

Proposed Library Funding Formula Information Sheet

February 8, 2019

The Cumberland Regional Library board met last night and I discussed the proposed library funding formula with them at length. Based on the questions and concerns of both the municipal councillors and citizen appointees I'm putting together this explanatory letter to help answer some of the questions that have come up around the funding formula.

Addressing the sticker shock:

Libraries have received no increases since the 2010/11 fiscal year. While this may seem like a substantial increase it is more that the increase did not happen in an incremental manner.

During the last 9 years while the cost of staffing, materials, and other expenses increased the library budget has remained stagnant. This has significantly impacted our ability to offer services to the citizens of Cumberland County.

Why is the province offloading this on to the municipalities?

They aren't. It is the same funding ratio that it has been for at least the last 20 years – the province funds 71%, the municipalities fund 26%, and library regions must fundraise 3% of the operating budget. The change comes from the increase in investment that the province plans to provide to libraries.

When will this take effect?

If this funding formula proposal is accepted it will start in the 2020/21 fiscal year.

What this money would mean for library services to the citizens:

A large percentage of the increase that would be allocated to CPL is for salaries. According to the provincial formula we should have 20 FTE. We currently have 15 FTE.

With the funds provided for staffing we would be able to provide

- more outreach to seniors, vulnerable populations, and other communities that may not be able to make it to the library;
- more afterschool programs to target school age children;
- more ongoing and consistent technology assistance (making our citizens more technologically adept).

More funding in the area of collections means we would

- bring back some of the electronic resources we cut such as Ancestry, Chiltons, and reliable medical information;
- invest in new electronic resources for language learning, homework help, and e-magazines;

More funding in the area of technology means we would

- be able to train citizens on new and emerging technologies that they might otherwise not see (such as 3D printers);
- provide some technology lending options.

And overall we would assess library hours and services that our patrons have requested that we've just not been able to provide.

Why will the Chief Librarian's salary be raised to \$92,000?

It won't. That was an average that the province used to calculate staffing amounts. Rather than providing the Chief Librarian with a huge raise (or any of the other positions listed in the handout) that money would be used to hire more front line staff to serve the citizens, as well as providing current staff with appropriate increase in pay based on our current salary scales.

What happens if the municipalities don't agree with this formula?

I frankly do not know.

For further questions or discussion please contact:

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