



Date Monday, May 13, 2019

From Lynne Fascinato, Acting Library CEO

Subject **Inter-Library Loan Service**

Report No. LIB2019-01 **Roll No.** N/a

Recommendation

That Committee of the Whole recommend Council of the Municipality of Meaford:

1. Endorses the importance of the Inter-Library Loan Service provided by Southern Ontario Library Service (SOLS) for the Meaford Public Library (MPL); and
2. Requests that the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport reconsiders the recent SOLS funding cut; and
3. Direct staff to provide this resolution to the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport, local MPP, and municipalities in Grey County.

Background

The Inter-Library Loan Service is a province-wide system connecting both southern and northern Ontario. In 2018, the service delivered more than 710,000 packages to 153 libraries in southern Ontario. On Thursday, April 18, 2019, SOLS, through their CEO, Barbara Franchetto, announced that due to the impact of the provincial cuts to the SOLS budget by the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport, its budget for the 2019/20 fiscal year would be reduced by just over 50%. Given the magnitude of this cut, SOLS have to eliminate the courier delivery service, effective April 26, 2019 and suspended the entire Inter-Library Loan Service until May 31, 2019. SOLS will then assess how they can continue to operate this system.

The Meaford Public Library has since recalled all inter-library loan books and informed patrons that all requests currently on the system will be cancelled.

Analysis

The SOLS Inter-Library Loan Service is a cornerstone of any public library. Libraries simply cannot purchase every book, so this service extends MPL's

collection of 36,834 items beyond Meaford Public Library's four walls. As a small, rural library, requests for specific materials, older items, and specialty books always exceed our collection. The Inter-Library Loan Service helps our customers - children, seniors, low-income residents, students, and more - find the resources that they need. Inter-library loans are a valuable, essential part of our library's service to our community. Through the Inter-Library Loan Service, MPL has been able to fulfill close to 90% of the requests we receive from our customers, thanks to the collections of our fellow public libraries.

The Inter-Library Loan Service saves thousands of dollars of the Meaford Public Library's budget. In 2018 through Inter-Library Loan Service, MPL received 1,974 items for patrons and supplied 2,472 to other libraries for a total of 4,446 items circulated. At a value of approximately \$20 per item for those MPL ordered for our customers, the cost to purchase these 1,974 items would have been approximately \$39,480. Plus, many items are out-of-print or rare making their monetary value even greater. If MPL had to ship all of its inter-library loan items through Canada Post (instead of the economical delivery service operated through the SOLS Inter-Library Loan Service), the cost to MPL would be approximately \$8,847.54 (4,446 items x Book Rate shipping cost of \$1.99).

Many books ordered on the Inter-Library Loan Service for Meaford patrons are in Large Print format for the visually impaired. There are a limited number of Large Print titles in circulation, therefore the sharing of this resource is even more important than for regular print titles.

Financial Impact

Cuts to SOLS may impact our subsidized eResources – Overdrive, Ancestry, World Book Online, Novelist, and Mango Languages - for the 2020 budget year. In 2019, these resources cost \$3,826.36 enabling access to over 110,000 eBooks and high quality information, genealogy, and language learning materials.

The Library postage budget will be over budget as SOLS is not able to reimburse MPL for inter-library loan books that we mailed to remote libraries over the course of the past year.

Costs to deliver new materials from the Library's book service, Library Services Centre (LSC), may rise in 2020 as they will be forced to use private courier services. Delivery rates will remain the same for the remainder of 2019.

The cost of education and professional development for Library Staff and Library Board members may increase as SOLS provides educational opportunities for free or at minimum cost.

The Public Library Operating Grant (PLOG) may be affected by cuts to SOLS. Last year, the Meaford Public Library received almost \$25,000.

Implications

Patron Impact

The impact on our customers will be huge and devastating. For example, we have a senior customer who is house bound and who requires Large Print books. He is a voracious reader and has literally read every single title in our Large Print collection. Until the end of the Inter-Library Loan Service, we had been ordering approx. seven books per week to keep up with the pace of his reading. The impact on this customer is either the end of his reading or that he must reread the Large Print books in our collection. Clearly, neither choice is acceptable for this man. And this is just one example. Other customers, many of them seniors on fixed incomes, have almost been brought to tears at the news that they can no longer access the books and resources that they value so highly.

Students are impacted, especially those doing online studies, as the Inter-Library Loan Service is used to access text books, and information resources. This includes those studying for police, firefighter, medical exams, and GED courses.

Senior leisure readers are impacted as they cannot access their favourite author, or genre of books that enhance their lives and keep their faculties engaged, as they have exhausted MPL's collection.

Book Clubs – especially MPL's four popular clubs may be disbanded as these clubs rely on the Inter-Library Loan Service to provide 10 to 20 copies of the same book for members to read. The Inter-Library Loan Service also supplies many private book clubs with their much needed books. Book Clubs are particularly important to rural and small town residents – they are a critical social link for more remote areas, offering companionship, education, intellectual stimulation, and social interaction.

Genealogy and Local History researchers will not be able to access MPL's unique local history books, microfilm, and genealogy records, which are shipped around the province through the system, thus denying them the chance to learn more about Meaford's rich history.

