
Board Meeting

Meeting Date: July 17, 2025
Meeting Time: 1:00 p.m.
Location: The Boardroom at L.E. Shore
Prepared By: Jennifer Murley, CEO/Secretary of the Board

Mission: *The Blue Mountains Public Library is a dynamic centre of community engagement where everyone can connect, explore and create.*



When available, this Board meeting will be recorded and made available on the BMPL YouTube Channel. Technical difficulties with social media platforms are not sufficient reason to cancel/postpone a meeting. The Community is also welcome to be onsite for meetings, or to present in either E1 or E2.

A. Call to Order

- A.1 Moment of Reflection
- A.2 Indigenous Acknowledgement Statement
- A.3 Public Announcement

If members of the public are present.

B. Agenda

- B.1 Approval of the Agenda

Recommended Motion

Moved by ___ and seconded by ___, THAT the Agenda of July 17, 2025, be approved as circulated, including any items added to the Agenda.

- B.2 Declaration of Pecuniary Interest and General Nature Thereof

NOTE: Known pecuniary interests should be provided to the Board Secretary in writing and be noted as part of this agenda item. Should items arise during the meeting, the member shall make notice.

C. Reports to be “Received as Information”

NOTE: Before there is any discussion on the items listed below, they must be received by this Board. Additional recommendations outlined in any of these items, as well as any subsequent motions, will be addressed at the time of discussion.

Recommended Motion

Moved by ___ and seconded by ___, THAT this Board receive as information:

1. 2025 Action Plan Status
2. ADM.25.24 entitled “*Space Utilization Study – Draft RFP V3*”
3. GOV.25.02 entitled “*Strategic Planning Committee Report-July*”
4. FIN.25.03 entitled “*Finance Report Q2 2025*”

D. Minutes

D.1 Previous Minutes

Recommended Motion

Moved by ___ and seconded by ___, THAT this Board approve the Library Board minutes of June 26, 2025, as circulated/amended;

AND THAT this Board accept the Strategic Planning Committee minutes of July 8, 2025, as information.

D.2 Business Arising from the Minutes

D2.1 **Discussion:** Town of The Blue Mountains (TBM) Corporate Strategic Plan

D2.2 **Focus Group:** TBM Corporate Strategic Plan Focus Group

NOTE: This discussion is scheduled to begin at 1:30 PM and will be facilitated by Adam Smith, Acting CAO, and Tim Hendry, Director of Strategic Initiatives for the Town of The Blue Mountains. During this portion of the meeting, the Board will have the opportunity to provide feedback on the Town’s updated Corporate Strategic Plan.

E. Communications with the Board

Deadline for registration is Monday, July 14 at 2pm.

E.1 Deputations

None at the time of agenda creation.

NOTE: In accordance with Ontario’s Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA) and Board policy, the Blue Mountains Public Library Board wishes to inform the public that all information including opinions, presentations, reports, and documentation provided for or at an Open Meeting are considered part of the public record. This information may be posted on the Library website, included in Board packages, published in video record, and/or made available to the public upon request.

E.2 Public Input on the Agenda

NOTE: Any individual may choose to register for a virtual link to participate in the Public Input virtually or be present onsite for face-to-face meetings without registering. Said correspondence must meet the BMPL’s [BLG.2018.6.7 Public Input on Agenda Items](#) criteria.

In addition to Correspondence, any members of the public who would like to attend the Board Meeting virtually may do so by contacting LibraryCEO@TheBlueMountains.ca. Requests received prior to 4:00pm the *day prior* to the Board Meeting will be provided with internet and/or phone login information. Credentials are available one month prior to the meeting, so requests need not be made the day of. Visitors may also attend in person without registering.

E.3 Correspondence

F. Strategic Plan Updates & Action Items

NOTE: To better facilitate this section, all reports and discussions have been identified. The Board may make decisions at any time and does not require a formal report or recommended motion to do so.

F.1 Action Planning

1. **Discussion:** *2025 Action Plan Status*

F.2 Strategic Plan Pillar: Community Hubs

1. **Discussion:** Multi-use Recreation Feasibility Assessment (MURFA) Next Steps
2. **Verbal Report:** CEO Update on the Youth Climate Action Fund (YCAF)
3. **Report:** ADM.25.24 entitled "*Space Utilization Study – Draft RFP V3*"

Recommended Motion

Moved by ___ and seconded by ___, THAT this Board directs the Library CEO to proceed with the public release of the Request for Proposal (RFP) in accordance with the Town of The Blue Mountains Procurement Policy.

F.3 Strategic Plan Pillar: Organizational Excellence

1. **Discussion:** 2026 Budget Timeline Continued
2. **Verbal Update:** Sewage Odour Issue at L.E. Shore
3. **Report:** GOV.25.02 entitled "*Strategic Planning Committee Report-July*"

Recommended Motion

Moved by ___ and seconded by ___, THAT the Blue Mountains Public Library Board accept the Terms of Reference of the Strategic Planning Steering Committee as presented;

AND THAT the Blue Mountains Public Library Board accept the Phases and Timelines of the Strategic Planning Steering Committee as presented.

4. **Report:** FIN.25.03 entitled "*Finance Report Q2 2025*"

F.4 Strategic Plan Pillar: Empowering Services

1. **Verbal Update:** 30th Anniversary Celebrations

G. Roundtable

G.1 Roundtable—General updates by the Board

NOTE: The Roundtable is an opportunity for members to share information on events, activities, or general information which members may wish to attend and/or review. This is not intended for new business or discussion pertaining to Action Items.

1) Community Updates and News

- CBC News (July 10, 2025): [Alberta bans school library books it deems sexually explicit](#)
- Collingwood Today (July 8, 2025): [Birds, butterflies, and pollinators benefit from TBM youth climate funds](#)
- Winnipeg Free Press (July 7, 2025): [Elbows up, even when you're holding a book](#)
- Montreal Gazette (July 4, 2025): [Drimonis: Children's book club is latest target of CAQ's identity politics](#)
- The Walrus (June 27, 2025): [Canada's Archives are in trouble – and so is its history](#)

2) BMPL Special Events

- [Sidewalk Astronomy](#)
Saturday, July 31 | 11 am-1 pm | L.E. Shore Library Parking Lot (Weather Permitting)
- [Astro Night with RASC](#)
Thursday, August 14 | 7:30-10:30 pm | L.E. Shore Library
- [Susan Swan ft. Julie Mannell Author Talk](#)
Saturday, August 16 | 2-4 pm | L.E. Shore Library
- [Exhibit Opening: Albert Chiarandini – 8th Member of the Group of Seven](#)
Saturday, August 30 | 2-4 pm | L.E. Shore Library

H. Key Messages

H.1 Key Messages Update

Recommended Motion

Moved by ___ and seconded by ___, THAT this Board approve the release of the Key Messages Update-July 2025.

I. Notice of Meeting Dates

The next regular Board Meeting is scheduled for September 18, 2025, at 1:00 p.m. in the L.E. Shore Boardroom.

All meetings and relevant agenda materials will be posted on the [Meeting and Agenda](#) page of Governance.

J. Adjournment

Recommended Motion

THAT this Board does now adjourn at ___ p.m. to meet again on September 18, 2025, in the Boardroom at the L.E. Shore Memorial Library and Virtually, or at the call of the Chair.

