Essex County Library

Statement of Purpose

The Essex County Library (ECL) is the community's connection to information resources and services for the residents living in the 7 municipalities within the County of Essex.

The ECL is governed by the direction of the Essex County Library Board (ECLB) and its Mission to "welcome you to a world of discovery, creativity and lifelong learning through accessible resources, programs and innovative services".

Service Description

ECL is connecting communities through 14 branch locations and a 24/7 online service centre:

Town of Amherstburg	Amherstburg Branch, Amherstburg, Ontario
Town of Essex	Essex Branch, Essex, Ontario
	Harrow Branch, Harrow, Ontario
	McGregor Branch, McGregor, Ontario
Town of Kingsville	Cottam Branch, Cottam, Ontario
	Highline Branch, Kingsville, Ontario
	Ruthven Branch, Ruthven, Ontario
Town of Lakeshore	Comber Branch, Comber, Ontario
	Toldo Foundation Branch, Emeryville, Ontario
	Stoney Point Branch, Stoney Point, Ontario
	Libro Centre Branch, Woodslee, Ontario
Town of LaSalle	Bill Varga Branch, LaSalle, Ontario
Municipality of Leamington	Leamington Branch, Leamington, Ontario
Town of Tecumseh	Cada Branch, Tecumseh, Ontario
24/7 online service	www.essexcountylibrary.ca

The ECL provides direct access to, and staffing support for, its collections, programs, and services. The 24/7 online service strengthens the Library's collections and resources by providing access to its expanding digital content of eBooks, eMagazines and Databases, and supporting membership through self-service options.

It is the vision of the Board to provide welcoming spaces for its membership where:

- Knowledgeable staff are sensitive to the needs and aspirations of the community
- Innovative ideas and cutting-edge technology are embraced
- Engaging programs and current comprehensive collections are created
- Creative partnerships encourage social interaction and cultural vitality

Staffing Chart

Staffing	2015	2016	2017	2018	2015 Actual ($000)	2016 Actual ($000)	2017 Budget ($000)	2017 Actual ($000)	2018 Budget ($000)
Full-Time	16	19	19	21	964	884	1,146	910	1,368
Part-Time	92	89	89	84	1,684	861	1,638	1,652	1,853
Total	108	108	108	105	2,648	1,745	2,784	2,562	3,221

2017 Budget Development

The ECL experienced a labour disruption between June 25, 2016, and February 15, 2017. Branch operations ceased during this time, however Wi-Fi access and digital services have remained available to the public. The 8-month labour disruption had significant impact on the planning and implementation of the 2017 Budget, and will continue to affect the 2018 and 2019 budget proposals, as ECL returns to full operations and services.

The 2017 Budget was developed with expectation for cost increases of facility operations, wages, services and resources. The initial budget proposal to meet service needs was $286,660, or 5.9% increase to the base budget. However, the ECL Board requested the budget to be adjusted to 0% due to the ongoing and unknown end of the labour disruption. To achieve a 0% budget, the following adjustments were made:

- reduced staffing salaries and benefits to represent 10/12 of the annual cost
- reduced spending for tangible resources (books)
- maintain operational costs at the 2016 rates
- absorption of any budgetary increases for operations, contractual services or resources through reserve utilization

Prior Year Performance

Salaries and Benefits

Significant staffing changes were experienced during 2017 that resulted in a variance in the salaries and benefits costs. Staffing resignations and retirements created vacancy gaps between the time positions were vacated and subsequently refilled. In addition, new positions started at a lower step on the wage grid, resulting in added savings.

Resignations

Full-time Manager - wages were calculated for a full year at the high banding level. The position was vacant as of June 16, therefore only 5 months were paid at full rate. The position was vacant for approximately 3 months, then in September, with the remaining 4 months of wages paid at the lower banding level.

Part-time Driver/Maintenance – resignation of one position. The hours were redistributed to remaining staff as ECL is restructuring to reduce positions with less than 15 hours/week.

3 part-time Resource Assistants – vacancy gap for time to assess community schedules, time to complete internal and external postings and hiring procedures.

Retirements

Full-time Request Clerk – wages calculated at full year rate. The position was vacant as of May 2018, position back filled by part time staff for 2 months as department positions were reassessed.

