



Aurora Public Library Board

MEETING

Wednesday, June 16, 2021

7:00 p.m.

Via video conference

AGENDA

1. Adoption of Agenda
2. Declaration of Conflict of Interest
3. Presentation
 - .1 Andrea Nauss, CPA, CA, Manager, BDO Canada LLP
Re: 2020 Audited Financial Statements and SR2021.14 (enclosure)
4. Minutes of:
 - .1 May 19, 2021 Meeting *(enclosure)*
5. Items for Consideration
 - .1 Fine-Free Library Model Report SR2021.15 *(enclosure)*
6. Library CEO Updates
 - .1 CEO Updates *(verbal report)*
7. General Business Information/Questions
 - .1 Library Square Construction Update *(enclosure)*
 - .2 APL Updates *(enclosure)*
8. Resolution to Move into Closed Session
 - .1 A proposed or pending acquisition or disposition of real property
 - .2 Labour relations or employee negotiations
 - .3 Contractual matters
9. Member Announcements
10. Date of Next Meeting: **Wednesday, September 15, 2021**
11. Adjournment

**** Please advise Maida Rae of regrets for attendance, by noon on June 16th by emailing mrae@aurorapl.ca.**

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85021857912>

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BDO Canada LLP
300 Lakeshore Drive, Suite 300
Barrie, Ontario
L4N 0B4

June 16, 2021

Aurora Public Library Board
15145 Yonge Street
Aurora, Ontario L4G 1M1

Re: Report to the Board of Directors for the year ending December 31, 2020

Dear Board of Directors Members:

Our report is designed to highlight and explain key issues which we believe to be relevant to the audit, including audit risks, the nature, extent, timing, and results of our audit work and the terms of our engagement, including fees. This report forms a significant part of our overall communication strategy with the Board of Directors and is designed to promote effective two-way communication throughout the audit process so that we may both share timely information. We are communicating only those matters of governance interest that come to our attention as a result of the performance of the audit. We are not required to design audit procedures for the specific purpose of identifying matters of governance interest.

Our audit and therefore this report will not necessarily identify all matters that may be of interest to the Board of Directors in fulfilling its responsibilities.

This report has been prepared solely for the use of the Board of Directors and should not be distributed without our prior consent. Consequently, we accept no responsibility to a third party that uses this communication.

Terms of Reference

Our overall responsibility is to form and express an opinion on the financial statements based on our audit procedures. The financial statements are prepared by management, with oversight by those charged with governance. The audit of the financial statements does not relieve management or those charged with governance of their responsibilities. The scope of our work, as confirmed in our engagement letter, and a summary of our proposed fees are set out below.

Engagement Objectives

- ▶ Forming and expressing an audit opinion on the financial statements.
- ▶ Present significant findings to the Board of Directors including key audit and accounting issues, any significant deficiencies in internal control and any other significant matters arising from our work.
- ▶ Provide timely and constructive management letters. This will include deficiencies in internal control identified during our audit.
- ▶ Consult regarding accounting, income taxes and reporting matters are requested throughout the year.
- ▶ Read the other information included in the Aurora Public Library Board's Annual Report to identify material inconsistencies, if any, with the audited financial statements.
- ▶ Work with management towards the timely issuance of financial statements.



Audit Strategy

Our overall audit strategy involved extensive partner and manager involvement in all aspects of the planning and execution of the audit and was based on our overall understanding of Aurora Public Library Board.

We performed a risk based audit which allows us to focus our audit effort on higher risk areas and other areas of concern for management and the Board of Directors.

To assess risk accurately, we gained a detailed understanding of Aurora Public Library Board's business and the environment it operates in. This allowed us to identify, assess and respond to the risks of material misstatement.

To identify, assess and respond to risk, we obtained an understanding of the system of internal control in place in order to consider the adequacy of these controls as a basis for the preparation of the financial statements, to determine whether adequate accounting records have been maintained and to assess the adequacy of these controls and records as a basis upon which to design and undertake our audit testing.

Based on our risk assessment, we designed an appropriate audit strategy to obtain sufficient assurance to enable us to report on the financial statements.

We chose audit procedures that we believed were the most effective and efficient to reduce audit risk to an acceptable low level. The procedures are a combination of testing the operating effectiveness of internal controls (when appropriate), substantive analytical procedures and other tests of detailed transactions.

Having planned our audit, we performed audit procedures, maintaining an appropriate degree of professional skepticism, in order to collect evidence to support our audit opinion.

Risks and Planned Audit Responses

Based on our knowledge of Aurora Public Library Board's business, our past experience, and knowledge gained from management and you, we identified the following financial statement areas with significant risks; those risks of material misstatement that, in our judgment, required special consideration.

These risks arose mainly because of the complexity of the accounting rules, the extent of estimation and judgment involved in the valuation of these financial statement areas, and the existence of new accounting pronouncements that affect them.



Financial Statement Areas	Audit Procedures Performed
Revenue - risk around completeness of donations and fines	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reviewed revenue recognition policy for consistency with the professional standards.• Audit report qualified with respect to completeness of these amounts as, due to their nature, they are not susceptible to satisfactory audit verification.
Management Override of Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tested the appropriateness of journal entries recorded in the general ledger and other adjustments made in the preparation of financial statements.• Obtained an understanding of the business rationale for significant transactions• Reviewed accounting estimates for biases and evaluated whether the circumstances producing the bias, if any, represented a risk of material misstatement due to fraud.
Tangible Capital Assets - risk that capital items have been expensed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tested a sample of repairs and maintenance expenses and assessed if amounts had been appropriately expensed.

Materiality

Misstatements, including omitted financial statement disclosures, are considered to be material if they, individually or in aggregate, could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of the financial statements.

Judgments about materiality are made in light of surrounding circumstances and include an assessment of both quantitative and qualitative factors and can be affected by the size or nature of a misstatement, or a combination of both.

For purposes of our audit, materiality was set at \$104,000 for the year ended December 31, 2020. We communicated all corrected and uncorrected misstatements identified during our audit to the Board of Directors, other than those which we determined to be “clearly trivial”. Misstatements are considered to be clearly trivial for purposes of the audits when they are inconsequential both individually and in aggregate.

We encouraged management to correct any misstatements identified throughout the audit process.

Audit Fees

As part of our audit, we understand that you expect us to provide value and to share in your commitment to minimizing costs.

The estimated fees for the audit of the financial statements of Aurora Public Library Board were



\$2,500.

Independence

Our annual communication confirming our independence is included as an Appendix. Except as noted in the Appendix, we are not aware of any relationships between the entity and us that, in our professional judgment, may reasonably be thought to bear on our independence to date.

Auditor's Considerations of Possible Fraud and Illegal Activities

We are responsible for planning and performing the audit to obtain reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free of material misstatements, whether caused by error or fraud, by:

- ▶ Identifying and assessing the risks of material misstatement due to fraud;
- ▶ Obtaining sufficient and appropriate audit evidence regarding the assessed risks of material misstatement due to fraud, through designing and implementing appropriate responses; and
- ▶ Responding appropriately to fraud or suspected fraud identified during the audit.

The likelihood of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than the likelihood of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from error because fraud may involve collusion as well as sophisticated and carefully organized schemes designed to conceal it.

During the audit, we performed risk assessment procedures and related activities to obtain an understanding of the entity and its environment, including the Library's internal control, to obtain information for use in identifying the risks of material misstatement due to fraud and made inquiries of management regarding:

- ▶ Management's assessment of the risk that the financial statements may be materially misstated due to fraud, including the nature, extent and frequency of such assessments;
- ▶ Management's process for identifying and responding to the risks of fraud in the Library, including any specific risks of fraud that management has identified or that have been brought to its attention, or classes of transactions, account balances, or disclosures for which a risk of fraud is likely to exist;
- ▶ Management's communication, if any, to those charged with governance regarding its processes for identifying and responding to the risks of fraud in Aurora Public Library Board; and
- ▶ Management's communication, if any, to employees regarding its view on business practices and ethical behaviour.

In response to our risk assessment and our inquiries of management, we performed procedures to address the assessed risks, which may have included:

- ▶ Inquired of management, the Board of Directors, and others related to any knowledge of fraud, suspected fraud or alleged fraud;
- ▶ Performed disaggregated analytical procedures and consider unusual or unexpected relationships identified in the planning of our audit;
- ▶ Incorporated an element of unpredictability in the selection of the nature, timing and extent of our audit procedures; and
- ▶ Performed additional required procedures to address the risk of management's override



of controls including:

- Testing internal controls designed to prevent and detect fraud;
- Testing the appropriateness of a sample of adjusting journal entries and other adjustments for evidence of the possibility of material misstatement due to fraud;
- Reviewing accounting estimates for biases that could result in material misstatements due to fraud, including a retrospective review of significant prior years' estimates; and
- Evaluated the business rationale for significant unusual transactions.

Litigation Proceedings

We have communicated with the Library's legal counsel who have indicated that there are no material claims outstanding against the Library.

Significant Weaknesses in Internal Controls

During the course of our audit, we performed the following procedures with respect to the Library's internal control environment:

- ▶ Documented operating systems to assess the design and implementation of control activities that were relevant to the audit.
- ▶ Discussed and considered potential audit risks with management.

The results of these procedures were considered in determining, the extent and nature of substantive audit testing required.

We are required to report to you in writing, significant deficiencies in internal control that we have identified during the audit. A significant deficiency is defined as a deficiency or combination of deficiencies in internal control that, in the auditor's professional judgment, is of sufficient importance to merit the attention of those charged with governance.

As the purpose of the audit is for us to express an opinion on the Library's financial statements, our audit cannot be expected to disclose all matters that may be of interest to you and, as a result, the matters reported may not be exclusive. As part of our work, we considered internal control relevant to the preparation of the financial statements such that we were able to design appropriate audit procedures. This work was not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of internal control.

Adjusted and Unadjusted Differences

We have disclosed all significant adjusted and unadjusted differences and disclosure omissions identified through the course of our audit engagement. Each of these items, if any, has been discussed with Management.

Management has determined that the unadjusted differences, if any, are immaterial both individually and in aggregate to the financial statements taken as a whole. Should the Board of Directors agree with this assessment, we do not propose further adjustments.

Management Representations



During the course of the audit, management made certain representations to us. These representations were verbal or written and therefore explicit, or they were implied through the financial statements. Management provided representations in response to specific queries from us, as well as unsolicited representations. Such representations were part of the evidence gathered by us to be able to draw reasonable conclusions on which to base the audit opinion. These representations were documented by including in the audit working papers memoranda of discussions with management and written representations received from management.

Management's representations included, but were not limited to:

- ▶ matters communicated in discussions with us, whether solicited or unsolicited;
- ▶ matters communicated electronically to us;
- ▶ schedules, analyses and reports prepared by the entity, and management's notations and comments thereon, whether or not in response to a request by us;
- ▶ internal and external memoranda or correspondence;
- ▶ minutes of meetings of the Board of Directors or similar bodies such as audit committees and compensation committees;
- ▶ a signed copy of the financial statements; and
- ▶ a representation letter from management.

We will provide you a copy of the management representation letter, which summarizes the representations we have requested from management.

We wish to express our appreciation for the co-operation we received during the audit from Aurora Public Library Board's management and staff who have assisted us in carrying out our work. We would be pleased to discuss with you the contents of this report and any other matters that you consider appropriate.

Yours truly,

Giselle Bodkin

Giselle Bodkin CPA, CA
Partner through a Corporation
BDO Canada LLP
Chartered Professional Accountants, Licensed Public Accountants

cc: Board of Directors

APPENDIX: INDEPENDENCE

June 16, 2021

Dear Board of Directors Members:

At the core of the provision of external audit services is the concept of independence. We are communicating all relationships between BDO Canada LLP and its related entities and Aurora Public Library Board and its related entities that, in our professional judgment, may reasonably be thought to have influenced our independence during the audit.

In determining which relationships to report, we have considered the applicable legislation and relevant rules of professional conduct and related interpretations prescribed by the appropriate provincial institute/order covering such matters as the following:

- Holding a financial interest, either directly or indirectly in a client;
- Holding a position, either directly or indirectly, that gives the right or responsibility to exert significant influence over the financial or accounting policies of a client;
- Personal or business relationships of immediate family, close relatives, partners or retired partners, either directly or indirectly, with a client;
- Economic dependence on a client; and
- Provision of services in addition to the audit.

We have prepared the following comments to facilitate our discussion with you regarding independence matters.

We are aware of the following relationships between the Library and us that, in our professional judgment, may reasonably be thought to have influenced our independence. The following relationships represent matters that have occurred from June 17, 2020 to June 16, 2021.

- We have provided assistance in the preparation of the financial statements, including adjusting journal entries. These services created a self-review threat to our independence since we subsequently expressed an opinion on whether the financial statements presented fairly, in all material respects, the financial position, results of operations and cash flows of the organization in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards.
- We, therefore, required that the following safeguards be put in place related to the above:
 - Management provided us with a trial balance and draft financial statements, including notes, prior to completion of our audit.
 - Management created the source data for all the accounting entries.
 - Management developed any underlying assumptions required with respect to the accounting treatment and measurement of the entries.
 - Management reviewed advice and comments provided and undertook their own analysis considering the Library's circumstances and generally accepted accounting principles.
 - Management reviewed and approved all journal entries prepared by us, as well as changes to financial statement presentation and disclosure.
 - Someone other than the preparer reviewed the proposed journal entries and financial statements.

We hereby confirm that we are independent with respect to the entity within the meaning of the Code of Professional Conduct of the Chartered Professional Accountants of Ontario as of June 16, 2021.



This communication is intended solely for the use of the Board of Directors, management and others with the entity and should not be used for any other purposes.

Yours truly,

BDO Canada LLP

Chartered Professional Accountants, Licensed Public Accountants

Aurora Public Library Board
Financial Statements
For the year ended December 31, 2020

Aurora Public Library Board
Financial Statements
For the year ended December 31, 2020

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Independent Auditor's Report

To the Members of the Aurora Public Library Board:

Qualified Opinion

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of the Aurora Public Library Board (the "Board"), which comprise the statement of financial position as at December 31, 2020, and the statements of operations and accumulated surplus, changes in net financial assets and cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies.

In our opinion, except for the possible effects of the matter described in the *Basis for Qualified Opinion* section of our report, the accompanying financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Board as at December 31, 2020, and its results of operations, its change in net financial assets and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards.