The Blue Mountains Public Library Board Meeting

DRAFT
Not Approved

Meeting Date: June 26, 2025
Meeting Time: 1:00 p.m.
Location: Library Boardroom
Posted to [YouTube](#)
Prepared By: Franz Greenfield, Administrative Assistant

In Attendance: _____
Joanne de Visser (Vice-Chair)
Julia Scott (Chair)
Kristina Wichman
Laurey Gillies

Guests: Michael Switzer, Town of The Blue Mountains Deputy Treasurer/Manager of Budgets & Accounting
Ashley Miller, KPMG Manager, Audit

Absent: N/A

Regrets: Marie Swift, Shawn McKinlay, Carol Sackville-Duyvelshoff

Staff: Jennifer Murley, CEO
Franz Greenfield, Administrative Assistant

A. Call to Order

A.1 Moment of Reflection

The Board meeting was called to order by the Chair at 12:59p.m. A Moment of Reflection was observed.

A.2 Indigenous Acknowledgement Statement

The Indigenous Acknowledgement Statement was read.

A.3 Public Announcement

None.

B. Agenda

B.1 Approval of the Agenda

Two modifications to the agenda were made:

- Laurey Gillies Update on Craighleith Working Group (added under F.4)
- 2024 Audited Statement Presentation from Ashley Miller (KPMG Manager) moved to the top of the agenda.

BMPL-Resolution 2025-032

Moved by Laurey Gillies and seconded by Kristina Wichman, THAT the Agenda of June 26, 2025, be approved as amended, including any items added to the Agenda. CARRIED.

- B.2 Declaration of Pecuniary Interest and General Nature Thereof
None.

C. Reports to be “Received as Information”

All reports to be received as information were received with additional discussion occurring as the items arose within the agenda.

BMPL-Resolution 2025-033

Moved by Joanne de Visser and seconded by Kristina Wichman, THAT this Board receive as information:

1. *2025 Action Plan Status*
2. *ADM.25.19 entitled “Space Utilization Study – Draft RFP V2”*
3. *ADM.25.20 entitled “Annual Policy Review - Continued”*
4. *ADM.25.21 entitled “Piano Policy – New”*
5. *ADM.25.22 entitled “Proposed Strategic Planning Process”*
6. *ADM.25.23 entitled “CEO Service Update-June”. CARRIED.*

D. Minutes

- D.1 Previous Minutes

In advance of the meeting, the Board had reviewed and provided edits, which were incorporated.

BMPL-Resolution 2025-034

Moved by Kristina Wichman and seconded by Joanne de Visser, THAT this Board approve the minutes of May 15, 2025, as amended. CARRIED.

- D.2 Business Arising from the Minutes
None.

E. Communications with the Board

The deadline for registration was Monday, June 23 at 2:00p.m. No members of the public were present.

- E.1 Deputations
None.

- E.2 Public Input on the Agenda
No members of the public were present.

E.3 Correspondence

1. **Tim Hendry, Director of Strategic Initiatives, Town of The Blue Mountains**
Re: Invitation to Participate in Shaping The Blue Mountains' Future

The Board requested that Tim Hendry be invited to the Board's July 17 meeting to conduct a focus group for the Town's next strategic plan.

F. Strategic Plan Updates & Action Items

F.1 Action Planning

1. **Discussion: 2025 Action Plan Status**

CEO Murley has successfully secured access to the application for charitable status, the completion of which is under way.

Since CEO Murley will now be producing a quarterly report of BMPL statistics and updates, the Board requested that the Action Plan be brought for review when there is a noteworthy concern, instead of at each meeting.

F.2 Strategic Plan Pillar: Community Hubs

1. Verbal Report: CEO updated on the Multi-Use Recreation Feasibility Assessment (MURFA)

A tentative date of Thursday, July 16 at 5:00 pm has been selected for a Joint Council meeting to receive the final report for the MURFA. The Board will be provided with a copy of the final report in advance of the July 16 meeting, where it will be presented to the Town of the Blue Mountains and Collingwood Councils and Library Boards as information. Procedurally, questions for both Library Boards will be filtered through their respective Council representatives.

2. Verbal Report: CEO Update on the Youth Climate Action Fund (YCAF)

There was no major update – the project is on track, with most of the work (that CEO Murley is involved in) completed. Announcements for second round recipients are coming soon.

3. Report: ADM.25.19 entitled *"Space Utilization Study – Draft RFP V2"*

Since the last Board meeting, CEO Murley met with the Town's Manager of Purchasing & Risk Management. The Manager was able to offer guidance and sample RFPs to support the development of a second draft, which was presented to the Board today.

A lengthy conversation occurred, with the following key points addressed:

- There was concern that including the term "Needs Assessment" in the RFP title could broaden the project's scope beyond an internal space utilization study focused on optimizing existing spaces over the next few years. It may imply a more comprehensive, strategic initiative involving external parties such as stakeholders and Council.
- The Board also emphasized wanting to revisit the deliverables section of the RFP.
- CEO Murley clarified that this latest draft of the RFP remains largely consistent with the original version. Notable changes include the addition of "Needs

Assessment” to the title—though this wording is not significantly reflected in the document’s content—as well as updates to dates, general language, and a revision of the evaluation criteria section.

- Funding for the RFP could potentially come from the Board’s reserve funds, though it remains unclear whether these funds can be allocated to this type of project. While the reserves are currently designated to offset projected budget deficits over the next three years, the CEO indicated that there are sufficient funds available to both balance the budget and support the RFP.
- It was agreed that Board members would inform Council members about the RFP during one-on-one meetings.

CEO Murley, with input from Joanne de Visser and Julia Scott, will review the RFP—focusing particularly on the scope and deliverables—and present it at the July meeting for review and final approval.

F.3 Strategic Plan Pillar: Organizational Excellence

1. **Verbal Update:** 2026 Budget Timeline

The Town’s 2026 budget will be approved by December 1, 2025. As part of this timeline, CEO Murley will bring the BMPL’s draft budget to the Board in October.

CEO Murley also noted work underway on a division sheet that will provide a more detailed and transparent representation of BMPL’s financials in the Town’s budget book—where they are currently minimally reflected. This document is operational in nature and is intended to provide the public a clearer understanding of how BMPL’s budget is allocated and spent.

While Board approval is not required, members will have the opportunity to provide feedback on this document, specifically regarding the categorization of budget priorities, prior to its submission to the Town. CEO Murley will circulate the draft for input following the meeting. The document is due to the Town at the beginning of July.

2. **Verbal Update:** Sewage Odor Issue at L.E. Shore

The sewage odour at L.E. Shore has been a persistent issue that is worsening over time. The root cause remains unclear. The Town is currently in the process of hiring a contractor to investigate.

3. **Report:** ADM.25.20 entitled “Annual Policy Review- Continued”

Two BMPL policies have been revised to better align with the Town’s corresponding policies, promoting greater consistency between BMPL and the Town.

BMPL-Resolution 2025-035

Moved by Joanne de Visser and seconded by Kristina Wichman, THAT this Board instruct the Library CEO to align the following Blue Mountains Public Library Board policies with the corresponding Town policies:

- POL-ADM.2018.101 entitled “Salary Administration” with POL.COR.23.01 entitled “Compensation Administration Program Policy”

- POL-ADM.2018.38 entitled “Leaves Requests” with POL.COR.24.06 entitled “Health, Wellness, and Personal Emergency Leave Policy”. CARRIED.

