

**FEDERATION OF ONTARIO PUBLIC LIBRARIES
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 2023
10:00 AM, TORONTO REFERENCE LIBRARY
789 YONGE ST., TORONTO, ON
[JOIN VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM](#)**

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

2. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT DOC 1

3. REGRETS

4. DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

5. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE JUNE 16, 2023 BOARD MEETING DOC 2

THAT this Board approve as circulated the minutes of the FOPL Board Meeting of June 16, 2023.

6. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

THAT this Board approve as circulated the FOPL Board Agenda for September 8, 2023.

7. TREASURER'S REPORT W. GRECO DOC 3

THAT this Board receive this report as information for the period ending August 31, 2023.

8. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT D. STEVENS DOC 4
 a. ANNUAL WORKPLAN DOC 5

THAT this Board receive the Executive Director's report as information.

9. WORKING GROUPS AND COMMITTEES – REPORTS AND UPDATES

 a. RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP S. McDONOUGH DOC 6

THAT this Board receive the Research and Development Working Group's report as information.

THAT this Board approve the amended Terms of Reference for the Research and Development Working Group.

b. INDIGENOUS LIBRARY PARTNERSHIPS WORKING GROUP F. MARACLE DOC 7

THAT this Board receive the Indigenous Library Partnerships Working Group's report as information.

c. GOVERNMENT RELATIONS WORKING GROUP M. SINGLETON DOC 8

THAT this Board receive the Government Relations Working Group's report as information.

10. DEFERRED BUSINESS

a. ONCA COMPLIANT BYLAWS S. SAUNDERS

b. CELUPL TERMS OF REFERENCE LARGE URBAN CAUCUS REPS

11. NEW BUSINESS

a. UPDATED ADVOCACY APPROACH **11:30AM** COUNSEL PUBIC AFFAIRS
i. CPA RECOMMENDATIONS PLOG APPROACH JUNE 2023 DOC 9
ii. CPA RECOMMENDATIONS AUGUST 2023 DOC 10
iii. GOVERNMENT RELATIONS PRIORITIES DOCUMENT DOC 11

b. LIBRARY DAYS AT QUEENS PARK D. STEVENS Doc 12
i. FUNDS APPROVAL \$6000

THAT this Board approve an additional \$6000 added to budget line 5740 Public Relations Services for the lobbying days scheduled at Queens Park November 14 and 15, 2023.

c. ONTARIO DIGITAL PUBLIC LIBRARY

d. INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM STATEMENT / ADOPTION L. RADHA

e. VICE-CHAIR VACANCY P. AINSLIE

f. STRIKE AT BRADFORD PL AND POTENTIAL IMPLICATIONS M. CORBETT

12. NEXT MEETING:

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2023
10:00 AM, VIRTUAL

13. ADJOURNMENT

WE, the public libraries of Ontario acknowledge that the lands now referred to as Ontario have been inhabited by many distinct Nations since time immemorial. The Original Peoples have been and continue to be the traditional custodians of this land. Ontarians, as well as Canadians, need to remember and reaffirm our accountability to these Indigenous Nations, and the lands, resources and waters which nourishes life. We are grateful to have the opportunity to work in the community, on this territory. FOPL acknowledges the lands and treaties upon which our public libraries across Ontario prosper.

Federation of Ontario Public Libraries

Meeting Date: June 16, 2023

Meeting Time: 10:00 a.m.

Location: Hybrid via Zoom & Civic Centre Resource Library

Secretary: Dina Stevens, Executive Director/Secretary of the Board

In Attendance: **First Nations Caucus:** Kathleen Copegog

Francophone Caucus: Catherina Rouse

Large Urban Caucus: Mary Chevreau, Wayne Greco, Alicia Subnaik-Kilgour,
Margie Singleton

Small & Medium Caucus: Matthew Corbett, Sabrina Saunders, Anne Smith

Northern Caucus: Rebecca Hunt, Sue Melcher

Rural Caucus: Jennifer LaChapelle

Toronto Caucus: Vickery Bowles, Lisa Radha Vohra

Regrets: Paul Ainslie, Feather Maracle, Nadine Williams, David Harvie

Absent: Kathy Fisher, Alim Remtulla

FOPL Team: Dina Stevens, Executive Director

Hannah Saunders, Administrative Assistant

Prepared By: Hannah Saunders, Administrative Assistant

1. Call to Order & Roll Call

The Board meeting was called to order at 10:11 a.m. by the Chair.

2. Land Acknowledgement

[Jennifer LaChapelle entered the meeting]

3. Regrets

As noted above.

4. Declarations of Conflict of Interest

None.

5. Approval of the Minutes – February 3, 2023

FOPL-Resolution 2023-010

Moved by Margie Singleton and seconded by Vickery Bowles, THAT this Board approve as circulated, the FOPL Board Minutes of February 3, 2023. CARRIED.

6. Approval of the Minutes – Audit Approval March 17, 2023

FOPL-Resolution 2023-011

Moved by Matthew Corbett and seconded by Wayne Greco, THAT this Board approve as circulated, the FOPL Audit Approval Minutes of March 17, 2023. CARRIED.

7. Approval of Agenda

FOPL-Resolution 2023-012

Moved by Catherina Rouse and seconded by Margie Singleton, THAT this Board approve as circulated, the FOPL Board Agenda of June 16, 2023. CARRIED.

8. Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer provided a summary of the distributed report. A discussion followed regarding the budgeted amount for Marketing and Promotions. The Executive Director described the difficulties in projecting accurate budgets for conferences given the fluctuating market for accommodations and inflation.

[Jennifer LaChapelle entered the meeting]

[Mary Chevreau entered the meeting]

FOPL-Resolution 2023-013

Moved by Wayne Greco and seconded by Matthew Corbett, THAT this Board receive the Treasurer's Report as information for the period ending May 31, 2023. CARRIED.

FOPL-Resolution 2023-014

Moved by Wayne Greco and seconded by Matthew Corbett, THAT this Board have three distinct accounts held in the name of FOPL: General Fund/Operational Chequing account; Internal Restricted high interest savings account; and an Investment savings account which is the credit card security; and that 50% of end of year surplus revenues be transferred from the General Fund to the Internal Restricted annually unless directed by resolution otherwise. CARRIED.

FOPL-Resolution 2023-015

Moved by Wayne Greco and seconded by Matthew Corbett, THAT the FOPL Board approve the revised 2023 Expense Claim Form effective for this meeting. CARRIED.

9. Executive Director's Report

a. Annual Work Plan

The Executive Director provided a summary of the distributed report. Board members expressed the need to modify FOPL's messaging and campaigns for future conferences. It was discussed that FOPL will discontinue the "Importance of Keeping Public Libraries Independent" campaign at the end of 2023. The messaging for a new campaign focusing on libraries as a non-partisan, welcoming and inclusive place for everyone within a

community. The Executive Director will take this feedback into account and work with Counsel Public Affairs for a new campaign for 2024 municipal engagement. A discussion also ensued regarding the Executive Director's participation on CFLA's Intellectual Freedom Committee.

FOPL-Resolution 2023-016

Moved by Vickery Bowles and seconded by Rebecca Hunt, THAT this Board receive the Executive Director's Report as information. CARRIED.

10. Working Group Reports

a. Research & Development Working Group

The Executive Director provided a verbal update. Areas of focus for this working group are Artificial Intelligence and ChatGPT, Asset Management and Bill 23. The working group will be providing an information session for FOPL members in the fall about Artificial Intelligence with guest speaker Avery Swartz.

FOPL-Resolution 2023-017

Moved by Wayne Greco and seconded by Margie Singleton, THAT this Board receive the Research & Development Working Group update as information. CARRIED.

b. Indigenous Library Partnership Working Group

Feather Maracle, Chair of the Working Group, provided a summary of the distributed report. A change will be made to reflect Kelly Bernstein's library on the website and reports.

FOPL-Resolution 2023-018

Moved by Sabrina Saunders and seconded by Wayne Greco, THAT this Board receive the Indigenous Library Partnership Working Group Report as information. CARRIED.

