



Executive Director's 2022 AGM Report

Report to: The FOPL Board and Members
Prepared by: Dina Stevens
Prepared on: June 3, 2022

Recommendation

1. **THAT the FOPL board and members receive this report as information.**

Report

Welcome to the Federation of Ontario Public Libraries 2022 Annual General Meeting. I have been looking forward to meeting with our members and sharing in the successes of the last year. When I reflect on my time with FOPL in 2021, though I only joined the organization in June, I can say that the strongest theme throughout those 7 months was transformation. I am immensely proud of the work that our board members, admin and myself have done to reinvigorate and revitalize our organization.

First and foremost, I want to thank the board and our members for their support as I navigated my way through my first year with FOPL. I like to think that FOPL is not the only thing that has changed in this past year. I am very pleased to be staying on with FOPL permanently and look forward to the work we will do together for the library community. I would like to reflect on some of the more transformative changes FOPL has gone through as an organization in our short time together. These changes have built a strong foundation for new organization that can support our strategic initiatives, working groups and advocacy efforts.

In the summer of 2021, we embarked on a large-scale digitization project to modernize FOPL's administration and make the organization more accessible remotely during the pandemic. This included building an internal cloud network so that all admin and board members could gain access to FOPL files remotely, digitizing all paper files and upgrading our bookkeeping and banking processes. Our website was also refreshed and given a new look, reconfigured for ease of accessibility and updated with resources for our members and an advocacy blog to keep everyone up to date. As administrative staff turned over in the fall, we also migrated from keeping staff and processing payroll to employing contractors for our administrative needs. These changes have afforded us flexibility, efficiency and cost savings that allow us to do the work that really matters.



The FOPL board took on a policy, bylaw and strategic plan review to ensure that they remain relevant and are meeting the needs of our members. The Policy and Bylaw Review Project Team completed a comprehensive analysis of our existing policies and bylaws in the fall of last year. All our existing policies and bylaws have been revised and/or replaced to ensure best practices and new statements of commitment were included to reflect FOPL's dedication to health and safety, accessibility, equity, diversity, and intellectual freedom. Our revised policies can be viewed on our [website](#) in further detail. A review of our strategic plan was also undertaken by a separate board Project Team to realign FOPL's direction so that we are upholding the pillars of our organization. The Strategic Plan Project Team has also been instrumental in operationalizing the strategic plan and ensuring that our organization is working together as a whole to achieve our goals. Our strategic objectives for the [2021 – 2023 Strategic Plan](#) are:

Advocacy and Influence - *Positively influence legislation and government initiatives impacting Ontario Public Libraries, especially surrounding the global pandemic and its impact periods.*

Marketing Public Library Value and Impact - *Coordinate and assist in the implementation of strategic marketing for Ontario Public Libraries.*

Training and Development - *Coordinate and assist in the implementation of strategic marketing for Ontario Public Libraries.*

Organizational Resilience - *Increase organizational resiliency.*

The Working Groups were reestablished to support our strategic objectives. Five Working Groups began to meet in the Fall of 2021 with two of them new to our repertoire. In addition to the Government Relations, Indigenous Libraries Partnerships and Marketing and Communications Working Groups which were pre-existing, we have added a French Translation and Research and Development Working Group. The terms of reference of each were evaluated and revised to align with the operationalized strategic plan.

Reestablishing our working groups has been an important part of member engagement, a strong priority of mine since starting with FOPL in June. In the summer of 2021 FOPL surveyed the membership so that we could gauge our member's priorities, invest in what was important to them and ensure we were incorporating their needs into our goals and strategic priorities. The survey formed the basis of some of our working groups and informed the revitalization of our website. We have new training and information sessions for our members, begun bi-annual Caucus meetings, invested in resources on our website and email updates are sent out every 2-4 weeks to keep everyone informed.



Most important of all are the momentous strides we have made in our advocacy and engagement efforts this past year. The bulk of 2021 was spent building relationships and refining our government relations priorities leading into an election year. FOPL staff, board and members alike have engaged with various ministry staff, cabinet members, MPPs seeking re-election, candidates from all parties and more to stress the importance of strong provincial support for public libraries. Our consistent messaging and unwavering dedication to our public libraries has been hugely successful, more so than we have ever been in years past, in getting our voices heard. Our three main priorities were incorporated into the platforms of three of the four major political parties for the 2022 election.

We have much underway for 2022, shifting our focus to the municipal elections in October and supporting our library community as we prepare for new boards and changes to municipal councils. I will be attending the AMCTO and AMO Conferences this summer, focusing on the importance of keeping our public library boards independent, board governance and the value proposition of public libraries within our communities. We are hoping to reach out to other municipal organizations such as the Rural Ontario Municipal Association, Ontario Municipal Administrators Association, and the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association.

Thank you to the Ontario library community and our members for your ongoing support of FOPL. Our efforts have a very real impact on creating a sustainable future for our public libraries. I am excited to see what we can accomplish next.

Kind Regards,

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