library Board

From: Josephine Bryant  
City Librarian

Date: December 21, 2001

**Re: Follow-Up Information Requests re Room Rental Policy**

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This memo is designed to respond to Board members' questions regarding the room rental policy raised at the November 19, 2001 Board meeting. Also included for your information is a chronology of decision-making and staff activities prior to this year.

This information should help provide context and informative decision-making on the room rental policy.

Senior Library staff will be contacting you early in the new year to discuss options for moving forward on this issue.

## I INFORMATION UPDATES TO NOVEMBER 19, 2001 MEETING

**The Board requested information on the impact of excluding tenants groups, residents and ratepayers associations from payment for room rentals.**

The *City of Toronto Residents and Ratepayers Association*, lists over 800 such organizations and includes such groups as BIAs, 519 Church Street, Home and School Associations, the Federation of Ontario Naturalists, and the Grange Historical Society.

By excluding these groups, which are essentially the current non-profit clientele of the room booking service, the Library would be faced with a loss of \$300,000 in current revenue.

Since the Board approved the policy first in 1999, staff have reviewed the different ways of categorizing groups. Any registration process to define these groups more narrowly than for profit/non profit would substantially increase

administrative time and costs, be difficult to enforce and ensure consistency, and would potentially lead to less equity across the city.

**The Board further requested information about the impact of identifying and exempting tenants organizations only.**

Eleven tenants associations currently book Library facilities at TPL. Financial implications of exempting these groups are nominal (about \$3,000).

It would be difficult to defend excluding these groups over other community-based organizations.

In order to ensure consistency and equity for all community organizations we would not recommend excluding these groups.

**The Board requested information on groups that are currently identified as Non-profit by TPL that also receive City funding.**

Twenty-two Toronto Public Library regular room users were also 2001 City of Toronto grant recipients (full list attached). Fourteen currently do not pay any room rental fees. Grants for these groups range from \$2,000 to \$381,877.

**The Board requested information on what do community centres operated by City Parks and Recreation charge for renting their rooms to non-profit groups.**

Parks and Recreation does charge non-profit groups, although rates are not harmonized across the City – there is a lot of local discretion about who is charged fees and who is exempt. The City of Toronto Welcome Policy only applies to program fees and not to renting/using meeting rooms.

In high needs areas, "Priority Centres" programs were free and fees would be attached to room rentals. Parks and Recreation has set up a Permit Fee Harmonization Committee which will be making a recommendation re fees at Priority Centres.

The impact of introducing Priority Centres at TPL could result in a loss of revenue in some locations currently charging fees. For example, Flemingdon Park currently earns +\$3,000 each year.

**The Board requested information on what do community centres NOT operated by City Parks and Recreation charge for renting their rooms to non-profit groups.**

A survey was conducted of nine community centres not operated by Parks & Recreation. One centre does not charge non-profit groups during hours of operation (519 Church).

At all other centres, charges are typically based on room size and range from \$9 – \$75 per hour. All but two of the surveyed community centres were 2001 City of Toronto grant recipients. Grants ranged from \$65,000 to \$127,000 (list attached).

**The Board asked staff what the impact of not charging for the use of kitchens would be.**

Based on information from the centralized system in the North Region and Research & Reference, there would be an estimated loss of approximately \$4,000 in revenue. Other regions charge for use of kitchen facilities but that information has not been separately tracked.

Waiving these fees is not recommended since actual suggests the \$10 flat rate for kitchen use acts as a deterrent to misuse of the facilities.

**The Board asked for information on increasing the booking fee for commercial users to \$90/hr.**

The impact of increasing the charge for commercial users is relatively small, as commercial users are a relatively small portion of the user group of TPL facilities.

Current commercial use of library space is estimated at two percent of bookings and four percent of revenue. A change in fees for commercial users from \$70/hr to \$90/hr could result in a possible increase in revenue of \$4,500 – \$13,460. (This assumes 100 commercial bookings – booking fees ranging between \$180-\$270.)

