
HALDIMAND COUNTY

Report CSS-01-2019 Library Community Hubs – Memorandum of Understanding

For Consideration by Council in Committee on October 8, 2019



OBJECTIVE:

To execute a Memorandum of Understanding between Haldimand County and the Haldimand County Library Board for the provision of Library Community Hubs.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. THAT Report CSS-01-2019 Library Community Hubs – Memorandum of Understanding be received;
2. AND THAT the Mayor and Clerk be authorized to execute the Library Hubs Memorandum of Understanding.

Respectfully submitted: Cathy Case, General Manager of Corporate & Social Services

Approved: Craig Manley, MCIP, RPP, Chief Administrative Officer

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Library Community Hubs are a critical component of the Central Administration Project, allowing provision of online customer service and related guidance to members of the public. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been developed to outline the roles and responsibilities of the municipality and the Library Board in implementing and delivering the service hub initiative. The Library Board has formally approved the MOU and staff are recommending that Council also formally approve the document.

BACKGROUND:

A key principle of the Central Administration Project is customer service. In order to facilitate customer service in the local communities once municipal offices are consolidated into a new facility in Cayuga, a commitment was made to the public to offer service hubs at each of the six Haldimand County Library branches. This initiative would see three full service satellite offices replaced with six community hubs offering staff-guided online self service options, with a primary goal of teaching digital literacy. Of course, online services will be available to customers at home and on their mobile devices on a 24-7 basis, however the library hubs will provide a similar experience for customers who may not own a computer or mobile device, subscribe to internet service or be proficient using technology.

Several discussions with the CEO of the Haldimand County Public Library, and through the CEO with the Library Board, have taken place over the previous two years. The initiative is now at a point where the County and the Library Board, who are governed by two separate bodies, need to enter into a more formal arrangement for the provision of the hubs. As a result, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was developed by County staff in conjunction with the Library CEO, and has been approved by the

Library Board. Haldimand County Council approval is now required to allow us to move forward and finalize the hub implementation.

ANALYSIS:

The draft MOU is included as Attachment #1. The MOU outlines the roles and responsibilities of the Board and the County. In particular the following items are addressed:

- The guiding principles and legislative authority for each of the parties and a commitment to one another that the hub initiative is a partnership
- The commitment to facilitating customer service and information sharing with the public
- The capital requirements of the hubs (e.g. kiosks, technology, signage) and the financial support to implement
- The ongoing financial support to provide the Council-directed level of service to facilitate customer service through the hubs (e.g. initial staff training, expanded library hours)
- The services that will be available at the hubs (e.g. guidance and instruction on how to obtain online self-service, direct phone lines to Customer Service Representatives at the Haldimand County Administration Building, provision of general municipal information typically found on the County website, digital literacy programming, etc.)

It is important to note that the community hubs will provide service differently than is currently provided at satellite offices with a more modernized approach. The service is highly guidance based to allow the customer to self-serve for permit application, payments, registrations, reporting issues, etc. Staff will not take or process payments from the public. The Library staff will assist all patrons, as they currently do, on how to use the County website and find the information they are seeking.

The MOU does not have any insurance provisions included as both parties are insured under the County's general insurance policy.

The MOU does not have an expiry date, however, may be terminated by either party with twelve months notice. If the Library Board terminates the agreement, all equipment will be returned to the municipality and any municipal funding related to the hubs (i.e. expansion hours) will be withdrawn.

Overall, staff are confident that the agreement addresses all aspects of the hubs implementation and ongoing operation and that the provisions contained within are fair to both parties. Most importantly, the MOU provides the basis for continual customer service throughout several communities within the County without having to travel to the new municipal office in Cayuga, utilizing modern approaches and improving the digital literacy of Haldimand County residents.

FINANCIAL/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

There are no direct financial implications related to the approval of the MOU. The document does contain a commitment from the municipality to continue to fund the recently-approved expansion hours at the library branches, as they relate to the service hubs. All other costs related to implementing library service hubs are included in the approved budget for the CAP project and the approved 2019 Tax Supported Capital Budget (Library section).

STAKEHOLDER IMPACTS:

The Financial and Data Services Department reviewed the MOU. The Library CEO assisted in the development of the MOU and has since received approval from the Library Board to execute the MOU once the municipality has approved it.

REPORT IMPACTS:

Agreement: Yes

By-law: No

Budget Amendment: No

Policy: No

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Draft Memorandum of Understanding – Library Hubs.