Basis for Qualified Opinion

In common with many not-for-profit organizations, the Board derives revenue from fines and donations, the completeness of which is not susceptible to satisfactory audit verification. Accordingly, verification of these revenues was limited to the amounts recorded in the records of the Entity. Therefore, we were not able to determine whether any adjustments might be necessary to fines revenue, donations revenue, annual surplus, and cash flows from operations for the years ended December 31, 2020 and 2019, financial assets as at December 31, 2020 and 2019, and accumulated surplus as at January 1 and December 31 for both the 2020 and 2019 years. Our audit opinion on the financial statements for the year ended December 31, 2019 was modified accordingly because of the possible effects of this limitation in scope.

We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements* section of our report. We are independent of the Entity in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in Canada, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our qualified audit opinion.

Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is responsible for assessing the Board's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the Board or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Board's financial reporting process.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Board's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Board's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Entity to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Chartered Professional Accountants, Licensed Public Accountants

Barrie, Ontario
June 16, 2021

Aurora Public Library Board **Statement of Financial Position**

December 31	2020	2019
Financial assets		
Cash	\$ 23,349	\$ 7,392
Receivable from the Corporation of the Town of Aurora (note 2)	39,140	218,469
Other receivables	19,081	18,860
	<u>81,570</u>	<u>244,721</u>
Liabilities		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	136,707	312,035
Employee benefits liabilities (note 4)	92,528	82,500
	<u>229,235</u>	<u>394,535</u>
Net debt	<u>(147,665)</u>	<u>(149,814)</u>
Non-financial assets		
Tangible capital assets (note 5)	3,572,057	3,750,035
Prepaid expenses	5,975	280
	<u>3,578,032</u>	<u>3,750,315</u>
Accumulated surplus (note 6)	<u>\$ 3,430,367</u>	<u>\$ 3,600,501</u>

On behalf of the Board

Aurora Public Library Board Chair

Chief Executive Officer

Aurora Public Library Board

Statement of Operations and Accumulated Surplus

For the year ended December 31	Budget 2020 (note 7)	2020	2019
Revenue			
Town of Aurora funding	\$ 4,068,100	\$ 3,245,298	\$ 3,943,095
Provincial operating grants	45,422	45,422	45,422
Grants and other	-	-	6,075
Fines and user fees	65,920	12,677	64,223
Interest and other	33,500	14,171	37,811
	<u>4,212,942</u>	<u>3,317,568</u>	<u>4,096,626</u>
Expenses			
Salaries and employee benefits	3,140,742	2,460,870	2,866,119
Services and rent	299,200	243,565	182,032
Materials and supplies	718,000	277,713	600,347
Amortization	505,554	505,554	450,170
	<u>4,663,496</u>	<u>3,487,702</u>	<u>4,098,668</u>
Annual deficit	<u>(450,554)</u>	<u>(170,134)</u>	<u>(2,042)</u>
Accumulated surplus, beginning of year		<u>3,600,501</u>	<u>3,602,543</u>
Accumulated surplus, end of year		<u>\$ 3,430,367</u>	<u>\$ 3,600,501</u>

Aurora Public Library Board
Statement of Change in Net Financial Assets (Debt)

For the year ended December 31	Budget 2020 (note 7)	2020	2019
Annual deficit	\$ (450,554)	\$ (170,134)	\$ (2,042)
Amortization of tangible capital assets	505,554	505,554	450,170
Acquisition of tangible capital assets	(327,576)	(327,576)	(1,940,536)
Change in prepaid expenses	(5,695)	(5,695)	(280)
Change in net financial assets (debt)	(278,271)	2,149	(1,492,688)
Net financial assets (debt), beginning of year	(149,814)	(149,814)	1,342,874
Net financial assets (debt), end of year	\$ (428,085)	\$ (147,665)	\$ (149,814)

Aurora Public Library Board

Statement of Cash Flows

For the year ended December 31	2020	2019
Operating transactions		
Annual surplus	\$ (170,134)	\$ (2,042)
Non-cash charges to operations:		
Amortization	505,554	450,170
Changes in non-cash operating working capital:		
Receivable from the Corporation of the Town of Aurora	179,329	1,862,423
Other receivables	(221)	(18,851)
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	(175,328)	(365,220)
Employee benefits liabilities	10,028	16,300
Prepaid expenses	(5,695)	(280)
Total Operating Transactions	343,533	1,942,500
Capital transactions		
Acquisition of tangible capital assets	(327,576)	(1,940,536)
Increase in cash	15,957	1,964
Cash, beginning of year	7,392	5,428
Cash, end of year	\$ 23,349	\$ 7,392

Aurora Public Library Board Notes to the Financial Statements

December 31, 2020

1. Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

Management's Responsibility

The financial statements of the Aurora Public Library Board (the "Board") are the responsibility of management. They have been prepared in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards established by the Public Sector Accounting Board ("PSAB") of the Chartered Professional Accountants of Canada. The Board is a registered charity and as such, is exempt from income tax under the Canadian Income Tax Act, and may issue income tax receipts to donors. Its primary role is to provide library services to the general public.

Basis of Accounting

Revenue and expenses are reported on the accrual basis of accounting whereby revenue is recognized as it is earned and measurable; and expenses are recognized in the period that goods and services are acquired, a liability is incurred, or transfers are due.

Revenue Recognition

Revenues are recognized as follows:

- a) Grants
 - Conditional grant revenue is recognized to the extent the conditions imposed on it have been fulfilled.
 - Unconditional grant revenue is recognized when monies are receivable.
- b) Fine and user fee revenue is recognized in the period in which it is collected.
- c) Interest and other income is recognized in the period it is earned.

Use of Estimates

The preparation of financial statements in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements, and the reported amounts of revenues and expenses during the reporting period. The principal estimates used in the preparation of these financial statements are the employee benefits liabilities, the estimated useful lives of tangible capital assets and valuation of tangible capital assets. Actual results could differ from management's best estimates as additional information becomes available in the future.

Government Transfers

Government transfers are recognized in the financial statements in the period in which the events giving rise to the transfer occur, providing the transfers are authorized, any eligibility criteria have been met, and reasonable estimates of the amounts can be made.

December 31, 2020

1. Summary of Significant Accounting Policies (continued)

Tangible Capital Assets

Tangible capital assets are recorded at cost, less accumulated amortization. Cost includes all costs directly attributable to acquisition or construction of the tangible capital asset including transportation costs, installation costs, design and engineering fees, legal fees and site preparation costs. Amortization is recorded on a straight-line basis over the estimated life of the tangible capital asset using the following rates:

Library collection	7 years
Equipment	4 - 10 years
Furniture	10 - 20 years

One half of the annual amortization is charged in the year of acquisition and in the year of disposal.

Tangible capital assets under construction are not amortized until such time that they are available to be put into service.

Non-pension Post-employment Benefits, Compensated Absences & Termination Benefits

The Board accrues its obligations under employee benefit plans as the employees render the services necessary to earn employee future benefits. The Board has adopted the following valuation methods and assumptions:

- a) Actuarial cost method:
Accrued benefit obligations are computed using the projected benefit method prorated on service, as defined in PSAB 3250 and PSAB 3255. The objective under this method is to expense each member's benefit under the plan taking into consideration projections of benefit costs to and during retirement. Under this method an equal portion of total estimated future benefit is attributed to each year of service.
- b) Accounting policies:
Actuarial gains and losses are amortized on a linear basis over the expected average remaining service life ("EARSLS") (expected remaining payment period in respect of the retiring allowance) of members expected to receive benefits under the plan, with amortization commencing in the period following the determination of the gain or loss. Obligations are attributed to the period beginning on the member's date of hire and ending on the expected date of termination, death or retirement, depending on the benefit value.

Pension agreements

The Board makes contributions to the Ontario Municipal Employees' Retirement System ("OMERS"), a multi-employer public sector pension fund, based on the principles of a defined benefit plan, which specifies the amount of the retirement benefit to be received by the employees on the basis of predefined retirement age, length of eligible service and rates of remuneration over a fixed period of time.

Because OMERS is a multi-employer pension plan, any pension plan surpluses or deficits are a joint responsibility of all participating Ontario employers and their employees. As a result, the Board does not recognize any share of the OMERS pension surplus or deficit. Accordingly, contributions made during the year are expensed.

Aurora Public Library Board
Notes to the Financial Statements

December 31, 2020

2. Receivable from the Corporation of the Town of Aurora

At the end of the year, the amount due from the Corporation of the Town of Aurora ("the Town") is as follows:

	2020	2019
Receivable from the Town	\$ 39,140	\$ 218,469

The amount receivable from the Town is non-interest bearing and has no fixed terms of repayment. This balance is short-term in nature, reflecting inter-fund balances.

Additionally, the Town provides the facilities, including utilities and maintenance for the Board's operations for \$NIL consideration.

3. Pension Agreements

OMERS provides pension services to almost 500,000 active and retired members and approximately 1,000 employers. Each year an independent actuary determines the funding status of OMERS Primary Pension Plan (the Plan) by comparing the actuarial value of invested assets to the estimated present value of all pension benefits that members have earned to date. The most recent actuarial valuation of the Plan was conducted at December 31, 2020. The results of this valuation disclosed total actuarial liabilities of \$113,055 million in respect of benefits accrued for service with actuarial assets at that date of \$109,844 million indicating an actuarial deficit of \$3,211 million. Because OMERS is a multi-employer plan, any pension plan surpluses or deficits are a joint responsibility of Ontario municipal organizations and their employees. As a result, the Aurora Public Library (APL) Board does not recognize any share of the OMERS pension surplus or deficit.

Contributions made by the APL Board to OMERS in 2020 ranged from 9.0% to 14.6% depending on the level of earnings. As a result, \$191,359 (2019 - \$214,046) was contributed to OMERS for current year services.

Aurora Public Library Board
Notes to the Financial Statements

December 31, 2020

4. Employee Benefits Liabilities

	2020	2019
Post-employment benefits - accrued obligation	\$ 57,290	\$ 60,400
Accrued sick leave	35,238	22,100
	<u>\$ 92,528</u>	<u>\$ 82,500</u>

Post-employment benefits

Post-employment benefits are health and dental benefits that are provided to early retirees and employees currently on long-term disability. The Board recognized these post-employment costs as they are earned during the employee's tenure of service.

	2020	2019
Post-employment benefits accrued obligation, beginning of year	\$ 145,388	\$ 118,400
Add: Benefit expense	20,805	15,700
Interest cost	5,027	4,400
Actuarial Losses	-	17,988
Less: Benefits paid for the period	(24,350)	(11,100)
Post-employment benefits accrued obligation, end of year	<u>146,870</u>	<u>145,388</u>
Unamortized actuarial losses	<u>(54,342)</u>	<u>(62,888)</u>
Post-employment benefits - accrued benefit liabilities	<u>\$ 92,528</u>	<u>\$ 82,500</u>

The accrued benefit obligations for the Board's post-employment benefits liability as at December 31, 2020 are based on actuarial valuations for accounting purposes as at December 31, 2019 with projections to December 31, 2022. These actuarial valuations were based on assumptions about future events. The economic assumptions used in these valuations are management's best estimates of expected rates of:

	2020	2019
Expected future inflation rates	1.75%	1.75%
Discount on accrued benefit obligations	3.50%	3.50%
Drug costs escalation	6.75%	6.75%
Other health care costs escalation	6.75%	6.75%
Dental costs escalation	3.75%	3.75%

The amount of benefits paid during the year was \$11,031 (2019 - \$25,432).

Aurora Public Library Board
Notes to the Financial Statements

December 31, 2020

5. Tangible Capital Assets

	Library Collection	Equipment	Furniture	2020 Leasehold Improve- ments	Assets Under Construction	Total
Cost						
Balance, beginning of year	\$2,852,606	\$ 678,668	\$ 964,666	\$ -	\$ 2,028,198	\$6,524,138
Add: Additions during the year	223,713	54,540	-	49,323	-	327,576
Add: Donations and Transfers	-	-	-	2,028,198	(2,028,198)	-
Less: Disposals during the year	(357,181)	-	-	-	-	(357,181)
Balance, end of year	2,719,138	733,208	964,666	2,077,521	-	6,494,533
Accumulated amortization						
Balance, beginning of year	1,670,617	584,634	518,852	-	-	2,774,103
Add: Amortization during the year	346,210	36,202	65,433	57,709	-	505,554
Less: Disposals during the year	(357,181)	-	-	-	-	(357,181)
Balance, end of year	1,659,646	620,836	584,285	57,709	-	2,922,476
Net book value	\$1,059,492	\$ 112,372	\$ 380,381	\$2,019,812	\$ -	\$3,572,057

Aurora Public Library Board
Notes to the Financial Statements

December 31, 2020

5. Tangible Capital Assets Continued

	Library Collection	Equipment	Furniture	2019 Leasehold Improve- ments	Assets Under Construction	Total
Cost						
Balance, beginning of year	\$ 2,943,777	\$ 644,020	\$ 587,818	\$ -	\$ 792,665	\$ 4,968,280
Add: Additions during the year	276,467	51,688	376,848	-	1,235,533	1,940,536
Less: Disposals during the year	(367,638)	(17,040)	-	-	-	(384,678)
Balance, end of year	2,852,606	678,668	964,666	-	2,028,198	6,524,138
Accumulated amortization						
Balance, beginning of year	1,676,000	558,791	473,822	-	-	2,708,613
Add: Amortization during the year	362,255	42,885	45,030	-	-	450,170
Less: Amortization on disposals	(367,638)	(17,042)	-	-	-	(384,680)
Balance, end of year	1,670,617	584,634	518,852	-	-	2,774,103
Net book value	\$ 1,181,989	\$ 94,034	\$ 445,814	\$ -	\$ 2,028,198	\$ 3,750,035

Aurora Public Library Board
Notes to the Financial Statements

December 31, 2020

6. Accumulated Surplus

Accumulated surplus is comprised of the following:

	2020	2019
Surpluses		
General revenue	\$ (503,781)	\$ (2,910,775)
Invested in tangible capital assets	3,572,057	3,750,035
Increase to Prepaid Expenses	-	280
Less: employee benefit liabilities	(92,528)	(82,500)
Total surpluses	2,975,748	757,040
Reserves		
General capital reserve	409,711	2,799,208
Aurora Public Library Board Donation and Bequest Reserve	44,908	44,253
Total reserves	454,619	2,843,461
Accumulated surplus	\$ 3,430,367	\$ 3,600,501

Invested in tangible capital assets

The investment in tangible capital assets represents amounts already spent and invested in infrastructure and other non-financial assets.