FOPL-Resolution 2023-019

Moved by Sabrina Saunders and seconded by Wayne Greco, THAT the FOPL Board approve the allocation of \$5000 in funds for the production of a video campaign to support the organizations provincial priority for public libraries on reserve. CARRIED.

FOPL-Resolution 2023-020

Moved by Sabrina Saunders and seconded by Wayne Greco, THAT the FOPL Board approve and adopt the position statement on UNDRIP. CARRIED.

c. Marketing & Communications Working Group

Sabrina Saunders, Chair of the Working Group, provided a summary of the distributed report. A change will be made on the website to correct Catherina Moskau's preferred name.

FOPL-Resolution 2023-021

Moved by Margie Singleton and seconded by Catherina Rouse, THAT this Board receive the Marketing & Communications Working Group Report as information. CARRIED.

d. Government Relations Working Group

Margie Singleton, Chair of the Working Group, provided a summary of the distributed report.

FOPL-Resolution 2023-022

Moved by Margie Singleton and seconded by Alicia Subnaik-Kilgour, THAT this Board receive the Government Relations Working Group Report as information. CARRIED.

FOPL-Resolution 2023-023

Moved by Margie Singleton and seconded by Alicia Subnaik-Kilgour, And THAT the FOPL Board work with CULC Safety and Security Task Group to pursue joint initiatives to support Ontario Public Libraries in their quest to deliver safe and secure spaces. CARRIED.

FOPL-Resolution 2023-024

Moved by Margie Singleton and seconded by Alicia Subnaik-Kilgour, THAT the FOPL Board support by submission of a letter, the CULC/CIPPIC/CARL/CFLA request for changes to the Consumer Protection Act (CPA) and additional sector specific legislative proposals to ensure library protection against unfair digital contracts that target publicly supported libraries. CARRIED.

FOPL-Resolution 2023-025

Moved by Margie Singleton and seconded by Alicia Subnaik-Kilgour, THAT the FOPL Board ensure the FOPL priority of increased PLOG funding be integrated into all future provincial government advocacy initiatives. CARRIED.

e. CELUPL Terms of Reference

The Executive Director provided a summary of the distributed report. After much discussion, it was decided that the Large Urban Caucus CEO representatives will review the document and work with the CELUPL Executive to create a mutually acceptable Terms of Reference

FOPL-Resolution 2023-026

Moved by Mary Chevreau and seconded by Jennifer LaChapelle, THAT the Large Urban Caucus representatives engage with CELUPL executive to design a document that is acceptable to both groups. CARRIED.

[Sue Melcher left the meeting]

11. Deferred Business

a. ONCA Compliant Bylaws

FOPL's Bylaws need to be revised to that they fit within the ONCA compliance framework. Lisa Radha Vohra has volunteered to work with Sabrina Saunders to revise the bylaws by the end of 2023.

12. New Business

a. Support for Consumer Protection Act Recommendations

The Executive Director provided a summary of the distributed report. The board recommends supporting this initiative via a letter.

FOPL-Resolution 2023-027

Moved by Catherina Rouse and seconded by Lisa Radha Vohra, THAT this Board receive the Support for Consumer Protection Act Recommendations as information. CARRIED.

b. Ex Libris Association Partnership Opportunity

The Executive Director provided a summary of the distributed report. After deliberating the various options for partnership with Ex Libris Association, the board recommends offering an Association Membership at the standard rate.

FOPL-Resolution 2023-028

Moved by Wayne Greco and seconded by Lisa Radha Vohra, THAT this Board will extend the offer of an Association members of \$500 for full access. CARRIED.

c. Ontario Digital Public Library Recommendation Committee

Margie Singleton provided a summary of her recommendation that FOPL create a committee to discuss the wants and needs of the public library community in respect to the Ontario Digital Public Library. As the ODPL has gotten a lot of attention lately it would be best to be prepared with a set of formal recommendations in the event that we do receive funding. Lisa, Catherina and Rebecca have expressed interest in participating. The board agreed that a first step would be to meet with the Ontario Library Service. A discussion occurred regarding the various possibilities for recommendations.

d. Safety & Security Advocacy Initiatives

- i. Partnership With CULC & White Paper Proposal
- ii. Researchers Project with Brantford, Barrie, & Thunder Bay Pls

The Executive Director provided a summary of the distributed reports and the opportunities for collaboration available. There was a discussion regarding the various benefits of collaborating with each. The board recommended liaising with the Ontario Library Service to discern their current work in this initiative. The board decided to offer knowledge sharing and mobilization with both organizations.

e. Counsel Public Affairs Contract Renewal

The Executive Director provided a summary of the distributed report.

FOPL-Resolution 2023-029

Moved by Wayne Greco and seconded by Margie Singleton, THAT this Board renew the contract with OLA. CARRIED.

f. Collections & Programming Challenges

Catherina Rouse provided a verbal update.

g. Strategic Planning Working Group Revival

The Executive Director brought to the board's attention that FOPL's current strategic plan is valid until the end of 2023. The board agreed to revive the strategic plan working group. Sabrina, Rebecca, Alicia, Kathleen and Anne have expressed interest in participating.

FOPL-Resolution 2023-030

Moved by Catherina Rouse and seconded by Margie Singleton, THAT this Board revive the Strategic Planning Working Group. CARRIED.

13. Next Meeting

- September 8, 2023 @ 10:00 a.m.
Hybrid Meeting
Bradford Public Library

14. Adjournment

The Board meeting was called to adjourn by the Chair at 2:45 p.m.

FOPL-Resolution 2023-031

Moved by Catherina Rouse THAT this Board does now adjourn. CARRIED.

Paul Ainslie, Board Chair

Dina Stevens, Board Secretary

Treasurer's Report

Report To: The FOPL Board
Prepared by: Dina Stevens on behalf of Wayne Greco
Prepared on: August 29, 2023

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the FOPL Board receive this report as information for the period ending August 29, 2023.

BACKGROUND

This report covers the period January 1, 2023 to August 29, 2023 to present finances to date within the current fiscal year. This reflects an unaudited representation of FOPL finances.

REPORT

Financial Reports (attached):

- Comparative Income Statement: Provides FOPL's operating revenue and expenditures from January 1, 2023 to August 29, 2023.
- Balance Sheet: Provides information on FOPL's full financial situation as of August 29, 2023 including accounts and investments.

Note: In the Balance Sheet document, the line for Accounts Payable currently shows a balance of \$22,920.30. These are funds that have been paid to OLA for our government relations services but have yet to be reconciled in our chequing account.

Revenue to Note:

- None for this reporting period.

Expenditures to Note:

- None for this reporting period.

Total Assets as of August 29, 2023:

- Total Cash (chequing account): \$132,946.25
- Total Savings: \$103,012.12
- Total Receivable: \$2985.00

FINANCIAL UPDATES

1. A significant amount of funds have been reallocated from line 5610 Conferences and Exhibitions to 5115 Admin Travel. Hotel and accommodations for conferences were allocated to 5610 and this change has been reflected in the attached Comparative Income Statement.