4. Report: ADM.25.21 entitled “*Piano Policy - New*”

The Board requested minor edits before approving this policy.

BMPL-Resolution 2025-036

Moved by Laurey Gillies and seconded by Joanne de Visser, THAT this Board approve POL-PUB.2025.01 entitled “Piano Use Policy” as amended. CARRIED.

5. Report: ADM.25.22 entitled “*Proposed Strategic Planning Process*”

The report recommends that the existing Strategic Plan be updated, without restricting it to a four-year timeframe.

An ad hoc committee will be established to develop a more detailed plan to implement this recommendation, including identifying the necessary funding. Implementation will occur in 2026.

BMPL-Resolution 2025-037

Moved by Joanne de Visser and seconded by Kristina Wichman, THAT this Board adopt option 3 of report ADM.25.22 entitled “Proposed Strategic Planning Process”;

AND THAT an ad hoc committee be established to put together a plan to complete the strategic plan;

AND THAT this Board appoint members Julia Scott, Joanne de Visser, Kristina Wichman, and Library CEO Jennifer Murley to the Strategic Planning Committee. CARRIED.

6. Discussion: Quarterly Reporting Template

Moving forward, the quarterly report will take the place of the monthly CEO Service Report and will be provided to Council for inclusion in their meeting agendas.

7. Verbal Update: OLS Spring Board Assembly

Marie Swift attended and shared her notes with the CEO, who provided a verbal update. Notably, other library board members in attendance also reported challenges related to their libraries outgrowing their current spaces.

F.4 Strategic Plan Pillar: Empowering Services

1. Discussion: OLA Indigenous Advisory Council Recommendation to Take Action: Say No to Bill 5

The Board reviewed a draft letter supporting this advocacy effort and requested minor edits.

BMPL-Resolution 2025-038

Moved by Kristina Wichman and seconded by Joanne de Visser, THAT this Board submit a letter, as amended, to MPP Saunderson, in honour of Indigenous History Month and the core values of public librarianship, supporting the Ontario Library Association’s call to take action against Bill 5

Protecting Ontario by Unleashing our Economy Act 2025, and urge the government to begin again with open dialogue with Indigenous communities, and greater attention to its impacts on environmental sustainability. CARRIED.

2. **Discussion:** ADM.25.23 entitled “CEO Service Update-June”
This report was presented.
3. **Verbal Update:** Craigeleith Working Group
Laurey Gillies has officially joined the committee. Town staff and Council are closely involved, and the group is a strong sounding board for the Craigeleith community.

G. Other Business

G.1 Presentation: Draft 2024 Audited Financial Statements

Ashley Miller, a KPMG manager, presented a summary of the audited financial statements. No issues or concerns were present.

BMPL-Resolution 2025-039

Moved by Kristina Wichman and seconded by Joanne de Visser, THAT this Board approve the draft 2024 Audited Financials of the Blue Mountains Public Library; AND

THAT this Board approve the Town of The Blue Mountains 2025 audited firm as the Blue Mountains Public Library Audited Firm. CARRIED.

H. Roundtable

H.1 Roundtable—General updates by the Board

- 1) Community Updates and News:
 - Collingwood Today (June 2, 2025): [In the Name of Pride: Town and Library Partner for Pride Celebrations in The Blue Mountains](#)
 - TBM Website (June 10, 2025): [TBM Proclamation: Pride Week 2025](#)
 - Collingwood Today (June 14, 2025): [TBM mourning the loss of beloved community volunteer](#)
 - Collingwood Today (June 14, 2025): [Exhibit on history of slavery in Canada coming to Collingwood Museum](#)
 - Collingwood Today (June 16, 2025): [Collingwood author explores small-town secrets in fourth book](#)
 - [TBM Corporate Strategic Plan Community Survey Now Open](#)
Closes Monday, July 7, 2025
- 2) BMPL Events: a shortlist of special events occurring prior to the next meeting were provided.
 - [TD Summer Reading Club Registration Begins](#)
Saturday, June 28 | 11 am-3 pm | L.E. Shore Library
 - [Rainbow Dance Party](#)
Saturday, June 28 | 11 am- 1pm | L.E. Shore Library

- [Memoir & Fiction Workshop \(5 Sessions\)](#)
Saturday, July 5 | 10 am-12 pm | L.E. Shore Library
- [Exhibit Opening: Our Bundle, Our Medicine](#)
Saturday, July 5 | 2-4 pm | L.E. Shore Library

I. Key Messages

The Key Messages were determined by the Board and approved for release.

BMPL-Resolution 2025-040

Moved by Kristina Wichman and seconded by Laurey Gillies, THAT this Board approve the release of the Key Messages Update-June 2025. CARRIED.

J. Notice of Meeting Dates

The next regularly scheduled Board Meeting will be held on July 17, 2025, at 1:00pm in the L.E. Shore Boardroom.

All meetings and relevant agenda materials will be posted on the [Meeting and Agenda](#) page of Governance.

K. Closed Session

None.

L. Adjourned

BMPL-Resolution 2025-041

Moved by Joanne de Visser and Kristina Wichman, THAT this Board does now adjourn at 4:18p.m. to meet again at the call of the Chair. CARRIED.

Julia Scott, Chair

Jennifer Murley, Board Secretary



Committee Minutes

The Blue Mountains Public Library Board Meeting

Strategic Planning Steering Committee

DRAFT

Not Approved

Meeting Date: Tuesday, July 8, 2025
Meeting Time: 1:00 p.m.
Location: Boardroom, L.E. Shores Memorial Library & Gallery
Prepared by: Jennifer Murley, CEO

Present: Julia Scott, Joanne de Visser, Jennifer Murley (CEO)
Regrets: Kristina Wichman

Mission: The Blue Mountains Public Library exists to enrich the lives of all members of our community by offering a wide range of materials, programs and services.

Committee Mandate: TBD

A. Call to Order

A.1 Election of Chair

CEO Murley called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm. Joanne de Visser was acclaimed as Chair.

A.2 Agenda Review

The agenda was approved with no amendments.

B. New and Unfinished Business

B.1 Mandate

As there is no drafted mandate or statements of responsibility, the Committee will consider and draft these for inclusion in a Terms of Reference for presentation to the Board.

B.2 Draft Terms of Reference

The CEO prepared a Terms of Reference (ToR) for review, with major amendments to the ToR established in 2019.

B.3 Establish Phases and Timelines for Board Approval

The Committee developed a draft timeline outlining key phases and activities, with the goal of presenting an updated Strategic Plan to the Board at its April 2026 meeting. A preliminary discussion was held to identify concerns with the current plan. During this discussion, the CEO noted that the Museum expressed a desire for stronger representation in the updated version. The Committee also considered the financial resources required for the project. Currently, \$1,500 is allocated in the 2026 budget, with potential additional costs anticipated for advertising, community engagement incentives, and outsourced graphic design. At this stage, the Committee agreed that engaging a consultant would not be necessary.

B.4 Provide CEO with Direction for July Follow Up Report

The Committee discussed the format of the report, with the core recommendations listed below.

