

COMMUNICATION 132071

Received From: Meriah Caswell, CEO, Carleton Place Public Library
Addressed To: Committee of the Whole
Date: May 11, 2021
Topic: Mississippi Mills Termination of the Library Portion of the Howard Allan Cost Sharing Agreement

SUMMARY

On April 29, 2021 representatives of the Carleton Place Public Library Board (CPPLB) met with representatives of the Mississippi Mills Public Library Board (MMPLB) to discuss the effective end date of the library portion of the Howard Allan Cost Sharing Agreement and the reimbursement to South Ramsay residents who register with CPPL after this date. MMPLB will be recommending to Mississippi Mills Council a September 30, 2021 termination date. They also propose to reimburse some Ramsay residents a portion of the CPPL non-residency fee. CPPLB has requested a December 31, 2021 termination date from Mississippi Mills Council.

BACKGROUND

Howard Allan Cost Sharing Agreement

In 1987, the Town of Carleton Place, Township of Beckwith and the former municipalities of the Town of Almonte and Township of Ramsay (now Municipality of Mississippi Mills) retained the services of Howard Allan, Municipal Auditor to review and recommend a cost sharing formula for recreation (recreation and pool) and cultural services (library) between the respective municipalities. The original Agreement came into effect on September 28, 1987 and the agreement and its formula have been in place since that time. The formula is updated on an annual basis to reflect the most current assessment information available.

In October 2000, the Council of the Town of Mississippi Mills commissioned Allan & Partners Inc. to review the current Recreation and Culture Cost Sharing Agreement to determine the continued validity of the cost sharing arrangement, review eligible expenditures under the agreement, review usage statistics of Carleton Place facilities by parties to the agreement and the formula used. Following the review in 2020, an addendum report was issued in August 2021. Since the review in 2000, there have been many discussions over the years regarding the continued validity of the agreement.

Library Portion of Howard Allan Cost Sharing Agreement

As a result of communications from the Mississippi Mills Public Library Board to the Ministry of Heritage, Tourism and Culture in October 2020, Library Board Chair Mike Jeays received a letter from Kevin Finnerty, Assistant Deputy Minister in February 2021 detailing issues with the Cost Sharing Agreement. It states that “the arrangement may not be consistent with any of the options that are currently available under the *Public Libraries Act* to provide library services to a municipality without library facilities.” By creating terms for public library service that circumvent the Carleton Place Public

Library Board, the Ministry's position is that the Cost Sharing Agreement is not compliant with the *Public Libraries Act*. The letter encourages the CPPL Board to become compliant with the *Public Libraries Act* before the 2022 funding year.

Assistant Deputy Minister Kevin Finnerty's letter also addressed the issue of annual Public Library Operating Grant (PLOG) funds from Mississippi Mills. The PLOG is an annual Provincial grant for public library boards and municipalities that establish a contract for library service with a neighbouring public library board. The PLOG funding amount has remained static since 1998. The letter notes that PLOG legal terms and conditions prohibits the re-assignment of PLOG funds. MMPL has traditionally transferred \$2,933 of its annual PLOG to CPPL in recognition of Ramsay Ward use of the CPPL, and certainly long before the amalgamation of the former municipalities into the Municipality of Mississippi Mills.

February 23, 2021- After becoming aware of motions being brought to Mississippi Mills Council to end the library portion of the Howard Allan Cost Sharing Agreement (CSA), representatives of CPPLB invited MMPLB to a meeting to investigate the situation.

March 17, 2021- CPPLB passed a resolution to expire the accounts of all Mississippi Mills account holders beginning the date of termination of the library portion of the CSA. The resolution also sets non-residency fees at \$90 annually at that time.

March 25, 2021- the CPPLB received notice from MMPLB Chair Cathy Peacock of their request to Mississippi Mills Council to terminate the library portion of the CSA.

April 6, 2021- Mississippi Mills Council passed a resolution to terminate the library portion of the CSA, with further direction to pursue a reciprocal sharing agreement with CPPL.