Federation of Ontario Public Libraries

Comparative Income Statement

	Budget 2023-01-01 to 2023-12-31	Actual 2023-01-01 to 2023-08-29	Difference
REVENUE			
Revenue			
Sponsorships	0.00	500.00	-500.00
Gifts & Donations	0.00	0.00	0.00
Membership Fees	285,025.00	280,825.00	4,200.00
Grants	0.00	0.00	0.00
Sale of Material	0.00	0.00	0.00
Other Revenues	0.00	0.00	0.00
Special Peer Comparisons Fees	0.00	0.00	0.00
Library Training & Development ...	0.00	0.00	0.00
Interest Income	0.00	1,520.62	-1,520.62
Misc.	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total Revenue	<u>285,025.00</u>	<u>282,845.62</u>	2,179.38
TOTAL REVENUE	<u>285,025.00</u>	<u>282,845.62</u>	2,179.38
EXPENSE			
Payroll Expenses			
Part-Time Permanent Salaries	0.00	0.00	0.00
Contract & Temporary Staff	0.00	0.00	0.00
EI Expense	0.00	0.00	0.00
CPP Expense	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total Payroll Expense	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	0.00
Office Consultants			
Executive Director	107,000.00	58,612.66	48,387.34
Administrative Assistant	23,400.00	13,860.00	9,540.00
Marketing & Social Media	9,000.00	3,875.00	5,125.00
Total Office Consultants	<u>139,400.00</u>	<u>76,347.66</u>	63,052.34
Administrative Expenses			
Admin Meeting	200.00	0.00	200.00
Admin Travel	4,500.00	4,143.33	356.67
Admin Professional Development	2,000.00	2,260.00	-260.00
Total Administrative Expenses	<u>6,700.00</u>	<u>6,403.33</u>	296.67
Board Expenses			
Board Travel	9,000.00	3,385.31	5,614.69
Board Meeting	3,000.00	1,100.24	1,899.76
Board Professional Development	0.00	0.00	0.00
Board Recruitment	0.00	0.00	0.00
Annual General Meeting	0.00	0.00	0.00
Legal	0.00	0.00	0.00
Board Appreciation	200.00	187.32	12.68
Total Board Expenses	<u>12,200.00</u>	<u>4,672.87</u>	7,527.13
Committee Work			
CELUPL	500.00	0.00	500.00
Working Groups	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total Committee Work	<u>500.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	500.00
Operational Expenses			
General Office Supplies	500.00	12.95	487.05
Postage & Courier	500.00	207.08	292.92
Photocopying Supplies	150.00	55.91	94.09
Printing	150.00	143.11	6.89
Telephone	2,000.00	659.45	1,340.55
Telecommunication	200.00	0.00	200.00

Federation of Ontario Public Libraries

Comparative Income Statement

	Budget 2023-01-01 to 2023-12-31	Actual 2023-01-01 to 2023-08-29	Difference
Insurance	1,700.00	1,922.40	-222.40
FOPL Memberships	3,400.00	3,363.00	37.00
Subscriptions	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total Operational Expenses	8,600.00	6,363.90	2,236.10
Furniture & Equipment			
Furniture	0.00	0.00	0.00
Equipment	0.00	0.00	0.00
Information Technology Hardware	2,000.00	1,129.99	870.01
Information Technology Software	1,500.00	140.11	1,359.89
Total Furniture & Equipment	3,500.00	1,270.10	2,229.90
Finance			
Bank Charges & Interest	600.00	247.62	352.38
Credit Card Charges	115.00	75.00	40.00
Audit	6,800.00	7,910.00	-1,110.00
Services & Consultants	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total Finance	7,515.00	8,232.62	-717.62
Marketing & Promotion			
Conferences & Exhibitions	12,000.00	11,353.09	646.91
Advertising & Promotions	250.00	0.00	250.00
Special Events	0.00	0.00	0.00
Publications & Printing	500.00	58.50	441.50
Presentation Supplies	500.00	0.00	500.00
Indigenous Language Translation	3,000.00	0.00	3,000.00
French Language Translation	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00
Website	500.00	499.08	0.92
Total Marketing & Promotion	17,750.00	11,910.67	5,839.33
Programs & Projects			
Contract Services	0.00	0.00	0.00
Research & Development	600.00	0.00	600.00
Statistician Fees	0.00	0.00	0.00
Library Member Training	0.00	0.00	0.00
Working Groups	5,000.00	0.00	5,000.00
Legal Opinions	0.00	0.00	0.00
Public Relations Services	40,000.00	24,630.81	15,369.19
Total Programs & Projects	45,600.00	24,630.81	20,969.19
Miscellaneous Expense			
UNKOWN EXPENSE	0.00	0.00	0.00
Write-off	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total Miscellaneous Expense	0.00	0.00	0.00
TOTAL EXPENSE	241,765.00	139,831.96	101,933.04
NET INCOME	43,260.00	143,013.66	-99,753.66

Federation of Ontario Public Libraries

Balance Sheet As at 2023-08-29

ASSET

Current Assets

Scotia Chequing Account	162,109.69	
Cash Investment Account Scotia	0.00	
Scotia Savings Account	102,706.77	
Payroll Clearing	0.00	
Total Cash		264,816.46
Investments	9,427.68	
Total Investments		9,427.68
Accounts Receivable	2,985.00	
Accounts Receivable Adjustments	-128,915.00	
Interest Receivable	191.26	
Total Receivable		-125,738.74
Prepaid Expenses	2,187.52	
Total Prepays		2,187.52
Total Current Assets		150,692.92

Other Assets

Due from OLA	0.00	
Total Due From		0.00
Organizational Costs		0.00
Total Other Assets		0.00

TOTAL ASSET 150,692.92

LIABILITY

Current Liabilities

Accounts Payable		22,920.30
Accounts Payable Adjustments		500.00
Accrued Liabilities		19,284.74
Visa Payable	3,100.95	
Credit Card Accrued Liabilities	0.00	
Total Credit Card Payable		3,100.95
EI Payable	-76.26	
CPP Payable	76.26	
Federal Income Tax Payable	0.15	
Federal Tax 2016 Adjustment	-291.98	
Total Rec General Source Deduc...		-291.83
Vacation Payable		-2,118.41
PST Payable		0.00
PST Paid on Purchases		0.00
GST Paid on Purchases		-5,218.43
Total Current Liabilities		38,177.32

Deferred Revenue

Deferred Revenue		-128,915.00
Total Deferred Revenue		-128,915.00

TOTAL LIABILITY -90,737.68

EQUITY

Equity

Net Assets		0.00
Contributed Surplus		0.00
Reserve / Project Fund		0.00
Project Fund		0.00
Retained Earnings - Previous Year		98,416.94
Current Earnings		143,013.66

Federation of Ontario Public Libraries Balance Sheet As at 2023-08-29

Total Owners Equity	<u>241,430.60</u>
TOTAL EQUITY	<u>241,430.60</u>
LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	<u><u>150,692.92</u></u>

Executive Director's Report

Report to: The FOPL Board
Prepared by: Dina Stevens, Executive Director
Prepared on: August 30, 2023

Recommendation

THAT the FOPL board receive this report as information.

Report

Since the board last met in June, FOPL has been mainly concerned with municipal outreach and furthering our advocacy efforts into the fall. I was able to attend both the AMO (Association of Municipalities of Ontario) and AMCTO (Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks, and Treasurers of Ontario) Conferences.

At the AMCTO Conference in June, together with Alicia Subnaik-Kilgour and another Niagara Public Library staff member, we spoke to over 250+ delegates. Conversations with delegates ranged from positive to neutral with many asking questions about library boards and the nuances of the Public Libraries Act. Many were curious about the overall trends and issues libraries in Ontario are seeing as of late and were generally supportive of our two main campaigns, "The Value of Public Libraries" and "Keeping Public Libraries Independent". We had very valuable discussions about our Government Relations priorities and the impact the ODPL would have on their communities. This is a noticeable shift from the atmosphere last year when many delegates avoided our booth and were wary in speaking to us.

The AMO Conference in August was a hugely positive experience and saw the same upward trend from when we attended last year. I was joined by Michael Ciccone and staff from London Public Library and we spoke so continuously with delegates that we were unable to keep track. There were over 3000 delegates that attended this year and we spoke to everyone from local councilors and mayors to ministers and Marit Stiles. All were supportive of public libraries, our government relations priorities and wanted to know more about how they could support their own local public libraries. We heard from many who were facing challenging library board situations that are typical of the first year a board comes together. We heard over and over again that their "library is so much more than books!" which really paved the way for conversations about enhancing PLOG funding and the Ontario Digital Public Library.



Looking towards the fall, I am very excited that we will be returning to Queens Park for two in-person lobbying days. Over the summer I have been working with Counsel Public Affairs and the Ontario Library Association, our provincial advocacy partners, to reframe our government relations priorities and strategize our way ahead of the 2024 Ministry of Finance budget submission. We have refocused to ask for an additional \$25 million to the Public Libraries Operating Grant which would bring the current envelope of \$21 million up to today's value. Feedback from the Ministry of Tourism Culture and Sport regarding earlier consultations from March has been positive and they have been paying particular attention to the idea of an Ontario Digital Public Library. We will continue to advocate for the ODPL as well as increased funding for First Nations Public Libraries. I'm hoping that the majority of the FOPL board can join us at Queen's Park for this very important aspect of our advocacy work.