C. Recommendations to the Board

The following recommendations will be presented at the next duly scheduled Board Meeting approval.

1. THAT the BMPL Board accept as information the Strategic Planning Committees Minutes of July 8, 2025.
2. THAT the BMPL Board accept the Terms of Reference of the Strategic Planning Steering Committee as presented.
3. THAT the BMPL Board accept the Phases and Timelines of the Strategic Planning Steering Committee as presented.

D. Notice of Meeting Dates / Adjournment

The next meeting date is TBD. The Chair adjourned the meeting at 2:20 pm.

2025 Action Plan - Summary

Pillar	Key Results	Status (Green, Yellow, Red)	Highlights
COMMUNITY HUBS	Ensure BMPL keeps pace with growth and community needs		
	1. Implement top 2 - 3 priority space improvement items identified in the Space accessibility audits and gap analyses		Accessibility audits completed (Q1); Space Utilization Study draft RFP in progress
	2. Council supports space improvements and/or expansion recommendation through resolution		2024 Annual Report presented; Councillors engaged; MURFA Final Report received
EMPOWERING SERVICES	Strengthen awareness and support of the BMPL's role in the community		
	1. Improve Awareness of BMPL as a valuable community resource through in-person and media exposure)		30 th anniversary plans on track; physical cultural map in progress; increased media attention on track
	2. Increase use of GLAM services		Arts Walk successfully completed under new leadership; new reporting routine finalized
	3. Increase participation in Town Initiatives		Feature in TBM Feb Newsletter Continued participation on MURFA & YCAF; SROI in May TBM Newsletter to all households.
	4. Increase participation in community advocacy efforts		Representation on Craighleith Community Working group secured
ORGANIZ- ATIONAL EXCELLENCE	Enhance organizational resilience		
	1. Staff are trained on Privacy of Information, Cybersecurity, AI and safety protocols for Challenging Interactions		AI policy implemented; training and outreach ongoing.
	2. Solidify 2025 funding sources and develop a multi-year strategic financial plan		RR number verified. Charitable status application started.

Status Legend:

On Track

At Risk

Late



Admin Report

The Blue Mountains Public Library

Report To: The Blue Mountains Public Library Board
Report Name: ADM.25.24 Space Utilization Study – Draft RFP V3
Prepared by: Jennifer Murley, CEO

A. Recommendations

THAT the Blue Mountains Public Library Board receive as information *ADM.25.24* entitled “Space Utilization Study – Draft RFP V3”;

AND THAT this Board directs the Library CEO to proceed with the public release of the Request for Proposal (RFP) in accordance with the Town of The Blue Mountains Public Library’s Procurement Policy.

B. Background

At the April 17, 2025, meeting, the Board requested a draft RFP for a space utilization study to be completed for the May 15 meeting for further discussion.

At the May 15 meeting, the Board provided feedback and requested that the CEO bring a follow-up report with the recommended changes to the June meeting.

Following the June 26 meeting, the Board requested the Chair and Vice-Chair meet with the CEO to finalize the deliverables for the July 17 meeting.

C. Draft RFP

The third draft is attached, for review. This version has been streamlined to focus specifically on the key areas requested in the RFP, including the project scope, deliverables, timeline, and major milestones. A concise background section has been included to provide essential context for the scope of work. Additionally, a new section outlining the roles and responsibilities of each party has been added to enhance role clarity.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jennifer Murley, CEO
LibraryCEO@TheBlueMountains.ca
519-599-3681 extension 148

Appendix A:

L.E. Shore Memorial Library & Gallery Space Utilization Study

Draft RFP – Version 3

A. Background

The Town of The Blue Mountains is Canada's second fastest growing municipality, home to over 9,300 full-time residents and a significant part-time and seasonal population. Recognized as Ontario's premier four-season tourism and recreation destination, The Blue Mountains welcomes an additional 2.5 million visitors each year and offers a high-quality lifestyle that appeals to families seeking stability, adventurers exploring new horizons, and relaxation seekers drawn to the area's natural beauty and charm. With deep roots in agriculture and tourism, the local economy has evolved through innovation and entrepreneurship in sectors such as agriculture, tourism, construction, small business, and hospitality.

The Blue Mountains Public Library (BMPL) is one of three Gallery, Library, Archive, and Museums (GLAM) in Ontario, and is the only municipal cultural facility in the Town of The Blue Mountains, delivering vital literary, recreational, and cultural services through:

- L.E. Shore Library and Gallery (Thornbury) – serving as our central hub, this location offers comprehensive library services and access to a diverse collection of materials. It also features the innovative *Library of Things*, which lends non-traditional items such as camera equipment, assistive technology, park passes, snowshoes, and more. The facility features inviting indoor and outdoor gathering spaces, along with a vibrant art gallery that showcases local and regional talent.
- Craigleith Heritage Depot Museum and Archives – our second branch, offers select library services alongside access to the community museum and archival collections.
Please note: the Craigleith branch is outside the scope of this project.

With its significant historic and cultural importance, BMPL plays a central role in the community. However, like many Ontario municipalities, population growth is placing increased pressure on library space and services.

The L.E. Shore facility is approaching capacity and is limited by outdated infrastructure that no longer meets the needs of a modern, 21st-century library. The current layout does not adequately support accessible programming areas, a functional teen area, quiet study zones, or flexible, multipurpose spaces essential to delivering inclusive and responsive services.

Additionally, staff have outgrown their existing workspace, creating operational challenges and limiting our ability to expand services. The circulation area is inaccessible and inefficiently designed, and storage is a challenge. These factors indicate the need for both immediate space optimization and longer-term planning for future expansion.

A significant amount of usage data, research, public and professional input has been gathered for numerous reports, and we now require a partner to support the development of a plan for optimal use of the space at LE SHORE in the short to medium term.

B. Project Scope of Work

1. Engage stakeholders to ensure an inclusive process:

- Gather and summarize input and feedback from library staff, patrons, community groups and board members.
- Identify methodologies that will be used for engagement (i.e. surveys, interviews, focus groups, town halls)
- Identify strategies to ensure accessibility, inclusiveness, and equitable participation across all stakeholder groups

2. Assess current space utilization:

- Review usage data, previous reports, and other relevant information.
- Review how all areas of the library and gallery are currently used, including public spaces, collections, staff work areas, and programming areas.
- Identify underutilized or inefficient areas.
- Review space booking policies and processes, including waiting lists.

3. Explore opportunities for reconfiguration:

Propose ways to reconfigure existing space to accommodate current core services, including circulation/collections, programming, library of things, art gallery, staff space and identify opportunities to increase usage for children, teens, adults, and seniors.

Priorities include:

- A multi-purpose meeting space for community groups and events.
- Private space for meetings, studying, and exam proctoring.
- A dedicated teen space that supports youth engagement.
- An updated, accessible children's area, suitable for inclusive programming.

4. Highlight trends in flexible, multi-use library design.

- Present examples from other libraries within the last 5 years that have successfully reconfigured limited space.

5. Assess the potential for modest physical expansion into the existing courtyard.

6. Recommend a timeline for implementation of recommendations to a maximum of three years.

7. Prepare a high-level costing of recommendations.

C. Project Deliverables

1. An interim report/presentation to the Board on project status and highlights.
2. A final report addressing project deliverables, recommendations, and prioritized action steps with estimated costs.
3. A presentation to the BMPL Board of Directors.

D. Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation Criteria		
Non-Price Rated Criteria Category	Weighting (Points)	Section Points
1.0 Experience and Qualifications		
1.1 Previous Experience	15	25
1.2 Employee Qualifications	10	
2.0 Understanding of Scope and Proposed Approach		
2.1 Demonstrates an understanding of the project	10	25
2.2 Addresses unique challenges and opportunities of the library’s space	10	
2.3 Includes realistic timeline and workflow that aligns with the project’s milestones	5	
3.0 Community Engagement		
3.1 Outlines Community Engagement Methodology	15	15
4.0 Innovation and Best Practices		
4.1 Demonstrates understanding of the evolving role of public libraries as community hubs and cultural venues, as well as emerging trends in library design	10	10
Non Price-Related Criteria Total		75
Non-Price Rated Criteria Category	Question	Points
Pricing	25	25
Total Points		100

E. Timeline

Issue Date of RFP	July 29, 2025
Site Visit	August 6, 2025 - 10:00 am
Deadline for Questions	August 11, 2025 - 4:30:59 PM local time
Deadline for Issuing Addenda	August 12, 2025 - 11:59:59 AM local time
Submission Deadline	August 19, 2025 - 2:00:59 PM local time
Rectification Period	Two (2) business days
Anticipated Ranking	Week of August 25, 2025
Anticipated Final Ranking	Week of August 25, 2025
Contract Negotiation Period	Ten (10) calendar days
Anticipated Execution of Agreement	Week of September 19, 2025

The RFP timetable is tentative only and may be changed by the Library at any time. For greater clarity, business days mean every day that the Library is open for business.

F. Milestones

Milestone	Date
Project Kick Off	September 22, 2025
Community Consultation	October, 2025
Board Update re Status	November 20, 2025
Final Report	December 31, 2025
Presentation to Board	Insert Date
In-Person Presentation to Council	Insert Date

G. Roles and Responsibilities

RFP Evaluation Team: Library CEO, Library Manager, Town of The Blue Mountains Manager of Fleet to Facilities

BMPL Board: RFP deliverables alignment including funding approvals for final project.

Library CEO: Final project oversight, direct liaison with winning proponent for all deliverables in RFP submission and final project delivery including financial management.

Town of the Blue Mountains: RFP process systems, tools, and management. Direct conduit with submitting groups for assistance with the RFP process and tools. Consult with Library CEO on protocols for RFP release, questions, submission gathering and collation.

Selected Partner ('Proponent'): Delivery of all requirements through the system indicated herein. Communication and delivery of final project.



Finance Report

Board Meeting

Report To: The Blue Mountains Public Library Board
Report Name: FIN.24.03 Finance Report of Q2 2025
Date: July 17, 2025
Prepared by: Jennifer Murley, CEO

A. Recommendations

THAT this Board receive as information the Finance Report of Quarter 2 (Q2) 2025.

B. Background

The BMPL Board receives quarterly financial variance reports that compare the approved budget to actual expenditures. This report covers the period ending June 30, 2025 (Q2). These are unaudited numbers and the Town's accounts payable team will continue to process invoices for Q2, past June 30, 2025.

*It should be noted that the BMPL's Surplus Reserve totals are now included in this report, at the request of the Board. The annual surplus from 2024 has not been allocated to this budget line to date.

C. Grants

Since the last report, the BMPL has not received any additional grant funding. \$2,715 is anticipated in grant revenue by Q4 from the Community Foundation Grey Bruce.

D. Concerns

The 2025 capital budget includes \$60,000 intended to replace the circulation desk at the L.E. Shore Memorial Library, however, this project may be put on hold while the Board completes a space utilization study, which includes the re-evaluation of the entire use of space at this facility. It should also be noted that there is currently a full-time vacancy that will be addressed in Q4.

E. Current Standing of the Accounts and Funds

Held By	Asset	Location	Status
Board	Surplus Reserve	Town Lined Account	\$461,736.07 Section 3.6 of the Board/Council Funding Agreement stipulates that “The Board and Town agree that any Annual Surplus will be rolled over and held in a Reserve Account maintained and controlled by the Board”.
Board	Open Reserve	Savings	\$296,141.22 (+\$1557.01 from Q1)
Board	Land Reserve Fund	Investment	\$19,234.10 (+\$489.92 from Q1) [Next maturity April 28, 2025] 5.3% interest rate *For new builds.
Council	Development Charge	DC Act Town Lined Account	\$3,143,985.85 (+\$127,380.48 from Q1) *Can only be used for growth-related items that were identified in the Town’s DC Study. These include expansion, the purchase of land, and materials.
Council	General Reserve (Non-Growth Related)	Town Lined Account	\$72,389.89 Feasibility Study/Space Plan(s) balance available for engineering, consultation, legal pertaining to expansion.
CEO	CHD Reserve	Town Lined Account	\$0 *All funds were used to offset costs for the Museum renovation.
CEO	CHD Fundraising Reserve	Town Lined Account	\$15,790.80 *Can be used to offset costs for future films, etc. Designated for the CHD.
Council	Library Legacy Reserve Fund	BL 2003-55 Town Lined Account	\$22,694 *Limited for TBM needs such as BMPL IT.

1. Board accounts are held by the Board in High Interest Savings or invested per MTCS directions. All other funds are located in Town accounts.
2. Council held reserves require a recommendation resolution by the Board to access funds.
3. Town lined accounts are administrative and therefore require CEO authority when accessing within budget.

F. Variance as of June 30, 2025

The June 30 Budget Variance Report (Q2) is attached.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jennifer Murley, CEO
LibraryCEO@TheBlueMountains.ca
519-599-3681 extension 148

CONSOLIDATED Balance Variance Report -- Q2 2025

Blue Mountains Public Library as at June 30, 2025

	No.	YTD	Budget 2025	Amount Spent	Balance
EXPENSES	No.	YTD	Budget 2025	Spent	Remaining
Staffing		\$ 485,297.09	\$ 1,198,664.44	40%	\$ 713,367.35
Administrative		\$ 5,068.03	\$ 18,050.00	28%	\$ 12,981.97
General Operating		\$ 30,460.93	\$ 72,050.00	42%	\$ 41,589.07
Communications		\$ 634.50	\$ 6,275.00	10%	\$ 5,640.50
Training & Travel		\$ 6,650.85	\$ 11,380.00	58%	\$ 4,729.15
Personnel		\$ 178.64	\$ 2,600	7%	\$ 2,421.36
Equipment Services		\$ 3,694.15	\$ 15,918.00	23%	\$ 12,223.85
Purchased Services		\$ -	\$ 4,550	0%	\$ 4,550.00
Financial Services		\$ 280.83	\$ 2,805	10%	\$ 2,524.17
Minor Capital		\$ 302.08	\$ 2,400	13%	\$ 2,097.92
TOTAL EXPENSES		\$ 532,567.10	\$ 1,334,692.44	40%	\$ 802,125.34