General Capital Reserve

The Town Council has approved the setting aside of any of the Board's operating surplus in a year to a general library capital reserve for future capital projects.

Aurora Public Library Board Donation and Bequest Reserve

The Board has approved a reserve named "The Aurora Public Library Board Donation and Bequest Reserve" ("ALB Donation & Bequest") for future specified/significant donations and bequests received to support special programs or initiatives outside of the annual operating budget. Funds are transferred from the reserve for approved expenditures. If such funds are not fully expended in the approval year, they are held as Unexpended Funds.

DC Reserve Fund - Library Service

The Town levies, collects and holds development charges, a component of which is specifically to fund expansion of library services to accommodate growth. Allocations from these funds are approved by the Library Board as part of the annual budget process. Currently, the Town holds \$3,382,725 (2019 - \$3,440,215) of the Library Service related development charges in their segregated development charges accounts. This reserve fund is not reflected in these financial statements.

Aurora Public Library Board Notes to the Financial Statements

December 31, 2020

7. Budget Reconciliation

The Budget for 2020 adopted by the Board on October 16, 2019 was prepared on a basis not consistent with that used to report actual results (Canadian public sector accounting standards). The budget was prepared on a modified accrual basis, while Canadian public sector accounting standards now require financial statements to be prepared on a full accrual basis. Accordingly, the budget expensed all tangible capital expenditures rather than including an amortization expense. As a result, the budget figures presented in the statements of operations and change in net financial assets represent the 2020 budget adopted by the Board with adjustments as follows:

	Revenue	Expense	Net
Approved net operating funding from the Town of Aurora	\$ 3,868,100	\$ 3,868,100	\$ -
Budgeted grant, fines and user fees	144,842	144,842	-
Total Board approved budget	\$ 4,012,942	\$ 4,012,942	\$ -
Less: capitalized to TCA from operating accounts	-	(223,711)	223,711
transfers to/from other funds	-	(130,000)	130,000
Plus: 2020 Non-TCA capital projects' costs	-	498,711	(498,711)
DC funding from the Town of Aurora	200,000	-	200,000
amortization expense	-	505,554	(505,554)
Adjusted budget per the statement of operations	\$ 4,212,942	\$ 4,663,496	\$ (450,554)

8. Uncertainty due to COVID-19

In March, 2020 the Aurora Public Library along with the rest of the world found itself subject to the COVID-19 pandemic. The magnitude of the impact of COVID-19 on the library is not yet clear, but the existing social distancing measures and economic shut-down impacts have already had material impacts on the library's short-term financial position. Those impacts principally being the closure of its facility to the public resulting in lost revenues and a requirement to place the majority of staff on declared emergency leave. Consequently, an overall net savings is anticipated in the short-term with a return to a new normal over the longer term. The Aurora Public Library's recognized COVID-19 net operating savings were returned to the Town in support of its pressures arising due to the pandemic.



Aurora Public Library Board

MINUTES of MEETING

Wednesday, May 19 2021

The Aurora Public Library Board held its regular meeting on Wednesday, May 19, 2021 via video conference.

Present: John Clement, Tom Connor (Chair), Councillor John Gallo, Councillor Sandra Humfries, Adam Mobbs (Vice Chair), Marie Rankel, Ken Turriff

Chief Executive Officer: Bruce Gorman

Staff: Reccia Mandelcorn, Manager, Community Collaboration; Jodi Marr, Manager, Customer Opportunity; Maida Rae, HR Coordinator/EA (recorder); Julie Rocca, Business Manager

The Chair called the meeting to order at 07:02 p.m.

1. **Adoption of the revised Agenda**

MOTION: **21.04.28**
Moved by: M. Rankel
Seconded by: A. Mobbs
CARRIED

THAT agenda item 5.1 Aurora Public Library Board Committees membership be moved to the top of the agenda.

MOTION: **21.04.29**
Moved by: J. Clement
Seconded by: Councillor S. Humfries
CARRIED

THAT the revised Agenda be approved

2. **Disclosure of Interest**

3. **Approval of Minutes:**

.1 Regular meeting of April 21, 2021

MOTION: **21.04.30**
Moved by: A. Mobbs
Seconded by: Councillor J. Gallo
CARRIED

THAT the Minutes of the April 21, 2021 regular meeting be approved

4. **Reports**

.1 First Quarter Operations Report SR2021.10

A staff report was issued prior to the meeting.

MOTION: **21.04.31**

Moved by: K. Turriff

Seconded by: J. Clement

CARRIED

THAT the First Quarter

Operations Report to March 31, 2021 be received as information

K. Turriff joined the meeting at 7.22 p.m.

.2 2020 Financial Statement – Year End Report SR2021.11

A staff report was issued prior to the meeting.

MOTION: **21.04.32**

Moved by: M. Rankel

Seconded by: T. Connor

CARRIED

THAT the Aurora Public Library Financial Statement for the year ended December 31, 2020 be received

.3 First Quarter Financial Statement SR2021.12

A staff report was issued prior to the meeting.

MOTION: **21.04.33**

Moved by: K. Turriff

Seconded by: J. Clement

CARRIED

THAT the Aurora Public Library Financial Statement for the period ended March 31, 2021 be received

5. **Items for Consideration**

.1 Aurora Public Library Board Committees Membership discussion

MOTION: **21.04.34**

Moved by: M. Rankel

Seconded by: Councillor S. Humfryes

CARRIED

THAT the membership of the Executive Committee consist of Tom Connor (Board Chair), Adam Mobbs (Vice Chair) and Marie Rankel

and,

THAT the membership of the Finance Sub Committee consist of Tom Connor (ex officio), Adam Mobbs, John Clement and Councillor John Gallo

and,

THAT the membership of the CEO Performance Review Committee consist of Tom Connor (ex officio), Marie Rankel, Ken Turriff and Councillor Sandra Humfryes

.2 APL Staff Appreciation discussion

A discussion occurred at the meeting.

MOTION: 21.04.35

Moved by: Councillor J. Gallo

Seconded by: A. Mobbs

CARRIED

THAT the Library Board provide a \$50 gift card to each Library staff member to thank them for their work throughout the pandemic.

It was noted that a letter from the Board be included with the gift card.

6. Library CEO Updates

.1 CEO Updates

A verbal report was provided at the meeting.

MOTION: 21.04.36

Moved by: M. Rankel

Seconded: K. Turriff

CARRIED

THAT the Library CEO Updates verbal report be received as information

The provincial framework for reopening is changing. The Library will adapt their existing plan once the new framework is provided.

The HRIS launches in June.

The South doors are in place, the Town will bridge the entryway and accessibility next week. This will become the primary staff entrance/egress, to avoid the construction in the north end of the building.

The Editor in Residence program has resulted in a referral for one participating author to an agent. Oscar nominated film Another Round is available on Hoopla, and APL is hosting an online film event.

Vice-Chair A. Mobbs shared his appreciation for the land acknowledgement at the start of a recent library virtual event. There was discussion from the Board about including a land acknowledgement prior to Library Board meetings and events. M. Rankel asked if there was a formal Equity Diversity Inclusion Strategy for APL.

MOTION: 21.04.37

Moved by: M. Rankel

Seconded by: K. Turriff

CARRIED

THAT Library staff investigate ways to include equity, diversity and inclusion in their operations, including incorporating land acknowledgements prior to

Agenda item 4
Library Board meetings and
events,

and,

to bring recommendations back to
Library Board for consideration

.2 First Quarter Use Indicators Update SR2021.13

A staff report was issued prior to the meeting.

MOTION: 21.04.38

Moved by: J. Clement

Seconded by: Councillor J. Gallo

CARRIED

THAT the First Quarter Use
Indicators Update be received
as information

.3 Library Square Governance Update

A verbal report was provided at the meeting.

MOTION: 21.04.39

Moved by: K. Turriff

Seconded by: T. Connor

CARRIED

THAT the Library Square
Governance Update be received
as information

Staff are negotiating a Service-Level Agreement (SLA) with the Town for Library Square IT provision, customer service and support. Once negotiated, the SLA will be included in a future Board meeting agenda for review and approval.

7. General Business Information/Questions

.1 APL Updates and Library Square Stakeholder Updates

Articles, photographs and a project update were issued prior to the meeting.

MOTION: 21.04.40

Moved by: K. Turriff

Seconded by: J. Clement

CARRIED

THAT the APL Updates and
Library Square Stakeholder
Updates be received as
information

Newspaper articles and media coverage from late April to early May highlighted APL's programs and services.

The Town of Aurora provided an update on the Library Square construction project.

8. Member Announcements

The Board congratulated CEO Bruce Gorman on the successful completion of the ICD.D program from the University of Toronto Rothman's School of Management.

J. Marr shared that APL is partnering with every York and Durham Region library this summer to present the Superstar Storyteller Series, which includes four virtual presentations from teen/children's authors. This will bolster the TD Summer Reading Club programming, which will include Storywalks at select Town parks.

June is Pride Month and APL is once again hosting Drag Queen Storytime with Ms. Eva Lasting on Saturday, June 5th.

9. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 16, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.

10. Adjournment

MOTION: **21.04.41**

Moved by: T. Connor

Seconded by: K. Turriff

CARRIED

THAT the meeting be adjourned
at 9:03 p.m.

T. Connor
Chair

B. Gorman
Chief Executive Officer



Aurora Public Library Board

**REPORT
SR2021.15**

SUBJECT: *Fine-Free Library Model*

FROM: Bruce Gorman, Chief Executive Officer

DATE: June 16, 2021

RECOMMENDATION

That the Aurora Public Library Board approve an overdue fine-free circulation model, updating policies and procedures accordingly.

PURPOSE

To implement a fine-free circulation model in order to advance the priorities of Aurora Public Library's 2017-2021 Strategic Plan, which identifies under:

Strategic Direction – Build Community

- Assess policies and procedures to remove systemic barriers that may exist

Strategic Direction – Place of Possibilities

- Identify barriers to service and investigate solutions

BACKGROUND

Over the past several years, many public library systems throughout North America have begun to examine the value and barrier presented by fines for overdue material. In recent years, many systems, large and small, have embraced offering fine-free service to their community.

There are four primary benefits to eliminating fines:

- Fines stand in the way of the library providing equitable service, especially as they disproportionately impact families with young children, newcomers, seniors, and low-income residents.
- Research indicates that literacy development is closely linked to positive early experiences in children's lives related to books and stories. Fines, by their very definition, are punitive. Removing fines increases access to these positive library experiences, thus promoting lifelong literacy.

- Fines are not a sustainable revenue model for public libraries. As the library offers automated pre-overdue reminders, as renewing material online or in the library app is easy and convenient, and with the growth of digital circulation, where return is automatic and no fines incurred, the amount of library fines collected annually continues to decline.
- Implementing a fine-free model typically increases circulation and the number of active library customers. Fine-free libraries have found that eliminating fines has increased circulation, brought back lapsed users, and boosted goodwill.

While there may be a public perception that fines encourage a more responsible use of library collections, research does not support this. In fact, studies have shown that eliminating overdue fines does not correlate to an increase in late returns, longer hold times, or gaps in the collection.

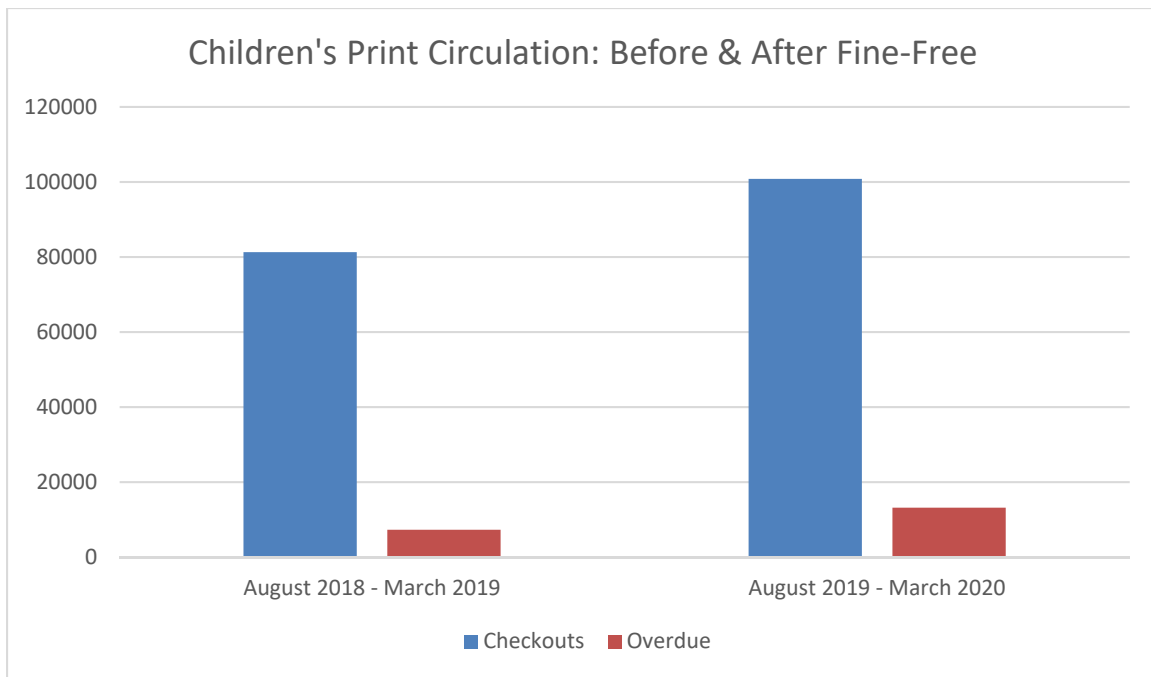
DISCUSSION

Early research on this topic includes Colorado State Library, who removed fines on children's material in 2016. Other libraries soon followed, such as New York City in 2017, with many, such as Salt Lake City (2017), Chicago, San Francisco, Denver, and Phoenix (all 2019) eliminating overdue fines on all material. In Canada, more than 200 libraries of all sizes, including Calgary, Edmonton, Halifax, Regina, Vancouver, and Winnipeg, have also gone completely fine-free.