## **II BACKGROUND**

In November 1998, the Toronto Public Library Board reviewed an information item regarding room rental policies that noted that rental revenue stood at \$300,000 annually, and a harmonized fee structure based on mid-range charges from across the system would cost the Library \$150,000.

In September 1999, the Toronto Public Library Board approved the following harmonized room rental policy:

*That the Auditorium, Meeting Room and Theatre Rental Policy and proposed fee structure be approved for implementation in January 2000 subject to further review when departments of the City of Toronto set rental rates for comparable facilities.*

### **Staff Implementation Review**

After approval of the Board Policy, a staff committee examined recent changes to community funding, City of Toronto initiatives, partnerships, and the potential for additional policies which would enhance the appeal of room rentals to more customers.

The principles of equitability, convenience for the public and the balancing of community support with fiscal responsibility guided the committee's recommendations.

The status of every regular and longstanding user of auditoriums, meeting rooms and theatres in all regions was reviewed. Groups from all regions using rooms for non-public library purposes were compared as to fees charged, availability and operating costs. Categories of groups were reviewed to ensure that cost recovery could be achieved, while ensuring standardised criteria for library-related and non-profit groups.

Taking into account room rental fees currently paid by the majority of non-profit groups, the recommended fee structure was designed to have as minimal an impact as possible on these non-library groups and on core library services and programs.

A communication plan with a long lead-time for informing the public, councillors and staff was developed. Regular room users were to be informed individually one year before implementation. Informal discussions began with some regular users regarding proposed changes for their groups.

Upon approval of the policy, staff involved in room rentals in some regions began informing users that a change in fees and application would be coming January 2000.

## **Comparisons to Other Services**

A complete review was undertaken compared to the Toronto District School Board and Parks & Recreation. A detailed comparison of the TDSB rules are available in the October 29, 2001 Board package, with the November 19, 2001 package providing detailed information on Parks & Recreation room rentals. Parks & Recreation has not finalized harmonization of room rental practices.

## **2001 Activities**

### **Councillors Briefing – October 19, 2001**

Library staff held an information session for all Councillors, and presented the policy. Additional information regarding comparable facilities, exemptions, co-sponsored criteria was sought, and included in the subsequent package for the Board. On the basis of staff questions, detailed information concerning the Parks & Recreation policy was researched and included in the October 29, 2001 presentation.

### **TPL Board Meeting – October 29, 2001**

Two motions – to exempt room rental fees for individuals and groups in designated branches in high needs areas, and to approve the policy, but review the cost recovery implications in one year – were defeated.

The motion to defer, with a staff report back regarding the financial impact of alternative rates for non-profit community groups, carried.

### **TPL Board Meeting – November 19, 2001**

An updated presentation that included information requests was presented:

New material included:

- further details regarding Parks & Recreation policies
- three alternative fee structures options for non-profit groups

