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Library Board Report

To: Newmarket Public Library Board

From: Todd Kyle, C.E.O.

Date: September 18, 2019

RE: **Reciprocal borrowing request from Bradford-West Gwillimbury Public Library**

Background:

Newmarket Public Library has had reciprocal borrowing agreements with neighbouring libraries in place for a number of years. Under these agreements, people who live, work, or attend school in one municipality can obtain a library card free of charge in a second municipality where both municipalities are party to such an agreement. Since 1991, an agreement has been in place with Aurora, Markham, Richmond Hill, and Vaughan. King Township, East Gwillimbury, Whitchurch-Stouffville, and Georgina requested and were granted an agreement by this Board in 2012. These arrangements were formalized in 2017 with the creation of the York Region Public Library Partnership under which reciprocal borrowing was permitted among all 9 libraries.

Due to changes to the inter-library loan system, Bradford-West Gwillimbury (BWG) Public Library has been pursuing a similar arrangement for libraries in Simcoe County. At the same time, they have requested reciprocal borrowing from Newmarket, similar to what they have had for some time with East Gwillimbury and King Township. They have received a number of customer comments from Newmarket residents requesting free library access. At the time of writing this report, BWG's plan was to have the proposal approved by their Board on September 16 and to take the proposal to the rest of the Simcoe County libraries at a meeting on September 17.

Concerns about extending free borrowing to neighbouring libraries are minimal. There is some impact on non-resident fee revenue. This budget line was at roughly \$3000 per year when the 2012 changes were implemented and is now down to \$300, with the 2018 actuals at \$545. It is likely this revenue would mostly disappear, as it appears that the few remaining patrons who pay non-resident fees are BWG residents (the annual fee is \$30).

At the same time there has been some concern that residents of smaller municipalities will unfairly monopolize Newmarket's extensive collection, or that Newmarket will lose cardholders

to a library that might been seen as more convenient for users. To date there has been no evidence to suggest that this is the case, and the prevailing philosophy is that fewer barriers to access results in higher usage and accessibility of libraries overall. It is also worth noting that along with the N6 libraries, BWG is part of a group of 7 libraries who share characteristics of geography and scale and who meet frequently to discuss issues of mutual concern and to coordinate consortial purchasing among them.

Conclusion:

The following motion is recommended:

THAT the Library Board approve a reciprocal borrowing agreement with Bradford-West Gwillimbury Public Library contingent on similar approval by the Bradford-West Gwillimbury Public Library Board.