



Peterborough Public Library

To: Library Board of Trustees

From: Jennifer Jones, Library CEO

Meeting Date: September 1, 2020

Subject: Report PPL20-013
Library CEO Report September 2020

Purpose

A report to inform the Library Board of Trustees on general matters concerning Library operations and services.

Recommendation

That the Library Board approves the recommendation as outlined in Report PPL20-013 dated September 1, 2020, of the Library CEO as follows:

That the report to inform the Library Board on general matters concerning Library operations and service be received for information.

Budget and Financial Implications

There are no budget or financial implications resulting from the approval of the recommendation of this report.

Background

As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Peterborough Public Library (PPL) closed its doors to the public at 5 p.m. on March 13, 2020. All part-time staff were temporarily laid off effective the next day. Full-time staff were able to continue working in the facility until April 3, 2020 when they were either temporarily laid off or transferred to a work from home (WFH) status. Very few positions at PPL can be accommodated in a WFH set up and only eight full-time staff were able to continue working during the closure. Much of

the work is dependant on access to the facility, the library materials within it, and providing customer service to the community.

WFH staff were able to enhance and augment our digital collection (eBooks, eAudiobooks, digital magazines and online databases) and provide usage support over the phone and through email during the closure. Staff experimented with new online ways to offer programs digitally.

When Peterborough was moved into Stage 2, the covid restrictions still in place for Libraries to open involved no touching of library materials by the public which was a major complication. Given the open concept nature of the facility, and the difficulty in enforcing this limitation, PPL remained closed to the public but started offering an alternative service model – Curbside Pickup.

On May 27, temporarily laid off full-time staff were recalled to work in the facility, along with a few part-time staff in order to offer the new Curbside Pickup service starting June 3, 2020. The three day per week low contact service has been steadily busy and community members have expressed both their appreciation and happiness at having access to physical library materials again. (See Appendix A for some statistical highlights of the curbside service.)

The Stage 3 Provincial announcement removed certain restrictions and added a limit of 50 people plus staff in the facility.

Unfortunately, there was a challenge with the timing of the Stage 3 announcement as it coincided with a previously planned public computer upgrade. We wanted to take advantage of the facility being closed to complete the upgrade to cause the least amount of disruption possible. As a high demand service and a primary reason for many coming to the library, this computer upgrade should be completed before the facility is reopened. (Additional complications with the computer upgrade were encountered that could not be resolved before the opening date and will likely take a few more weeks to be fixed.)

In person visits were delayed in order to accommodate the timeline for the computer upgrade. Curbside Pickup service was expanded to five days a week starting July 28th as a result of this extra delay and high demand for the service. Curbside pickup services ended on August 22, 2020 as the Library reopened its doors to the public on Tuesday August 25, 2020.

The DelaFosse branch library will remain closed at this time as we are unable to properly staff both facilities and ensure health and safety protocols and COVID precautionary measures are in place at both locations.

The hours of operation at the Main branch will be temporarily reduced from seven to five days a week with altered operating hours:

Sunday – Closed
Monday – Closed
Tuesday – 10-8 p.m.
Wednesday – 10-5 p.m.
Thursday – 10-8 p.m.
Friday – 10-5 p.m.
Saturday – 10-5 p.m.

Safety Measures

- Social distancing measures have been already implemented with the staff in the building for curbside pickup.
- Frequent handwashing is encouraged.
- As of August 1, 2020, face coverings/masks are to be worn by all staff in public spaces, while working at a service desk, and when social distancing in staff areas is not possible.
- Public seating and tables have been moved further apart, with additional chairs temporarily removed as a social distancing reminder aid.
- Plexiglass shields have been purchased for the customer service points and will be mounted to the service desks.
- Face shields have been purchased for front line staff (to be worn in addition to their masks) when 2-meter distancing is not possible to maintain.
- Additional hand sanitizer stations have been installed throughout the building.
- “Please wait here” and “Stop the spread” floor stickers have arrived and are being installed.
- Social distancing signage will be posted at the entrance and throughout the facility.
- Library users will be asked to self-screen/self-assess before entry and to sanitize their hands as they enter the facility.

Cleaning

- Increased cleaning protocols have been implemented and will be reviewed and revised as needed.
- The washrooms are cleaned twice daily with a third cleaning after hours.
- Additional cleaning is to be done after hours of the washrooms and high traffic/high touch areas. This includes door handles, stair railings, elevator buttons, service counter tops, shared workstations, individual workstations, and more.
- Staff are responsible for cleaning their own workstations as per City guidelines.
- Public spaces are cleaned by onsite custodial staff scheduled during operating hours.