Lastly, I would like to welcome Susan McGibbon (Trustee, Rural Caucus) and Jodi Delgado (CEO, Small Medium Caucus) to our board. Susan joins us as the Chair of the Georgian Bay Public Library Board and Jodi Delgado joins us as the CEO of the Springwater Public Library. Please also join me in wishing Sabrina Saunders a heartfelt farewell as she will be leaving us after our September meeting. Sabrina has had an enormous impact on the public library sector and the work that we do here at FOPL. She will be fondly missed!

Kind Regards,

Dina Stevens, MLIS
Executive Director

Federation of Ontario Public Libraries
PO Box 3285 Meaford Stn Main
Meaford, ON N4L 1A5
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Strategic Objectives and Initiatives for 2021 - 2023

Advocacy & Influence

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

1. Build relationships with provincial elected officials and civil service to influence government policy and practices.
2. Collaborate with other library associations, organizations, and agencies to lobby for public libraries in provincial political arena such as Library Day at Queen's Park.
3. Support members' libraries efforts in municipal government advocacy.
4. Support First Nations libraries with national and provincial advocacy.
5. Remain agile to enable timely response to emerging issues and opportunities.
6. Act as a conduit for government to supply information to Public Libraries.

Objective	Method	Timeline	Result
Collaborate with other library associations, organizations, and agencies to lobby for public libraries in provincial political arena and speak with a united voice.	Participate in 2023 Standing Committee of Finance and Economic Affairs and Minister of Finance budget consultations.	Q1	FOPL deputation to the Minister of Finance on January 11 th . Two other member libraries granted deputations as well. Nine library CEOs and FOPL requested to attend deputations to the Standing Committee.
Ensure that libraries are at the table and considered as integral social institutions that require provincial support and attention.	Submit Official 2023 Budget Request for Ontario's Public Libraries.	Q1	Official 2023 Pre-Budget Submission to the Ministry of Finance submitted January 13 th .
Respond to emerging issues and opportunities.	Monitor upcoming bills and potential municipal level changes that can affect library governance.	Ongoing	Letter send to Toronto and Ottawa CAOs/Clerks re: Bill 3
Build relationships with provincial elected officials and civil servants to influence government policy and practices.	Engage with cabinet members, Ministry staff, and other officials.	Ongoing	Members engaged to reach out to selected members of elected PC Caucus Meetings with Ministry staff to brief

			them on our sector priorities; Hannah Andersen, Connor Scott Participated in MTCS consultations re: our priorities. Lobbying Days at Queens Park scheduled for November 14 and 15, 2023.
Support members' libraries efforts in municipal government advocacy. Participate in the education of new board and new councils across the province.	Available to member libraries to provide advocacy specific board orientation and training.	Q1/Q2	Booked with Niagara PL and Orangeville PL to provide a presentation.

Marketing Public Library Value and Impact

Coordinate and assist in the implementation of strategic marketing for Ontario Public Libraries.

1. Be recognized as the trusted voice of Ontario Public Libraries.
2. Inspire and mobilize the library community.
3. Develop and provide research to inform marketing initiatives.
4. Develop province-wide social media marketing campaign tools.
5. Pursue partnerships beyond traditional library partners such as AMO, school boards, vendors and media.
6. Collaborate to create consistent promotional messaging for use by Public Libraries.

Objective	Method	Timeline	Result
Produce resources for libraries to advocate for themselves and create community awareness of social impact.	Provide letter templates, social media graphics and offer consultation to board and CEOs.	Ongoing	Taken meetings to consult with Cobourg PL, Simcoe County Libraries, Clarington PL and Cobalt PL, Hawksbury PL ,
Inspire and mobilize the library community. Develop and provide research to inform marketing initiatives.	Provide the Data Dashboard to member libraries so they might better market their own success and impacts.	Ongoing	Research and Development WG preparing opinion papers on AI/ChatGPT, looking into grants for a student to maintain dashboard. Additional research and presentations on Asset Management and Bill 23 in the fall.

Be recognized as the trusted, authoritative voice of Ontario Public Libraries. Raise the public profile of FOPL within the library sector.	Produce social media that will market FOPL as well as be in a format that member libraries can easily edit for local impact.	Ongoing	Digital Marketer contracted to provide professional content. The traffic on the website, our social media accounts and newsroom blog has exploded.
Be recognized as the trusted, authoritative voice of Ontario Public Libraries. Raise the public profile of FOPL within the library sector.	Attend municipal conferences to promote the value impact of Ontario's public libraries on their local communities.	Ongoing	Jan 22-24 – ROMA, 250+ people Feb 1-4 – OLA, presentations + booth May 7-10 – FONOM, 250+ people June 11-14 – AMCTO, 300+ people August – AMO, 2000+ delegates

Training & Development

Provide Ontario's Public Libraries with professional training and development.

1. Coordinate training opportunities such as seminars, workshops, symposia, and webinars.
2. Collaborate in creation of trustee training tools.
3. Share expertise at professional conferences and events such as OLA Super Conference and Marketing Think Tank.
4. Build consensus in the Ontario Public Library community.

Objective	Method	Timeline	Result
Increase added value for member libraries. Establish training opportunities related to advocacy and library promotion.	Continue the FOPL Annual Info Series	Q3/Q4	Presentation Topics: Truth and Reconciliation Report AI/Chat GPT and Its' Implications for Libraries Asset Management Requirements Bill 23 and its' Implications for Libraries
Share expertise at professional conferences and events.	OLA SuperConference 2023	Q1	Tradeshow booth Session "Advocacy with Attitude" Session "Advocacy Primer"

Increase awareness of grant and subsidy opportunities. Offer resources for educational and sector awareness purposes.	Ongoing addition of resources and blogs shared with our members via email and the website.	Ongoing	Very positive feedback from our members regarding our website resources, blogs and monthly advocacy updates. The information is shared with boards and keeps FOPL relevant and top of mind.
Develop and provide advocacy resources for our members. Provide research to aid in advocacy initiatives.	Create an Advocacy Primer video for our members to use with their boards and councils. Collaborate with OLBA and OLS and contribute to their board training efforts.	Q1	Shared with Members on January 27 th .

Organizational Resilience

Increase organizational resiliency.

1. Seek alternate sources of funding to ensure fiscal stability.
2. Grow and retain membership through increased member engagement.
3. More effectively and more frequently communicate with individual members and FOPL caucuses.
4. Increase involvement and contribution of FOPL Working Groups.
5. Overcome challenges of diversity and geography.
6. Develop a succession plan for Executive Director and Administrative Assistant.

Objective	Method	Timeline	Result
Overcome challenges of diversity and geography. Grow and retain membership through increased engagement.	Host AGM virtually. Offer hybrid board meetings.	Q2	April 21 – 90+ participants

Seek alternate sources of funding to ensure fiscal stability.	Create Former Library Leaders Caucus. Promote MLS/LT student access to FOPL resources.	Q1	All MLS and LT schools emailed – will follow up in February. Three new members for FLL. Pursuing a partnership with ExLibris.
More effectively and more frequently communicate with individual members and FOPL caucuses.	Virtual Annual Caucus Meetings to engage with all members.	Q1	Meetings booked for March.
Overcome challenges of diversity and geography. Increase involvement and contribution of FOPL Working Groups.	Provide portions of the website, our resources, and the opportunity to request items in French Translation. Work with the ILPWG to create resources in First Nations languages.	Ongoing	Translations provided on an as needed basis. Have provided a few items in translation for the CFLA IFC in kind.
Grow and retain membership through increased member engagement.	Non-Member Campaign	Q4	

Indigenous Library Partnerships Working Group Board Report September 2023

Report To: FOPL Board
Report Name: Government Relations Working Group Report to the Board
Prepared by: Dina Stevens on behalf of the Working Group

Working Group: Kelly Bernstein, Waterloo Public Library
Kathy Fisher, Ottawa Public Library
Feather Maracle, Six Nations Public Library
Kathleen Copegog, Beausoleil First Nation Public Library
Sabrina Saunders, The Blue Mountains Public Library
Alicia Subnaik-Kilgour, Niagara Falls Public Library
Aly Velji, Toronto Public Library
Staff Resource: Dina Stevens, FOPL ED

Meetings: August 16, 2023

A. Recommendation

THAT the FOPL Board receive this report as information.