Within Ontario, at least a dozen libraries (including Hamilton, Toronto and Markham) have removed fines on children's and/or teen material, with an additional 25 libraries currently completely fine-free, including Barrie, Innisfil, Kitchener, London, Oakville, Ottawa, Thunder Bay, and Vaughan. Several of these libraries began with children's material and then extended to all material a year or two later.

The Aurora Public Library Board also approved a fine-free model for children's print material, which was implemented August 6, 2019. Examination of the usage of this collection, as well as the return rates, are in line with what other library systems have experienced:

- It did not result in significant increase in overdue material. The majority of material continued to be returned on or before the due date.
- For those families who were going to be a couple days late regardless, it encouraged much higher circulation, as families were able to continue using the library without stigma or fear of punitive financial barriers.



Removal of overdue fines on children's print material (books, magazines, etc.) took effect on August 6, 2019. We therefore compared circulation from that date to March 6, 2020 (one week before the library closed as a result of COVID) to the same period, one year earlier: August 6, 2018 to March 6, 2019.

The numbers show a clear success story. Our circulation rose an astonishing 24% (or 19,561 additional items) from 81,265 children's print checkouts to 100,826 in the same period the following year. Meanwhile, the number of overdue items remained very low: 7,303 (or 9%) the first year, to 13,195 (or 13%) the following year.

Additionally, COVID played a large part in the slight increase (from 9% to 13%) of material overdue. When the library closed on March 13, 2020, we had no staff working in-library to empty the book drop, so we sent out messaging (via email, social media, and our website) asking all customers to please keep their checked out material. When we reopened for Curbside Pickup in May 2020, many of the items coming back at that time had original check out dates between December 2019 and March 2020.

SERVICE IMPACT

As seen in the elimination of children's print fines above, we anticipate the elimination of overdue fines on all material to result in the following service impacts:

- Growth in circulation and active membership across all age groups
- More equitable provision of library services, as blocked cardholder rates decline in high-needs and vulnerable communities

- Improved customer relationships and goodwill with the Library, as interactions related to fines owing and payment transactions are reduced
- Increased use of the library resources by educators and community programmers supporting students, seniors, job-seekers, individuals living in shelters, and so on, can use the library on behalf of clients in their care
- Enhanced ability for library staff to focus on library services that have the most positive impact in the community, as many payment transactions and individual fee waivers are eliminated, thus freeing staff time for more meaningful interactions

Contrary to public perception, eliminating fines does not result in a significant increase in overdue material, wait time for holds, or gaps in the collection. Many library systems have experienced an increase in the return of long-overdue or lost material, as well as lapsed users following implementation of a fine-free model. Chicago Public Library, for example, noted an increase of 240% in returned items, as a result of many items considered lost being returned, once the stigma and financial barrier of overdue fines was removed.

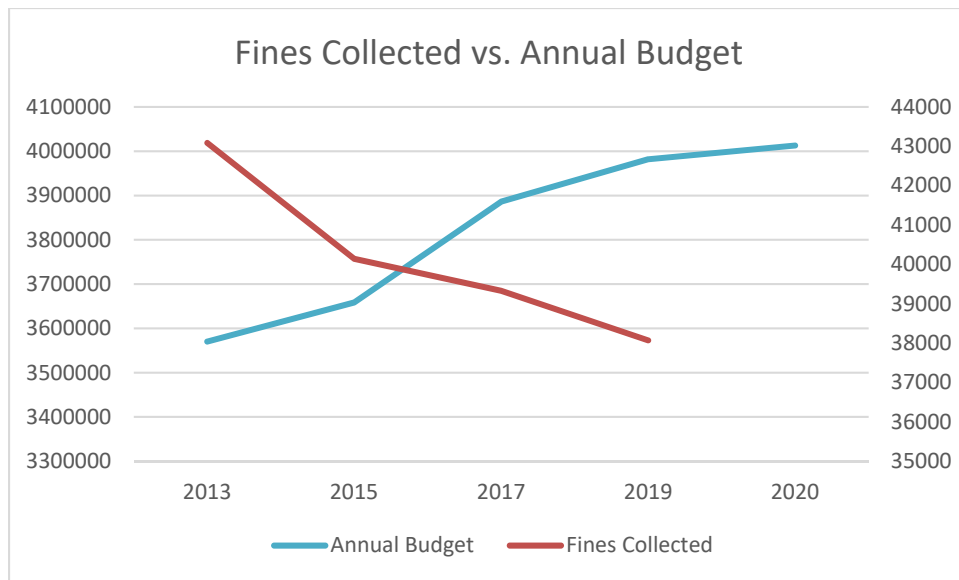
After seeing the impact of removing fines on children's print material, Aurora Public Library anticipates a similar outcome in our community. Most library material is returned on or before the due date, not because customers fear nominal fines, but because they are active library users who continue to return material when they come to borrow more.

Our communications strategy, as well as our automated pre-overdue notices, easy renewals online or in the app, and convenient email and phone overdue reminders, enable customers to track their due dates and continue to return on time. Any items not returned 6 weeks after the due date will continue to be billed to the customer as Assumed Lost (this is the current practice and will not change). However, like in Chicago and many other library systems, we anticipate an increase in the return of these lost / long-overdue items, once customers no longer fear the stigma and financial burden of paying an overdue fine.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Total revenue from fines has steadily declined in recent years. Contributing to this includes:

- Increased use of digital resources, which do not incur late fines
- Decreased use of DVDs
- Improved communications (such as automated pre-overdue reminders)
- Easy use of up to 5 renewals online or in the APL app



Revenue from fines do not represent a sustainable or significant revenue stream. In 2013, fines represented only 1.2% of our annual revenue, whereas in 2019, this figure had further declined to 0.9%.

From a cost-avoidance stance, moving to a fine-free environment drives efficiency. An in-person fine payment transaction can consume numerous minutes of staff time, as well as a per-charge fee on the Moneris payment terminal. Many customers will pay even a 10 or 25 cent fee using a credit or debit card, costing the library a fixed-fee per transaction. Freeing staff from these transactions will allow them to focus more time on activities that have a positive impact for library users.

Furthermore, many library systems have shown that removing overdue fines increased the return of long-overdue and lost material, resulting in significant cost-avoidance of replacing lost material. Currently, there are 4,023 APL items considered long overdue or assumed lost. Even assuming a modest 10% increase in lost and long-overdue returns (keeping in mind Chicago experienced a 240% increase in returns) that would be an additional 402 items returned. The OCLC estimates the average print library material costs \$45. Removing the financial barrier of overdue fines, and therefore increasing customer willingness to return long overdue or lost material, would result in cost-avoidance in the form of replacing fewer such lost collection items.

As a result, the anticipated financial impact resulting from the elimination of fines to library operations is not significant.

CONCLUSION

While there may be a perception that library budgets need the support from overdue fines, or that fines are necessary to ensure that collections are readily available, the research and evidence do not support these claims. Rather, Aurora Public Library has found clear evidence in our children's print collections (fine-free since August 6, 2019) that overdue return rates are not significantly impacted by removing overdue fines, and that, in fact, circulation increases by a significant margin, demonstrating quite the opposite – that collection access is improved across the whole community by the removal of late fines. Libraries, both large and small, that have removed overdue fines on all collections have experienced similar results, library-wide.

Financial implications are mitigated by the efficiencies gained in staff time, through reduced payment interactions, heightened engagement with the collection and through increased returns of lost items, thus reducing replacement costs.

As a result of COVID-19, the Aurora Public Library Board has currently waived all overdue fines until June 30, 2021. Staff recommend the Board make this an ongoing policy, in tandem with a communications plan. Our communication materials will show the community how this decision will increase circulation without impacting wait times. Charges for lost and damaged items remain in place to address any misuse of the collection.

In order to *Build Community*, the library must leverage positive relationships with all sectors of the community. Overdue fines disproportionately affect families with young children, newcomers, seniors, and low-income residents. As a *Place of Possibilities*, we recommend APL join the growing movement of public libraries moving away from punitive fines and instead toward welcoming policies and eliminating barriers to access.

Assisted by: Ashley Nunn-Smith, Manager Content, Access & Innovation

*Bruce Gorman
Chief Executive Officer*

LIBRARY SQUARE *Updates*



June 2021

Activities Since Last Update

- Site preparation works continued for the month of May 2021 in anticipation of works commencing on the new Cultural Centre sub-structure and Library renovations.
- The west entrance tower of the Library is now completely demolished, with underpinning of the 2nd floor slab remaining in place.
- Remediation of the existing concrete masonry block walls continued at the future 2nd floor multi-purpose rooms, while the elevator shaft construction has progressed to the 2nd floor.
- The pedestrian bridge foundations within the centre of the future outdoor square have been poured, stripped, and backfilled.
- Forming, pouring, and curing of the future generator/chiller equipment enclosure has been completed.
- The previously completed north retaining wall is anticipated to be backfilled from the north in the coming weeks.
- Temporary heating measures have now been removed from 22 Church St. as the warmer weather sets in.
- The tower crane was installed in the first week of May 2021, with power being supplied from a temporary sub-station within the School House's basement.

Activities For Next Period

- The forming and pouring of the Cultural Centre foundation walls and raft slab will be the focus of work in June 2021.
- Library rooftop expansion area continues to be prepped for new installations including the new elevator shaft.
- Continue installation of new infrastructure within the library.
- Library mechanical and electrical rough-in.
- Regular site meetings to occur with contractor every two weeks.
- Project management meetings are ongoing.

Theatre Aurora plans play reading for One Book One Aurora campaign

Drew Hayden Taylor piece eyed for theatre’s reopening

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Over the last few weeks, Aurora readers have had the opportunity to all read from the same page as part of the One Book One Aurora campaign, spearheaded by the Aurora Public Library.

With each page of Chasing Painted Horses, the acclaimed 2019 novel by Drew Hayden Taylor, the vivid characters of Danielle, who found a creative outlet with her “Everything Wall” and police officer Ralph, whose interest is stirred by a graffitied image of a horse on a wall, have come to life.

This fall, readers will be able to come face to face with them as Theatre Aurora unveils a staged reading of “The Girl Who Loved Her Horses”, the play that started it all.

Set to take place on the Theatre Aurora stage on October 2, it is unclear at this point whether the public will be allowed into the Henderson Drive performance venue to see the reading in person, or whether it will have to be a strictly streamed affair online, but Theatre Aurora is eager to get those creative juices flowing once again after more than a year in the dark.

“I was taken aback by the simple idea of how art is impactful and the creator can be – which is the loveliest gem for me in the book – as simple as a ten-year-old girl who can create something and it becomes a moving piece of art to many people,” says Theatre Aurora Artistic Director Sergio Calderon. “That strikes a chord with me working in the theatre. We want to create art hoping it will



Contributed photo

Chasing Painted Horses by Drew Hayden Taylor, above, is the 2021 book selection for One Book One Aurora. The play that started it all, The Girl Who Loved Her Horses, will be subject of an upcoming Theatre Aurora initiative.

move people. It doesn’t need to be complicated, it doesn’t need to be complex; it can be simple and sort of universal.

“Everyone has their own experience from it. Not everyone has to have the exact same experience; some will be positive, some will be negative. Some will be confused or ponder, and I think that is ultimately the goal of what art is trying to create: the very beginning of a conversation.”

The conversations sparked by the words on the pages of “Chasing Painted Horses” started out life as “The Girl Who Loved Her Horses” and going through both pieces has provided Theatre Aurora with a number of threads to draw on – not only about art, but Indigenous persons and their histories.

But that has also provided a

challenge. Unfortunately, Theatre Aurora does not have a regular roster of players of Indigenous ancestry and they have been reaching out to different groups for leads on how to make this reading as authentic as possible by bringing Indigenous actors into the fold.

“We produce shows and content and things that we’re all comfortable with,” says Mr. Calderon. “People continuously show up and do things, thus we have our local small theatre, we have our Indigenous theatre, our Black theatre, but it would be nice if a lot of those borders were broken down, a lot more diverse and we mix a little bit more into each other’s worlds. We’re reaching out and hoping this is not just a one-off but the beginning of a process where we can examine larger bodies of work to present on our stage and perhaps share experiences on both sides.”

As they still have a few months to bring everything together, having a representative cast to bring the play to life is not their only challenge; another hurdle is preparing for any and all eventuality due to the global pandemic.

“What we don’t know is how we have to approach it,” says Mr. Calderon. “We have to set it up and be ready and able to do this virtually at the end of the day because we have

no idea where we will be in October with restrictions or if we’re even going to be allowed audiences. All of that is left to the unknown. Our approach is we’re going to start with the simplest, most basic and safest way, which will ultimately lead to four chairs on our stage where it will truly be a reading. In that format, then we can set up several cameras and we can easily switch from in-person to live-streaming should we need to. Then, as we get closer and more familiar with the material, and as we’re told what the new guidelines are for performance basis, we might be able to augment a little bit with a bit of movement, but that will all be determined at some point in the summer when we start hearing what will this truly look like.

“It is an all-in for us. Our biggest hope is we’ll be able to welcome people back into our space. Hopefully it is our first event back in the theatre after COVID.”

If you or anyone you know might want to become involved in the reading/presentation of The Girl Who Loved Her Horses, visit theatreaurora.com, call 905-727-3669, or reach out to Mr. Calderon directly via social media. For more on the One Book One Aurora campaign, visit onebookoneaurora.com.

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The Aurora Museum & Archives is recognizing...

Packaging Design Day (May 7)

Some objects are just so commonplace that it becomes easy to forget how complex their design and production truly is. The humble milk carton is one such item: something most of us have used successfully for years without much thought, but which excels at its intended task. This empty, unprinted example (2002.7.1) was manufactured at the now-closed Tetra Pak facility that operated on Vandorf Sideroad starting in 1985. On May 7, we recognize packaging designs and their designers, and thank them for subtly making our lives cleaner, easier and tastier!



Federal Budget fails to address the cracks in Canada's economic foundations

On April 19, the Government tabled the first federal budget in over two years. With hundreds of millions in spending and unprecedented deficit and debt levels, this budget is both a hit and a miss.

