

January 29, 2021

Budget Committee
City of Toronto
Toronto City Hall
10th Floor, West Tower
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Dear Chair Crawford and Members of the Budget Committee:

Re: Toronto Public Library Board – 2021 Operating Budget

Pursuant to recommendation 4 endorsed by the Library Board at its meeting January 25, 2021, the *2021 Operating Budget - City Staff Recommended* report is being forwarded to Budget Committee for consideration. Pursuant to recommendation 1 of the report, the Library Board gratefully acknowledges the continuing support provided by Council as reflected in the recommended 2021 operating budget of \$204.117 million, which represents a 3.8% increase. Pursuant to recommendation 2 of the report, the Library Board requests Budget Committee to consider funding for two service enhancements totaling \$0.319 million in 2021 for Community Librarians Outreach and Digital Literacy for Seniors programs, as these were not included in the recommended budget before you.

Please find attached to this letter:

- an extract from the draft Minutes of the January 25, 2021 meeting of the Toronto Public Library Board; and
- Report: 2021 Operating Budget - City Staff Recommended

Community Librarians Outreach

While working onsite in partner agency locations, community librarians work closely with agency staff and clients. The intent is for the librarians to learn about and understand these clients' information needs, and respond by providing the best possible mix of the full range of library services and programs. Community librarians have worked in many settings including Toronto Shelter, Support & Housing Administration, The Toronto East and South Detention Centres, Toronto Employment and Social Services. A 2021 budget enhancement would allow TPL to focus on delivering services in shelters, work with agencies to support individuals recently released from the correctional system and focus on confronting anti-black racism by working with agencies dedicated to serving black communities in Toronto. The Community Librarians Outreach program would add 2 positions in 2021 and an additional 2 positions in 2022, for a cost of \$0.107 million in 2021, and the full year cost of \$0.411 million in 2022.

Office of the City Librarian

789 Yonge St, Toronto, ON, Canada M4W 2G8
t: 416 393 7032 | f: 416 393 7083

Digital Literacy for Seniors

This supports social connectedness by expanding digital literacy programs for seniors, both in branches and in the community. The in-branch program targets disadvantaged seniors who are socially isolated, with low income, and lacking digital literacy and likely both devices and home connectivity. The community-based program is designed in partnership with Toronto Community Housing (TCHC) to engage socially isolated seniors by bringing regularly scheduled library services, delivered by a community librarian, directly to the TCHC seniors' buildings where they reside. Both in-branch and community programs will address the diverse needs and challenges among Toronto's seniors as identified in the City of Toronto Seniors Strategy. The Digital Literacy for Seniors program would add 2 positions in 2021 and an additional 2 positions in 2022, for a cost of \$0.212 million in 2021 to support the community-based program in TCHC locations, and equipment for eight branches would support the expansion of the in-branch program, with the full year cost of \$0.723 million in 2022.

The Community Librarians Outreach and Digital Literacy for Seniors will have meaningful impact on Toronto residents and in particular, the most vulnerable, while supporting the City's Poverty Reduction Strategy and the Seniors Strategy. The Board appreciates your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Vickery Bowles." The signature is written in a cursive style with a period at the end.

Vickery Bowles
City Librarian

Attachments:

Board Minutes No.: 21-014

Board Report No. 14: *2021 Operating Budget - City Staff Recommended*