



Date: September 4, 2024  
To: Port Colborne Public Library Board  
From: Rachel Tkachuk, Chief Executive Officer  
Subject: CEO's Report

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## **Recommendation**

That the Port Colborne Public Library Board receive the CEO's Report, for information.

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### **1. Board Governance and Training**

The Board is invited to attend the OLS Stronger Libraries, Stronger Communities Virtual Conference on Thursday, October 24, 2024 (Registration can be found at: [Public Library Boards: Thursday, October 24, 2024](#)). Opportunities for Board development can be found on the Ontario Library Service [GovernanceHub](#) website.

### **2. Community Connect Partnerships**

Two new local community support agency partnerships have been established for the Community Connect program:

- Brain Injury Association of Niagara (Their mission: BIAN is committed to empowering and maximizing the quality of life for individuals living with the effects of an acquired brain injury and their families through support, social activities, community and peer opportunities, advocacy, and information. We are committed to education, awareness, and prevention of brain injury in St. Catharines and the Niagara region.)

In July, BIAN ran an information session to distribute resources at the library. In January 2025, art masks created by members of the BIAN will be showcased in the Art in the Atrium display.

- Niagara College's Newcomers to Canada Program  
The NC Newcomers Office offers a wide range of free immigrant language training programs for students and job seekers.

Staff from the Newcomer's to Canada program will host monthly information sessions at the library in the fall/winter.

### **3. City Partnerships**

- The CEO and Communications Team collaborated on a press release highlighting a donation of Wonderbooks from the Port Colborne Lions Club. The CEO was interviewed about the donation on 610 CKTB and gave a fall update about library programming: [Niagara in The Morning with Steph Vivier Audio Bites: Rachel Tkachuk - CEO, Port Colborne Public Library](#). The press release was picked up by the Welland Tribune: [Lions Club helps expand Wonderbooks collection at library](#). The CEO and the Communications Team will collaborate on a press release for the Erwin Taylor Charitable Foundation Donation.
- Librarian H. Madsen will attend the City's Touch-a-Truck on Thursday, October 3, 2024. This is an annual event with the library attending as a pop-up with an activity for children and families.
- Since June, French Marigold seeds have been distributed at the library to Port Colborne residents for the Communities in Bloom initiative through the City of Port Colborne.
- Library staff and the Communications Teams collaborated on making pinback buttons to identify community groups working during Canal Days. Communications staff created the design, and library staff and volunteers created the 70 buttons for the event.
- The Human Resources department has included an optional library membership form in the onboarding package for new hires, volunteers, and co-op students.

### **4. Cultural Block**

Staff from the Library and Museum will meet in the fall to discuss partnering for a 2025 Art in the Atrium showcase at the library.

Cultural Block programs are cross promoted through social media and promotional materials at each location.

The library provided an Under the Sails Story Time during the Canal Days Marine Heritage Festival. The Museum provided family activities for the TD Summer Reading Club party for the library on Wed. August 28, 2024.

## **5. Committee Partnerships**

- City of Port Colborne's Senior Citizens Advisory Committee  
The SCAC offers advice and recommendations to Council with respect to issues which have or will have an impact on Port Colborne's seniors, as well as ways in which Port Colborne can become a more age-friendly community for persons of all ages and ability levels.

Members from the SCAC are scheduled to host two information sessions at the library to distribute resources.

- City of Port Colborne's Environmental Advisory Committee  
The EAC advises Council on environmental, energy conservation, and shoreline protection issues that affect the City of Port Colborne and those matters referred to the committee by Council.

The EAC will present a monthly Environmental Awareness Speaker Series at the L.R. Wilson Archives on the following dates:

- Monday, September 23, 2024, 6:30 – 7:30 p.m.  
Conservation in Niagara: Taking Action for Nature by Natalie Green, Manager of Climate Change & Special Programs, Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority
- Monday, October 28, 2024, 6:30 – 7:30 p.m.  
Residential Electrification: Taking Steps for a Sustainable Future by Tim Lamb, EAC Member & Electrification Advocate
- Monday, November 25, 2024, 6:30 – 7:30 p.m.  
Building Empathy for Local Watersheds by Dr. Julia Baird, Canada Research Chair & Professor at Brock University

## **6. Libraries in Niagara Cooperative (LiNC) Services**

The Library is a partner library in LiNC. LiNC was established in 2010 and is a cooperative library consortium that was created to share an open source library catalogue system called Evergreen. The Library joined in 2020 and benefits from resource-sharing and from reduced costs associated with a shared integrated library system (ILS).

LiNC Expenses	2022	2023	2024
Consortium dues	\$5,066.00	\$5,066.00	\$6,192
Courier cost	\$2,338.53	\$2,604.00	\$2,604
Other expenses (ILS training, LiNC module development costs)		\$1,355.00	

The increase in consortium costs was due in part to Niagara College leaving the consortium.

## 7. St. Catharines Public Library Reciprocal Borrowing

The Reciprocal Borrowing Agreement between St. Catharines Public Library and Port Colborne Public Library was signed and finalized on June 26, 2024. A social media announcement was made to the public on Wednesday, September 3, 2024.

## 8. Bridge: Data Solution Platform Update

The Bridge Data Solution Platform aims to achieve the following goal through collecting data from library staff and library users:

- Measure equity and demonstrate impact, to drive digital inclusion, and respond to community needs
- Provide critical feedback to manage technology resources more efficiently and effectively, fostering continuous improvement and data-driven decision support.
- Empower advocacy and accountability in reporting requirements, with implications for meeting strategic priorities and securing sustainable funding

Bridge patron surveys were conducted between July 8 – 13, 2024. The next sessions are scheduled for: September 9 – 14, 2024 and November 4 – 9, 2024. A Bridge staff survey is scheduled for early October.