Revenue	No.	YTD	Budget 2025	Spent	Balance
Federal Grants	53005	\$ -	\$ 7,980.00	0%	\$ 7,980.00
Provincial Grants	53010	\$ 3,980.70	\$ 23,371.00	17%	\$ 19,390.30
Municipal Grants	53015	\$ 499,942.32	\$ 1,253,640.00	40%	\$ 753,697.68
Donations	53020	\$ 11,480.20	\$ 6,700.00	171%	\$ (4,780.20)
Own Source		\$ 13,127.98	\$ 9,650.48	136%	\$ (3,477.50)
Commissions	55720	\$ 4,035.90	\$ 3,000.00	135%	\$ (1,035.90)
Capital Roll Over		\$ -		0%	\$ -
Strat Plan Roll Over		\$ -	\$ -	0%	\$ -
Reserves / Roll Over		\$ -		0%	\$ -
TOTAL REVENUE		\$ 532,567.10	\$ 1,304,341.48	41%	\$ 771,774.38

Capital	No.	YTD	Budget 2025	Spent	Remaining
Books	62051	\$ 22,509.61	\$ 60,900.00	37%	\$ 38,390.39
Replacement Furniture & Fixtures	64016	\$ -	\$ 60,000.00	0%	\$ 60,000.00
Software	64004	\$ -	\$ 2,500.00	0%	\$ 2,500.00
Replacement Equipment	64011	\$ 922.90	\$ 15,000.00	6%	\$ 14,077.10
Contract Services	63125		\$ 2,000.00	0%	\$ 2,000.00
TOTAL EXPENSES		\$ 23,432.51	\$ 140,400.00	43%	\$ 116,967.49

Strategic Plan	No.	YTD	Budget 2025	Spent	Remaining
Administrative		\$ -	\$ 1,500.00	0%	\$ 1,500.00
Communications		\$ -	\$ -	0%	\$ -
TOTAL EXPENSES		\$ -	\$ 1,500.00	0%	\$ 1,500.00

Birds, butterflies and pollinators benefit from TBM youth climate funds

CollingwoodToday Staff
Jul 8, 2025 11:35 AM



Events for Life received a grant from round one of the Youth Climate Action Fund.

[Listen to this article](#)

00:03:44

The Town of The Blue Mountains has announced that 12 youth-led projects have been selected to receive funding through the town's Youth Climate Action Fund.

Following a successful first round of the program, the second round offered microgrants between \$1,500 and \$7,000 to fund youth-led climate initiatives, with funded activities taking place this year in The Blue Mountains and other locations across the traditional Territory of the Saugeen Ojibway Nation.

“Youth are demonstrating their interest, energy and ability to take meaningful action on climate change, and we appreciate the organizations that have stepped up to support youth and help make their projects a reality,” said Town of The Blue Mountains Mayor and Grey County Warden Andrea Matrosovs. “The town has been proud to provide this opportunity to enable youth leadership and climate action across our region.”

The following projects were selected to receive money from the Youth Climate Action Fund:

- Living Snow Fence – students will plant a natural tree buffer to improve winter road safety where the need and a willing rural landowner are identified
- Wiarton Bike Bus – students will run bike-to-school events and build knowledge of bike safety and repair
- Community Gardens and Urban Farming – students will co-design and plant new gardens, including Indigenous methods, at St. Mary’s High School in Owen Sound
- Water and Woods: Reviving Nature Through Cleanup and Reforestation – youth and volunteers will restore a section of the Nottawasaga River in The Blue Mountains
- Earthkeepers – older students will explore a model of developing and delivering climate change education for younger students
- EcoFlow – youth will provide education on sustainable period product options and will provide free options in various public places
- Get Our Festivals Clean – youth will enhance the sustainability of Banditfest, a youth-led music festival, and will involve attendees in climate awareness activities
- Backyard Bird House project – students will learn about, design, build and distribute bird houses to enhance habitat and biodiversity

- Butterfly Garden and Insect Hotels – students will learn about, design, build and distribute insect hotels and will provide pollinator-friendly plants to student families
- Endangered Species Mural – students will create a mural to build awareness of endangered Ontario species for the Bluewater Outdoor Education Centre
- Pollinator Engagement and Education – youth will create public art and installations to build awareness of pollinators and pollinator habitat in The Blue Mountains
- Community Gardens Food Security Service and Education – youth will co-design a new community area at the CMHA garden and deliver educational content

More detailed project descriptions for the twelve projects are available on the [Youth Climate Action Fund website](#), along with more detailed information summarizing the activities and outcomes of the eight Round 1 youth-led projects.

At its committee of the whole meeting on July 7, The Blue Mountains council received a [full staff report](#) about the Youth Climate Action Fund projects.

“There is an interest and energy from youth across the region to take action on climate change,” said Nicholas Cloet, the town’s sustainability coordinator. “The interest is definitely there.”

Cloet told council that administering the two rounds of the program has been a beneficial learning experience for the town.

“We’ve been learning a lot about how to engage youth more effectively,” he said.

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Here are 5 events in the Collingwood area this weekend

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Elbows up, even when you're holding a book

By: Stephanie Paddey

Posted: **2:01 AM CDT Monday, Jul. 7, 2025**Last Modified: 10:48 AM CDT Monday, Jul. 7, 2025 | [Updates](#)

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OPINION

Taylor Swift recently made headlines when she purchased back her musical catalogue, after re-recording masters that shot to the top of the Billboard charts. Swifties collectively understand that ownership equals control, and that to be in a position of not having

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sale,” declared Prime Minister Mark Carney in a visit to the White House.

Canadian book buyers who happily hem and haw over labels at the grocery store seem blissfully unaware of the elephant in the room— that 95 per cent of the Canadian book market is already controlled by foreign-owned multinational publishers.



Russell Wangersky / Free Press

Trying to keep from buying American products?
Consider who is publishing the books you're reading.

Mark Carney's *Values* was published
by the Canadian branch of Penguin

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biggest names, the most BookTok-worthy titles, and the lucky few who are published by the branch plants, their advances (money offered upon signing a contract, before a book is published) far exceed what Canadian independent publishers can offer. Books published by The Big Five (Penguin Random House, Harper Collins, Simon & Schuster, Hachette and Macmillan) are regular fixtures on awards and bestseller lists, so my quarrel isn't with the books themselves, or with their authors, or even with the people who work on those books in the glass towers of Toronto offices. It's with those Five's complete and utter dominance of the publishing industry.

Roughly 115 independent English-language publishers operate in Canada. According to the BookNet report *The State of Publishing in Canada 2023*, Canadian companies published an average of 35 books in 2023, while multinationals published

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So why, when branch plants exist, are indies important at all? Indies push the envelope. As an industry, we have a collective track record of recognizing cultural and historic value before multinationals recognize the commercial potential of the same authors/topics.

Debut authors are risky, while those with an existing platform represent a surer return on investment. University of Manitoba Press published John Milloy's *A National Crime* in 1999 — years before truth and reconciliation became part of the national discourse. Even working at a small university press, I've seen agents and editors browsing our digital review copies and buying from our website. I met a Big Five editor recently who came to our booth at a conference book fair, no doubt scoping out the university presses to see if any titles held trade-crossover appeal.

I don't doubt the intentions of the editors and publishers working for the

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roughly the size of a single U.S. state (California) — that's a dangerous problem. To be a branch is to be vulnerable. As any arborist will tell you, you don't make cuts from the trunk.