B. Background

This Working Group has been a standing committee of FOPL for a number of years. Since the reauthorization of Working Groups, this committee has been meeting regularly. Membership includes 2 CEOs from First Nation public libraries and five members from municipal public library systems.

C. Discussion of Needs, Issues and Work Completed

The main purpose of meeting in August was to determine a workplan for the group for the remainder of 2023 and to start thinking about goals for 2024.

The group identified that we should aim to produce one Indigenous themed webinar for the FOPL Info series every year and make that a standing item on the workplan.

The group identified three projects for the remainder of 2023:

1. "Truth and Reconciliation" Webinar – to be delivered near the end of September. Presenters include Sabrina Saunders.

2. Promotional video for First Nations Public Libraries government relations priorities.
 - a. The script and general outline of the video is currently being developed with the FOPL ED and Counsel Public Affairs. It will be given to both the FOPL and OLA indigenous working groups for comment/feedback.
 - b. \$5000 has already been approved for production.
 - c. Videographers and editors have already been identified and hired.
 - d. FOPL ED will act as project manager to ensure project completion – completion target is currently the November 14/15 lobbying days at Queens Park.
3. Feedback research project – the working group has identified that feedback and direct involvement from First Nations Public Libraries is crucial for appropriate representation. In preparation for the November 14/15 lobbying days, working group members will be reaching out to FNPLs to let them know about FOPL's opportunities, to gather feedback and comments from First Nations Public Library librarians, and compile talking points.

D. Next Steps

1. The working group will reconvene at the end of October to share feedback and liaise about the video project.

Government Relations Working Group Board Report September 2023

Report To: FOPL Members and Board
Report Name: Government Relations Working Group Report to the Board
Prepared by: Margie Singleton

Working Group: Vickery Bowles, Toronto PL
Michael Ciccone, London PL
Jodie Delgado, Springwater PL
Sonia Bebbington, Ottawa PL
Margie Singleton, Vaughan PL (Chair)
Christine Row, Mississippi Mills PL
Stephanie Clare, Georgian Bay PL

Staff Resource: Dina Stevens, FOPL ED

Meetings: June 16, 2023

Recommendation

THAT the FOPL Board receive this report as information.

Background

The Government Relations Working Group met June 16, 2023 before the FOPL Board meeting. A verbal report of the discussions and outcomes of that meeting was presented at the June 16, 2023 Board meeting.

Discussion of Needs, Issues and Work Completed

Topics discussed and reported on June 16, 2023 include the fulsome Executive Director's Update and Terms of Reference of the Working Group. The Working Group continues to update the Terms of Reference which will be forwarded to the Board for approval when completed.

Also discussed June 16, 2023 was a request from an individual citizen for FOPL's support opposing Simcoe County Council's request of the provincial government to amend Ontario's Public Library Act. The Executive Director was directed to respond to the individual that FOPL has been apprised of the evolving issue and will respond appropriately should the need arise.

A desire was expressed to pursue Library Day at Queen's Park when possible.

Next Meeting

September 14th, 10am - Virtual



MEMO

Federation of Ontario Public Libraries (FOPL)

Board of Directors Update

Ontario Government Relations: Status of Priorities & Recommendations

June 2023

PURPOSE & SUMMARY:

- This memo provides an overview of the public library sector's Ontario government relations priorities and activity, and recommendations to address direction from FOPL regarding the Public Libraries Operating Grant (PLOG).
- Each year, OLA and FOPL submit their identified priorities for provincial support as part of the Pre-Budget process. These priorities and accompanying submission are developed in the fall, approved by the respective boards, vetted with key ministry staff, and formally presented during the January Ontario Government Budget consultations.
- Following the submission of the 2023 OLA & FOPL Pre-Budget submission, the FOPL board of directors passed a motion to identify enhanced provincial operating funding for public libraries (PLOG) as a budget priority.
 - This recognized the importance of ensuring consistency in sector priorities for members and to enhance ongoing conversations with MPPs and other elected officials.
- We have had indications that the MTCS may be considering advancing the Ontario Digital Public Library and the First Nations Salary Supplement budget asks as ministry-initiated budget proposals for the 2024/25 provincial budget cycle.
- While OLA and FOPL have advocated for an increase to the PLOG for many years, ongoing consultations with ministry staff have indicated there is currently no interest in this priority.
- However, timed correctly, and matched to provincial government goals, we can plan further strategy to re-assert the need for an increase to the PLOG.

RECOMMENDATION FOR DISCUSSION:

- Based on the context and considerations outlined in this memo, Counsel puts forward the following recommended approach for discussion to address FOPL's motion regarding the PLOG in the context of this year, the upcoming budget cycle, and beyond.
 - A. Continue to emphasize focus on provincial investment in the ODPL and First Nations Salary Supplement as the sector's top (but not only) priorities for the duration of the current year.
 - B. Update the sector's key messaging on the PLOG, re-asserting the need for enhancement and framing in the context of additional pressures since the 2022 election, and opportunities for alignment with provincial government mandate priorities.
 - C. Provide an updated summary briefing document about public library sector priorities to support ongoing member engagement with provincial and municipal elected officials.
 - D. Through the FOPL Recommendations Group, consider how best to identify how enhanced PLOG funding would be used at the library level, particularly whether there are needs that are well-aligned with areas of focus for the Ontario government.

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- E. Include enhancing – rather than just maintaining – the PLOG as a sector priority in the joint FOPL & OLA 2024 Ontario Pre-Budget Submission (January 2024).
- F. In advance of the February 2024 FOPL Board of Director's meeting, provide an assessment of the likelihood of securing provincial funding for the ODPL and/or the First Nations Salary Supplement in the 2024 Ontario Budget.
- G. Looking beyond 2023/24, based on this assessment, as well as the outcome of the 2024 Ontario Budget, reassess the status and actions related to sector priorities to guide further Ontario government relations and associated tactics.

PLOG CONTEXT:

- Counsel Public Affairs (Counsel) has provided provincial government relations services on behalf of the public library sector – represented by the Ontario Library Association (OLA) and FOPL in partnership – since 2017.
- As a result of this outreach, the public library sector has successfully achieved several important outcomes:
 - Inclusion of public libraries within the new *Development Charges Act* framework, identifying public libraries as core community infrastructure within a significantly reduced list of eligible services and making all capital costs fully recoverable through development charges for the first time.
 - Securing \$4.8 million in provincial funding for the expansion and enhancement of public library broadband infrastructure, allowing for significant upgrades to be implemented at upwards of 100 public library branches across Ontario.
 - Persuading the Ontario Government to revise tabled legislation reducing the number of mandatory public library board meetings required per the *Public Libraries Act* and revising this requirement to a specific requirement brought forward by the public library sector.
 - Successfully securing commitments for significant enhancements to the PLOG in advance of the 2018 (Ontario Liberal Party) and 2022 (Ontario NDP, Ontario Liberal Party) provincial elections (*these were not implemented due to consecutive victories by the Ontario PC Party*).
- Bringing attention to the PLOG – its purpose, the length of time since it was last increased, and the need for a funding enhancement – has remained a consistent priority of the combined government relations effort.
- Since the 2018 Ontario Election, per the strategic advice of Counsel Public Affairs, FOPL and OLA have referred to “maintaining” rather than “increasing” the PLOG in their formal Pre-Budget submissions to the Ministry of Finance as part of the Ontario budget process.
 - This reflects insight that the government was not interested in considering additional PLOG funding at that time.
 - Moreover, during the government's first mandate, it was considered strongly advisable to manage the risk of potential funding cuts by a government that was eager to identify savings.
 - COVID-19 contingencies further de-prioritized this issue for the Ontario Government for several years.
 - Pre-Budget submissions are time-limited documents that, alongside virtual or in-person hearings, provide a formal opportunity to submit input to the Budget process.
 - Notwithstanding the pre-Budget process, requests for additional budget spending are not considered by the Ministry of Finance in isolation of broader dialogue with the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport (MTCS), and largely defined by funding allocations for each ministry determined at Treasury Board in the months preceding the consultation.
- In advance of the 2022 Ontario Election, FOPL and OLA re-introduced the formal request for enhanced PLOG funding. This was done in recognition of political opportunities created by the impending election and the potential for a change in government.
 - As a result of an active advocacy effort undertaken by FOPL and OLA, supported by both Counsel and grassroots membership, both the Ontario NDP and Ontario Liberal Party committed to significant PLOG enhancement in their 2022 election platforms.