- Library equipment, such as the self-checkout machines and photocopier, will also be cleaned twice daily.

Facility Capacity Limitations

- Security services have been recalled in order to manage capacity limits.
- There will be a one in/one out model in place once the 50-person limit is reached.
- The facility will only be accessible via the main entrance on Aylmer Street N.
- Community members will be encouraged to keep their visit to the necessities.
- Loitering will be discouraged to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to use the facility.

Room Rentals

Room rentals will remain suspended until facility capacity limits have been lifted and we can ensure proper cleaning can be maintained between rentals/usage.

Library Collection and Services

- Patrons may browse all areas of the collection freely. Aisles cannot be made one way due to the shelving layout of the collection (items go down one side and up the other alphabetically). Aisles can be exited or entered at either end.
- Checkout can be done with a staff person at the service desk or using the self-checkout machines. These have been programmed to be low contact with minimal screen touching required.
- Fines, Fees and printing charges may still be paid in cash, though debit and credit are preferred. Staff will be expected to wash hands and sanitize after a cash transaction.
- A quarantine period of 3 days/72 hours for all borrowed and returned library material was implemented as part of the Curbside Pickup service and will remain in place.
- Material used in library that patrons do not wish to borrow should be placed on marked trolleys for a 3-day quarantine.
- The toys from the children's area, Maker Boxes, Board Games, and colouring supplies have all been temporarily removed from public use.
- The Digital collection (eBooks, eAudiobooks, and databases, etc.) will continue to be available.
 - The use of the cloudLibrary service continues to be strong despite the availability of Curbside Pickup. The demand for titles peaked in May at 9,750 downloads – dropping 7.8% in June but then increased by 8.04% in July. There have been slight increases over the summer in the number of audiobook and magazine downloads through the RBdigital platform.
 - The use of the Hoopla platform averages 1,788 downloads per month (since March). The number of downloads peaked in April at 1,994 but as more new users joined, the number of downloads dropped in July due to

budget caps. This is a challenging service to maintain as any increase in users means that budget allocations need to increase.

- The usage of Acorn TV is averaging 1,763 episodes viewed per month – there was a drop in use in June and July which is likely related to a decrease in the amount of social media publicity for it.
- Since we acquired Creative Bug in June, there have been 62 patrons signed up and using the service. Use of the program is expected to grow. Creative Bug offers online video arts and crafts workshops and techniques – e.g. paint, knit, crochet, sew, screen print, and more!
- Ancestry Library Edition is still accessible from home and will be until at least the end of September.

Collection Maintenance

The change in borrowing habits during the library closure and the use of Curbside Pickup necessitated a physical shift in the collection. Staff have been flexing their muscles (literally!) to move the books on the shelves; reapportioning, repositioning, and shifting as needed to make sure everything fits. Some weeding has also taken place to remove damaged material and outdated items with incorrect information. It has been a larger undertaking than we expected at the start, but a satisfying one to finish. The collection is looking refreshed and there is now room for all the new items that are slowly starting to arrive from the publishers.

Public Computers

- The total number of available public computers has been reduced from 20 to 7 to ensure that social distancing is maintained by computer users.
- Cleaning wipes have been provided near the computer stations for patron use for additional peripheral cleaning (keyboard and mice) if they so choose.
- The public computers will have a 30-minute time limit.
- Printing services will be available.

Visiting Library Services

Staff are hopeful to reinstate the delivery service to homebound library patrons before the end of September. It is a much-missed service with the deliveries made by volunteers.

The volunteers have been contacted and we are working with those interested and able to return. We will need to engage more volunteers in order to achieve the level of service that existed prior to the suspension of service. Until this occurs, the number of deliveries will need to be reduced (from a 3-week cycle to a 6-week cycle only).

Deliveries were generally low contact prior to Covid and should continue to be so. A courtesy PPE kit will also be provided to the volunteers consisting of a reusable mask

and hand sanitizer. Instructions on proper PPE use will also be provided to each volunteer.

Library Software Updates

The closure also provided us the opportunity to update our online catalogue and CloudLibrary App. Some of the new features include:

- Mobile responsiveness increased for catalogue searches
- The ability to see both online and print options available for a title in one record
- Author names in checkout history
- In My Account we've added some additional fields to see your personal information and the option to sign up for SMS (text) messaging notifications
- Cloud Library App users are now able to see the print items they have checked out as well as their digital CloudLibrary items
- Patrons can renew their physical items right in the CloudLibrary App or use the My Book Bag element as a check list to help them remember which physical items to return.