A national budget must do two things. It must address immediate short-term issues while also positioning for and protecting long-term growth. Recognizing the challenges of COVID-19 and the continued need for emergency relief, the 2021 federal budget provides appropriate short-term support for individuals, small businesses and some drastically affected industry sectors. These entitlement programs drive private consumption allowing for citizens to weather the current emergency, but for a vibrant economy they can't exist in isolation. Without substantial core investments to support the backbone of an economy no future prosperity will be built.

Unfortunately, with respect to the more difficult task of establishing and bolstering these economic foundations this budget falls short.

Grave cracks in Canada's competitiveness and productivity predate the pandemic. Foreign capital investment was leaving Canada in disturbing amounts and national security tariffs, non-tariff trade barriers, and complex regulatory and tax frameworks were driving companies to move assembly lines and jobs to other jurisdictions.

For some time, in response to changes in the global economic balance of power, countries around the world have charted a course away from globalization, and placed a greater emphasis on national capability, self-sufficiency, and security. Since the health and economic shock of COVID-19 this trend has accelerated. The resulting shortages of personal protective equipment, vaccines, other medical supplies as well as many other essential



MP'S REPORT

Leona Alleslev, MP
Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill

consumer goods, has further illustrated the vulnerabilities in the Canadian economic framework.

The budget was largely silent on measures to address these pre and post pandemic economic foundation cracks. There was no mention of comprehensive personal and corporate tax reform or regulatory rationalization to improve Canada's competitiveness.

Investment in critical domestic industries such as PPE, vaccine manufacturing, and medical research was limited, and lacks the creation of domestic manufacturing capability. In order to bolster Canada's self-sufficiency and ensure greater longer-term health security, Canada must not only address the current lack of supply but also plan for the future.

Pandemic lockdowns have accelerated the transition to greater dependence on digital information. Canada's lack of a universally accessible, leading edge and secure digital infrastructure is leaving the entire country at a distinct disadvantage. The budget investments are insufficient to mitigate the nation's susceptibility to cyber-attacks and internet fraud or to allow the country to achieve digital access and information security.

Additionally, despite the looming shutdown of Enbridge Line 5 threatening critical supply to Ontario, Quebec and the Maritimes, there was no mention of

Canada's energy future. Canada's oil and gas industry while meeting the highest environmental standards in the world, remains vulnerable to decisions of foreign oil suppliers. The budget did nothing to reduce Canada's dependence on dirtier foreign oil to achieve both climate change goals and domestic energy security simultaneously.

Lastly, there were no concrete measures or "fiscal anchors" to address the country's staggering deficit and debt. The deficit is forecasted to hit a whopping \$388.7 Billion or 17% of GDP in 2021, while the debt will exceed \$2 Trillion. At that level Justin Trudeau will have incurred more cumulative debt than all 22 Prime Ministers before him.

Worse still, this budget has overestimated economic growth by failing to adequately account for the impact of government stimulus and a disproportionately high housing market on GDP. If government handouts in 2020 were removed from the calculations the economy would have shrunk by 15.3% to its lowest level in seven years. Ultra-low interest rates, easy access to credit and a shift to work from home has resulted in the housing share of GDP reaching a record high, offsetting losses in many other areas. The government's statement that the economy will come roaring back fails to note that without stimulus and a red-hot housing market the economy is on life support.

Immense spending with large amounts of debt, will jeopardize Canada's future prosperity and leave a sky-high debt burden for generations to come. Core foundational investments and a clear-eyed view of the state of the economy are critical to protecting the health, and economic security of all Canadians. Economic recovery and Canada's future prosperity cannot be achieved without them.

Customer Service 101

I know we're all trying to shop locally and support our Aurora retailers during these trying times, but based on a recent attempted purchase, sometimes they aren't making that a happy experience.

I went online a few months ago to a nationwide retailer to purchase a fairly expensive item, and was delighted to see that it was on sale for half price – a big savings.

According to the website, there were items at stores throughout the GTA, but for the moment, the Aurora store was temporarily out of stock.

But I wanted to support our store, so I placed my order there, and received a confirmation email that the item would be ready in a week or so.

After a week I went online to check the status, which said the item was set for delivery in three days. Two days later I got an email from the company noting that they were cancelling my order.

I called the head office number accompanying the email. It was explained that if a store did not have a sale item, they would not get one from another store that had them, but would wait for the manufacturer to send them one. Until then, they would just keep providing the customer with a series of made-up delivery dates (my words, but that was the gist of it). Once the sale was over, they would cancel the order, at which time the customer was welcome to reorder the item, which would be available at the regular higher price.

Further, I was told that even if the store knew there may be an availability



INSIDE AURORA

Scott Johnston

issue prior to the sale ending, they were not obligated to advise the customer, or suggest they pick one up at another store, which I would have gladly done, if I'd known.

Bottom line, I was told that since the sale was over, I was out of luck.

Not excited about this explanation, I thought that I'd follow up directly with the store itself. I went online and found that their only listed contact information was a fax number!

I'm sure the last time anyone complained by fax about anything it was in the previous century.

With no access to this obsolete technology, the store itself closed for in-person visits (at the time – curbside pickup only), and no other contact options, such as - here's a thought - a phone number or email, their "customer service" had successfully defeated me.

This whole situation reminded me of an experience I'd had with a different chain many years ago.

In brief, I went to the local store to speak to the manager about an issue I'd had there and was told he wasn't

available and that if I had a complaint, I had to write a letter (!). This I did requesting a response, and hand delivered it at the store (the manager was still not there).

I never did hear back, so eventually I went online to their head office customer feedback site, and explained it all again. I received a response saying they were looking into it.

When I asked when I might expect a specific response they said that "looking into it" was just a standard wording they used, and they were not actually planning to get back to me with any further feedback. If I wanted an actual response, I'd have to explain my issue all over again through a totally different process.

Having failed to get any sort of answer to my issue in person (twice), in writing (once) and by email (twice), by this time they'd worn me down completely, and I gave up trying to contact them. But in a way this issue did have a resolution, as I went from purchasing items at this store every couple of months, to maybe having purchased one or two items there over the past 20 years.

Back to my recent experience here in Town, will this stop me from going out of my way to purchase items locally and support Aurora businesses? Of course not.

But will that be the case at this specific Aurora store?

We'll see.

Feel free to e-mail Scott at:
machelscorners@gmail.com



Welcome to Library Land

By Reccia Mandelcorn
Collections & Exhibitions Coordinator,
Aurora Museum & Archives

When I started my library career, I assumed my days would be spent in the pleasurable pursuit of storytelling and sharing wonderful narratives with fellow readers. And (full disclosure) as someone with a strong aversion to risk, venturing into the territory of business, job hunting and entrepreneurship were never on my to-do list. In fact, since I was 18, I've known no home other than Library Land.

However, over my career, my view has widened. The current economic upheaval has increased the need for libraries to support the business community and those who are looking for work, but even pre-pandemic, substantial research world-wide has shown the importance of libraries as economic drivers and supports.

In collaboration with our community partners, my library has been able to develop many opportunities for job seekers to learn new skills, from resumé writing, to interview techniques, to changing careers in a new country. Last week, I was reviewing a dip in attendance at a 10-week career series for women, and was thrilled to learn that some of the participants could no longer attend the morning sessions because they had successfully found employment. Reverse statistics at its best!

One of my favourite events is Entrepreneurs-in-Residence, an evening of fast-paced storytelling, tips and networking. Entrepreneurship is an exciting adventure, but even in the best of times, it is never without risk. COVID-19 has overturned the best of business plans, causing chaos and uncertainty. Yet, while many start-ups have suffered during the pandemic, Forbes reports an increase in entrepreneurial activity; responding to or anticipating needs in innovative ways.

Being a lover of stories, it's no wonder that I am captivated by the narratives of people who create their dreams, often many times over. From the wedding vow that freed a corporate executive to follow his creative passion to the resilience of an Olympic athlete who started an organic specialty tea company after a fall left her paralyzed at age 14 – these are stories of the human spirit. And stories are what attracted me to Library Land in the first place.

Whether you are seeking work, redefining your life, developing your skills or building a new future, I hope Library Land will be a place you stop by. And if you are an entrepreneur with a story to share, I'd love to hear from you at rmandelcorn@aurorapl.ca.

What I've been reading:

Our Riches
by Kaouter Adimi

Never Anyone But You
by Rupert Thomson

A Madness So Discreet
by Mindy McGinnis

Come Cold River
by Karen Connelly

Reccia Mandelcorn is the Manager, Community Collaboration at Aurora Public Library. The opinions expressed in this column reflect her personal thoughts about the engagement of community with their public library.

THIS WEEK'S NEW POLL

Should virtual learning be offered in a post-pandemic world?
Yes No Unsure

www.theauroran.com

PREVIOUS POLL
Would paid sick days help the fight against COVID-19?

RESULTS TO DATE May 4, 2021	YES 84%	NO 11%	UNSURE 5%
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Author Farzana Doctor to tackle tough issues in virtual Library talk



Author Farzana Doctor will participate in a virtual talk hosted by the Aurora Public Library on June 1.

Contributed photo

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Sharifa finds herself straddling two worlds.

On a trip to India with her husband to reconnect with her heritage, she's drawn into the politics of "khatna," a ritual groups identified as female genital cutting, and is ultimately forced to pick a side.

This is the real-world tapestry woven by acclaimed author Farzana Doctor in her novel "Seven," and one which she will unravel to readers virtually through an author talk hosted by the Aurora Public Library.

The Aurora Public Library (APL) will host An Evening with Farzana Doctor on Thursday, June 3, at 7 p.m.

Born in Zambia of Indian ancestry, Ms. Doctor's work is billed as a "brave, richly-layered narrative about inheritance and resistance that tests the balance between kinship and the fight against customs that harm us."

In 2015, Ms. Doctor became involved with an activist group called We Speak Out which aims to end female genital cutting in the community into which she was born. Balancing her activism with social work, she says she began waking up every morning, writing in a notebook and finding fully-formed fictional scenes spilling out of her.

"After writing about 20 of those scenes, I realized I was writing a novel and it was on the subject," she says. "I was also working through my own personal experience and it was a very emotionally-intense time. As I was preparing for publication, I was quite nervous because I wondered what my own community would think and I wondered if it would sell. It is a difficult premise and while I have worked very hard to write a good page-turner with plenty of lightness and humour, I worried this would be a book that people would be afraid of because it does have a heavy subject. But, actually I found it has gone very well."

That might be something of an understatement.

Since its publication last year, "Seven" has been found on several year-end lists of 2020's top novels, is now nominated for a Trillium Book Award, and, perhaps most importantly, it has opened up a dialogue on a subject that many consider "taboo."

"I have heard people tell me that they learned a lot about this very kind of insular, almost secretive community," she says. "They learned a lot about issues surrounding female genital mutilation and from within my own community I heard people talking about how for the first time they have been having conversations inside their own families on these issues. I recently got an email from a woman in the community who is also a khatna survivor and she told me it inspired a lot of processing for her and while that was difficult it was also really healing for her. It was her first experience of looking at this issue in a really immersive way and being able to better understand her own family and her own experience."

"When I get that kind of feedback that it helped somebody, it is really terrific."

"Another example is a white Canadian who experienced a form of trauma when she was young and wrote to me and said, 'I haven't experienced FGM, I am not from your community, but I found reading the descriptions of this character's healing really helped me understand my own experience better. It is always the personal experiences.'"

By the same token, exploring this

tough subject also helped the author with some of her own lived experience.

"When I started writing this novel, I was very, very angry and I didn't really understand the perspectives of people on the other side of the issue, the people who believe this is a normal, regular and healthy thing to do," she says. "I really wanted to write characters that presented the whole range of opinion on this subject, so my audience could understand the complexity and the diversity within the community. I found myself beginning to understand the point of view of somebody who had a very different point of view from my own and that came from writing characters."

"Through writing those characters, I felt myself softening. I still have the same political beliefs that I always had, but now I understand that to change the issue, to have the social norm shift in the community, it is going to happen through compassion and it has got to happen through understanding. I basically started writing the book in a very angry place and I came out of it with a much more nuanced understanding."

"Sometimes we forget how important literature is in helping us with our own lives and helping us understand the words of others. Literature can be so powerful in that way."

Free registration for APL's An Evening with Farzana Doctor can be completed at [Eventbrite.ca/e/an-evening-with-farzana-doctor-tickets-146814184177](https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/an-evening-with-farzana-doctor-tickets-146814184177).

