Library Workers: Our Issues

A presentation by the Toronto Public Library Workers Union (TPLWU) - Local 4948, CUPE

Monday, October 23, 2017 - Fairview Library
Melvil Dewey’s vision for libraries:

“A great librarian must have a clear head, a strong hand, and above all, a great heart.”

Goodreads.com
The challenges we face...
Survey on Precarious Work in Public Libraries Across Canada:

Conducted by: “Viewpoints Research”
Sponsored by: CUPE National
10+ years

To obtain a Permanent Full-Time Job
40% Have no benefits
23% Have no pension
30% Have no paid sick time
How does the Toronto Public Library compare?
LIBRARY WORKERS
75% WOMEN
50% PART-TIME
0% PENSIONS, BENEFITS
100% UNFAIR!

Local 4948
“I love [working for] the library, but if I don’t have enough money for my family, then my passion for the library is completely outweighed by the obligation to my family … I have to make an income that provides for [them].”*

* Comments from a Part-Time Library Worker who has 11 years of service with the Toronto Public Library (2015)
It’s shameful that Toronto’s library system is so chronically underfunded - librarians like... make up the building blocks of a community!

I would have loved to go into library sciences but with all the cuts it didn’t seem possible; my friends who studied library sciences (all under 35) have had to move onto other jobs because there just aren’t enough positions to go around and they couldn't support themselves - no fault of the TPL itself, they're already stretched so thin, but it's unfortunate and saddening, they would have been amazing and dedicated librarians.

Like · Reply · 2 · January 25 at 11:35am · Edited
How did we get here?
Budget cuts and chronic underfunding

**50% Below Inflation (CPI)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Change in Net Base Budget</th>
<th>Cumulative Budget</th>
<th>Cumulative CPI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>-3.5%</td>
<td>-3.5%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>-3.2%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>-1.8%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018 Base</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Significant cuts to staffing over the years

TPL 2018 Operating Budget submission
Over **650** positions at the library have been eliminated since 1992

(2018 Operating Budget submission - Toronto Public Library / Martin Prosperity Institute)
Q33 What issue or working condition have gotten worse during your employment at the library?

- Health & Safety
- Violent and/or Abusive Public
- Career Paths
- Hours Spread Out Over Too...
- Fewer Permanent...
- Deskilling
- Deprofessionallization
- Workload
- Staffing Levels

Local 4948 Bargaining Survey (2015)
Library workers are not keeping up...

Average Annual Wage Increases for Public Sector municipal workers vs. Annual Negotiated Wage Increases for TPL union workers

MOL Labour Force Survey (2017) / Local 4948 collective agreements
Annual salary costs for TPL Managers earning $100,000+
Staffing Model: 20 years in the making

Brian Hughes Illustration
What do the staff think?

- 86% Not enough information from Employer
- 89% Decreased morale at work
- 99% Plan was poorly communicated to staff

Local 4948 telephone town hall survey (2017)
Health and Safety Issues at TPL
Addressing the opioid crisis
### Increasing trends of violence and abuse

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Violent and/or abusive behaviour</th>
<th>Threatening behaviour/ Verbal Threat</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>% of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>365</td>
<td>23.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>363</td>
<td>498</td>
<td>25.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources:
- Toronto Public Library incident reports
Q44 Do you feel violent and/or harassing behaviours from members of the public is on the rise?

Local 4948 Bargaining Survey (2015)
Q39 Do you feel it would be helpful in ensuring the safety of workers and the public if you had access to incident reports from all work locations?
Q36 How many of the following have you personally experienced and/or witnessed from members of the public while at work?

- Verbal abuse
- Violent or threatening...
- Destruction of property
- Intoxication / under-the-in...
- Sexual misconduct
- Disruptive behaviour
- Racist behaviour
- Homophobia
- Gender-based slurs

Local 4948 Bargaining Survey (2015)
Q46 Do you feel there should be a higher level of security in work locations that would allow more intervention by the security guards?

Local 4948 Bargaining Survey (2015)
Q50 Do you feel that a zero-tolerance policy in regards to harassing and/or violent behaviour by the public in the library would result in an increased safety for workers and the public?

Local 4948 Bargaining Survey (2015)
“Staff-less” Libraries

Evan Russell
Biggest concern about Staff-less Libraries

- Safety: 42.0%
- Vandalism: 16.0%
- Theft: 12.0%
- Unsure: 30.0%

Local 4948 “Mainstreet” survey
DID YOU KNOW?

Access to staff-less libraries would be restricted for children.
What is the public saying about “staff-less” libraries?
@JohnTory Staff-less libraries would be heartless libraries. @Local4948 Library Workers keep us safe, happy and informed #i❤️libraryworkers
A library without librarians is like having a cool car but no gas. #LibrariesMatter
Toronto Public Library system is a great asset for our city. A staffless library is a senseless, idiotic notion. Live librarians, please.

6:01 AM - 7 Apr 2017

We need to debunk the spin re staff-less/self-serve libraries, it's not about access or 'innovation' or being '21st C' it's about cuts.

5:58 AM - 14 Apr 2017
Do we need library staff? Absolutely! 4 million Ontarians visited libraries in 2016 to take part in 250,000 programs
Diversity:  

... Promises broken
### 4. Visible Minority

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Management</th>
<th>Non-Management</th>
<th>Union FT</th>
<th>Union PT</th>
<th>Union Pages</th>
<th>Union PT Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>8.24%</td>
<td>41.38%</td>
<td>29.42%</td>
<td>53.42%</td>
<td>49.78%</td>
<td>52.21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>85.88%</td>
<td>55.17%</td>
<td>56.76%</td>
<td>33.42%</td>
<td>40.36%</td>
<td>37.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I prefer not to answer</td>
<td>5.88%</td>
<td>3.45%</td>
<td>13.81%</td>
<td>13.16%</td>
<td>9.87%</td>
<td>10.04%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Report: “Diversity at Toronto Public Library”
# TPL’s Diversity Plan:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Diversity Plan is first rolled out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Diversity Survey sent to staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Diversity Training for Senior Managers and Managers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Diversity Training for All Staff</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## TPL’s Diversity Plan (cont’d):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Results of Survey sent to Library Board, along with recommendations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Diversity Training for All Staff continued</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Diversity Initiatives at TPL:

- Results never shared with Library staff
- “Employment Diversity Review” (2014)
- City Council direction to analyze TPL budget with an Equity Lens

Referenced in Toronto Public Library board report (2014)
How are you measuring up?
Neglected Services, Plans, and Programs:

- Automated sorter at the Ellesmere hub
- Instrument-Lending Library at Parkdale branch
- “The Spot” at Malvern branch
- Open Hours Vision
- Children’s literacy
Where do we go from here?
Solutions

- Creation of more Full-Time jobs
- Study the impact of past cuts to staff and proposed cuts in future
- Re-investment plan for TPL
- Service-based model rather than “retail” model
- Renewed focus on core library services
- Acknowledgment of unionization in workplace
Looking ahead to 2019...
Let’s have a conversation.

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Questions?