



438 Park Avenue
Newmarket, Ontario L3Y 1W1

Email: npl@newmarketpl.ca
Website: newmarketpl.ca
Phone: 905-953-5110

Library Board Report

To: Newmarket Public Library Board
From: Todd Kyle, C.E.O.
Date: December 18, 2019
RE: **Library security considerations**

Background:

Library staff continue to play an active role in maintaining the safety and security of employees and visitors to our facility, but recent trends have made this role more difficult and increased the strain on our staffing levels.

As reported in previous discussions, a significant number of minor security incidents are regularly experienced, involving such behaviours as drug use, abusive language, and disorderly conduct. In response, the Library continues to refine its processes surrounding incident reporting, the use of video surveillance recordings, furniture layout, and signage, in order to make the facility as safe as it can be.

More importantly, a set of protocols has been developed whereby staff are empowered to ask a member of the public to leave the premises if their behavior persists, and follow up with a written Exclusion Notice for a period of up to 6 months. For more serious infractions, the C.E.O. may authorize an exclusion up to an including an indefinite one, where the person excluded must request re-entry. At any time, police can be called to support, including where a person disobeys an exclusion notice (this becomes trespass).

While these actions have resulted in some success, there is increasing stress experienced by staff when security situations arise. Often these situations arise on evenings and weekends, a time when staff on duty are dedicated largely to front-line services. Dealing with these situations involves at least two staff and often considerable time to investigate, deal with police, and write a report, thereby placing a strain on staffing levels. In addition, police report an increase in calls for concerning behavior in public spaces, and advise that they may be unable or slower to respond to incidents that are non-criminal or that do not pose an immediate threat to safety.

In order to mitigate these concerns, one additional action that might be explored is a pilot project to determine whether engaging an external security contractor might enhance both the appearance and the effectiveness of facility security. Many libraries are taking similar actions as social changes put pressure on libraries to deal with more vulnerable members of society. In consulting neighbouring libraries, it has been suggested that a pilot to engage a security guard contractor at seasonal peak times (typically November to April) and at times when there are fewer staff on duty (evenings and weekends) would be a worthwhile exercise.

A suggested pilot period would be January to April 2020 for a period of up to 16 weeks. While we have not yet requested quotes for security services from providers, preliminary investigation suggests that the pilot could be accomplished for between \$7000 and \$9000. It is believed that there is room for this in existing budgets because of projected savings in other areas.

Conclusion:

The following motion is recommended:

THAT the Library Board receive the report on Library Security Considerations;

AND THAT the Library Board authorize the described security pilot project within approved budgets.