April 29, 2021- CPPLB accepted an invitation from MMPLB to discuss library services. At this meeting, representatives of MMPLB informed CPPLB representatives of their intention to recommend to their Council a September 30, 2021 termination date for the library portion of the CSA. Upon request from CPPL representatives, a December 31, 2021 termination date will also be presented. MMPLB also informed CPPL reps of their intention to reimburse residents of South Ramsay \$30 of the \$90 non-resident fee.

COMMENT

Reciprocal borrowing is a formal agreement between two (2) or more library boards to allow residents from their communities to receive borrowing privileges at the other libraries. If, for example, Lanark Highlands Public Library and the Carleton Place Public Library were to enter a reciprocal arrangement, residents from Lanark Highlands would be able to register for a library card at the Carleton Place Public Library, and vice versa. There is no requirement to integrate systems or collections between libraries and use of a library card from either library would be subject to the policies of that library. For example, if a cardholder from Lanark Highlands borrows a book from the Carleton Place Public Library, they would need to return it to the Carleton Place Public Library.

The CPPLB feels that, while in some scenarios it can be a mutually beneficial arrangement between partners, reciprocal borrowing may not be a fiscally responsible course of action for CPPL at this time. Carleton Place is centrally located in Lanark County, with many County residents travelling to the Town for shopping and cultural activities, and through the Town when travelling to Ottawa. This allows the library to draw users from all over the County, with 635 active users from Mississippi Mills. Conversely, MMPL reports only 93 residents of Carleton Place maintaining memberships at MMPL (as of October 20, 2020). Should the Carleton Place Public Library enter into a reciprocal borrowing agreement with MMPL, the benefits of reciprocal borrowing will be weighted heavily in favour of Mississippi Mills.

Moreover, the loss of Mississippi Mills cost sharing funds will result in a loss of service levels at CPPL. To provide library services to the residents of Mississippi Mills at no cost through a reciprocal borrowing agreement will put pressure on the resources of a diminished library system. The CPPLB felt such a decision would also likely offend many of CPPL's stakeholders, including the Carleton Place community and Council, as well as Beckwith cost-sharing partners.

This decision by Mississippi Mills Council and Library Board may also impact the Township of Beckwith's participation in the library portion of the CSA. Any reduction in the cost of a non-resident fee will encourage Beckwith to pursue a reimbursement model like that of Mississippi Mills. The Library Board believes a \$90 non-residency fee will promote cost-recovery and encourage Beckwith cost-sharing partners to remain in the cost-sharing agreement.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

2021 Financial Implications

Should Mississippi Mills Council accept MMPLB's recommendation to end the library portion of the CSA on September 30, 2021, it would represent a loss of approximately \$15,000 of the library's operating budget. The Library Board has not yet determined how this funding loss will be addressed.

2022 Financial Implications

Mississippi Mills cost sharing funds represents approximately 12% of the library's operating budget. With the addition of the PLOG payment, total 2020 funds were \$60,201. The CPPLB has not yet determined how this funding loss will be addressed. However, it is likely the library will need to reduce hours of operation and spending on library resources such as books, eBooks, and other digital resources. This funding loss will also have an effect on the library's capacity to offer programming.

OTHER RELEVANT STATISTICS

Per Capita breakdown – CPPL and cost sharing partners

Municipality	Population	CP Library Contribution 2020	2020 CPPL Support Per Capita
Carleton Place	10,644	\$295,562	\$27.76
Mississippi Mills	13,163	\$57,268	\$4.35
Beckwith	7,644	\$120,069	\$15.70

Provincial Average (2019): \$49.60¹

Average of population cohort (2019): \$40.47²

Mississippi Mills Public Library Support Per Capita³:

In 2019 the Municipality of Mississippi Mills provided \$43.76 per capita for library service.

Current Library usership (As of November 2020)

	Active (<2 years)		Total users (<5 years)	
Carleton Place	3,895	58%	5,757	57%
Mississippi Mills	635	10%	1,005	10%
Beckwith	1,710	26%	2,522	25%
Non-Residents	426	6%	742	7%
Total Active	6,666			
Total Users	10,026			

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council receives the report on Mississippi Mills' termination of the Library portion of the Howard Cost Sharing Agreement as information.

¹ Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries- [2019 Ontario Public Library Statistics](#)

² Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries- [2019 Ontario Public Library Statistics](#)

³ Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries- [2019 Ontario Public Library Statistics](#)

