

Winnipeg Public Library Board

Winnipeg Public Library's Materials Budget

During the City of Winnipeg's 2009 budget deliberations, Winnipeg Public Library Board Chair Vernon DePape made presentations in February and March to City Council's Standing Policy Committee on Protection and Community Services and to Executive Policy Committee.

This document contains the main points of Mr. DePape's presentations.

Good morning. My name is Vernon DePape and I am the current Chair of the Winnipeg Public Library Board.

First, I would like to thank you for your ongoing support of Winnipeg's public library services. For several years you have supported, within the City's means, additions to the Library's materials budget.

I would like you to know that the Board understands the significant pressure there is on Council to continue to increase funding for all of its programs.

However, the public library system also faces a financial crunch. Public libraries are constantly adjusting to meet the demand of changing demographics: the larger Aboriginal community in Winnipeg, influx of immigrants, and an aging population are a few examples. To meet these demands, I would ask that you give serious consideration to the recommendation forwarded by the Lord Selkirk-West Kildonan Community Committee, for an increase of 3% or \$75,000 in each of 2009 and 2010 for the Library's materials budget, which would enhance library materials to support our diverse population's needs.

To put this request into context you should know that Canadian public libraries provide comparative data for comparison purposes. It is our goal to see Winnipeg Public Library eventually reach at least the average per capita expenditure on materials. The current average materials expenditure per capita of the 63 reporting large urban public libraries is \$4.69 per capita. Winnipeg ranks 40th, at \$4.21 For comparison, consider: Edmonton: \$7.40 Vancouver \$7.13 Calgary \$7.17 Hamilton \$6.00 Halifax \$4.62.

An injection of \$75,000 would be a move in the right direction, though to reach the average of \$4.69, based on a population of 650,000, we would need to add \$567,000. A 3% increase is equal to approximately \$0.12 per capita and would increase per capita funding to \$4.33 which is still well below the national average of \$4.69.

In considering this request you must know that Winnipeg libraries operate very efficiently providing great service with extremely low salary costs as a percentage of expenditures ranking 61st out of 63, or 55% of total expenditures.

In the past, in response to the Library Board's requests, you, and subsequently Council, have responded by adding \$100,000 in each of 2004 and 2005, and \$50,000 in 2006. In 2007 Council approved an increase of \$50,000, which was added to the base budget. And while we gratefully appreciate this support there is a need for more.

The Province as an outcome of its Public Library Review gave a one time grant of \$115,000 in 2008 for Winnipeg Public Library's collections which is largely being used to support the establishment of "Learning Centres" in all its branches.

As I mentioned previously an increase in materials funding is required as the City needs become more diverse.

Immigration

As you are no doubt aware, the Province has set annual immigration targets of 10,000 individuals annually and expects to attract 20,000 annually by 2020, to address labour shortages.

Dual language and EAL materials would address some needs of newcomers. Multilingual materials for our African, Filipino, Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese and Vietnamese communities are some of the critical needs.

Aging population

To reflect the aging population in Winnipeg, the Mayor established his Seniors Advisory Committee. In its analysis of City services available, Committee members noted:

1. the Library's Homebound program, in which volunteers deliver books in print or talking books;
2. the Library's outreach van service to seniors' group residences;
3. and deposits of books to personal care homes;
4. and a variety of other services and programs available to mobile seniors.

For those of any age with visual disabilities, in addition to large print books, and adaptive technology at Millennium Library, there has been an increased demand for large print and audio books for aging baby boomers...There is also a need for descriptive DVDs that have additional narration for those with visual impairments.

Teens

Literacy: teen services have been expanded at the public library. Today's teens are attracted by the benefits of electronic resources.

Teens have their own web area called Booked, on the Library's website. The site includes poetry written by teens, a blog, a book review section to which teens contribute; and more. A Teen Advisory Council manages the site in consultation with staff and a web designer.

Now there are three new teen book clubs at several library branches. So more materials are needed for this group.

Increased materials funding would allow the Library to put dedicated funding towards building collections for young adults.

Electronic resources

In 2007 there were over 170,000 uses of Winnipeg Public Library's electronic databases, and I have been advised that will have jumped considerably in 2008.

Electronic resources are expensive to purchase but offer extended library access after hours through remote access. You might have read, in the recent issue of the Library's newsletter, about some of the 37 online databases of interest to all age groups. These include:

- o **BookFLIX** which introduces children to a world of knowledge,

- **TumbleReadables** featuring 125 read-along titles including picture books, early readers, chapter books, middle school readers and teen novels.
- **Tell Me More** is a language learning database, for access to lessons in a variety of languages, including English.
- Other online databases include major Canadian daily newspapers, encyclopedias, genealogy info, music, and downloadable e-books.

Aboriginal Services

In 2009, the Library Board, through the support it receives from the City, is planning to conduct a research study to learn more about the best methods of providing library service to the Aboriginal community. (The study would include a consultation process.) The Library is currently selecting materials, and has a fairly extensive collection at the Princess White Dove Library at the Turtle Island Neighbourhood Centre, but is looking forward to the results of this study to learn more about the collection needs of the Aboriginal community.

In conclusion:

To quote an article in a local newsletter published by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, Manitoba Office... "Winnipeg's public libraries provide an invaluable service to our community, and are an important part of its economy...

Our libraries can play a significant role in the development and enrichment of our City's potential..." And as the Manager of Library Services, Rick Walker, recently noted, public libraries are invaluable in tough economic times, providing resources and entertainment that citizens might not otherwise be able to afford.

I must emphasize that the Library Board is proud of the tremendous job that our public library staff does in meeting the informational, educational and recreational needs of the citizens of Winnipeg, with the funds available to them. I want to personally commend Rick Walker for the excellent job that he does and for the value contribution and support that he provides to Board members

The return on investment in public libraries provides excellent value to the citizens of Winnipeg.

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