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- However, the Ontario PC Party – the party of the incumbent government – took no position on this ask and did not release a formal platform. No new action on public libraries was identified in the pre-election Budget.

CURRENT APPROACH:

- Since the Fall of 2022, FOPL and OLA are focusing on two top government relations priorities: securing provincial funding for the creation of an Ontario Digital Public Library, and enhancement of the First Nations Salary Supplement.
 - This was reflected in the framing of FOPL & OLA's 2023 Pre-Budget submission, which also reflected key messaging on the importance of the PLOG and the need to, at minimum, maintain it at current levels.
- This approach was informed based on insight obtained through direct conversations with senior MTCS Minister's Office staff and Ministry officials.
 - The appointment of Minister Neil Lumsden to the position of Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport, alongside new Minister's Office staff, represented a positive opportunity to re-introduce the public library sector to the political leadership of its key Ministry.
 - These briefings and conversations led us to draw two conclusions:
 - There continues to be little to no appetite within the Ontario Government to consider enhanced PLOG funding in the current environment, and skepticism about support for increased funding within the Premier's Office or Treasury Board based on current priorities.
 - By contrast, there is demonstrable interest in working to address FOPL and OLA's other two priorities – the Ontario Digital Public Library and the First Nations Salary Supplement – in the context of the forthcoming 2024 Ontario Budget.
- It was therefore recommended that the best strategic course of action was for FOPL and OLA to prioritize their full effort towards secure funding for these two priorities as part of a new, MTCS-initiated budgetary allocation as part of the 2024 Ontario Budget.
- Throughout this time, FOPL & OLA have continued to provide direct context and information to the MTCS Minister's Office and MTCS officials on the importance of the PLOG and the challenges created by the time elapsed since it was last increased.
 - This includes written feedback to MTCS as part of a Ministry-led information-gathering exercise (Spring 2023) on sector priorities.

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APPENDIX: CONSIDERATIONS & RISKS

- In undertaking the current approach and considering our recommendation regarding the PLOG, Counsel assessed the following considerations and risks:
- ***MTCS Direction & Actions on Public Library Sector Priorities***
 - There appears to be genuine interest in trying to move forward with proposed new investments for the ODPL and the First Nations Salary Supplement as part the 2024 Ontario Budget.
 - Most successful requests for new funding within the Budget do not emerge as third-party proposals during the Pre-Budget submission period, but rather are initiated by the respective Ministry and captured in the proposed allocations brought forward as part of shaping the next year's budget.
 - These allocations are subject to a rigorous internal review and approval process conducted by the Treasury Board in the late fall of the current fiscal year.
 - Ministry-initiated proposals usually take significant advance preparation before they are considered by the Minister and ultimately Treasury Board.
 - The first steps appear to have already taken place, along with follow-up requests from the Minister's Office for additional information, as well as further information-gathering meetings and information requests from MTCS staff to FOPL, OLA and other sector stakeholders.
 - We are anticipating more insight on further steps in dialogue with MTCS later this summer ahead of critical decision points in the Fall.
- ***Staying Focused on Near-Term Opportunities***
 - As noted, MTCS Minister's Office staff have signaled that a PLOG enhancement is unlikely to proceed at this time.
 - Actively shifting the attention of the Minister's Office and Ministry officials to an additional priority will create a significant risk of undermining the Ministry-led initiative regarding the other priorities and efforts to secure this funding.
- ***A Time-Limited – Rather than Open-Ended – Approach***
 - The recommended primary emphasis on the ODPL and the First Nations Salary Supplement is not unrestricted – but will be re-assessed on an ongoing basis as discussions with MTCS and other ministries continue.
 - It is highly conditional on continuing, favourable indications from MTCS that a Ministry-initiated budget proposal will proceed as part of the 2024 Ontario Budget.
 - At various points, this focus will be reconsidered, including:
 - Information that MTCS is not proceeding with a Ministry-initiated request, or that it is rejected by Treasury Board;
 - A change in MTCS priorities or focus due to a Cabinet shuffle (discussed below); or
 - Absence of any new investment in the ODPL or the First Nations Salary Supplement as part of the 2024 Ontario Budget.
 - If it is clear (or reasonably anticipated) that the MTCS-initiated funding request is not proceeding or was rejected, this will trigger a need to reconvene and reconsider collectively whether further changes in tactical direction are required in the immediate term.
- ***Maintaining a Common Voice on Sector Priorities***
 - Since the beginning of Counsel's work with FOPL and OLA, the public library sector has benefitted from maintaining a common voice on issues and priorities affecting libraries in Ontario.
 - This has allowed both organizations, as well as Counsel, to speak with authority as representatives of Ontario's public libraries.
 - The Ontario Government has been able to act, share information, or respond with confidence that they have clarity on the common position of the public library sector's representatives.

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- Inconsistency between FOPL or OLA on sector priorities will create uncertainty within government and will likely undermine current progress without significantly advancing new or re-prioritized asks.
- ***Cabinet Shuffle***
 - There are indications that the Premier is contemplating a Cabinet shuffle, whether late this Spring, over the summer or in early Fall.
 - While Minister Lumsden remains a strong fit to remain as Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport, it is important to be prepared for any eventuality.
 - Should a Cabinet shuffle occur, there will be a need to re-engage with the incoming Minister's Office to provide foundational briefings to the incoming Minister and potentially new Minister's Office staff.
 - While this will present an opportunity to re-introduce the PLOG as a priority for the public library sector, it will also narrow the window and increase the importance of a tight focus to keep the possibility of MTCS-initiated funding for the ODPL for the First Nations Salary Supplement on the table for next year's budget.
- ***Building Municipal Support for a PLOG Enhancement***
 - Building municipal support for a PLOG enhancement – from both major urban municipalities and smaller communities – will be a critical ingredient to securing provincial action on this priority going forward.
 - A significant risk inherent in any PLOG enhancement is that municipalities may use an increase in provincial funding as a reason to reduce their financial contribution to local public libraries – with the net effect being no budgetary increase for public libraries.
 - Securing clear municipal support for the PLOG enhancement, while challenging, will have two important impacts:
 - Demonstrate to the Ontario government that PLOG enhancement is a priority for municipalities, leveraging their collective voice to amplify the ask and increase the likelihood of provincial action; and
 - Help build understanding and secure commitments that any enhanced PLOG investment by the provincial government will be a net increase to the overall public library budget – not met with municipal cuts.
 - Preparing and building internal buy-in among FOPL members (CEOs and board members) to participate in an active, grassroots advocacy effort with their own municipalities will be a fundamentally important step and will take some time to bear results.



MEMO

Ontario Library Association (OLA) / Federation of Ontario Public Libraries (FOPL)

Enhanced Provincial Operating Funding:

Recommended Approach for Refocused Provincial Priority Ask

September 2023

PURPOSE & SUMMARY:

- This memo builds upon the earlier recommended government relations strategy for Ontario's public library sector, as outlined in the June 2023 memo prepared upon request for the FOPL board who asked to analyse the strategy for the provincial operating grant request, with a view to refocusing advocacy towards an increase to the grant versus maintaining the existing funding.
- Counsel was directed to work with OLA and FOPL to develop a proposed approach, narrative and evidence to reassert the need for enhanced provincial operating funding within the context of the 2024-25 Ontario budget cycle.
- The objective is to continue to emphasize the need for increased funding and a new path forward towards securing enhanced investment.
- This approach was intended to complement ongoing dialogue with the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport (MTCS) regarding the proposed Ontario Digital Public Library and First Nations Salary Supplement budget asks, pending further clarification as to their status as government-initiated proposals.