Full-time Processing Clerk – 1-month vacancy gap to post and fill position.

Part-time Resource Assistant - vacancy to assess, schedule and complete the posting and hiring procedures.

2 part-time Janitors retired/resigned from their positions. Cleaning service assumed by existing contract service providers.

Vacancies

Manager, HR position – anticipated hire date of June 2017; position filled for December 2017 – 5-month vacancy.

Part-time Resource Assistant – 7 months due to staffing changes and assessment of schedules.

Programming and Outreach Services – due to high volume of staffing changes, ECL was not able to meet its objective to provide the full extent of Programming and Outreach services.

Short Term Disability

The ECL experienced a higher than anticipated rate of Short Term Disability (STD) claims. Approximately 6 claims in a 6-month period. STD claims ranged between 4 – 8 weeks of staff absence. Wages for claims were processed by the insurance company.

The above staffing changes created a significant savings between the anticipated budget and actual funds spent.

Staffing

The ECLB approved the recommendation to adjust working schedules to eliminate part-time positions with less than 15 hours of work/week. As resignations and retirements occur, ECL has reviewed all working schedules and restructured to create positions that are scheduled for no less than 15 hours/week.

The ECL has reviewed all department operations and adjusted schedules to reflect service needs. The Information Services Department restructured staffing hours to reflect changes in the processing system. This restructuring eliminated one part-time clerk position and provided an opportunity to increase the part-time Marketing and Media Clerk position to full-time to support internal and external communications. The restructuring of the Information Services Department resulted in an overall reduction of hours within the department.

Library Materials

Tangible and Intangible Resources – ECL's vision is to provide a current and comprehensive collection for our communities. A comprehensive collection provides access to information through a variety of resources, such as the printed book, online databases, and digital and alternative content. As the 2017 Budget approval reduced the Library Materials funding to achieve a 0% budget request, the impact of the decision reduced the quantity of resources purchased.

ECL continues to experience a demand for digital content. As the expense for digital content is prone to fluctuation due the cost per item as set by the publisher and the rate of exchange on US currency, the ECL monitors the expense of intangible items and offsets these purchases through the overall Library Materials Budget. Constant monitoring of purchasing provides an accessible and balanced collection.

ECL further supports its vision by expanding the collection to include alternative formats. In 2017, ECL added to its tangible items a selection of "Launch Pad" devices for both adult and children. The Launch Pad is a device, preloaded with apps for books, movies, games and activities. Launch Pads can focus on language development, senior "brain games", Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) activities, etc. ECL will monitor the collection's success and adjust the collection development based on its popularity.

Operating Expense

In 2017, ECL upgraded the VOIP phone system. Through an RFP bid, ECL changed its system provider and upgraded most of its hardware devices. The new system should provide for greater communications flexibility between the site locations. The change did not impact customer access as phone numbers and extensions remain the same.

In 2017, ECL opted to sell the Sprinter van as it was in need of constant, costly repairs. The proceeds from the sale of the van were directed to the ECL Vehicle Reserve. ECL will monitor if and when a replacement is needed.

Purchased Services

Legal costs were higher than anticipated for the 2017 year. Finalization of the Collective Agreement and the significant number of grievances contributed to the spending. The ECLB budgeted $10,000 from base funding, with any additional costs to be paid through the ECL Reserves.

Capital Expenditures

ECL upgraded the entry door access at all branch locations with the installation of an electronic FOB-key system. This upgrade reduced the number of physical keys required for each site, and provided staff with ease of access for supply shifts at all 14 branch locations.

Final Variance

The ECLB estimates a positive variance of $125,220 from the 2017 Budget. The Board recommends the funds be directed to the ECLB Capital Reserve (ECLB Resolution #17/90) to support the future renovations and upgrades of library branches.

Proposed Budget – Current Year

The proposed 2018 Budget is mindful of financial limitations and constraints, yet strives to maintain a provincial standard for buildings, collections and staffing. This budget supports the Mission and Vision for library services, as approved by the ECLB.

The ECLB reviewed the budget at their November 16, 2017 meeting and approved the final recommendation for the 2018 Essex County Library Budget to be submitted to County Council. The ECL 2018 Budget proposes an 8.1% increase, or $393,120. The Board is keenly aware of the impact that the labour disruption has had on both the previous and current year's budgets, and accordingly has focused its efforts on minimizing increases to support the services and operations.

