

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor Bonnette and Members of Council

FROM: Beverley King, Manager of Community and Adult Services

DATE: June 14, 2019

MEMORANDUM NO.: MEM-LIB-2019-0003

RE: Partial Restoration of Interlibrary Loan Service

PURPOSE OF THE MEMORANDUM:

The purpose of this Memorandum is to inform Council of the recent decision by the Government of Ontario to partially restore funding for the interlibrary loan service and outline the impacts of additional costs to the Library Board and Town.

BACKGROUND:

The Southern Ontario Library Service (SOLS) announced a resumption of interlibrary loan services in Ontario on May 31, 2019 following extensive discussion with the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport. SOLS suspended interlibrary loan service in April following the latest provincial budget that announced 50% funding cuts to SOLS. SOLS immediately cancelled their courier services which impacted the delivery of interlibrary loan materials.

This year's Ontario budget the provincial Public Libraries Operating Grant funding at existing levels. Staff appreciates the Ontario government's commitment to maintaining this investment in local public libraries and its recognition of the essential role they play in communities across the province.

Although interlibrary loan services are resuming, SOLS is shifting to a different model that relies upon the Canada Post library materials postage rate, with a partial provincial subsidy. In addition to this subsidy, SOLS will also maintain the software service used to manage the interlibrary loan service.

This change puts Ontario out of step with other Canadian provinces, most of which fully subsidize interlibrary loan in recognition of the important role it plays in ensuring equity of access and cost-effectiveness for public libraries in small, rural, remote and Indigenous communities.

It is accurate to characterize the resumption of interlibrary loan as a partial restoration. Here are the facts:

1. By moving to the Canada Post library materials rate model, public libraries now:
 - Will have to manage the interlibrary loan workload with the same staff despite the increased work to weigh, measure, and package each loan separately, and use two different unconnected systems;
 - Incur the costs of packaging materials, stamps, and other related expenses in anticipation of receiving a partial subsidy at the end of the year;
 - As interlibrary loan is required by legislation to be at no charge to patrons, there is no opportunity to offset these additional costs without using additional local funding.

2. The Federation of Ontario Public Libraries (FOPL) announced that in 2017, 441,683 interlibrary loans in Ontario would have cost \$940,484 at the 2017 postage rates:
 - With special contracts, SOLS was able to do this cost effectively;
 - The base cost to mail an item two-ways using the Canada Post rate is \$1.38. Additional fees are added for weight and distance. Libraries pay to loan materials, but not to borrow;
 - According to FOPL, the average cost to mail an item through Canada Post was \$2.13 in 2017;
 - The proposed new subsidy is capped at \$340,000 in southern Ontario;
 - According to SOLS, in 2018, there were almost 419,000 items lent;
 - Thus, the partial provincial subsidy for the postage rate would amount to approximately 40% of the full cost of fulfilling these interlibrary loans;
 - Halton Hills lent 2424 items in 2018 and borrowed 2046.

COMMENTS:

SOLS restored interlibrary loan service on June 1, 2019. Like many libraries, Halton Hills has opted to delay the return to full service in order to give staff time to evaluate interlibrary loan policies and consult with other library systems on how best to reintroduce the service efficiently.

The cost to mail items can be anticipated using the base Canada Post library materials rate. In 2018, Halton Hills lent just over 2,400 items. Using the average Canada Post library materials rate as provided by FOPL (\$2.13), this service would cost Halton Hills just over \$5,000. Halton Hills can expect to receive just under \$2,000 as part of the SOLS rebate program.

The overall impact of additional staffing costs to process materials is unknown. Staff estimates it will take approximately ten minutes more to process a single item since items must now be packaged and mailed individually. The additional processing costs

are also unknown. Currently Canada Post has permitted the use of reusable cloth bags which will ensure the Library can continue this sustainable practice.

CONCLUSION:

Staff will continue to monitor and track the impact of the changes to the interlibrary loan service. Halton Hills Public Library will resume the interlibrary loan service based on the new model on July 2, 2019. Staff will reassess the service at the end of 2019 and will implement balancing measures to ensure a fair and equitable balance between lending and borrowing. Staff will keep the Library Board and Council informed of the ongoing impact of the new interlibrary loan service model and any future budgetary implications as a result to the change in service.

Reviewed and approved by,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Geoff Cannon". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Geoff Cannon, Chief Librarian

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brent Marshall". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Brent Marshall, Chief Administrative Officer