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Blind-Spot Collision Warning	✔	✗	✔
Heated leather steering wheel	✔	✗	✗
Proximity keyless entry with push-button ignition	✔	✗	✗
Comprehensive Limited Warranty [†]	60 months / 100,000 km	36 months / 60,000 km	36 months / 60,000 km

2021 Nissan Qashqai information is not available as of February 9, 2021.

Ultimate model shown ▶

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Heated rear seats	✔	✗	✗
Proximity key with push-button ignition	✔	✗	✗
Comprehensive Limited Warranty [†]	60 months / 100,000 km	36 months / 60,000 km	36 months / Unlimited km

Ultimate model with Tech package shown ▶

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Heated leather-wrapped steering wheel	✔	✔	✗
Proximity keyless entry with push-button ignition	✔	✗	✗
Comprehensive Limited Warranty [†]	60 months / 100,000 km	36 months / 60,000 km	36 months / 60,000 km

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[§]Leasing offers available O.A.C. from Hyundai Financial Services based on a new 2021 ELANTRA Essential manual/2021 TUCSON 2.0L Essential FWD/2021 ELANTRA Preferred Auto IVT with an annual lease rate of 2.49%/0.9%/2.49%. Total lease obligation is \$11,511/\$11,891/\$13,852. Weekly lease payment of \$30/\$36/\$61 for a 48/36/48-month walk-away lease. Down payment of \$1,095/\$0/\$1,095 and first monthly payment required. Trade-in value may be applied to down payment amount. Lease offer includes Delivery and Destination charges (excluding HST). Lease offer excludes registration, insurance, PPSA, licence fees and dealer admin. fees of up to \$499. Fees may vary by dealer. \$0 security deposit on all models. 16,000 km allowance per year applies. Additional charge of \$0.12/km. [†]Finance offers available O.A.C. from Hyundai Financial Services based on new in-stock 2021 TUCSON 2.0L Preferred FWD/2021 KONA 2.0L Preferred FWD models with an annual finance rate of 0%/0%. Cost of borrowing is \$0/\$0. Selling price is \$29,749/\$24,999. Weekly payments are \$95/\$80 for 72/72 months. \$0/\$0 down payment required. Trade-in value may be applied to down payment amount. Finance offers include Delivery and Destination charge of \$1,825/\$1,825, levies and all applicable charges (excluding HST). Finance offers exclude registration, insurance, PPSA, licence fees and dealer admin. fees of up to \$499. Fees may vary by dealer. [†]Subject to government restrictions. ^{††}Finance payment shown for the 2021 TUCSON 2.0L Preferred FWD includes the finance purchase credit of \$500. Finance purchase credit is applied before taxes and is calculated against the vehicle's starting price. Offer is non-transferable and cannot be assigned. ^{†††}Price of model shown: 2021 ELANTRA Ultimate Intense Blue with Tech package/2021 KONA Ultimate AWD Pulse Red/2021 TUCSON Ultimate AWD Magnetic Grey is \$30,357/\$34,457/\$40,257. Price includes Delivery and Destination charges of \$1,725/\$1,825/\$1,825, levies and all applicable charges (excluding HST). Prices exclude registration, insurance, PPSA, licence fees and dealer admin. fees of up to \$499. Fees may vary by dealer. ^{††††}0 payments (payment deferral) for 90 days is available on promotional finance offers of in-stock 2021 Hyundai models. Payment deferral applies to only promotional finance offers on approved credit and proof of income may be required. If the payment deferral offer is selected, the original term of the finance contract will be extended by 2 months (60 days). Hyundai Auto Canada Corp. will pay the interest during the first 2 months (60 days) of the finance contract, after which the purchaser will pay all principal and interest owing in equal installments over the remaining term of the contract. Payments on finance contracts are paid in arrears. ^{†††††}For finance contracts payable on a weekly and bi-weekly basis, purchasers who select the payment deferral offer may have to make their first weekly or bi-weekly payment sooner than 90 days from purchase. Down payments are not subject to the payment deferral offer and are due on the date the contract is signed. Hyundai Auto Canada Corp. reserves the right to amend or terminate this offer, in whole or in part, at any time without prior notice. Additional conditions and limitations apply. Ask your dealer for details. ^{††††††}Offers available for a limited time and subject to change or cancellation without notice. Vehicle colour is subject to availability. Delivery and Destination charge includes freight, P.D.I. and a full tank of gas. Dealer may sell for less. Inventory is limited, dealer order may be required. Offer is non-transferable and cannot be assigned. No vehicle trade-in required. Visit www.hyundaicanada.com or see dealer for complete details. ^{†††††††}Hyundai's Comprehensive Limited Warranty coverage covers most vehicle components against defects in workmanship under normal use and maintenance conditions. ^{††††††††}Certain restrictions apply. Customers must present their proof of military relationship and I.D. at time of purchase to receive special price discount off their purchase. Program subject to change or cancellation without notice. Visit www.hyundaicanada.com/military or see dealer for complete details. ^{™/®}The Hyundai name, logos, product names, feature names, images and slogans are trademarks owned or licensed by Hyundai Auto Canada Corp. All other trademarks and trade names are the property of their respective owners.

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Acclaimed author Farzana Doctor tackles taboo issues in virtual Aurora Library talk

Since its publication last year, *Seven* has been found on several year-end lists of 2020's top novels, is now nominated for a Trillium Book Award, and, perhaps most importantly, it has opened up a dialogue on the issue of female genital mutilation

about 4 hours ago By: Brock Weir, Local Journalism Initiative reporter



Seven author Farzana Doctor is featured in a virtual talk hosted Aurora Public Library on June 3.

Sharifa finds herself straddling two worlds.

On a trip to India with her husband to reconnect with her heritage, she's drawn into the politics of "khatna," a ritual groups identified as female genital cutting, and is ultimately forced to pick a side.

This is the real-world tapestry woven by acclaimed author Farzana Doctor in her novel *Seven*, and one which she will unravel to readers virtually through an author talk hosted by the Aurora Public Library.

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"After writing about 20 of those scenes, I realized I was writing a novel and it was on the subject," she says. "I was also working through my own personal experience and it was a very emotionally intense time. As I was preparing for publication, I was quite nervous because I wondered what my own community would think and I wondered if it would sell. It is a difficult premise and while I have worked very hard to write a good page-turner with plenty of lightness and humour, I worried this would be a book that people would be afraid of because it does have a heavy subject. But, actually I found it has gone very well."

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"I have heard people tell me that they learned a lot about this very kind of insular, almost secretive community," she says. "They learned a lot about issues surrounding female genital mutilation and from within my own community I heard people talking about how for the first time they have been having conversations inside their own families on these issues. I recently got an email from a woman in the community who is also a khatna survivor and she told me it inspired a lot of processing for her and while that was difficult it was also really healing for her. It was her first experience of looking at this issue in a really immersive way and being able to better understand her own family and her own experience."

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"Another example is a white Canadian who experienced a form of trauma when she was young and wrote to me and said, 'I haven't experienced FGM, I am not from your community, but I found reading the descriptions of this character's healing really helped me understand my own experience better. It is always the personal experiences.'"

By the same token, exploring this tough subject also helped the author with some of her own lived experience.

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presented the whole range of opinion on this subject, so my audience could understand the complexity and the diversity within the community. I found myself beginning to understand the point of view of somebody who had a very different point of view from my own and that came from writing characters.

“Through writing those characters, I felt myself softening. I still have the same political beliefs that I always had, but now I understand that to change the issue, to have the social norm shift in the community, it is going to happen through compassion and it has got to happen through understanding. I basically started writing the book in a very angry place and I came out of it with a much more nuanced understanding.

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Free registration for APL’s An Evening with Farzana Doctor can be completed at [Eventbrite.ca/e/an-evening-with-farzana-doctor-tickets-146814184177](https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/an-evening-with-farzana-doctor-tickets-146814184177).

Brock Weir is a federally funded Local Journalism Initiative reporter at The Auran

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Vol. 21 No. 32 905-727-3300

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Week of May 27, 2021



BACK IN BUSINESS – It didn't take long for local golf and tennis enthusiasts to get back on the courses and the courts after select outdoor amenities were allowed to reopen. (MAIN) Ada and Cossa hit the links at Westview Golf Club while (INSET) Alex works on his serve at the tennis courts at David English Park.

Auroran photos by Glenn Rodger

Reopening Province will depend on vaccine rates

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Every dose of COVID-19 vaccine injected into an arm will bring us one step closer to re-opening Ontario, the Province announced Thursday.

Last week, the Provincial Government released its "Roadmap to Reopen," a three-step plan which scraps Ontario's previous colour-coded system with one entirely dependent on the number of people who get their shots.

The first steps towards re-opening

were realized on Saturday with the re-opening of many outdoor amenities, such as golf courses and tennis courts, but there is still a long way to go before more sectors are able to once again open their doors.

"As a result of the strict public health measures we introduced to stop the spread of COVID-19 variants, we are seeing a steady improvement in our situation as ICU and hospital numbers begin to stabilize," said Premier Doug Ford. "While we must remain conscious of the continued threat the virus poses, with millions of Ontarians having

received at least their first dose of vaccine we can now begin the process of a slow and cautious reopening of the Province in full consultation with our public health professionals."

Following the reopening of outdoor amenities, the resumption of outdoor activities with smaller crowds "where the risk of transmission is lower", coupled with opening up non-essential retail at 15 per cent capacity is Step 1 of the plan. Here, outdoor gatherings of up to 10 people will be allowed, along with outdoor dining of up to four people per

Continued on page 17

Weekend vaccine pop-up set for Aurora Community Centre

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Residents twelve years of age or older will be able to get a dose of Pfizer at a local popup vaccination clinic this weekend.

On Saturday, May 29, and Sunday, May 30, the Region of York and the Ministry of Health will take over

Continued on page 19



BOYS & BOOKS – Lorcan O'Donnell of CAYR Community Connections leads a virtual book club celebrating queer authors in conjunction with the Aurora Public Library. Boys & Books is just one program happening in the community to celebrate Pride Month this June. For more, see Pages 12 & 13.

Auroran photo by Brock Weir

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Over **30 Years** Experience in Aurora



Queer authors explored in Boys & Books club

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Since the global pandemic changed our world, there have been few forums where people can socialize, and far fewer avenues for the 2SLGBTQ+ community.

But CAYR Community Connections and the Aurora Public Library have stepped up to fill at least one gap with Boys & Books, a book discussion and social group for cis and trans gay, bisexual and queer guys.

Meeting monthly, the group discusses stories written by or about cis and trans gay, bisexual and queer authors and how they impact audiences today.

The group is facilitated by CAYR’s Men’s Health Program Coordinator Lorcan O’Donnell and programming will continue into June’s Pride month with a discussion *The Skin We’re In: A Year of Black Resistance & Power* by Desmond Cole.

“The closure of any sort of social space where cisgender and transgender gay, bisexual and queer guys could meet, socialize and hang out was a key factor,” says O’Donnell of founding the group. “I was seeing a lot of isolation and loneliness and really wanting to reconnect with community, reconnect with other guys, and just honestly be around other folks in the community. We did a bit of polling to see what folks were interested in and a book club or discussion group is really what people are interested in.”

The only criteria for each book selected for discussion is they were either written by a member of the gay, bisexual or queer community or tell the story of their experiences.

The group read Oscar Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray* last month and, through that book, they were able to discuss “how far we have come as a society in Canada for the acceptance of the LGBTQ+ rights and sexual freedoms and still have that as a question and concern for a lot of countries around the globe.”

“The groups have been great, the



Boys & Books’ facilitator Lorcan O’Donnell displays May’s selection, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, alongside June’s pick, *The Skin We’re In*.
Auroran photo by Brock Weir

discussions have been absolutely fantastic. It really shows that folks really want to engage and find common ground through reading,” says O’Donnell. “When you look at queer books and queer reads, there are stories that haven’t really been told through the mainstream in the last 100 years. It has gotten better in the last 30 or 40 years. We’re really trying to showcase that and showcase the great talents and stories that queer guys have around the world and their varying identities that intersect in this. It’s not just what a white cisgender gay man might experience, but looking at the intersecting realities of being queer and being black, being a person of colour, being Indigenous, Two Spirit, we’re trying to really keep that intersectional approach to this.”

The Skin We’re In looks at Black liberation and the intersecting roles of being queer and a person of colour. For O’Donnell, it is the shared struggle “that oppressed groups have felt” that act as a common thread.

“It is those shared struggles of really trying to just live authentically without fear of persecution, without fear of homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, racism, all the different isms that come up,” he says.

“I think ahead of Pride month, it is good to recognize, and especially in York Region, we really want to shine a light on the groups that are still vying for

recognition and awareness and equality. We have come so far in the LGBT rights and gays and lesbians now have photos in the mainstream and are becoming much more prevalent. Trans and non-binary folks are still experiencing transphobia and discrimination in every day life and health

care settings, housing, and that struggle is something we really don’t want to lose touch with, that we don’t know what some parts of our community have achieved equality or equity. There are so many other parts that we still need to keep fighting for.”

For more on the Boys & Books group, and to register for the June 8 session which runs from 7 – 9 p.m., visit bit.ly/3hWQxXV.

The following session will take place at the same time on July 13, with Jonny Appleseed by Joshua Whitehead.

Additional virtual programs offered by the Aurora Public Library include popular returning family favourite Drag Queen Story Hour with Miss Eva Lasting on June 5; Q&Gay on June 9, an open and non-judgemental conversation about safe sex and harm reduction; and Pflag’s Coffee Night Support Meeting on June 14. For more on these and other offerings, and how to register, visit aurorapl.ca.

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Find out when, where and how to get vaccinated at ontario.ca/covidvaccineplan or call 1-888-999-6488 for assistance in more than 300 languages.

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Ontario

York Region kicks off Digital Pride this Wednesday



Tristan Coolman leads Pflag York Region, one of several community groups spearheading virtual programming for Pride Month.

Auroran photo by Brock Weir

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

We still have to keep our distance, but the community is set to come together virtually this Wednesday, June 2, for the kick-off of Digital Pride in York Region.

Spearheaded by the York Pride Festival and community partners, this will be the second year running that events have had to take place in the virtual realm, but organizers have come up with new ways to keep the event fresh throughout the month of June.

“As the sun sets to the west, Digital Pride is getting fired up on the east side of Newmarket as we prepare to rock the Digital Stage for opening night of York Pride,” say organizers. “We’ve seriously drawn some wildcards for this evening packed with stellar performances. In the artist lineup, you can expect various styles of drag, involving voguing and untamed outfit realness. Who knows, you might even catch a king on site.

“Continuing into the night, we feature home-grown talent from the north of York Region as we dabble in the catchy tunes of country along with performances from another band that’s sure to get you on your feet. And to top it all off, we go behind the intense heat and witness the deadly art of fire dancing as they lash out some extremely incredible visual displays. Anticipate wicked lighting, bursts of smoke, confetti and pyrotechnics as we celebrate the first night of Season Two of Digital Pride Live with you from the comfort of your own home.”

The fun continues with the distribution of “experiences boxes” on June 4, which

encourages people to share in the same culinary experiences from their own homes – cooking and eating together “like a true family.” Proceeds from the sale of these “experience boxes” will go towards Rainbow Camp to help send 2SLGBTQ+ Canadians to camp.

Further programs include Express Yourself on June 7, a workshop focused on self expression, body positivity and “life-affirming and creative movement exercises” all with an aim of helping you uncover “more authentic versions of you.”

Your Voice is the theme for June 9, a time for “young 2SLGBTQ+ Canadians to have their voices “heard loud and clear.”

“Through passionate conversations and real lived experiences, youth within the Greater Toronto Area and York Region will share real fears, constructive criticisms and their feelings on the ever-changing landscape of our communities,” say organizers. “This is your chance to be unapologetically truthful, to spark change, and make strides to raise awareness on ongoing issues in our community.”

Programming will continue through June 30 and, in the coming weeks, The Auroran will share more of what’s to come.

These conversations, however, are not only being sparked by York Pride. Pflag York Region is also hard at work during Pride Month to provide programs and services to the 2SLGBTQ+ community.

June marks the first anniversary that Pflag York Region has had to reconfigure their events for virtual participants and while there have been some challenges, Pflag president Tristan Coolman says opportunities have presented themselves as well.