CONTEXT – UPDATE:

- Bringing attention to the PLOG – its purpose, the length of time since it was last increased, and the need for a funding enhancement – has remained a consistent priority of the combined government relations effort.
 - At the same time, these efforts have not been successful to date in motivating action by the Ontario PC Party government.
 - (By contrast, significant commitments to address this issue were secured from the Ontario Liberal Party [2018, 2022] and the Ontario NDP [2023] – but neither party was ultimately in position to fulfill their commitment).
 - *An extended summary of these efforts and corresponding assessment was included in the June 2023 memo prepared for OLA and FOPL.*
- As identified in the previous memo, Counsel anticipated further clarification from MTCS regarding the possibility of ministry-initiated action on active OLA/FOPL priorities, specifically the Ontario Digital Public Library.
 - **Since then, Counsel has confirmed through direct discussions with MTCS that, emerging from and informed by the consultations undertaken with FOPL, OLA and other stakeholders in March, Ministry staff are preparing policy options for the Minister's consideration pertaining to some of these priorities, as well as engaging with counterparts in other Ministries on potential approaches.**
- The proposed refocusing of enhanced provincial operating funding is intended to complement the potential for significant progress on other priorities, without inadvertently insinuating that they are no longer important to the sector – or that the government does not stand to benefit from a positive response should they act to fulfill them.
- Furthermore, FOPL participation at the annual Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) conference in August 2023 affirmed that the positive perception of public libraries

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by municipal leaders (heads of council, councillors and chief administrative officers) is currently very strong.

- These interactions generally reflect greater awareness of the local impact that public libraries have and continue to have on challenging community priorities, and a desire to see greater provincial funding to supplement existing municipal investments.

CONSIDERATIONS:

- The June 2023 memo outlined in detail a variety of considerations informing Counsel's guidance on the Ontario public library sector's strategic advocacy with the Ontario Government, specifically regarding enhanced provincial operating funding. In brief, these include:
 - Positive progress in securing MTCS support for other OLA & FOPL priority asks (Ontario Digital Public Library and First Nations Salary Supplement);
 - Potential of an impending Cabinet shuffle and the impact on the Minister and Minister's Office at Tourism, Culture and Sport;
 - Maintaining a common voice on public library sector priorities; and
 - Identifying opportunities to build municipal support for a provincial funding enhancement.
- As described above, MTCS continues to demonstrate positive interest and action in moving forward on other priority asks, particularly the Ontario Digital Public Library, although the specific outcome is to be determined.
- There are also general considerations regarding the fiscal posture and mandate-oriented focus of the Ontario Government that are relevant to Counsel's recommendations related to a refocused ask.
 - There is a long-standing, general reluctance within the provincial government to make open-ended commitments for enhanced operating funding or transfer payments, with the most significant exception being large base funding increases to some ministry budgets (such as Health and Education).
 - In some areas where open-ended or inflation-linked enhancements have been made by the current government, such as mental health support funding or ODSP, they stand out as a particular exception rather than a rule.
 - Major government funding decisions to date have tended to be very rigorously aligned to key themes and priorities from the government's election mandate, and almost universally framed in that context.
 - The argument for making funding enhancements to address the impacts of inflation and the erosion of purchasing power – while very timely – are proving to be ineffective. Inflation is being cited as a near-universal rationale for funding requests at this time, and the government does not have the means or the appetite to address all of them.
 - The provincial government has demonstrated a newfound willingness to enter arbitration with major public sector unions, such as teachers. While avoiding politically damaging labour disruptions, arbitrated bargaining decisions will have a major impact on the fiscal bottom line, and are expected to contribute to reinforce cautious fiscal sentiments at the budget-setting table.
 - As provincial operating funding represents approximately 5% of average public library budgets, it is difficult to convince the provincial government that a failure to enhance this funding will lead to a catastrophic outcome (operationally or politically, such as library closures) or inoculate the public library from a destructive decision by the municipality (such as a dramatic reduction in funding).
 - There is also an important need to strike the balance between moving this priority forward and putting other asks at risk. Building internal support for the Ontario Digital Public Library has required years of effort, and it may be poorly received for an additional major funding ask to immediately follow it. Both asks will continue to demonstrate how they are investments in government priorities, rather than a "make good" for past shortfalls.

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ENHANCED PROVINCIAL OPERATING FUNDING – RECOMMENDED APPROACH

- It is Counsel's understanding that the objective of a refocused ask is make a concerted effort towards securing enhanced operating funding under the current provincial government, rather than solely continuing to demonstrate the identified need to membership.
- Reflecting this, informed by the context and considerations outlined above, Counsel recommends that a refocused ask for enhanced provincial operating funding:
 - Continue to reflect the full amount of the funding requested in OLA & FOPL's up-to-date priorities document (\$25 million annually);
 - Target the funding to broadly address 3-4 high-priority areas of focus that the funding is to be used for. These will be closely-aligned to identified provincial government priorities, and are recommended to include:
 - Job training and skills development in key sectors and fields experiencing skills shortages;
 - Addressing the community impacts of mental health and addictions;
 - Services and resources to assist high-needs members of the community, specifically seniors, newcomers and working families; and/or
 - K-12 student success;
 - Retain significant flexibility for how the funding is used – whether for operations, resources or staffing – as long as it can be demonstrated through reporting that it is addressing these priorities.
 - Be presented as a time-limited (3 years), renewable, investment, rather than an open-ended increase;
 - Be framed as a standalone provincial investment, rather than an increase to the PLOG, so as to not require a reconsideration of the PLOG formula in how the funding is distributed among public libraries.

NEXT STEPS:

- OLA & FOPL boards to review and approve the recommended approach set out in this memo, pending any agreed upon modifications.
- OLA & FOPL, informed by input from sector leadership, to confirm the proposed areas of focus for the utilization of enhanced provincial operating funding.
- Counsel will develop a proposed narrative and key messages for OLA and FOPL approval, and incorporation in the 2024-25 pre-Budget submission cycle.
- Counsel to outline a proposed action plan to engage with the Ontario Government and MPPs on the updated proposal (and other sector priorities), as well as with municipal leaders to secure municipal support for the proposal.
 - This may include a recommendation for targeted public opinion polling to test key messages and assumptions and thereby refine the pitch to government.

Protecting Local Public Libraries Across Ontario

OLA & FOPL Advocacy Priorities

Public libraries are an essential part of communities across Ontario – but many who depend on them are still falling through the gaps.

- Public libraries are Ontario's farthest-reaching, most cost-effective public resource and community hubs.
- Millions of Ontarians rely on local public libraries in their communities: to work, to learn, to connect to community and government services, and to find or train for a job.
- Despite this, many individuals and families across the province are unable to access the local public library resources they need as libraries' resources are stretched well beyond capacity.
- While these challenges existed prior to the pandemic, the combined impact of the pandemic, the demand for skilled staff in a tight labour market, and the impact of inflation on public library budgets has brought our libraries to a critical point for many communities across Ontario.
- The situation for public libraries located on First Nations Reserves in Ontario is even more challenging, as these libraries do not receive funding from municipal taxes. This has overburdened a funding model that has left many public libraries on reserve closed or with severely reduced access.

Investing in public libraries will directly support people, their communities and local economy.

Through carefully targeted investments, the Ontario Government can ensure that all Ontarians – no matter where they live or learn – will continue to have access to modern, cost-effective resources and services they have come to rely on through their local public libraries.

- Working alongside First Nations Public Library leaders, rapidly implement a sustainable funding model for public libraries on reserve to ensure that these important local hubs are fully-funded and viable. This includes enhancing the existing direct provincial funding support for public libraries on reserve to sustainably fund library operations and ensure a living income for frontline library staff in these communities.
- Provide critical e-learning support and fair access to modern, digital resources for all Ontario

public libraries through the creation of an Ontario Digital Public Library, thereby leveraging the province's significant purchasing power to give all Ontarians access to a common core of high-quality e-learning & online resources and more e-books.

