



Manitoba Library Trustees Association

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September 1st, 2015

Honourable Ron Lemieux, Minister
Manitoba Tourism, Culture, Heritage, Sport and Consumer Protection
Room 118, Manitoba Legislative Building
450 Broadway Avenue
Winnipeg, MB
R3C 0V8

Dear Minister Lemieux:

As public libraries are within your jurisdiction as Minister of Tourism, Culture, Heritage, Sport and Consumer Protection, The Manitoba Library Trustees Association (MLTA) would like to add its voice to the desire to have provincial funding increased for public libraries. We understand that several library boards and municipalities have already contacted you requesting an increase to the maximum provincial per capita levy of \$8.50 for basic operating grant that was last increased in 2004.

Public library boards are grateful for the provincial funding that is received annually, particularly the per capita levy of up to \$8.50 per capita for the basic operating grant. However, since this levy amount has remained unchanged since 2004, over which time libraries have faced increased costs, more and more of which have been borne by the municipal partners as costs continue to climb. Salary increases have been about 2% annually for the last few years, and CPI rates for 2008 – 2015 ranged from 0.83% to 2.4% with an average of 1.6%. These economic factors impact buying power and the cost of materials, supplies, staffing, services and hours of operation. One of the biggest increases facing public libraries is technology costs related to e-books and internet access, which patrons, particularly in rural communities, increasingly rely upon and expect from their library.

Library boards are annually faced with the discussion of what the local community is willing and able to pay to at least maintain the current level of library service, let alone what increases are necessary for enhancements. Library staff and local committees have, out of necessity, become active in fundraising to supplement funds available for collection development and programming.

In 2014, the municipal levy per capita for libraries had a range of \$0.00 (Leaf Rapids and Lynn Lake) to \$38.77 (Boissevain and Morton), with an average of \$14.97 and a median of \$12.13. Of the 57 public library systems, excluding Winnipeg, 43 or 76% of them had a municipal levy greater than \$8.50.

To promote and foster the effectiveness of public library boards

Municipal Levy	No. of systems	%
\$8.51 - \$10.00	9/57	15
\$10.01 - \$20.00	19/57	33
\$20.01 - \$30.00	12/57	21
\$30.01 - \$40.00	4/57	7

While municipal levies have increased, the maximum provincial per capita levy of \$8.50 for the basic operating grant, set in 2004, has not increased. One of the common themes coming from rural municipalities and library boards is the request that the Association of Manitoba Municipalities (AMM) and MLTA lobby for an increase to the provincial per capita levy. It is long overdue.

AMM Resolution 15-2011 - Increase Per Capita Base Rate for Library Funding

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Association of Manitoba Municipalities lobby the Province of Manitoba to increase the per capita base rate funding for library boards to \$10.00;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the AMM lobby the Province of Manitoba to re-evaluate the funding formula for library boards annually or bi-annually to better reflect the actual cost of delivering the services.

AMM Resolution 59-2011 (Standing Policy) - Rural Library Per Capita Funding

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Association of Manitoba Municipalities lobby the Province of Manitoba to establish a funding mechanism to address the current trend that is seeing population decline in small communities, resulting in reduced per capita revenues to rural libraries.

Our MLTA Board would appreciate a meeting with you to discuss our request for an increase in funding to public libraries. If the best time and place, in your opinion, is the AMM Convention in November 2015 in Brandon, we are willing to wait to meet as part of a collective group at that time.

Please direct your reply to us via the mail or email addresses above, or by contacting me at 204-726-0025 (Brandon).

We look forward to meeting with you to discuss this matter.

Sincerely,

Donna Kormilo, Chair