Special Oakville Public Library Board

Agenda

Tuesday, April 07, 2020
Teleconference
3:00 p.m.

www.opl.ca

Register as a delegation

Due to precautions being taken due to the COVID-19 emergency, in-person delegations will not be permitted at this meeting. You may register to join the teleconference meeting by emailing townclerk@oakville.ca by Noon the day of the meeting.

Upon your registration the information to join the meeting will be provided.

Oakville Public Library Board Membership

The following Members of Council have been appointed to serve on the Library Board until November 14, 2022:

Councillor Janet Haslett-Theall
Councillor Jeff Knoll

The following Oakville residents have been appointed to serve on the Library Board for the term of Council 2018 – 2022 or until their successors are appointed.

Steven Bright
Pankaj Sardana
Bill Smith
Paul McIntyre Royston
Susan Fanelli
Andrew Cashman

Oakville Public Library Board
Special Meeting

Agenda

Tuesday, April 07, 2020
Teleconference
3:00 p.m.

Chairperson: Councillor Jeff Knoll

Regrets

Declarations of Pecuniary Interest

Discussion Item(s)

1. Oakville Public Library (OPL) Response to COVID-19   **5-12**
   - Report from CEO's Office, April 7, 2020

       Recommendation:
       1.   That the OPL's response to COVID-19 report be received for information.

       2.   That the decision to close all OPL locations as of March 17, 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic by the Executive Committee be approved by the Board as per OPL Board Procedural By-law 4.4.

       3.   That the direction by the Board Chair to delegate reporting authority of the CEO from the Board to the CAO of the Town of Oakville as of March 24, 2020 and for the duration of the COVID-19 emergency be approved.

Confidential Discussion Item(s)

C-1. Confidential Discussion on Next Steps
- Confidential Verbal Report from Acting CAO, Town of Oakville and
CEO, Oakville Public Library

Adjournment

#1.

Oakville Public Library Board

Report

Meeting Date: April 7, 2020

From:	**CEO's Office**
Date:	April 6, 2020
Subject:	**Oakville Public Library (OPL) Response to COVID-19**

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Recommendations

1. That the OPL's response to COVID-19 report be received for information.

2. That the decision to close all OPL locations as of March 17, 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic by the Executive Committee be approved by the Board as per OPL Board Procedural By-law 4.4.

3. That the direction by the Board Chair to delegate reporting authority of the CEO from the Board to the CAO of the Town of Oakville as of March 24,2020 and for the duration of the COVID-19 emergency be approved.

Key Facts
The following are key points for consideration with respect to this item:
*   Due to COVID-19 pandemic, OPL branches were closed to the public on March 13, 2020.
*   All in-person programs and room rentals have been cancelled for the remainder of 2020.
*   Mental health impacts due to the pandemic will likely be severe. OPL provides services to help residents cope both during the short and long-term.
*   Initiatives developed during the closure grow OPL's long-term ability to offer virtual services post COVID-19.

Background
OPL is in an unprecedented time due to the COVID-19 global pandemic. To assist in halting the spread of COVID-19, OPL closed all branches to the public on March 13, 2020 and to all staff at end of day March 17, 2020. OPL worked closely with the IS department to allow as many OPL staff to work from home as possible.

#1.

Oakville Public Library Board Report

From: CEO's Office
Date: April 6, 2020
Subject: Oakville Public Library (OPL) Response to COVID-19

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On March 17 public libraries were required to close as part of the Province of Ontario's State of Emergency declaration and therefore cannot re-open until that declaration is lifted and it is deemed safe to do so.

On March 23, 2020, the Board chair directed the OPL CEO to take direction from the Town of Oakville CAO for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic emergency.

To date, OPL has been working to develop innovative ways to continue to deliver services to the residents of Oakville while working closely with the Town of Oakville on managing the overall emergency response to COVID-19.