- Increase critical provincial funding for Ontario's public libraries and work with municipalities to ensure that this critical investment builds upon and enhances existing municipal support for public library budgets.

Priorities

- **Working alongside First Nations Public Library leaders, implement a sustainable funding model for public libraries on reserve to ensure that these important local hubs are fully-funded and viable.**

As an immediate first step, enhance the existing direct provincial funding support for public libraries on reserve to sustainably fund library operations and ensure a living income for frontline library staff in these communities.

- Public libraries on reserve serve as an accessible gathering place and information sharing resource for First Nations communities. They are deeply important to maintaining a sense of community and to minimizing social isolation in these communities, many of which are remote or face systemic social and economic challenges.
- Furthermore, public libraries on reserve perform a unique role in the preservation of their communities' memory, archiving community photos and historical information, and in revitalizing First Nations languages through cultural resources, language learning programming, storytelling events, and craft groups.
- Public libraries on reserve are chronically under-funded. The municipal tax revenue used to support most public libraries does not exist for public libraries in First Nation communities. Provincial funding through the Public Library Operating Grant (PLOG) and the First Nation Salary Supplement Grant (FNSS) provides on average \$15,000/year to each of the existing public libraries on reserve. Band Councils must therefore allocate essential funding support such as rent, hydro, internet, fax and telephone services.
- There is little to no funding available for collections, programming and technology resources.
- Librarians rely on one-time grants or donations to develop their collections, and many librarians contribute personally to purchase programming supplies and food.
- Many public libraries on reserve operate with only one staff person who is expected to perform many functions – librarian, archivist, community liaison, fundraiser, administrator, tech support, and more. Public libraries on reserve need additional funding to provide staff with a living wage and to increase staffing levels so that they can meet their communities' needs for library programs and services.
- Of the 133 First Nations communities in Ontario, only 39 have public libraries. The number has steadily dropped in recent years and the pandemic has only made this situation worse, with four public libraries on reserve closing their doors due to inadequate funding over the past 20 months.

Recommended Priority:

- As an immediate first step, the First Nations Salary Supplement must be increased to ensure

that all existing staff of public libraries on reserve are fairly compensated for the work they perform.

- *Projected cost:* \$2 million / annually (First Nation Salary Supplement increase for existing public libraries on reserve).

- **Provide critical e-learning support and fair access to modern, digital resources for all Ontario public libraries through the creation of an Ontario Digital Public Library, thereby leveraging the province's significant purchasing power to give all Ontarians access to a common core of high-quality e-learning & online resources and more e-books.**

- Ontario's Public Libraries are essential to equitable, reliable access to broadband internet and computers. They are especially vital for many First Nation, rural and Northern communities where at home connectivity is limited, and for hundreds of thousands of Ontarians that cannot afford in-home internet services.
- The Ontario Government has recognized the crucial importance of public libraries to broadband internet access, making a \$4.8 million investment to install or upgrade broadband connectivity at over 100 public libraries across the province.
- In particular, people rely on local public libraries for access to digital and online resources, which contribute to student success and life-long learning, as well as towards entrepreneurship and job readiness.
- However, these resources are expensive, especially when purchased on a patchwork, library-by-library basis.
- Many public libraries in Ontario, particularly in smaller and First Nation communities, struggle to pay for or are unable to afford these high-quality resources.
- People living in communities of less than 5,000 have access to less than half the e-books and less than a third of the online databases as those living in Toronto – despite accessing them twice as often per capita as people in large urban communities.
- Creating an Ontario Digital Public Library through a targeted provincial investment would leverage the province's significant purchasing power to give all Ontarians – no matter where they live – access to a common set of high-quality digital resources and more e-books through their public library.
- Ontario's public library sector would work closely the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport and agency partners on the development and implementation of an Ontario Digital Public Library to ensure the included resources are appropriate to the needs of public libraries and communities of all sizes, that barriers to access are addressed, and that integration with existing digital infrastructure at the individual library level is seamless.
- *Projected cost:* \$9.4 million / annually.

- **Increase critical provincial funding for Ontario's public libraries**

- With no increase to annual provincial funding support for public libraries (Public Libraries Operating Grant, or PLOG) in over 20 years, the value of the province's investment in public libraries has decreased by over 60%.
- Libraries have adapted and maximized the impact of every dollar despite inflation, substantial

changes in technology, and the increasing importance of libraries as a vital community hub and public resource.

- In a growing number of communities, especially rural and Northern communities, these budget pressures are reaching a tipping point.
- Although over 90% of public library funding is provided by the local municipal government, provincial operating funding provides critical stability to public library budgets.
- This investment would be shared across hundreds of Ontario libraries with an emphasis on smaller towns and rural communities, and provide predictable, flexible funding that gives local public libraries the ability to make long-term investments that best respond to the needs of the people and the local communities they serve.
- The proposed investment reflects a restoration of the present value of the Ontario Government's support for Ontario's public libraries, addressing the impact of inflation, rising costs and other pressures over more than two decades since it was originally set.
- In conjunction with this investment, the Ontario Government would be well-advised to work with municipalities to ensure that this critical investment builds upon and enhances existing municipal support for public library budgets.
- *Projected cost:* \$25 million / annually, as an enhancement to the current provincial funding support provided through the Public Libraries Operating Grant

Ontario Library Association / Federation of Ontario Public Libraries

The Ontario Library Association (OLA) is the oldest continually-operating non-profit library association in Canada, with over 3,500 members comprised of library staff and supporters from public, school, academic, and special libraries.

The Federation of Ontario Public Libraries (FOPL) represents 237 public library systems in Ontario, including 39 Public Libraries on Reserves.

Together, OLA & FOPL are committed to ensuring that libraries can continue to play a critical role in the social, education, cultural and economic success of our communities and schools.

‘Library Days’ at Queens Park

Report To: The FOPL Board
Prepared by: Dina Stevens, Executive Director
Prepared on August 30, 2023

Memo to FOPL Board Members

Provincial Advocacy – November 14 / 15

The Federation of Ontario Public Libraries and the Ontario Library Association are excited to once again be bringing our provincial advocacy and the collective voice of Ontario’s libraries and library staff to the halls of Queen’s Park this November.

Resuming a long-standing pre-pandemic tradition, these advocacy days are an important part of our collective provincial government relations efforts, providing us with a unique opportunity for to build broad awareness and undertake concentrated advocacy with elected members from all parties and government officials on the importance of Ontario’s public libraries and the sector’s priority needs. This year, we are undertaking a two-day effort to give us a better chance of securing as many of the key meetings we are targeting as possible.

Through Library Days at Queen’s Park, our sector is collectively fulfilling several key advocacy objectives:

- Building the library sector’s capacity for advocacy and greater unity on sector priorities
- Educating, increasing awareness, and building and maintaining local relationships with a full spectrum of elected officials and Ministry officials
- Raising the profile and understanding of the impact of libraries and the challenges they face among government decision-makers – especially how these impact their own communities
- Bringing focus and momentum to the sector’s priority asks at a critical time in the government’s annual cycle – and previewing these priorities in advance of the pre-Budget consultation process
- Updating members and officials on positive progress to date on key priorities, and how they can contribute to our shared success
- Demonstrating the collective impact of FOPL to membership

Participation from board members and other library leaders is essential to the success of these advocacy days. Local representation is critical to securing many of our targeted meetings, as local MPPs are keenly interested in engaging with library leaders in their own communities. Participants will be fully supported by OLA and FOPL, as well as our government relations partners at Counsel Public Affairs, to ensure that they can shine as effective advocates. This includes:

- Virtual training on effective advocacy and what to expect on the Library Days



- A complete meeting toolkit providing all the necessary logistical, scheduling and background information for the day(s)
- Supporting briefing material, key messages and leave-behinds
- Multi-person groups to ensure a breadth of advocacy experience and knowledge of the sector's priority asks
- Opportunity to attend the Ontario Legislature for Question Period and to be present to receive greetings and acknowledgements of Library Day by members of the various parties