



ONTARIO LIBRARY BOARDS' ASSOCIATION

BEN HENDRIKS, PRESIDENT

OLBA

2020 OLBA Membership: 858

This past year was a year like no other and I just want to say that I hope that everyone is continuing to be healthy and coping as well as they can as we make our way through this second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. The rules around restrictions may be changing where you are, so please keep safe!

The work plan for this past year quickly got replaced with the more important activity of supporting library boards as they dealt with the effects of COVID-19 in our communities. We saw physical library space closures with significant workforce impacts, and boards pivoting to online meetings while figuring out how to continue good governance in this new landscape. Seeing things unfold, OLBA also quickly pivoted and worked to build on our partnership with SOLS and OLS-N. We started engaging you, our members, online with conversations that we hope were topical and helpful. Here are the online sessions offered this past year:

- April – Labour/Employment Relations during COVID-19
- May – COVID-19: Next Steps for Library Boards
- June – COVID-19: Library Boards during Re-Opening
- October – Evidence and how Library Boards use it
- November – Strategic Planning in the Context of COVID-19
- December – Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA)

I want to thank everyone who was able to attend or has had a chance to listen to the recordings, I hope you found them useful. I invite anyone who was not able to make it to view the recordings by logging into LearnHQ and you will find them there.

Municipal Relations & Budgets

One of the areas we have kept an eye, and ear, on has been municipal relations and budgets. We'll be sending out a more formal survey to our members here in early 2021 but know that we and OLA are watching the municipal space and are here to support your library board if you have any questions or concerns. Whether it's a question of the value of the library at a time when physical locations are shut down or an issue where a municipality is facing budgetary constraints due to the pandemic, it's important that the lines of communication be open so that our communities can access the important resources of the library.

SOLS's Governance Hub

The Southern Ontario Library Service continues to operate their online, interactive Governance Hub that involves input from key organizations who constantly work with libraries and their governance structures. FOPL, OLA, SOLS/OLS-N, and OLBA all participated and provided resources to support an inclusive and comprehensive Governance Hub that we highly recommend and that guides board members, trustees, and CEOs on governance issues. The Governance Hub takes you through the full 4-year cycle of a board member's term by providing information on many different issues and concepts relevant to library governance. We want to thank all parties involved for their continuing efforts on this one-stop-shop for all things library board related.

OLBA Bootcamp of Engagement

The sessions from Bootcamp 2020 (It seems like 20 years ago!) were drawn from suggestions from our membership, as well as from an understanding of the needs of our members. From the very beginning with Counsel Public Affairs presenting on the political landscape and the Regional Governance Review, through excellent and knowledgeable speakers on "Municipalities: What Library Boards Need to Know", library experts on "Community Engagement: What it looks Like and Why it's Important", and the team from SOLS and OLS-N following up with "Board + CEO: The Crucial Governance Partnership", it was a day not to be missed! Speaking of not to be missed, the last session of that day was a wonderful update from Leslie Weir, the Librarian and Archivist of Canada, on the new space being built in partnership with the Ottawa Public Library! Of course, Leslie had a few stories to tell along the way as she has been, and continues to be, a shining star in the world of libraries. The planning team heard a number of great comments about the sessions, which were appreciated and taken forward into the coming year.

We would like to thank the members of the OLBA Council for their time and efforts this year. We are welcoming S.S. Ahmad, the former Central West Regional representative, as our new Vice-President, and Caroline Goulding will be assuming the duties of President in 2021. She knows she's got a great group committed to listening to, and representing, the interests of library board members and trustees province-wide!