Programming

The library will continue to offer all programs digitally until the end of the year. Where possible and appropriate, physical enhancements (e.g.: Curbside Crafts) will be available in limited quantities.

Facility capacity limitations and social distancing guidelines will determine the next evolution of in-person programming.

The programming staff have been flexible and creative in their programming efforts. They have introduced several new initiatives including monthly trivia offerings, “I Spy Peterborough”, and “Storefront Stories” while finding alternative ways to deliver those core programs such as Story Time and our Book Clubs. There has been an incredible amount of learning by the programmers to understand the new tools, how to create videos, and the digital platforms available to share those videos. Lots of work has gone into both the video creation and the trial and error of finding out what works for our community.

Staff are in the process of wrapping up summer programming and planning a variety of fall offerings.

Café

The café will remain closed during the initial reopening phase. There are new health and safety protocols that would need to be implemented as a result of COVID and arrangements will need to be made with the vendor.

Marketing and Communication Statistics

In July, 22.49% of our website traffic came from 25-34 years old. After that, the highest demographic of website viewers is 65+.

We continue to see a higher number of people accessing our site from a computer as opposed to a cell phone or tablet.

Our top 10 pages from July 1 - August 19

1. Website home page
2. Catalogue home page
3. Catalogue My Account
4. Curbside Pickup
5. Membership
6. Books and Audiobooks
7. Hours and Location
8. My lists
9. Movies TV Music
10. Contact us

Facebook

Demographics: Women between the ages of 35–44 have a higher potential to see your content and visit our Page. We do have a high number of visitors age 25-34 as well.

Facebook remains to be a place to create a community so posts where we ask questions and have fun are still among our highest engagement

Twitter

Demographics: 43% male, 57% female age 25-34 (35 – 44 are the next highest category)

Instagram

Demographics: 77% female age 25-34 (35-44 are the next biggest age group of followers)

Library Service Review

The Service Review data has been collected, but the analysis will need to be re-examined with a COVID lens. This will be brought back to the Library Board at a future meeting for discussion.

Kiosk

The NovelBranch kiosk machine has been installed at the Peterborough Sport & Wellness Centre (PSWC) location. The original launch date was to be during March Break 2020 but was postponed. The new requirement for a three-day library item quarantine for items has created a bit of a challenge in the regular use of the kiosk, but staff have been working on possible alternatives.

Positives

A nice little thank-you from one of the members of the Adult Book Club:

“Thanks for the good news [Newsletter announcing library reopening]. Thanks also for getting us books during the shut down. Enjoyed the Zoom Book Club - both in the p.m. & evening. You've all been working hard & we appreciate your efforts. “

From the Public Services Supervisor:

“It was a challenge, trying to manage all of the prep related to offering curbside pickup as well as the check-in, shelving of books and the actual physical demands of offering curbside during pickup hours – with only 6 staff. I have been so incredibly proud of our ability to adapt to new situations, work together and overcome obstacles. The staff who have made this service possible are truly remarkable.”

“98% of the feedback I have received from the public has been incredibly positive. Most people are very grateful to have access to library materials once more and remark at the efficiency of our curbside pickup. Most patrons express gratitude to us for offering this service and leave curbside pickup satisfied with their experience.”

“Quite a few patrons have expressed disappointment that curbside pickup will not be continued once we reopen. We had so much positive feedback over the course of the summer, from happy, grateful library users. A lot of people have expressed excitement about the library reopening at long last.”

Submitted by,

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Attachments :

Appendix A – Curbside Pickup Highlights

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(For the period from June 3 to August 15, 2020)

- Curbside pickup service began June 3, 2020 operating 12 hours a week.
- Ability to place Holds on library materials for pickup opened on May 28, 2020. 877 holds placed that one day.
- We continued to average over 350 holds placed per day.
- From June 3 to August 15 we served 4711 community members during our curbside pickup time slots. With many of those repeat customers!
- We have checked out over 13,195 items through Curbside Pickup.
- Average curbside pickup is less than 90 seconds per interaction.
- Our single busiest day saw 205 people pass through Curbside Pickup on June 22, 2020 to checkout 603 items.
- New membership requests totaled 422 for the period of March to June. We had 13,375 active members at the end of 2019 – and are already at 13,685 for 2020.