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Coming up at 6 pm, it's this month's Guelph Public Library Board meeting. Here's what they're talking about for September:



Vice-Chair Williamson calls the meeting to order.

Williamson says that he will be guiding the board at meetings for the next couple of months as Chair Ellery is teaching a course Monday evenings this semester.

Williamson asks for a moment to say thanks to all the people who volunteer and organised the Book Sale this weekend. He also salutes staff for an incident he witnessed at the main library where a man was going through "some strife" and he was well supported by staff.

Agenda for this meeting approved.

Declaration of Pecuniary Interests? Nope.

Consent agenda. Member Cowan asks to pull the Operating Variance.

**Consent Agenda (15 min) – Board Review**

- 5.1 Adoption of June 2023 Minutes
- 5.2 Correspondence
- 5.3 CEO's Report
- 5.4 Service Utilization Scorecard Report
- 5.5 Service Capacity Scorecard Report
- 5.6 Operating Variance Report

Cowan asks if the year-to-date budget is the full budget by 12 or by expenses. Deputy CEO Atkins says its by month.

Cowan asks if a line item is a little ahead, should they be concerned. Atkins says that there are costs amortised over 12 months when they pay for books in Jan.

Next, New Central Library: Milestone Update Report. Mr. Chatha the project manager notes that the contractor and exhibition company are on site, and construction should begin in a few days.

Member Carlsson asks about the involvement of the City's accessibility co-ordinator. He says they're involved in all stage.

Williamson asks Chatha if there's anything they should keep an eye on. He notes that so far the project is under budget.

Cllr Caron asks if there's any chance for the board to comment on the public space in the district. CEO Kraft says that's a question for the steering committee and they haven't approached him yet.

Caron asks if the board should ask for the ability to comment on public space as it might effect the library. Kraft says that's a good idea if the board wants to make a motion.

Caron moves a motion to have the CEO correspond with the project manager to comment on designs that affect site plan for the Baker District. Cllr Klassen seconds.

Motion is approved.

Member Rishworth asks about accountability when it comes to overseeing the budget on the project. Kraft says the job of the board is done, but there's no formal reporting back to the board except thru him; the City has their project management team.

Motion to receive update for information approved.

Next, Final 2024 GPL Proposed Operating Budget Report. Kraft and Atkins will present.

Atkins begins the presentation. He says this is a transformational budget that will give the library the resource for the move in 2026 or 27. Budget estimates are based on historic use, and approved levels of service plus GPL and City Strat plans.

Note: An info report will be going to council next month to outline the operational needs of the new main library.

Operating request for 2024 is \$11.38 million, a 8.77% increase. This is the largest year over year increase since they opened the East End branch in 2010. Compensation increase, and inflation among the drivers.

Plus, rental increase at Scottsdale & Westminster, increase in book list prices, internal charges for West End Branch, Bookmobile, insurance and security going up 16%.

Looking to add 5 FTES for \$514,221 and includes programmer, library assistant, clerk, supervisor of archives and record management and supervisor of communications. Business case identifies need to hire 25 new staff members for the new main.

68% of budget is compensation

16% is purchase services

15% is purchased goods

GPL is in line with the national average on their budgeting needs.

Library is projecting more modest revenue last year. Reminder: the GPL eliminated late fees on borrowed materials two years ago.

Majority of new staff will be added in 2026 and 27, and the GPL will see savings in 2027 as the old building goes offline and the new building is fully operations. In 2025 the increase will be 7.2% and it will be 12.03% in 2026.

Caron asks about servicing Conestoga students when they arrive in '25, can we advocate for change to the operating formula? Kraft says there's a group in the Cdn. Urban Library Council advocating for that changes, but so far that's on deaf ears.

Kraft asks what the board can do to advocate. Kraft says he would like to reach out to Conestoga and look at a partnership, and he also talk to ministry rep about coming up with a strategy to reach the minister.


Klassen asks the \$3.5 million fundraising goal. Kraft says that was the consultant's goal as to what the GPL could reasonably raise in a direct campaign. Proper campaign will kick off later this fall.

