



Toronto Public Library
Workers Union
Local 4948

Affiliated with
CUPE and the
Toronto & York Region
Labour Council

Maureen O'Reilly
President

Brendan Haley
Vice-President

Viveca Gretton
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Carmela DeGiorgio
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Brian Raymer
Toronto Reference Library

Philip Singer
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June 25, 2012

Councillor Paul Ainslie, Chair and the
Members of the Toronto Public Library Board
Toronto Public Library
789 Yonge Street
Toronto, ON
M4W 2G8

Dear Members of the Toronto Public Library Board:

RE: 2013 OPERATING BUDGET AND STAFFING

I am here tonight to review staffing issues in TPL as we move into budget deliberations for the 2013 budget cycle.

Some of the information that I am presenting to you tonight is new while some you have seen before. I think it is important information for you to have before any further decisions around staffing are made for this coming year.

Some Interesting Facts

The most basic fact is this:

There has been a 17% staff cut since amalgamation (1998) and a 30% increase in circulation.

Toronto Public Library is the busiest public library system in the world. Did you know that Canadians are the second biggest readers in the world next to the Danes? This is certainly one of the reasons that our library is so well used and beloved by Torontonians.

Should we not be looking at how to preserve the services of TPL instead of dismantling them? Certainly the myth of the city in financial crisis has been debunked. A Toronto Star report ("Windfall Stuns Councillors", May 2012) shows that since 2006, Toronto has not only had a surplus each and every year but that same surplus has grown each and every year since then.

Furthermore, the TPLWU Local 4948 had an analysis done by two professors, one at Ryerson and one at the University of Toronto, regarding our campaign participants last year. **One of their key findings**



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was that the staff is an integral part of the delivery of the library service.

Yet what has the TPLB's response been to TPL over the last two years?

Cuts, Cuts and More Cuts to Staffing

We have seen the elimination of :

- .5 fte librarian at the Hospital for Sick Children
- 1 fte library assistant at Bridgepoint Hospital
- Almost 4 positions from the Urban Affairs Library
- The service desk at Centre for People with Disabilities closed down
- 11.1 fte cuts in 2011
- A further 107 positions from the overall complement in 2012 (plus 6.5 previously approved from 2011 budget)

Where were the cuts made?

In October 2011 this board voted for the following cuts:

Detailed budget review and other reductions (\$0.820 million including 2.0 FTEs)

FTE Reduction	Service
2.0	Brentwood Resulting from a revised scheduled and staff reduction

Service consolidations (\$1.705 including 17.5 FTEs)

FTE Reduction	Service
2.5	Consolidate Urban Affairs at TRL (Year 2)
4.0	Integrate periodicals at TRL (Year 2)
2.0	Merge separate business desks at TRL
3.7	Material delivery services consolidation
4.0	Mobile Library Services – consolidation at NYCL



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FTE Reduction	Service
1.0	Landscaping/snow clearing

Technology Driven Efficiencies (\$1.925 million, including 26.8 FTEs)

FTE Reduction	Service
1.0	Maintenance contracts and licenses
9.3	Self-service circulation RFID project
11.5	Library material sorters – 5 branches
5.0	RFID Self Checkout – 10 additional branches

Business Process Re-engineering (\$3.148 million, including 45 FTEs)

FTE Reduction	Service
31.0	Procurement and Inventory Management
12.0	Holds Efficiency Project
2.0	Timekeeping and Payroll Efficiencies

Management and Support Reductions (0.764 million, including 9 FTEs)

FTE Reduction	Service
9.0	Including 6 management/exempt positions

At the December 12th board meeting, the following cuts were approved to the budget:

Efficiencies (\$2.69 million increase to the capital budget)

FTE	Service
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Reduction	
7.0	Automated sorter for the Ellesmere hub and Don Mills, Malvern and Woodside Square to be installed

The City Librarian said most of these cuts would not take place in the public service and therefore not have an impact on direct service delivery to our patrons. As a result of the Voluntary Separation Package (VSP) program, the following **actual** cuts were made:

- **87** of these deletions are full-time positions
- **30** Public Service Assistant positions (including **24** full-time positions) **eliminated**. In sheer numbers, this would be roughly equivalent to eliminating each and every PSA from the entire Cedarbrae and Barbara Frum Districts combined.
- Research & Reference Libraries: **25** frontline positions **eliminated** (including **21** positions from TPL's flagship location, the Toronto Reference Library, currently undergoing a massive 'revitalization' and renovation capital project).
- Bloor/Gladstone-Brentwood-Richview District: **14** frontline positions **eliminated**
- System-wide: **26** frontline librarian positions **eliminated** (including **21** full-time positions)
- System-wide: **12** Library Assistant positions **eliminated** (including **11** frontline service positions)
- **5** full-time positions providing services for people with special needs **eliminated** (**4** in Home Library Services, **1** dedicated to Services for Peoples with Disabilities)

The local believes most of these cuts were made in the public service and will have an impact on direct service delivery to our patrons.