## TPL REGULAR ROOM USERS & CITY OF TORONTO GRANT RECIPIENTS - 2001

<b>Group</b>	<b>Grant 2001</b>	<b>Current Status</b>	<b>Recommended Status</b>
Amicus Productions	\$3,000	non-profit theatre rate	no change
Art Starts Neighbourhood Cultural Centre	\$65,700	co-sponsored no fee	non-profit \$20/hr
Birchmount Bluffs Neighbourhood Centre	\$67,057	city dept. – exempt	city dept - exempt
Caliban Arts Theatre	\$5,000	non-profit theatre rate	no change
Etobicoke Services for Seniors	\$60,710	non-profit \$20 flat rate	non-profit \$20/hr
Houselink Community Homes	\$37,000	co-sponsored no fee	non-profit \$20/hr
Kababayan Community Services Centre Inc.	\$26,350	co-sponsored no fee	non-profit \$20/hr
Neighbourhood Information Post	\$381,877	co-sponsored no fee	non-profit \$20/hr
Older Women's Network	\$3,000	co-sponsored no fee	no change
Parkdale Intercultural Association	\$5,000	co-sponsored no fee	non-profit \$20/hr
Parkdale Legal Services	\$60,000	co-sponsored no fee	non-profit \$20/hr
Scadding Court Community Centre	\$74,239	co-sponsored no fee	no change-reciprocal arrangement
Scarborough Arts Council	\$70,000	co-sponsored no fee	non-profit \$20/hr
Sistering - A Women's Place	\$112,857	co-sponsored no fee	non-profit \$20/hr
Downsview Symphony Orchestra	\$2,500	non-profit \$20/hr	no change
Stage Centre Productions	\$2,000	non-profit theatre rate	no change
Toronto Animated Image Society	\$3,000	\$50 flat rate	non-profit \$20/hr
Toronto East End Literacy Project	\$17,835	non-profit \$20 flat rate	cosponsor no fee
Vietnamese Youth's & Women's Services Assoc.	\$10,000	co-sponsored no fee	non-profit \$20/hr
Waterfront Trail Artists	\$2,000	co-sponsored no fee	non-profit \$20/hr
Youthlink (Inner City & Scarborough)	\$155,103	non-profit no charge	non-profit \$20/hr
Roseneath Theatre	\$16,000	non-profit theatre rate	no change

## Community Centres\* in the City of Toronto

### Examples of availability and fee structures\*\*

CENTRE & REGION	ROOM RATES	ADDITIONAL CHARGES	AVAILABILITY	CITY OF TORONTO 2001 GRANTS
Alexandra Park Community Centre South Region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Varies for non-profit groups (a once per week seniors grp pays \$100/mo)</li> <li>Commercial: \$250/eve</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Groups must arrange own security and pay costs</li> </ul>	Evenings only	Alexandra Park Residents Association \$41,000
St. Alban's Boys and Girls Club South Region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Non-profit: \$15/hr</li> <li>Commercial: \$25/hr</li> </ul>		Weekdays before 3:30 p.m. and after 6:30 p.m. Weekends 4-7:30 p.m.	\$96,200
519 Church Street Community Centre South Region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Free to non-profit groups during hours of operation</li> <li>Commercial: \$50/hr</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>\$10 equipment charge for all groups</li> </ul>	Mon. - Fri 9 am-10 p.m. Sat 9 – 5:30 Sun 10 - 5	\$164,150
Cabbagetown Youth Centre South Region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>\$20/hr</li> </ul>		Weekday evenings weekends	\$127,000
Harbourfront Community Centre South Region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Non-profit: \$15/hr - \$75/hr (depends on room size)</li> <li>Commercial \$50- \$175/hr</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>\$21.50 per staff (2 staff always assigned)</li> </ul>	Mon. - Fri 9:30am- 9:30pm Sat & Sun 12-5 p.m.	\$65,085
Swansea Town Hall Community Centre South Region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Non-profit, community \$9-\$24/hr (depends on room size)</li> <li>Other \$10.50-\$35</li> <li>5 community support groups exempted</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2 hr min after 7:00 pm</li> <li>\$20/hr surcharge after hours</li> </ul>		
Scadding Court Community Centre South Region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Non-profit \$12.50- \$50/hr</li> <li>Commercial \$102/hr</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open hours only</li> </ul>	\$85,654
Jane Finch Centre North Region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No rooms available</li> </ul>			\$107,719
Lakeshore Area Multi-service Project West Region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community groups: \$20/half day</li> <li>Other: \$40/half day</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mon. – Thurs. 8:30 am- 8:00 p.m.</li> <li>Fri 8:30 am- 5:00 p.m.</li> <li>Weekends- closed</li> </ul>	\$ 113,000

\* not operated by Parks & Recreation

\*\*centres were randomly selected within regions