

REPORT

Oakville Public Library Board

Meeting Date: June 23, 2022

FROM: Oakville Public Library

DATE: June 14, 2022

SUBJECT: Board Newsletter Proposal – June 23, 2022

RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the Board Newsletter Proposal report is received.
2. That Option C is approved for implementation following the July Board Meeting.

KEY FACTS:

The following are key points for consideration with respect to this report:

- At the January 27, 2022 Board Meeting, the Board requested that Ms. Wong consider a newsletter be developed with updates after each board meeting and be made available to the public. This newsletter could be made available via email and social media.
- Staff reviewed options and are providing three (3) options related to the creation/inclusion of board information in a newsletter format.

BACKGROUND:

At the January 27, 2022 Board Meeting, the Board requested that Ms. Wong consider developing a newsletter with updates after each board meeting and be made available to the public. This newsletter could be made available via email and social media.

The goal being to increase public awareness of board issues and decision and to increase transparency of the Library Board as a whole.

OPL staff sought out library examples of board communications and found two libraries that issue a separate communication from their board.

- Vancouver Regional Island Library (VRIL) which issues a [quarterly update](#). VIRL is a regional library consisting of 28 member municipalities and 10 regional districts.

- Lethbridge Public Library issues an annual board update (Appendix A).

A number of Canadian Urban Library Council (CULC) libraries did produce board newsletters in the past but discontinued due to low engagement and the impacts on staff time. The current practice is to post meeting agendas and minutes publicly.

COMMENT/OPTIONS:

Staff reviewed several options and are providing (3) options for Board consideration:

Option A – Monthly Board Newsletter

OPL could create a dedicated newsletter to go out within a week of an OPL Board Meeting, highlighting the agenda and key decision items.

Pros:

- *Dedicated newsletter focused on board activities.*
- *Breakdown of key items.*
- *Timely.*

Cons:

- *Requires staff time to create content for a stand-alone newsletter.*
- *Would need to build subscribers from scratch.*
- *Not every month has a board meeting.*

Option B – Quarterly Board Newsletter

Building on the model from VRIL, OPL could issue a newsletter quarterly, highlighting key items from that period. This option would allow for quarterly news to be summarized and for the newsletter to remain consistent (not all months have a board meeting).

Pros

- *Able to highlight key items from the quarter.*
- *Less staff time than Option A.*

Cons:

- *Not as timely as monthly.*
- *Requires staff time to create content for a stand-alone newsletter.*

Option C – Board section with existing OPL newsletter

OPL currently produces a newsletter that goes out weekly on Friday's listing upcoming events and programs as well as important news updates. The current newsletter has over 9000 subscribers. A board section could be added to OPL's existing newsletter to highlight board activities the week following the board meeting.

Pros:

- *Newsletter is already established with 9061 subscribers.*
- *Minimal staff time for all options.*
- *Provides a one stop newsletter for all OPL news.*

Cons:

- *Not dedicated to only board information.*

To fulfill the Board's request of a newsletter, it was suggested that staff review the newsletter produced by the Halton Regional Police Services (HRPS).

OPL staff reviewed the HRPS newsletter and spoke with HRPS staff responsible for producing the content. Following these discussions, it was determined that currently OPL does not have the bench depth to support this initiative without significant impacts on other projects. Due to this impact, OPL is recommending Option C which allows board news to have a strong start using our existing subscriber base as well as to leverage existing resources and achieve the desired outcome (more board transparency) without impact other initiatives.

Staff Recommendation: Option C

Regardless of the option selected, OPL will start posting via social channels prior to upcoming meetings to ensure the public is aware of their ability to watch board meetings (both live and recorded) and review the full board package. An example of a social post can be found as Appendix C.

APPENDICES:

Appendix A – Lethbridge Public Library - Annual Board Report – 2021

Appendix B – OPL Newsletter Sample - Option C

Appendix C – Social post sample

Prepared and submitted by:
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