Cowan asks what happens after the budget is approved. Kraft says it will go to the City's finance department and will be presented as part of multiyear budget.

Cowan asks if there will be any issues at council. Williamson says that council usually hems close to the board approved budget. Klassen warns that the budget is going to be very, very challenging this year.

Williamson says that they're not making news through the budget, this has been a process that council should be aware of as they date back to the deliberations about building the new library building.

The budget will be presented to city council on November 7 at 9 am.

Caron notes that the library has repeatedly brought a budget back to the city with a 0-2% increase for years, as per the finance staff. Williamson says the community made the decision to invest in the library for many reasons and we need to make sure residents get  worth.

Cllr Goller asks for rationale to add positions now. Atkins says its kind of impractical to bring in 25 new people at the same time as the new building is opening. Also, the library is at capacity now. Library added 2 new staff positions since 2010.

Goller asks if the City knows that this request is coming. Atkins says it was announced in the consultant's business case that changes would start in around 2024.

Goller asks what if council only approves half. Atkins says the library will still open, but it probably won't be operating at 100 per cent.

Rishworth asks if staff anticipate any problems with recruitment. The HR manager says that there are challenges, especially with these specialised roles. Will be longer turnaround time. Archives is an especially challenging pool of applicants.

Motion to approve the operating budget by Klassen/Rishworth. Board approves.

Next, Final 2024 Capital Budget Request Report.

Recommending capital budget request of \$3.27 million, which is also slightly larger than usual.

\$50k for RFID tech for self-check outs

\$175k I.T.

\$50k (current) main library maintenance

\$75k for branch upgrades

\$2.92 million for new collections and the new building.

Atkins notes that the current main library still has the AC unit that came with it in 1965.

Hoping to get a few more years out of it.



Capital costs will fall to \$185k in 2025 and that's the legal it will hang around for a couple of years before going back up in 2028 for a new bookmobile. On the other hand, the move to the new building will mean a savings on maintenance costs for the current building.

Williamson asks how long they could push off buying the new collection. Atkins says it's do or die in 2025 because there are a lot of considerations, and RFP process, and any library dealer will have to order stuff.

Goller asks if there would be any issue pushing it off to a future budget, why right now? Kraft says that it would allow the GPL to make some pre-purchasing, but says again that the 2025 budget is the last stop.

Kraft also notes that putting that money in the library budget for new collections was a motion passed by council. It was pushed back because the library construction start was pushed back.

Kraft notes that 2025 is fine if the board wants to pass a motion to move the \$2.9 million to next year's capital budget. Someone asks if it's okay to separate it out over two years. Kraft says he would like to keep the total together.

Someone else notes that any motion should also contain language that says not to move it beyond 2025. Williamson says he's happy to defer to staff, but the closer they get to the opening date the less time they leave themselves and more chances of stuff going wrong.

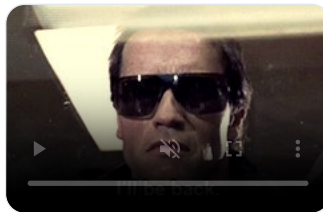
Caron says she wants to put the recommendation on the floor as presented. City council can move it to '25 if they like, but the library board has to put their best recommendation forward.

Caron adds that she's convinced that the City's 2025 budget is going to look any better.

Goller says he's comfortable with proceeding with the main recommendation.

Motion to adopt the proposed capital budget moved by Lepage/Klassen and it's passed.

The library board will now move in-camera to talk about labour relations or employee negotiations. Back in a bit.



We're coming out of the in-camera session. Apparently, there's nothing to report.

New business? The board retreat has been planned for next month on October 14.



Library staff will be wearing their orange shirts on Friday and Saturday. There will be Truth and Reconciliation Day activities both days with a story time on Friday and a beading workshop on Saturday. There will be displays in all branches too and reading suggestions.

Next meeting is Devil's Night, October 30. See you then!



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