To be sure, fears over foreign ownership are long-lived and perhaps easy to dismiss as nationalistic pearl clutching, but I question whether the C-suite has any sort of genuine concern for the cultural value of stories from Canada. Valuations are more central to their philosophies.

The Big Five all have far-right imprints under their domain, suggesting that the corporate powers-that-be are equal opportunists when it comes to ideology. Just look at the websites of imprints Forum, Signal or Broadside Books: their author lists read like a veritable who's-who of American conservatism. If book buyers seek out a Canadian-authored book published by a branch plant — in the same spirit of "sticking it to the man" that one

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I spent much of my 20s working in the Toronto office of an American-owned multinational education publisher. During my years of service, I watched that company shrink as subsequent restructurings designed to “optimize” and “introduce efficiency” shuttered first the warehouse, then the trade division, then accounting, then the Higher Ed Division’s Canadian editorial department, and eventually closed the office leaving a handful of sales reps scattered across the country, whose job is now mostly to sell American textbooks to Canadian students.

Talk to anyone at a multinational publisher — education or otherwise — you’d be hard pressed to find a branch plant that hasn’t been restructured in the last decade.

The once venerable bastion of Canadian literature, McClelland and Stewart — copyright holders of the works of Margaret Atwood, Leonard Cohen, Michael Ondaatje and Mordecai Richler (to name but a few)

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Where once they published a list of more than 100 books per year and were leaders in publishing new Canadian voices, their fall catalogue boasts 17 currently announced Canadian-authored titles — nine of which are by Margaret Atwood. For the C-suite, valuations proceed values — and they always will. That imprint recently announced an exciting forthcoming title *Elbows Up*, ostensibly a collection of reflections about Canadian sovereignty from a collection of well-known Canadians (including Margaret Atwood — so make that 10/17). The irony of a multinational publisher issuing this

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To be sure, the Big Five are unlikely to exit the Canadian marketplace any time soon. Their books (Canadian-authored and otherwise) will continue to dominate Indigo shelves, media coverage and bestseller lists. Indie publishers will continue to do the important work of lifting debut and midlist authors, and doing so in a marketplace that does them no favours.

But if mention of the 51st state churns your stomach enough that you make choices at the grocery or liquor store, consider adding an independently published book to your summer reading list.

Stephanie Paddey is the sales and marketing supervisor at University of Manitoba Press.

HISTORY

Updated on Monday, July 7, 2025 10:48 AM CDT:

Adds links

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Carney to meet with cabinet, premiers following Trump's latest tariff threat

David Baxter and Kelly Malone, The Canadian Press

7 minute read | [Preview](#)

7:30 AM EDT



7 minute read | [Preview](#)

Wednesday, Jul 9, 2025



Kelowna police say man assaulted two women after car crash, one victim now dead

Darryl Greer, The Canadian Press

3 minute read | [Preview](#)

Saturday, Jul 5, 2025



Experts say royal visit was meant to send a message to Trump — and to London

Catherine Morrison, The Canadian Press

5 minute read | [Preview](#)

Wednesday, May 28, 2025



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Yesterday at 9:31 PM EDT



Trump treatment in the Oval Office

Chris Megerian, The Associated Press

13 minute read | [Preview](#)

Tuesday, May 6, 2025



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COLUMNISTS

Drimonis: Children's book club is latest target of CAQ's identity politics

By **Toula Drimonis** *Special to the Montreal Gazette*

Updated July 4, 2025 8:22 AM



An illustration promoting a free nationwide bilingual book club for children has drawn the ire of the Coalition Avenir Québec government because of the depiction of a girl in a hijab. *TD Summer Reading Club*

Books and public libraries were my gateways to other worlds as a child. It's understandable, then, why I'm such a fan of [the TD Summer Reading Club](#), a

national program involving 2,200 public libraries, celebrating local authors and inspiring children to read. The club is free, all materials and book lists are bilingual across Canada, and since 2008 it's worked hard to provide original

X

it was this club that Quebec Francization Minister Jean-François Roberge decided to criticize on social media for the simple reason that one of the many illustrations it uses to promote its cross-country activities features a girl in a hijab.

“Many Quebecers have expressed their discomfort with this poster for a book club held in a public library,” Roberge said on X last month, “which depicts a young girl wearing a hijab. This type of poster does not promote the coexistence we want to promote in Quebec. The principles and foundations of the new [law on integration into the Quebec nation](#) must ultimately guide us to avoid this kind of blunder.”

How many Quebecers “expressed their discomfort,” we’ll never know, but what “blunder” is Roberge alluding to exactly?

A little girl being interested in reading? Improving her French? Feeling like she belongs to a larger, inclusive Quebec? Making friends with other cultural communities?

Or does Roberge only see a hijab?

Some people’s vision of vivre-ensemble appears limited to an “ensemble” that only looks like them. In an effort to erase what the government considers undesirable from public spaces, the Coalition Avenir Québec is not above scapegoating children. I fail to see how that strengthens state secularism.

[Mouvement laïque québécois](#) and the secular feminist organization [Pour les droits des femmes du Québec](#) shared their discomfort, noting the illustration depicts a minor wearing the hijab, not an adult with full agency. Yet the same

X

demanding the city remove it. The hijab is what ultimately bothered them. [Disappointingly, the city caved.](#)

If organizers — receiving pressure to conform to the CAQ's limited vision of inclusion — simply pull the book club from Quebec, what would be accomplished other than depriving thousands of Quebec kids of a free reading program? Do Quebec's public libraries belong to all Quebecers or do they not? Only months ago, [a Montreal public library told a writer trying to book a space to host his English book club that he couldn't](#), because Quebec's vague new language law was [creating unnecessary confusion](#). Why are we making access to culture more difficult for some Quebecers?

[With the Legault government slashing school budgets](#) and last year's reports of problems accessing [francization courses](#), and with [literacy rates lagging](#), one would think a francization minister would not only welcome outside assistance, but praise it.

No such luck.

Identity politics above everything else. Once again, the CAQ has chosen to single out a religious minority in order to showboat secularism. It's performative at best.

While I don't support hijabs on children, neither do I believe that targeting those who wear them supports state secularism. It's just bullying.

The CAQ says the book club's illustration "does not promote the coexistence we want to promote in Quebec." What kind of coexistence is that?

... X

club: the kind that selectively chooses to focus on some religious traditions while conveniently ignoring others?

All young Quebecers — without qualifiers — should feel welcome in our public spaces and cultural institutions. That's the kind of coexistence I can get behind.

*Toula Drimonis is a Montreal journalist and the author of **We, the Others: Allophones, Immigrants, and Belonging in Canada**.*

toulastake@gmail.com

This story was originally published July 4, 2025 at 6:00 AM.

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Canada's Archives Are in Trouble — and So Is Its History

Years-long delays, archaic privacy laws, and chronic underfunding are threatening our national memory

BY MARK BOURRIE

Updated 14:49, Jun. 27, 2025 | Published 12:10, Jun. 27, 2025



Nolan Krattinger, Unsplash / iStock / The Walrus

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In up while scouting local quarries for trilobites. I noticed the cute but hobbit-free [Shire Hall](#), the seat of government for Prince Edward County. There's a building next to it, the local land registry office. These were common in Ontario: little squat fireproof stone buildings that will be there when everything else is gone.