Comment/Options :

1. **Managing the Emergency Response – Immediate Issues**
   a) **Communicating during the Emergency**
      OPL's draft Pandemic Plan has been activated and OPL staff and leadership have focused on providing up-to-date information and clearly communicating decisions promptly to staff and customers using the appropriate channel(s). Our communications team has been working closely with all OPL teams to communicate internally and externally with customers. The communications team continues to work with the town and other partners to share messages, coordinate media relations, public relations, partnerships, and social media to ensure consistent messaging and timing. Some key outcomes of this effort have included:
      - **COVID-19 Information on OPL website and through the Halton Community Services database** - Before a formal emergency was declared, OPL created a page on COVID-19, outlining our response and linking to credible information to support people making informed decisions. The Halton Information Providers (HIP) team has been working diligently to ensure the database has the most up-to-date information and has created a widget for use by our partners to provide quick links to key services.
      - **Information for staff** - Because of the rapid shift to working from home, OPL was concerned that staff not used to accessing Intranet or email from home would encounter barriers to getting the messages in a timely message. In response OPL provided step-by-step instructions for accessing and had manager's follow-up with each staff member to ensure they could successfully access the information. OPL also identified staff members without access to the internet and created

Oakville Public Library Board Report

From: CEO's Office
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personal plans to ensure all communication as passed on. The CEO provides daily weekday updates prior to 5pm.

- **Online Community Management –** As customer inquires, questions and communications shift to sorely on-line and through the phone, OPL staff have welcomed the opportunity to maintain a two-way communication with the residents of Oakville who require assistance. Conversations have shifted to primarily e-mail and social media, not only to provide support and resources to our customers, but also, to build the OPL brand and program awareness throughout the community.

b) **Supporting Oakville's Emergency Response**

One of the key priorities in the draft Pandemic Plan is assisting with the Town of Oakville's response. This situation needs a strong collective effort to ensure all resources are being used to support public health and emergency response efforts. Since this started, Public Health, the Town of Oakville EOC Leaders and Town of Oakville facilities staff have been very supportive of OPL. Tara Wong is part of the EOC team and when major service decisions were made, OPL coordinated with the rest of EOC and continues to update them to ensure coordinated communication.

c) **Supporting staff working from home**

Our technology and human resources groups along with leaders have been focused on supporting staff to working effectively from home. OPL is a public service oriented organization so moving staff to work from home is new. Managers have been reaching out and supporting staff in their departments/ branches to ensure staff are able to effectively work from home as well as perform check-ins. Regular check-ins and team debriefs are occurring virtually and by telephone.

- **Focusing on learning and development** – OPL rolled out a comprehensive online learning plan to ensure staff, not otherwise engaged in library work, were able to spend this time expanding their skills. This ensures OPL is able to provide effective support to residents and the community recovery.
- **Supporting customers remotely** - OPL has added systems and procedures to ensure staff can remotely support customers.

d) **Drop Boxes**

On March 18, 2020, OPL closed all check-in stations and requested that customers hold onto any borrowed materials until the library is ready to receive items again. A process to receive items and deal with health concerns is being developed.

e) **Regular branch inspections**

OPL facilities staff in conjunction with Town of Oakville facilities and recreation staff are visiting branches daily to do internal and external inspections and reporting any problems.

2. **Online service enhancements during closure period**

The OPL Emergency Response Team and staff have been working diligently to enhance our online offerings and increase remote support for customers.

a) **Changing website and expanding digital collections access to respond to remote access only**

Staff have been working daily to update the website to ensure it reflects the current situation where in person visits, programs and support are currently unavailable. Some example of this work includes:
- Increased visibility and promotion of remote card registration
- Increased focus on/promotion of digital resources and increasing access to digital resources by purchasing more titles and increasing limits.
- One place to search displayed on home page reducing number of clicks
- Improved access: move from in-branch databases to unlimited online databases (Ancestry.com)
- Easier-to-find website resources

b) **Enhancing staff's ability to provide remote support**

Staff continue to support individual customers while working from home. Libraries have long and extensive experience supporting people remotely both through phone calls or using online channels, however, this has been previously done while staff are in library facilities. One of the biggest challenges has been in how to support and promote this work and how to scale it up appropriately. There must be appropriate capacity before we engage in significant promotion. OPL does not want to promote services widely while unsure of capacity to ensure a positive experience. Activities focused on this include:
- Developing online learning material for staff to support online work.