“Our Coffee Night ‘Let’s Chat’ events that we have monthly now is really a reflection of that,” says Mr. Coolman on the discussion forum hosted in partnership with the Aurora Public Library. “We’ve been able to do different webinars and educational seminars and for the first time we’re actually streaming live, too. We’re trying to make these events as accessible as possible because people are going to be celebrating Pride from home this year and we want to make it as successful as it can be.

“I think about what Pride means to me. Regardless of the efforts we are all trying to do to make these online events special, I still think about how special it was to participate in the capacity of Pflag [being] out at Pride and having that perspective, versus just visiting casually, almost as a tourist. There is no replacing what in-person Pride is and these events are not trying to replace it, but they are meant to be as much about the community as possible.”

For more on the events York Pride has to offer for the second annual Digital Pride Festival, visit YorkPride.ca. Further information on Pflag York Region, including virtual Coffee Nights, head over to pflagyork.ca.

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TOWN OF AURORA

Notice Board



Council & Committee Meetings			
Date	Time	Location	Meeting
Thursday, May 27	10 a.m.	Video conference	Mayor's Golf Classic Funds Committee
Tuesday, June 1	6:15 p.m.	TBD	Budget Committee (Public Consultation)
Tuesday, June 1	7 p.m.	TBD	General Committee
Monday, June 7	7 p.m.	Video conference	Heritage Advisory Committee
Tuesday, June 8	5:45 p.m.	Video conference	Finance Advisory Committee
Tuesday, June 8	7 p.m.	TBD	Public Planning
Wednesday, June 9	6:30 p.m.	Video conference	Aurora Cultural Centre Board (AGM/Public Meeting)
Wednesday, June 9	7 p.m.	Video conference	Accessibility Advisory Committee
Thursday, June 10	7 p.m.	Video conference	Committee of Adjustment

*Meetings can be viewed online by visiting aurora.ca/livecouncilmeeting

What's Happening



The Town of Aurora believes in recognizing citizens who have made a positive impact and generously contributed to the greater good of the community.

The 2021 Aurora Community Recognition Awards ceremony is being held virtually on **Monday, May 31 at 7 p.m.**

For more details and to view the virtual ceremony, please visit aurora.ca/cra.



The Town of Aurora is celebrating National AccessAbility Week (N.A.A.W.) from **May 31 to June 5**.

The Town and the Accessibility Advisory Committee created a number of initiatives in 2020 to increase accessibility in our community, including the installation of a modern pool hoist, adult change tables and a pathway lighting system along the Tim Jones Trail. This year the Town continues its accessibility journey with the development of new standards for both Information and Communications, as well as the Design of Public Spaces.

We are excited to have many virtual initiatives to celebrate this week including an accessibility art challenge, participation in red shirt day and the launch of a new Accessibility Awareness webpage set to launch on **Monday, May 31**. To view the new webpage visit aurora.ca/accessibilityawareness and learn more about how Aurora is removing barriers our community.



Curbside Giveaway cancelled

The curbside giveaway scheduled for **Saturday, May 29** has been cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions.

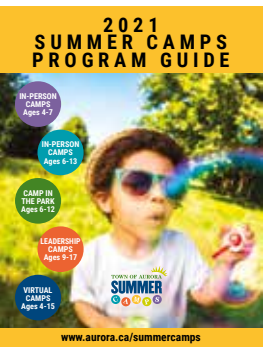
For more information, please visit aurora.ca/wasteandrecycling.

E-Waste collection cancelled

The e-waste collection scheduled for **Saturday, May 29** has been cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions.

For more information, please visit aurora.ca/wasteandrecycling.

What's Happening



Summer Camps 2021 Program Guide

Summer Camps are coming to Aurora! Our Summer Camps 2021 Program Guide will be distributed to all Aurora households with The Banner on **June 3**.

For full details please visit us online at aurora.ca/recguide.

Register online at aurora.ca/eplay.

Aquatics Leadership Programs

Aquatic Leadership Programs will be available throughout the summer. Classes will include both virtual and in-person instructions.

View all programs and course details online at aurora.ca/aquatics.

Club Aurora Virtual Group Fitness Classes

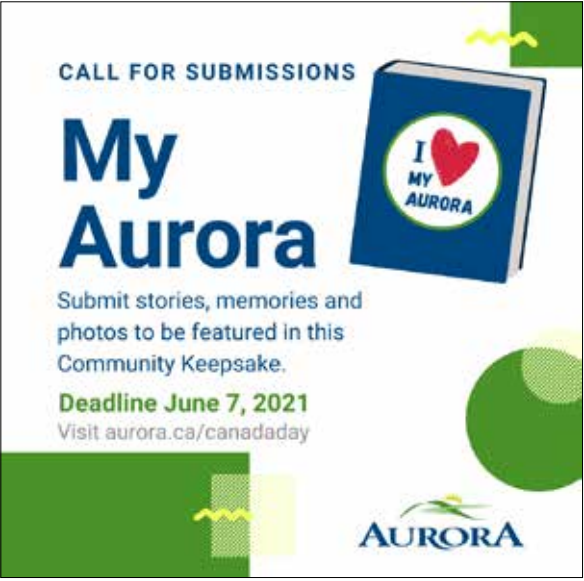
Join us for a Group Fitness Class in the comfort of your own home by pre-registering for one of our exciting virtual classes.

Learn about our virtual programs and view the schedule online at aurora.ca/fitness.

Seniors' Centre Without Walls (SCWW)

Seniors Centre Without Walls (SCWW) is a free program, providing community outreach to seniors and adults via telephone and Zoom.

Check out the monthly schedule online at aurora.ca/scww.



What's Happening

2021 AURORA TEEN IDOL

AUDITIONS WEDNESDAY, JUNE 9, 2021 REGISTER BY FRIDAY, JUNE 4, 2021 Applications are available at aurora.ca/teenidol or call 905-726-4762 FINAL COMPETITION THURSDAY, JULY 1, 2021

Aurora residents between the ages of 12 and 17 are eligible to participate in the competition.

Please note, we reserve the right to cancel, amend or change activities.

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AURORA



AURORA MUSEUM & ARCHIVES

Aurora Horse Show 100th Anniversary

We are looking for content!

Do you have photos, programs, memories, trophies, or anything else related to the show that you would like to loan or donate?

Stories Photos Film Programs Artifacts Trophies

Please contact: Shawna White - swhite@aurora.ca Alicia Cherayil - acherayil@aurora.ca

AURORA MUSEUM & ARCHIVES

SHOW & TELL for Grown Ups

Show and tell isn't just for kids anymore! If you have an interesting collection, photograph or family heirloom, tell us all about it.

Mondays | 10:00 - 11:30 am July 12, Aug 9, Sept 13

The Aurora Museum & Archives will also join to share an item from their collection.

Register at bit.ly/3v4Sfwb

Space is limited.

AURORA MUSEUM & ARCHIVES AURORA PUBLIC LIBRARY



The Aurora Museum & Archives is celebrating...

Heat Awareness Day!

(May 31)

With the long winter finally behind us, we are able to shift our climate control goals from heating to cooling. Most of us relish the moment the AC gets switched on, but equally satisfying is popping up one of these collapsible fans (78.14.15). This one, featuring ribs designed to resemble bamboo, would help keep anyone cool!

Optimism for Better Days Ahead

This month we are seeing confidence and optimism in the prospects of a summer where we finally begin the process of recovery and reconnection. Conversations are evolving from “When will I get a vaccine?” and “When will these lockdowns end?” to “What will this summer offer us?”

We are close to putting this pandemic behind us, but still have a distance to go. More than half the Canadian population has received their first dose of an authorized vaccine and this includes over 710,000 York Region residents.

Thanks to our accelerated vaccination campaign, provinces and territories have moved up their eligibility criteria. We’re getting closer to normalcy, but until everyone is fully vaccinated, we all need to work together to prevent community spread of COVID-19. That means following local public health orders, using the COVID Alert app, staying home, and getting vaccinated as soon as possible.

Up to \$1,200 more per child for 1.6 million Canadian families

In the first four years, the Canada Child Benefit (CCB) has helped lift nearly 435,000 children out of poverty. Families entitled to the CCB with children under the age of six can expect to receive a bit more money in the bank this year. It will help pay for things such as short-term childcare arrangements, healthy food, clothes, and activities they can do at home.

Families could receive up to \$1,200 in support per child under the age of six in 2021. This will benefit about 1.6 million Canadian families and about 2.1 million children under the age of six. In 2021, families that are entitled to receive the CCB with a net income of \$120,000 or less, will receive \$300 per payment for each child under the age of six.

The first payments will be issued on May 28, 2021, which will include both the January and April payments for those entitled to them. The final two payments will be issued on July 30 and October 29, 2021.

Supporting Canadians living with disabilities

We know Canadians living with disabilities are facing significant challenges



Tony Van Bynen, MP
Newmarket - Aurora

MP'S REPORT

during this difficult time and that long-standing barriers to inclusion have been heightened. Budget 2021 proposes to provide \$11.9 million over three years, starting in 2021-22, to undertake consultations to reform the eligibility process for federal disability programs and benefits. This will help maximize the reach of these programs and improve the lives of Canadians living with disabilities. This work would feed directly into the design of a new disability benefit.

Budget 2021 proposes to update the list of mental functions of everyday life used for assessment for the Disability Tax Credit, making it easier to be assessed, reduce delays, and improve access to benefits.

Budget 2021 also proposes to recognize more activities in determining time spent on life-sustaining therapies, and to reduce their minimum frequency to qualify for the Disability Tax Credit.

Creating Good Jobs and a Green Recovery with Home Retrofits

Our government announced that we’re creating 2,000 new green jobs to help us build back a better economy. With the Greener Homes Program, we are helping Canadians retrofit their homes to reduce their climate impact, make them more comfortable, and save money on energy.

To do this, we are investing \$10 million to recruit and train 2,000 new Energy Advisors across the country. These experts will measure each home’s energy performance and give advice to homeowners.

The Greener Homes initiative will provide homeowners with up to \$5,000 in grants for the purchase and installation of qualifying equipment or for the

implementation of qualifying measures. Details for this program are currently being finalized.

Empowering all Canadians to train and develop their skills

The Honourable Carla Qualtrough, Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion of Canada announced the launch of a new skills training program – Skills for Success.

Funding from this program will go to organizations to design and deliver training to enhance foundational and transferable skills to help nearly 90,000 Canadians tackle the barriers that keep them out of the labour force.

This program will help employees gain access to skills, tools and opportunities, and provide employers with skilled workers they need to succeed.

Support through Canada Healthy Communities Initiative

Recently, I was pleased to advise two important community organizations that their projects had been approved for funding under the Canada Healthy Communities Initiative. Salvation Army Central York Region in Aurora has received \$58K for their Psychotherapy Support Program. This provides no-charge Registered Psychotherapist counselling to support the increased challenges resulting from COVID-19. The focus is on face-to-face, online virtual counselling to target vulnerable adults, youth, and seniors in Central York Region and surrounding communities.

I was also pleased to advise Job Skills that their Technology Lending Program has been approved for \$98.6K. This program focuses on individuals with low income or living in poverty in York Region without access to a computer, and/or cell phone and/or WIFI, resulting in them being unable to access community programs and services currently delivered online.

Please continue to support local businesses and remember that they need your support.

If you are seeking information or require assistance with Federal programs and services, please reach out to my team by e-mail at Tony.VanBynen@parl.gc.ca or by calling 905-953-7515



Welcome to Library Land

By Reccia Mandelcorn

Back in the day when the Library was located at 56 Victoria Street, a young woman stopped by my desk one afternoon with an armful of books. “Thank you,” she said. “I wouldn’t have made it through high school without these.”

The books she was referring to were ones seldom checked out, but were definitely well read. We knew that because end-of-day we found them lying on the listening centre, tucked under the cushions and even stuffed within the pages of another book.

Classics like *Annie on my Mind* (Nancy Garden) are tame by today’s standards, but public libraries were about the only place teens could find books that reflected their sexual/gender identity. And they read them in the library rather than take them home – at least that was the case in Aurora in the 1980s.

Over the years, public libraries have expanded collections and services to better serve diverse 2SLGBTQ populations that span age groups, race, ethnicity and personal identities. We may not be allowed to celebrate together in the streets this year, but Pride in Library Land is far from cancelled. Here is your guide to the events taking place virtually throughout the month of June. Registration for all special events and monthly programs can be found at aurorapl.ca

An Evening with Farzana Doctor (June 3) is an invitation to meet and chat with the critically acclaimed BIPOC writer and activist whose her latest novel, *Seven*, is a finalist for the 2021 Trillium Book Award and an Evergreen Award nominee.

Drag Queen Story Hour (June 5) with Miss Eva Lasting is a family-friendly event that raises awareness of gender diversity, promotes self-acceptance and builds empathy through a fun literary experience.

Boys & Books (June 8) will be discussing *The Skin We’re In* by Desmond Cole. This monthly book and social group for cis and trans, gay, bisexual and queer guys is facilitated by Lorcan O’Donnell, CAYR Community Connections.

Q&Gay (June 9) sponsored by CAYR Community Connections, is your opportunity to be part of an open and non-judgemental conversation about safe sex and harm reduction.

Pflag Coffee Night Support Meeting (June 14) is a monthly online safe space where members of the 2SLGBTQ community, friends and allies come together. So, bring your beverage of choice and meet us online to listen, support, share and connect.

Pride is a time to have fun and celebrate the beauty of who we are. But it is also a time to remember the history and struggles of the early gay rights movement. This year marks the 40th anniversary of both the Toronto bathhouse raids and the founding of Pride Toronto.

The Scholars’ Hub @ Home Speaker Series (June 23) presents June 20, 1981: The Battle of Church Street and the founding of Pride Toronto, focussing on the connections between the resistance to the bathhouse raids and the forgotten histories of Pride Toronto. Q&A to follow.

Diverse collections and programs help people of all sexualities and gender identities see themselves represented as well as give the whole community the opportunity to learn more about the experiences of others. From Library Land to you – Happy Pride 2021.

