15.

STAFF REPORT
ACTION
REQUIRED

Toronto Public Library Board Self-Evaluation: Results

Date:	January 30, 2017
To:	Toronto Public Library Board
From:	City Librarian

SUMMARY

This report presents the results of the Board self-evaluation survey conducted during November and December 2016. The survey was conducted using an electronic survey tool and the results have been tabulated and are contained in Attachment 1. Seven of the current eleven Board members completed the survey.

Overall, all respondents agreed that the Board adds value to library service in Toronto, and is effective and performs well. In the six broad areas of focus in the survey, respondents made comments and suggestions that are addressed in this report. No major issues requiring immediate action have been identified.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Librarian recommends that the Toronto Public Library Board:

1. receives the results of the Board self-evaluation survey and directs staff to:
   a. communicate the suggestion for greater staggering of Board terms to the City's Civic Appointments office for consideration ;
   b. offer refresher sessions on the Procedural By-Law if members express interest and consult Board members about the format, length and topics for inclusion in the future orientation sessions and conduct an evaluation;
   c. present a list of topics for Board education sessions focusing on the strategic priorities to the Board for consideration, noting that topical issues may arise throughout the year;
   d. ensure that the legislative, policy or strategic reason a report is before the Board is provided in order to inform decision making;
   e. ensure that Board reports with financial implications outline how the issues discussed fit with the Library's strategic priorities; and
2. repeats the survey in November 2017.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There is no financial impact arising from the information in this report.

The Director, Finance and Treasurer has reviewed this financial impact statement and is in agreement with it.

DECISION HISTORY

On April 25, 2016, the Library Board resolved "*to undertake a self-evaluation as a pilot in November 2016 and directed staff to consult with Board members on options for the self-evaluation and present options and recommendations to the Board in October 2016."* http://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/content/about-the-library/pdfs/board/meetings/2016/apr25/13-tplb-self-evaluation.pdf

Staff developed a survey based on the self-evaluation survey developed by the Ontario Ministry of Government and Consumer Services for provincial agencies. Board members were consulted on the design of the survey during October/November 2016. The electronic survey was sent out to Board members on November 7, 2016 for completion.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

Goals of the Board self-evaluation are:

- determine the degree of alignment and agreement by Board members on the Library's mandate, mission and vision and strategic direction (Strategic Plan);
- identify gaps in knowledge and expertise to be addressed through Board education;
- identify improvements that promote effective board preparation, meeting management and communications;
- ensure effective governance and informed decision-making by supporting strong Board dynamics.

COMMENTS

Seven of the current eleven Board members responded to the survey. Results of the survey were analysed using the electronic survey tool and are provided in Attachment 1. Overall 100% of respondents agreed that the Board adds value to library service in Toronto, and is effective and performs well. In most areas the Board rated their performance in the range as acceptable.

There were two areas where respondents identified issues:

- 70% of respondents indicated that they either "disagree" or "strongly disagree" that the term of Board members is well staggered to ensure continuity;
- 43% of respondents indicated that they "disagreed" that orientation for Board members was adequate.

Specific Comments Provided

Each section of the survey provided opportunity for respondents to provide additional comments and/or suggestions. These are summarized below and staff have provided a response where possible. The full comments/suggestions provided by respondents are provided as part of Attachment 1.

Section	Comment	Staff Response
Governance	Greater staggering of terms of Board members required	Appointments to the Toronto Public Library Board are made through the City of Toronto's Civic Appointments Office. The term of Board members is tied to the term of Council (4 years). Staff share this comment with the City's Civic Appointments office.
	More detailed Board orientation required	Staff will offer refresher sessions on the Board Procedural By-Law if members express an interest. Staff will consult with Board members about the topics, format and length for inclusion in orientation and conduct an evaluation.
	More ongoing Board education required	Staff to present a list of topics to the Board for consideration on Board education sessions, focusing on the strategic priorities noting that topical issues may arise throughout the year.
Integrity, Ethics and Values	Continue to build a spirit of collaboration at Board discussions	Roles and responsibilities of Board members to be covered in Board orientation as well as applicable Board policies e.g. Board Code of Conduct.
Strategy Development and Performance Monitoring	The Board, in its first year, approves a Strategic Plan while members are still new to the role. Consideration to be given to conducting this process after members have served a full year.	The current strategic plan extends to 2019, the first year of the new Board term, which will provide the new Board with the opportunity to consult on the timeline for the development and approval of the new strategic plan.
	Greater clarity needed on why certain, non-strategic items, are on Board agendas for approval	Staff to ensure that the legislative, policy or strategic reason a report is before the Board continues to be provided in order to inform decision making.

	Need to ensure spending plans are placed in the context of strategic priorities	Staff to ensure that Board reports with financial implications outline how the issues discussed fit with the Library's strategic priorities.
Teamwork and Collaboration	All Board members to be encouraged to participate in discussion at meetings	Refresher session on the Board Procedural By-law focusing on meeting procedures be offered.
Advocacy and Communication	Board could improve on advocacy	To be addressed through Board education sessions.

In keeping with best practice from the environmental scan, it is recommended that the survey be completed annually to monitor the results.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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City Librarian

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Toronto Public Library Board Self-Evaluation Survey: Results