## 9. Staff Development and Training

Training and webinars are ongoing and available to all library staff throughout the year including CyberSecurity training. In particular, staff are enrolled in the following programs:

- One staff member is enrolled in the **Advancing Public Library Leadership (APLL) Institute**. APLL is a two-year certificate program designed to expand and advance the leadership capacity of public library CEOs and managers. Launched in 2008, the program addressed current issues and changes in the landscape of Ontario public libraries and is aimed at public library staff with leadership aspirations. Courses provide participants with a shared body of knowledge, covering themes related to organizational leadership and leading in the municipal environment.
- Two staff are enrolled in the **Mohawk College Library Technician program**. Mohawk offers a part-time distance education program for library technician courses. The library currently employs two full-time staff who hold Library Technician diplomas.
- One staff member has completed a **certification in CELA (Centre for Equitable Library Access)**. The course provides a comprehensive overview of CELA services to assist patrons with print disabilities. The course focuses on assistive technologies, devices, and apps.
- All full-time staff will receive **ILLO Migration Training for Resource Sharing for Groups** in September and October through the Ontario Library Service.

## 10. Health and Safety Training

- Two staff updated their **First Aid CPR C & AED** certificate through the St. John Ambulance program.
- All library staff are scheduled for **De-escalation Training** on Wednesday, September 11, 2024 (7 hours). The library will be closed to the public. This training focuses on how to deal with difficult situations in the workplace.

## 11. Meetings and Committees

In June-August 2024, the CEO attended the following:



- New CEO Networking Meeting (OLS)
- Quarterly Informal Library Chats (OLS)
- Workday HR & Accounting Kick-off (City)
- LINC CEO meeting
- Niagara Children's Planning Council Meeting (Niagara Region)
- Quarterly Ward Council Meetings
- OverDrive Annual General Meeting
- Fundraising Committee Meeting
- Staff Canal Days Training

## **12. Facility Updates**

- Children's Room HVAC repair completed by contractor on Thursday, August 22, 2024.
- The CEO met with AODA auditors for an assessment of the library facility on Tuesday, July 2, 2024.
- Step repair on North/Elgin St. stairs was completed.
- Roof repairs have been ongoing, and a full roof evaluation is currently underway.
- New flowers added to King St. Garden.

## **13. Library/Citizen Incidents**

In July, an increase in afterhours visitors was reported resulting in minor damage and clean-up of drug paraphernalia. The CEO met with the Niagara Regional Police Service Staff Sergeant to assess areas and damage.

## **14. Programming**

New programming includes:

- Teen Book Launch with local author: Sara de Waard
- Mud Lake Walk in partnership with Welland Public Library and the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority.
- Weekly afterschool craft cart for children
- EAC speaker series
- Portal Village Book Club

- PD Day: Friendship Bracelets
- Adult Board Game Night
- Adult Craft Circle
- Community Connect: Seniors Advisory Committee
- Community Connect: Newcomer Programs

## **15. Art in the Library**

Art by Eleanor Jane (Yost) Ryczak will be featured in the library's art gallery in September 2024. Eleanor was a Registered Nurse who lived and worked in Port Colborne. Eleanor's art includes landscapes, portraits, and posters for local community events.

## **16. Centre for Equitable Library Access Deposit Collection**

The Centre for Equitable Library Access (CELA) is an accessible library service, providing books and other materials to Canadians with print disabilities. CELA provides immediate access to books, newspapers and magazines in formats that people with print disabilities can read, such as audio, digital text and braille. These resources can also be accessed through a free app.

Starting in October, a CELA deposit collection of 100 children's, teen, and adult audio books will be available at the library for patrons to borrow. These items can be played in a CD player, or in a DAISY player.

A DAISY player is a device used to play DAISY audio books, which are designed to be used by people with print impairments, such as visual impairments or reading difficulties resulting from dyslexia. DAISY is a technical standard for digital audiobooks, periodicals, and computerized text.

## **17. Annual Survey of Public Libraries – Ministry of Tourism, Culture, and Sport**

2023 Ontario Public Library Statistics are available on the provincial government's Open Data website at the following link: <https://data.ontario.ca/dataset/ontario-public-library-statistics>

Individual Library Profile Report and customized reports, such as comparator library report, are available from the Ministry upon request.

## **18. Donations**

In August, a \$500 memorial donation was made to the library. A signed letter from the Board Chair was issued to the donor to acknowledge the donation.

In August, a donation of 807 heirloom seed packages was made to the library from an anonymous donor. The donation will be added to the Port Colborne Public Library's Seed Library, and includes over 100 varieties of vegetables, herbs, and flowers. The retail value of the donation is more than \$1600.

### **19. Erwin Taylor Charitable Donation Foundation**

In November 2023, the Erwin Taylor Charitable Foundation donated \$10,000 to the Port Colborne Public Library Board. The purpose of the donation was to expand the Library of Things / Non-Traditional Items collection. Items for the collection have started being purchased and are expected to be available to the public in early 2025.

### **20. Ontario Public Library Service Awards**

The Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport is accepting applications for their annual Ontario Public Library Service Awards. This opportunity allows libraries to spotlight a great initiative that their library has implemented. There are two awards, each with three categories (small, medium, and large libraries) for a total of six award winners.

- **Minister's Award for Innovation** recognizes a new approach that demonstrates a positive impact in a community and is of continued value for public libraries.
- **Angus Mowat Award of Excellence** recognizes best practices and a commitment to excellence in the delivery of public library service; these services need not be new and may be ongoing.

An application for the Minister's Award for Innovation will be submitted on behalf of the Board to spotlight the Port Colborne Public Library's Community Connect program.

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Respectfully submitted,



Rachel Tkachuk  
Chief Executive Officer