

Waterloo Public Library Board
Chair Report
March 2011 WPL Annual General Meeting

The past twelve months have been marked by change on three distinct fronts:

1. The continuing construction progress of the John M. Harper Branch Library
2. The introduction of Laurie Clark as the new CEO of the Waterloo Public Library
3. The establishment of a new Board for the WPL

John M. Harper Branch

After the sod turning in the fall of 2009, construction on the joint library/YMCA facility has progressed significantly with the facility now fully enclosed and work focused on the interior. While there were some delays due to the lack of availability of structural steel, it is expected that the facility will be substantially complete and made available to library staff in late summer 2011 for their preparatory work and a public opening in the fall of 2011.

The opening of this new \$7.2 million branch will mark a significant milestone for the WPL. With more than 17,800 sq. ft. of space, more than 100,000 items in its collection and a leading edge design, this facility will be a tremendous new asset for the community. On behalf of the Board I would like to thank the library staff team who have worked diligently with their counterparts at the YMCA and the City of Waterloo on this project.

Introduction of New CEO

At the time of our 2010 WPL Annual General Meeting, a Board appointed CEO Search Committee was working actively to identify the next CEO of the WPL. After a long and rigorous search, it was with great pleasure that the Board ratified the appointment of Laurie Clark as the new CEO of the WPL at the October 2010 Board Meeting. Laurie's first official day was October 11th and she was quickly busy making an impact with her immediate priorities on working with the staff team and ensuring the success of the Harper Branch project.

The Board was extremely grateful to the staff of the WPL who continued to focus on serving library customers during the 9 month period of the CEO search.

New Board

The end of the last term of municipal council also signified the establishment of a new board for the WPL. In December 2010, Waterloo City Council appointed the new WPL Board. Due to some previous board members reaching maximum term or choosing to not reapply, the new board has 7 new faces. These new members, along with the returning board members bring a valuable range of experiences to their board responsibilities.

In addition to these three key areas of change, the library has continued its activities on many fronts. I will defer the details of many of these activities to the report from the CEO.

One of the key accomplishments of the previous board was the establishment of the funding agreement between the City of Waterloo and the WPL. The funding agreement is to coincide with the term of city council but through mutual agreement it has been extended for 2011. A renewal of this funding agreement through this current term of council is targeted to be completed this year.

While the WPL and the City of Waterloo have worked collaboratively on funding, public libraries continue to be concerned with the level of financial support from the Province of Ontario. The Federation of Ontario Public Libraries continues to lead efforts in this area and the WPL and Board are supporting FOPL's efforts.

I would like to touch on the area of Fundraising. As part of the overall John M. Harper branch library project, the Board committed the WPL to raising \$ 530,000 through a capital campaign. As of today, more than \$400,000 has been pledged and the WPL has already provided a \$257,000 payment of this commitment to the city. July 2010 saw the Westmount Charity Golf Tournament held with the recipient being the Harper Branch Capital Campaign. That golf tournament was the most successful held and raised \$50,000. In September 2010, the Laurelwood Neighbourhood Association conducted its first neighbourhood fun fair which saw proceeds going to the Harper Capital campaign. The WPL is very grateful for this support.

Going forward the new board has established a fundraising committee to meet the remainder of this commitment as well as look at opportunities for ongoing fundraising for the WPL.

While my comments to this point have touched on the highlights from the past twelve months there are numerous other areas of discussion, consideration and work completed by the Board and staff team to ensure the successful ongoing operation of the WPL.

Looking Ahead

In the year to come the Board, working with the staff team will be focused on the following key areas:

1. A successful opening of the John M. Harper branch in the fall of 2011
2. The renewal of our funding agreement with the City of Waterloo
3. Establishment of an ongoing Fundraising structure to help increase the resources available to the WPL
4. With the last WPL strategic plan officially ending at the end of 2010, work will commence on our next strategic plan later in 2011

As WPL Chair, and on behalf of the Board, I would like to extend thanks to the following people for their valuable relationship with the WPL over the past year:

- The WPL staff team of more than 90 people
- The more than 190 WPL volunteers
- The customers of the WPL who make the Main and McCormick branches such a vibrant place to come

- Our numerous alliance partners including:
YMCA, Kitchener Public Library, Cambridge Public Library, Region of Waterloo Library, Library Settlement Partnership, Schools of Waterloo
- Waterloo City Council for their support and their funding of the WPL
- My Board colleagues for their volunteer support of the WPL

Due to a family move to London, Ontario I will be stepping down from the Board with a new Board chair elected at this meeting. I am grateful for the opportunity to have been on the board for the past 2 years. I wish the entire Waterloo Public Library family the very best and look forward to watching the WPL continue to succeed and thrive.

Respectfully submitted,
Steve Bryant
Chair, Waterloo Public Library Board