Meaford Public Library Board and Staff Impact

Libraries are experts at sharing resources. Through the Inter-Library Loan Service, library staff are able to order rare, expensive, professional textbooks on topics ranging from governance to programming ideas, from the professional collections of other libraries. With a 50% cut in SOLS funding, Library Staff and Library Board members may not be able to access the high quality, professional development sessions that SOLS provides for minimal cost.

The Inter-Library Loan Service provides collection development staff a chance to evaluate their collections and identify gaps. For example, multiple interloan requests on a certain topic are an indication that MPL should consider purchasing that book for our collection. This helps keep the collection relevant to what MPL patrons need and want.

Library programs offered to patrons, outside of book clubs, may cease to exist without the Inter-Library Loan Service. For example, the popular Canada Reads, Amazing Reads Summer Program, Evergreen Award Program, and more all rely on multiple copies of the same title in order to operate.

The loss of the Inter-Library Loan Service will put pressure on e-Resources, with patrons turning to the electronic format of titles. This puts pressure on the popular database, Overdrive, where the waiting lists for popular items are already long, some up to 6 months or longer. The waiting lists for e-Resources on OverDrive will definitely increase because of the cut to SOLS.

In addition, e-Resources are not a solution for some customers as they may not have access to the technology and devices necessary to download and read these e-Resources. Customers like these specifically require the Inter-Library Loan Service to support their reading.

As a Lender of Materials Impact

As one MPL patron says: "A shared resource is a gift that goes on giving." In 2018 MPL shared 2,472 books from its collection with other public libraries in Ontario saving those libraries thousands of dollars of their book budgets, and promoting the Meaford Public Library throughout the province, particularly when local history items are shipped.

Through the mail delivery option of inter-library loans, the Meaford Public Library used to provide books to tiny libraries in the north of the province. These often isolated communities, even smaller than our own, have libraries with small collections. The Inter-Library Loan Service was a critical link for the library customers in these small, remote communities.

Strategic Priorities

This report supports the mission, vision and values of the Municipality of Meaford, as well as the goals and objectives set out in Council's Strategic Priorities, particularly with respect to:

Focus Area: Ensuring Sustainability

Objective: Social: Foster a Caring Community

- A. Create a culture of responsiveness to address the diverse needs of residents to the best of our ability.

Focus Area: Ensuring Sustainability

Objective: Social: Engage in Social Development

- B. Commit to ensuring that affordable and accessible services are provided, including responsive subsidy programs for recreation.

Focus Area: Leading Municipal Government

Objective: Drive Continuous Improvement

- D. Adopt and embrace a corporate culture that is adaptive to change, is best-practice based, and is focused on customer service and community engagement.

Focus Area: Leading Municipal Government

Objective: Foster Public Participation and Proactive Communication

- E. Evaluate and ensure that municipal services provided are inclusive and accessible.

Focus Area: Strengthening our Community

Objective: Promote Arts and Culture

- C. Improve programming and services offered.

Focus Area: Strengthening our Community

Objective: Celebrate Heritage

- C. Promote the Municipality of Meaford's history and heritage assets.

Consultation and Communications

Support from MPL patrons has been overwhelming. They are contacting their MPPs and the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport by visiting in person, calling, or emailing their strong opinions. In addition, many are signing

petitions that are circulating, asking that the Inter-Library Loan Service be reinstated.

Some comments:

"The Inter-Library Loan Service has been a Godsend to the many people who require large print books due to visual impairment sight-impaired individuals have come to rely on the wider choice available only through interlibrary loan."

"As a retired senior, this budget cut directly and adversely affects me in that book clubs operated by our local rural Library and informally elsewhere in our community will no longer be able to be offered and living on a fixed income doesn't not afford me the luxury of buying two or more new books a month. Reading is a simple pleasure greatly enhanced by the opportunity to socialize and further educate ourselves by gathering once or twice a month for a lively and knowledge-expanding debate – an opportunity I and other residents of our rural area are now denied."

"I began using the Inter-Library Loan Service in earnest in the spring of 2017 while undergoing chemotherapy. I have borrowed at least 104 books I would have missed reading. 104 books that may have just sat on a shelf unloved, unread, unrequested. 104 books that have made my life richer, my days brighter, my vocabulary mightier, without interlibrary loan that wouldn't have happened. I can't tell how much I will miss the sheer joy of being at the library and having someone hand me my latest interlibrary loan books. The joy was not one-sided. Whoever handed me the books knew what they were handing me: joy, pleasure, suspense, satire, drama, maybe some sex, laughter, sarcasm, and sheer delight. All in the pages of a book!"

"My life is just a shade darker, less buoyant without my ILLOs."

Conclusion

It is recommended that Council endorses the importance of the Inter-Library Loan Service provided by Southern Ontario Library Service (SOLS) for the Meaford Public Library (MPL); requests that the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport reconsiders the recent SOLS funding cut; and provides this resolution to Michael Tobillo, Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport, Bill Walker, MPP Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, and municipalities in Grey County.

The cutting of the Inter-Library Loan Service and the SOLS budget indicates a shocking lack of understanding about the value it provides. SOLS economically ensures that citizens and library staff have access to the written materials, resources, and training that enrich and enhance their lives. The Inter-Library Loan Service is particularly important to seniors on

fixed incomes and those on low incomes - the vulnerable people who cannot afford to purchase items from a traditional or online bookstore.

Respectfully Submitted:

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