More of the Same

In addition, library management has just informed the union that the "Leading to Reading" programme will virtually be cut in half. Currently there is 24 staff delivering the service. 10 staff positions are being eliminated. Details on how the delivery of the programme will continue have not been made known to the union. We remain concerned that



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already overworked branch staff cannot cope with the infusion of further programming demands.

However, not only is there a challenge to the sheer numbers of library workers available to deliver the service, there also exists a challenge around the type of library worker who is left to deliver that service.

It's more food for thought and these are issues facing librarians and library workers beyond our city. TPL as the largest organization should be a leader in protecting services instead it allows itself to be swept along in the wrong direction.

The following is an excerpt from the CUPE Ontario Library Workers website (www.ontariolibraryworkers.cupe.ca) :

Top 10 Issues Facing Library Workers Today

(Not in ranking order)

1. Reduction of career paths for members by eliminating highly skilled public service positions with lower-skilled generic job positions: generic job positions make it easier for management to reassign or transfer staff members within the system as they see fit. The public suffers as well since patrons lose the assistance of highly skilled and knowledgeable staff.
2. Elimination of full-time staff and replacement with part-time staff who are paid at lower rates and have fewer or no benefits: the lack of full-time work forces part-time workers to work overtime, and or additional hours which causes stress and fatigue. Again this can have a negative impact on the quality of customer service given.
3. Increase of call-in workers and temporary work: some employees move from one temporary to another temporary for years before gaining a permanent position. This results in some positions that have high turnover rates which puts a huge strain on the branch or department staff who must cope with gapping, and training new staff. In addition to the ever changing technology patrons find themselves dealing with ever changing staff members making their visits feel less friendly and engaging.
4. High adoption to new technologies with rapid changes as well as automation (i.e. self-checkout and check-in) eliminates valuable social contact for both employee and the public, erodes customer service and further disenfranchises those with physical and mental challenges. Technology does create additional barriers for seniors,



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new immigrants whose first language is not English, and those who struggle with literacy.

5. Increasing reliance on electronic reference and formats at the expense of books, periodical and other material: reference and specialized collections are disappearing along with the staff and their expertise. Like any new technology, e-books are popular (but even TPL's own statistics confirm that usage is a fraction of the overall circulation). And like any new technology, library staff are need to provide the public with assistance in using this new format, a format that comes with a multitude of barriers. Conversely, books are accessible to all, do not require batteries, are very portable and offer a rich, tactile experience. Frontline workers will confirm that while e-book troubleshooting is now an integrated aspect of our service, print continues to dominate.
6. Closure of small branches and movement to larger branches serving a larger geographic area: Much of new automation equipment and technology cannot be accommodated in small branches. People in these small, poorer, or rural communities are forced to travel with their family's further distances to these new larger branches that lack the personal service they have grown accustomed to.
7. Gutting of mid-level good income positions: as a public service organization, in addition to providing services to their communities, libraries have a social responsibility as employers to ensure a staff complement that is representative of all classes of workers within their community. A polarized work force comprised of full-time Managers, Librarians and IT staff at the top pay bands, part-time information clerk positions at the bottom but fewer mid-level full-time positions, offers little opportunity for advancement within the organization, and is demoralizing for staff.
8. Tight staffing: libraries are giving in to public demands for more open hours of service but not increasing their staffing levels. Library workers are expected to offer more with less. Patrons find themselves waiting for service, or not getting any.
9. Retailing of Libraries: shared collections centralized material ordering and heavy reliance on jobbers and books plans (many of them non-Canadian) are moving libraries away from the concept of unique "neighbourhood" or community branches. There is a "one size fits all approach when it comes to library branches, regardless of the uniqueness of a community. Retail concepts such as



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“merchandizing” and “customers” are now being embraced by libraries as they compete with large chain retailer.

10. Increasing loss of meaningful interaction with our patrons which diminishes our job satisfaction and pleasure in working with the public.

Concluding Remarks

As we rush to adopt the mantra of the private sector retail model, warning signs are everywhere that this is not a path we should pursue.

In January 2012, CBC's the Marketplace did a special 1 hour show on customer service. It found that fewer service points, lack of staff on the floor, and the high turnover of staff which resulted in lack of product knowledge and awareness of the retail establishment was resulting in a very disgruntled group of consumers.

Yet, this is the same path that we are pursuing.

TPLWU Local 4948 is requesting that we provide a more in depth presentation on staffing to the Employee and Labour Relations Committee in September.

Thank you.

Maureen O'Reilly
President, TPLWU Local 4948