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The little registry offices were important to the people who built them. The records of land ownership were stored there, and they looked after them very carefully. If they burned, people could not prove who owned what. Good land records and respect for old documents help keep the peace in our society. Say, you have the old surveyors' notes of an Ontario township. Then people start arguing about who owns the township's beach. Did the surveyor draw the property line of the Crown lands down to the water? Or did he draw it to some sort of high-water mark? Do the cottagers own to the water? Or do the cottagers own to the edge of the sand? Can you and I walk along the beach? [Those notes](#) can be evidence of who owns billions of dollars' worth of waterfront.

We should look after all our records that carefully. But we don't. And we've often had bad luck. In 1849, a mob burned down the [parliament building](#) in Montreal, along with its [library and archives](#). (A few books and documents were recovered in an [archaeological dig](#) in the 2010s, but only enough to remind us of

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in the reading room of the Centre Block on Parliament Hill. That's where a fire started in 1916 that destroyed the whole building, along with many historic treasures.

This culling of the historic record wasn't always bad stewardship or poor luck. Few governments have been as careful with documents as the people who run Prince Edward County. During the French Revolution, national records in Paris survived, but regional archives were torched. In 1794, the local government in Puys, along with soldiers and townspeople, burned all the archives and records of the community and then threw medieval statues into the fire to keep it going.

The Palace of Westminster burned in 1834, taking a lot of British history with it. After losing so much, the British started a public records office four years later, beginning the process of putting together its national archives at Kew. The Russians carted off the archives of China's Qing dynasty in 1902 and didn't give them back to China until the 1950s. They sacked archives in Germany in 1945, and they're destroying the historic record of Ukraine now. The Public Record Office in Dublin was destroyed in 1922 during the Irish Civil War when the Four Courts were shelled. Seven centuries of records were lost in a country obsessed with its own history.

Canada got serious about record keeping in the first decades of the twentieth century. Coincidentally, we saw a massive growth in government, generating tons of records and an expectation that the stuff will be kept. And a lot of it is not interesting to people until it is. Indigenous land rights cases are built on written records of Crown agents. And, sometimes, we just want to know the truth about our government: journalist Jim Bronskill fought for years to pry

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can't get it again. It's also useless if we don't get to see it because of wonky secrecy and privacy laws.

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WE HAVE a crisis in Canadian history just as we're starting to reassert ourselves as a nation that's not the United States' back shed. Not enough students are majoring in Canadian history, and graduate students are scarce.

In 1998, Jack Granatstein wrote a book called *Who Killed Canadian History?* His less-than-original take: woke people did it. But he was wrong. Culturally, social history and political history are not warring in the bosom of a single state. No one outside academia cares. Canadian researched nonfiction accounts for 5 percent of Canadian book sales. (Canadian authors have just 12 percent of our country's market, making a joke of the claim that, at least in what we read, we're not Americans.)

And that's everything from *Fossils of Ontario Part 1: The Trilobites* (a book that changed my life) to cookbooks, biographies, and the works of Granatstein. We don't have a history-textbook business in this country thanks to the Canadian government's insane copyright rules that allow universities to sell writers' and publishers' work to students without compensating rights holders. And it's

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of the problem. A couple of years ago, Robyn Doolittle and a team of the *Globe and Mail* did a series on access to information and protection of privacy—ATIP—across the whole federal, provincial, and municipal spectrum. “Secret Canada” showed all three levels of government don’t take the public’s right to know seriously. The journalists found, to their surprise, historians were among the angriest users of access-to-information regimes. ATIP was supposed to improve freedom of information, and it ended up as a secrecy tool of bureaucracies, masked as protection of privacy.

A little over a decade ago, when I was doing research for a military safety project, I wanted to see the plans for Second World War fortifications around Prince Rupert, BC. The city was a major shipping point for American forces in the Pacific and was protected by artillery mounted in bunkers. I had a secret clearance. This was a good thing, because Canada’s bureaucracy acts as though Hirohito plays a long game. Those fortifications are long gone, but the plans for them are still secret. I went into a special room to look at the blueprints for the forts that don’t exist, just in case there were spies in the main LAC reading room.

LAC’s secrecy and slowness to declassify records are so bad that people in the military, who have even higher security clearances than I did, pray that their history project involves another NATO partner so they can go through archives in Brussels, Washington, or London to get material.

Charlotte Gray has bird-dogged the history crisis for years. She recently interviewed Stephen Azzi, professor of political management and history at Carleton University, for a long *Globe and Mail* article about LAC’s ATIP backlog and institutional secrecy. Azzi says he’s been waiting more than two years for

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of researchers to justify their right to know what governments did or were doing, rather than the responsibility of government to put its records and those of its predecessors into sunlight.”

LAC didn't make the privacy law. It's so broad that a simple name and address, no matter how old, is red flagged. The government needs to come up with a more reasonable privacy regime. A person can go to a major library and pull old phone books or city directories to find information protected by Canada's ATIP law.

There are 200 archivists at LAC working on ATIP. But when a researcher needs help with a project, LAC staff aren't around. There isn't money for everything. Historians can trash-talk Library and Archives, but Leslie Weir, the chief librarian and archivist, should not be forced to make so many hard choices. She explained to me that she follows the advice of justice department lawyers. And she doesn't decide how much money Parliament appropriates to protect and share the historical record.

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reading room and storage are in the same building.) Out-of-town researchers can't afford to spend weeks waiting for LAC deliveries.

LAC is making deals to survive and seem relevant. It has a partnership with [ancestry.ca](#), which generates a lot of clicks on digitized LAC records. *Ancestry.ca* sells internet access to national records like census results and military records, which are popular with genealogists. Instead of building one large archive with an on-site room for researchers, LAC partnered with the city of Ottawa to share a new building. Ottawa's sad, brutalist central library will move in with the national archives and the federal library in 2026. The new building won't have enough room for the national library's books, so they, like archival documents, will have to be trucked in to waiting readers.

It seems absurd to me that the national library and the national archives are a single entity. They might seem like it to politicians on Parliament Hill or the suits in the Prime Minister's Office, but they are not the same thing to researchers. They have different mandates: the national library gets and keeps copies of every book published in Canada and maintains a large collection of foreign books. The archives gathers, sorts, and keeps important government and private documents used by historical researchers. The librarians must compete with their library colleagues for the agency's money. Now the national archives will be part of a city library—in something that's going to look like an [archival Disneyland](#), with bright sitting areas, and a smudging room, but no historical records and few books from the national collection kept on site.

If we're going to remain a real country with a serious claim of valuing our culture and history, we need to do better than this. Telling our story well

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Mark Bourrie is an Ottawa-based author and lawyer who holds a PhD in history. He is a long-time consumer of archival resources.

How's The Walrus?

As the executive director, I am frequently asked this question. These days, I reply: “The Walrus was made for this moment.” From on-again, off-again trade news and negotiations to a new prime minister, we are committed to Canada’s conversations. We launched six regional bureaus earlier this year to ensure comprehensive coverage across this great country of ours. But we can’t do this alone. As a non-profit newsroom, this work isn’t possible without our readers’ support. If you believe in Canada’s stories, support our paywall-free journalism with a donation today.

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