

Public Release  
May 22, 2019



**Town of Aurora  
Additional Items to  
Finance Advisory Committee  
Meeting Agenda**

Wednesday, May 22, 2019  
5:30 p.m., Holland Room

- **Additional attachment to Item 2 – Review of Detailed Financial Budget Information, Re: Aurora Public Library – Correspondence from Bruce Gorman, CEO, Aurora Public Library**



## MEMO

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To: Town of Aurora Finance Advisory Committee

From: Bruce Gorman, Chief Executive Officer

Date: May 22, 2019

Subject: Town Partner – Budget Review

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The Aurora Public Library is pleased to have an audience with the Town's Finance Advisory Committee and to provide some background for context.

The Library takes pride in its financial acumen and judicious oversight of the funding provided by the Town in support of world class library service for your residents. As part of our fiduciary responsibility, the Aurora Public Library Board provides oversight through a Finance Sub-Committee. They meet regularly to monitor our financial position. This includes a line by line review of our operating accounts each year.

The Library is pleased to provide our landlord and the residents of Aurora with \$2.2M in leasehold improvements as our renovation project concludes in the coming weeks. As tenants we are grateful to the Town for the state of good repair of the facility.

The outcomes of this renovation project will be a game changer for the Library and will allow us to impact residents in even more meaningful ways. This includes the availability of two new multipurpose rooms and a large "living room" for public events of all kinds. As well, we are providing more flexible spaces for residents to use as they wish. We listened to our residents last fall regarding their desire for more open hours. They overwhelmingly told us that additional operating hours would further enrich their life experience in Aurora. To that end we will be opening Monday mornings and staying open until 6 p.m. on Fridays later in 2019.

The Library deploys cost avoidance strategies at every opportunity to maximize our financial envelope. This is in evidence by our ability to manage the usage of the Magna and Lebovic Rooms with existing staff levels. We continue to add more programs and events with no additional staff resources (961 programs delivered in 2018). This has resulted in an overall increase in program attendance of 14% and increased in person visits by 14% in 2018. We answered 88% more information questions from the public in 2018 compared to the previous year. And as noted above, we are opening additional hours Monday morning and Friday afternoon using existing staffing levels.

Some of our cost avoidance strategies include implementation of a One Desk service model, reallocating staff to provide additional/alternate public service. We are also deploying technology solutions wherever possible, including utilizing new communication tools and the implementation of an automated materials handling solution which lessens the staff requirement to handle returned materials, resulting in more staff resources to devote to other public services activities, all while getting material back on the shelves faster for public consumption.

Aurora is expected to grow to nearly 70,000 by next year. It is well proven that the social well-being of a growing Town is a critical success factor in the economic prosperity, health and well-being of its citizens. The Library is proud to be a leader in this social domain as we welcome over 260,000 customers visits each year. We are the great social equalizer for all within the community.

As we look to the future, we will continue to provide world class library service in a financially astute manner. Considerations going forward will include the increasing demand for digital collections and online courses. This is the way of the world and of the future; our customers want real time access to the wealth of digital collections the Library has to offer as they navigate their information driven daily lives. As evidence our eBook and eAudio circulation was up 24% in 2018.

The Library is a primary source for the public to engage with technology. From training, to learning, to understanding, to exposure, the library is at the forefront. Indeed, technology is now infused into everything we do, every day. The Library is on the front lines of this journey with Aurorans. With ongoing training programs, our introduction to new technologies, and a new creative studio environment, we are assisting residents every day. As the rate of change of technology continues its exponential ride, it will be imperative to properly fund this ongoing evolution.

In addition and alongside the exciting Library Square project we expect notable programming increases, particularly outside. The Library is committed to doing all we can to make Library Square as successful as possible. Programming is our specialty. We are experts. As Library Square unfolds, service levels would warrant additional human resources to support this new vibrant destination with dynamic and engaging programming.

We also heard definitively that the public want additional Sunday hours and Sunday programming. This is arguably the most important family day of the week. The Library looks forward to opening on Sundays and engaging Aurorans with meaningful, rich family programming. Making this happen will be a financial consideration.

The Library is excited to be woven into the fabric of Aurora. We are growing as the Town grows. As our partners and primary funders, we look forward to enriching our community each day side by side with the Town.

The Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport has cut funding to a provincial agency that assisted public libraries in Ontario, including us. The Southern Ontario Library Service (SOLS) provides a

variety of services including inter-library loans where libraries across the province share our collections. SOLS facilitates this through a delivery service. They suspended this service until May 31 as they evaluate their options, based on a 50% reduction of their budget. Libraries across the province have temporarily stopped the service.

Our Board and many others Library Boards sent a letter to the Ministry asking for reconsideration of the SOLS budget cuts.

I am waiting to hear from SOLS as to their options and will make informed decisions at that time. Until that time it is difficult to speculate as to the financial consequences but an alternate solution utilizing Canada Post and internal labour could approach \$15,000 per year.

Regarding library savings (surplus), operating financial statements do not include depreciation of tangible capital assets. The audited financial statements in accordance with PSAB standards require depreciation of tangible capital assets over their amortized useful life. This includes furniture, some technology and physical collections, which all have value in future years.

The Library's audited financial statement surplus differs from operating statement surplus as the physical collection is depreciated over a seven year useful life. Fluctuations occur based on spending decisions of our library experts in pursuit of the best collection to serve our community. It is worth mentioning that the digital collection, periodicals and some software are now accessed through licensing and are not depreciable. Therefore, it is important to understand that the audited financial statement surplus will differ primarily because we have a physical collection of books that is an essential service of the Library.

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*Bruce Gorman  
Chief Executive Officer*