- Setting up staff to have the knowledge and skills to feel confident in responding to questions. Also, ensuring staff know-how to escalate issues when as needed.
- Ensuring the systems that support remote work for AskUs and Tech Help are in place.

c) **Halton Information Providers (HIP)**

OPL's Information Oakville is lead for the Halton Information Providers which provides the Halton Community Services directory (HCSD). The HCSD provides up-to-date information on Halton area services vital in our current situation such as information on Emergency Child Care for Front Line COVID workers. HIP has also created a widget, which can be easily added to our partners' websites and allows for easy access to key services. Both 211 and the Halton Region rely on the information contained within the directory and the Information Oakville team remains committed ensuring that the HCSD is the go-to place in Halton for community services and information.

d) **Enhancing library programs available online**

OPL successfully shifted to offer programs remotely. OPL is focused on delivering quality and accessible virtual learning for the public by offering virtual sessions/learning programs such as:

- **Storytime Live and Recorded** – OPL storytimes live via social media on Tuesdays/Thursdays/ Fridays, expanding to 6 days per week starting Monday, April 6.
- **Online Book Clubs** – 3 weekly highlighting titles available through OPL eBook platforms.
- **Tech Help** – Customers can book time for help over the phone to access the library's resources or basic computer help including video conferencing assistance.
- **Book Talks** - Staff Pick Book Recommendations for all ages. Videos available via YouTube.
- **Appy Hour** - Videos uploaded to YouTube on how to use all the library's various apps and resources.
- **Author Visits** – Videos of exclusive readings and talks with local authors personalized for OPL. There are currently 5 videos ready to go with 12 more in process. Ian Hamilton has agreed to record a virtual version of In Conversation with, taking questions in advance via social media.

- **Creation Zone challenges** - Weekly maker challenges where customers respond to the Maker Challenge by uploading pictures to social media and tagging OPL and a challenge specific hashtag (ie. #OPLLegoChallenge, OPLPhotoChallenge).
- **Ready to Read** - Tips and activities for parents and caregivers in short 3-10 minute video clips inspired by the Every Child Ready to Read practices in print and video. Will be available via YouTube Channel as a Playlist.
- **Curriculum Connections** – This is a resource for caregivers homeschooling their children using materials at home and library eresources based on the Ontario curriculum. A new "connection per week" for ages 6-8, 8-10, 10-12.

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3. Preparing for re-opening and long-term challenges

The Town of Oakville, Ontario and Canada are well equipped to respond to this crisis. As an organization, OPL needs to continue to be a positive force in helping our community and its residents adapt to the changes that COVID-19 brings. Key items OPL is reviewing:

a) Preparing OPL spaces for re-opening

OPL needs to be ready to provide services to support the community as soon as it is safe to do so. Physical distancing may need to be in place and OPL needs to be proactive about reducing the risk of OPL becoming a vector of community spread, to this OPL should plan for the following:

- **Frequent cleaning** - OPL needs to have in place frequent cleaning in our spaces that provides staff and customers with confidence that they will not come in touch contact with surfaces that might have virus traces that have a small probability of infecting them or others. Items like hygiene stations are being reviewed to assist.
- **Physical distancing** - Will need to review options for allowing physical distancing to happen in each of our locations. Each location will be reviewed to identify specific challenges.

b) Resetting our programs

All in person programs for the rest of 2020 have been cancelled. When it is safe to offer in person programs, OPL will look to schedule based on priorities of community needs at that time. The path forward will require a mix of in-person and virtual programs and work is being done to look at what that mix should look like.

- **Focus on virtual programs** - During the closure OPL has implemented online programs. This experience provides OPL the opportunity to see how practical and effective virtual programming can be and will continue to offer after reopening where appropriate.
- **Focus on partner provided programs** - As programs restart, OPL work with key partners to assist with providing relevant programs to our customers.

c) **Other priorities**
OPL will be looking at a reformatted Summer Reading program if the closure goes into summer, reviewing branch hours, and reviewing how Alternative Services will be reintroduced while maintaining access to digital platforms.

Prepared by: Tara Wong, CEO OPL