Suggested reads for Pride:

Jonny Appleseed by Joshua Whitehead
Are You My Mother? by Alison Bechdel
Call Me by Your Name by Andre Aciman
Middlesex by Jeffrey Eugenides
Annabel by Kathleen Winter

Reccia Mandelcorn is the Manager, Community Collaboration at Aurora Public Library. The opinions expressed in this column reflect her personal thoughts about the engagement of community with their public library

THIS WEEK'S NEW POLL

Should Aurora consider Town-wide WIFI?

Yes No Unsure

www.theauroran.com

RESULTS TO DATE May 25, 2021	YES	NO	UNSURE
	27%	73%	0%

Stephen can be contacted at stephengsomerville@yahoo.com

Dream Golf Foursome

Finally, golf courses will open!

One of my favourite past-times is golf. I love playing the sport and also watching it, either in person at the Canadian Open or on television. Some of you may think viewing golf on television is akin to watching paint dry, but hey, I also like watching CPAC and the provincial political channel. Yes, I don’t get out much!

Other than watching the Masters tournament in early April and the U.S. Open in June, my other favourite golfing event is the Sony Open, played in Hawaii, in early January.

The weather up here is usually rotten; cold, lots of snow and the sun goes down around five pm every day.

This is in stark contrast to the scenery that unfolds on your television; lush palm trees, beautiful mountains, deep blue oceans and green fairways.

This also helps me bridge the gap to Easter when I watch the Masters with the great azaleas and the manicured fairways and the dark green dyed ponds.

I had a recent discussion with some buddies about who we would want to have in our dream foursomes.

As you can imagine, the foursomes ranged from sporting heroes to religious figures to rock stars.

One gentleman kindly suggested that his foursome would include Ms. September 2019, Ms. October 2019 and the Ms. November 2019 Playboy Playmates.

His buddy suggested a friendly amendment to this; replacing Ms. September 2019 with Ms. June 2019!



FRONT PORCH PERSPECTIVE

Stephen Somerville

So that I don’t have to sleep in the shed behind my house, I will say that my dream foursome would only have three players; my wife, son and myself.

Now, with that out of the way, I can unveil my secondary dream team.

I am going to cheat here. I will have two foursomes.

The first foursome will be my political foursome.

It will contain Sir John A. MacDonald, John Diefenbaker and Richard Nixon.

Sir John would have to be included as the first Prime Minister of Canada. As a thirty-nine year Conservative party member, I would love to hear his stories and talk to him about the Pacific Scandal and Louis Riel. I would be sure to have lots of Scotch on the cart for him.

I never met the Chief (who passed away in 1979), but have read a lot about him and seen some documentaries on television and it was said that he was a wonderful storyteller. I would like to hear him reminisce about his successful 1957

and 1958 national election campaigns.

I have always been fascinated by Richard Nixon. He was such a Shakespearian character, who attained great political heights but also was the only man to have to resign the U.S. Presidency. I would like to ask him about his overture to China and as well about the Watergate saga.

My other foursome would contain Walt Disney, U.S. General George Marshall and Terry Fox.

My family and I love going to Disney World and I have read so much about this man. His vision and creativity are iconic. I would like to talk to him about Disney World and whether he is happy or not with direction of the company today.

George Marshall was a former five star U.S. Army General who was the organizer of victory in the Second World War. The “Marshall Plan” was also credited with the economic reconstruction of Europe after this War. He also was a Secretary of State in the 1950’s and a Noble Peace Prize award winner.

I would like to get his views on current world events and ask what he thinks of America’s status in the world today.

As we all know, Terry Fox died much too young. I would like to ask him about the personal highlights of his run across this country and tell him about the enduring legacy that he left behind.

Who would be in your dream foursome?

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Gifts are nice, but being able to remain in your home is best of all

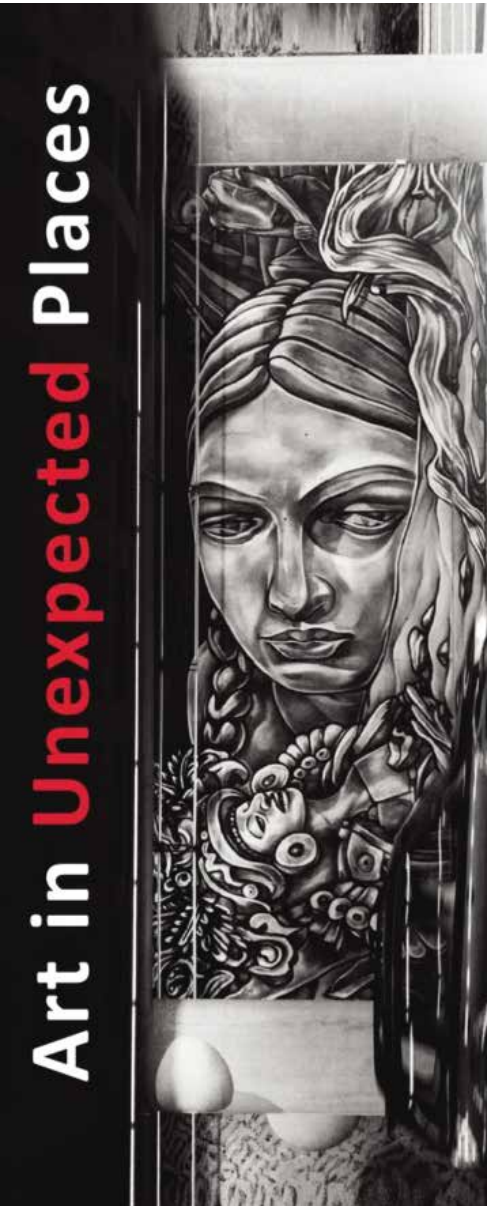
Thank you for featuring Brock Weir’s May 7 article, “Can’t find the perfect gift for mom? Consider ‘adopting’ a mom in need.” As Board Chair at Shine Through the Rain Foundation, the story of moms like Sophia needed to be told.

Brock’s article captured the unfortunate reality that patients and their families can face when diagnosed with life-threatening illnesses like cancer. With unexpected increased medical expenses and loss of income, it is easy to fall behind with the cost of everyday living, and many face disconnected utilities and eviction. They also have a hard time affording groceries and hospital parking costs. We appreciate you featuring this story and now, even more patients will know they can turn to Shine Through the Rain Foundation if they are diagnosed and in need of emergency financial assistance.

While gifts are nice, the greater wish is to be able to remain in your own home to focus on recovery.

As catastrophic health expenses are a reality, we appreciated the generosity of your readers who collectively provided close to \$1,000 for mothers in lieu of other Mother’s Day gifts. As our fundraising continues throughout the year, we can continue to help more patients in desperate financial situations. If anyone needs our assistance or would like to donate, please visit www.shinethroughtherain.ca, shinethroughtherain.ca/donate-now, call 905-477-7743 or email info@shinethroughtherain.ca.

Jim Anderson
Chair, Shine Through the Rain



PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST

Street art enhances our experience of a place. Whether it is urban graffiti, sculpture or yarn bombing, public art interrupts our daily routine, surprising and delighting passersby. This year’s One Book Aurora photography contest, hosted by The Aurora Public Library and The Auroran newspaper invites your photos of art in unexpected places.

For rules and guidelines, visit onebookoneaurora.com
Send submissions to brock@lpcmedia.ca
Contest deadline is
Friday, October 1, 2021.

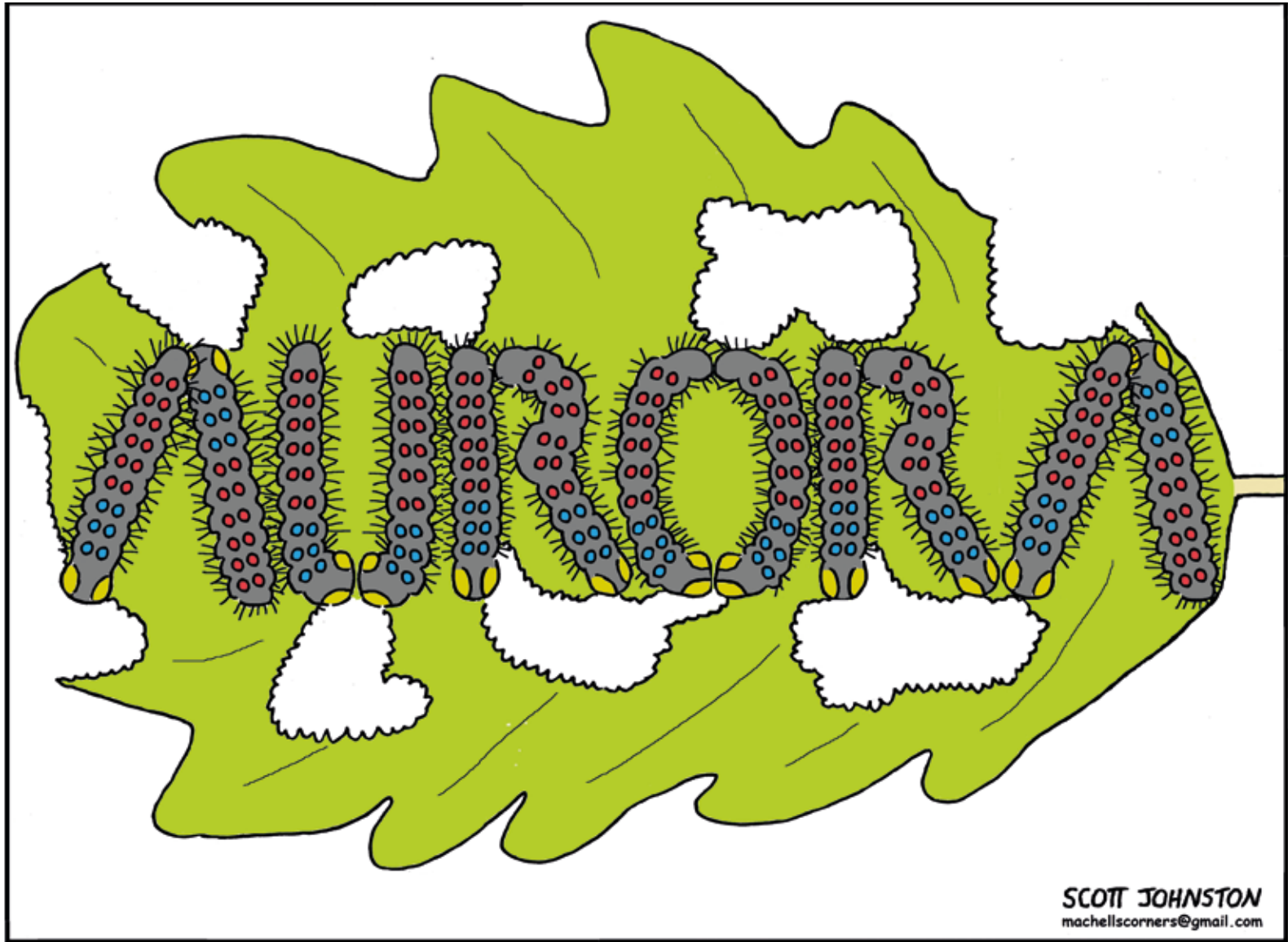
THE AURORAN

One Book Aurora

20 YEARS

AURORA PUBLIC LIBRARY

Machell’s Corners



Answering Calls to Action



BROCK’S BANTER

Brock Weir

We saw several demonstrations take place over the past weekend in solidarity with our Indigenous peoples – some organized by First Nations individuals themselves and others by settlers – each with an individual message under a unified umbrella.

Images and videos depicting the topping of the statue of Egerton Ryerson from the Toronto university which currently bears his name might be the ones that stick in our collective consciousness from the last few days, but others had a simple message for everyone:

“We ask you to step forward and do something in solidarity with us,” said Traditional Anishinaabe Grandmother Kim Wheatley of Turtle Clan, who carries the Spirit Name of Head or Leader of the Fireflower. “We need Canadians to become familiar with the TRC (Truth & Reconciliation Commission). It gave you 94 calls to action, something to do. If you haven’t read it, I encourage you. It’s free. Learn what was suggested in there because we knew this time would come. This is one of many discoveries that are going to turn up across the country.”

The calls to action should be, at minimum, required reading to both spur action and also the asking of very important questions that need to be posed to the elected officials we task with providing the answers.

If you’re a settler, finding some way to have a positive impact on reconciliation can seem like an overwhelming task, but it doesn’t need to be.

Contained within the Calls to Action are several things individuals and governments can do to forge a better path ahead, including developing age-appropriate curriculum so students can learn what is so vital to know about residential schools, treaties and the historical and contemporary contributions Indigenous peoples have made to Canada.

That just one example offered by the Commission.

The development of youth programs with appropriate government dollars to deliver programs and services on reconciliation, along with the development

of a national network of such groups to share best practices, is another.

Business leaders have been called upon to go into “meaningful consultation” to build “respectful relationships” with Indigenous peoples before going forward with economic development projects; to ensure that Indigenous peoples have equitable access to jobs; and provide education for management and staff on the realities of Indigenous history, including residential schools, for intercultural skills, conflict resolution, human rights and anti-racism policies.

Not exactly re-inventing the wheel. But the gears in our governmental machinery move slowly – and needlessly so.

Was a Commission required to call on the Feds to acknowledge that Indigenous rights include language rights?

How about to recommend all levels of government to “enable residential school survivors and their families to reclaim names changed by the residential school system” by waving the costs currently in place for the name-change process?

Or that sustainable funding just might be needed to address the “physical, mental, emotional support, and spiritual harm” caused by ripping children from their families’ arms to be placed in the residential school system?

Or that Indigenous healing practices might just have a place in determining the best health care path for Indigenous persons, should they request it?

Had the Calls to Action regarding education, calls that were not new to the TRC list, been heeded some time ago, the Commissioners might have had significantly less work cut out for them with education begetting action.

Perhaps, with sufficient education programs in place, vocal demonstrations over First Nations communities still being without a reliable supply of safe drinking water, not to mention tragically high suicide rates in these communities, would have been as loud and prominent as those related to getting fuel from Alberta’s oil sands from Point B.

At the very least, a 10-minute read of the 94 Calls to Action – a lengthier read time if you choose to delve deeper, and you should – will indeed make you better equipped to ask questions, make informed decisions on the governments you want to represent you, and even inspire your own ideas on how, if I can borrow an expression born out of the pandemic, to build a nation of nations better.

For more, visit trc.ca/assets/pdf/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf.

THE AU20RAN

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Deadline for submissions is Sunday at 1 p.m.

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