Salaries and Wages

Salaries, Wages and Benefits encompass the largest portion of the budgetary increase for 2018. Requested increases are supported by the following:

- $321,000 to adjust the Salaries and Wages to support 12 months of operations (2017 Budget funded 10/12 of a year)
- $50,000 for addition of one full-time IT Technician position, start date of April 1, 2018
- $24,000 for annualizing the HR Manager position, partial year budgeted in 2017
- $92,000 to support operational changes, negotiated wage increases and associated benefit rate changes
- minimum wage increase for non-union staff (Desk Clerks)

Staffing

The ECL services 14 branch locations throughout the County. Computers and technology equipment are essential to ECL operations and service delivery. This equipment is currently installed and serviced by one full-time IT Technician. ECLB is aware of, and has been requested to consider, additional computerized equipment, such as: robust Maker Space programs (3D printing, sound and visual editing);

increases related to mobile technology (tablets, iPads, portable WIFI units); and, equipment that can enhance library services outside the traditional library space (vending machines, electronic lockers). To support the current and growing technology demands, the ECLB approved the request for an additional full-time IT staff to support the implementation, upgrades and staff training associated with computer and technological equipment.

Collection Development and Maintenance

The ECLB maintained the Library Materials budget at status quo to minimize the budget increases. The ECL will continue to develop a collection that is relevant to the needs of our communities, providing current and comprehensive collections that support user engagement. In addition, ECL plans to continue to provide alternative formats, such as: loanable eReaders and tablets to provide direct access to ECL's digital resources; story kits to support early literacy development; science and technology kits; and, access to resources that support the development of trans-literacy skills (skills required for web-based learning and communication). ECL will seek grant funding to support and maintain alternate collections.

Training

Training maintains the ECL vision of providing "knowledgeable staff" that can identify and meet the needs of their communities.

In 2017, the ECL contracted professional services to facilitate support for staff reengagement after the resolution of the labour disruption; the process to conduct an internal cultural audit began in October 2017 and will continue through to March of 2018. ECL will support the cost of this process through reserve funding.

In 2016, the ECL underwent a restructuring of its branch services. At that time 7 Community Supervisor positions were created to work with, and support the immediate needs of the local communities. The labour disruption delayed the training process to support these positions. The ECLB has maintained its base funding rate for training and will contribute funding from the ECL Reserve to re-establish training for this role, which shall include Collection Development, Research, Community Librarianship and Supervisory Training.

Contracted Services

Janitorial Services - through attrition the ECL has been contracting independent janitorial services to clean the branch locations.

Inspections – in 2016, the ECL implemented regular inspections of branch locations for bed bugs. Locations are inspected monthly, bimonthly or quarterly depending on their hours of operation and potential for risk.

Occupancy Expenses

ECL has assumed a new expense in its annual budget. The County of Essex has balanced the operating cost of the Civic Centre between all departments and outside organizations who use or require space within the facility. This allocated occupancy expense of $78,000 accounts for 1.5% increase in the ECL 2018 Budget.

Capital Expenditures

The ECLB is aware of 5 branch locations that are in need of renovations to replace dated furnishings and equipment, and/or to meet AODA standards by 2025. The Board and local municipalities are in the initial stages of considering possible renovation projects. The 2018 Capital Expenditures has a place marker of $600,000 for initial project developments. This estimated amount would be adjusted as projects are confirmed and the scale and scope of the renovations are presented to the Board and local councils for their consideration. Capital projects are funded through Capital Reserves and do not impact base budget requests.

Provincial Grant

The 2018 Budget anticipates grant funding from the Province of Ontario in the amount of $273,620 to support operating costs.

The goal of the 2018 planning budget is to return the cost of library service to a full 12 months operating year. The ECL Board maintained status quo in all areas of the budget, except those expenditures deemed necessary to meet contractual obligations and support service requirements. The ECL Board approved the contribution of $250,000 from the ECL Rate Stabilization Reserve to support all one-time training and legal costs, and to reduce the impact of budget requirements on the 2018 Levy. Accordingly, the full cost of 12-month operations will have a further impact on the 2019 County Levy.