



## **Briefing for the Royal Society of Canada Expert Panel on the Status and Future of Canada's Libraries and Archives**

**Submitted by: Sylvie Nadeau, Executive Director, New Brunswick Public Library Service**

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### **Introduction**

On behalf of New Brunswick public libraries and as Executive Director of New Brunswick Public Library Service (NBPLS), the following briefing has been prepared as a response to the framing questions posed by the Royal Society of Canada Expert Panel on the Status and Future of Canada's Libraries and Archives. The briefing provided below is based on the current and projected landscape for public libraries in New Brunswick.

### **Background**

In New Brunswick, public library services are offered through a partnership between the provincial government and participating municipalities. New Brunswick Public Library Service (NBPLS) is responsible for the management and development of public library services in the province. NBPLS is part of the New Brunswick Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour. NBPLS is made up of one provincial office, 5 regional offices, 52 public libraries, 11 public-school libraries, a virtual branch, books-by-mail/talking book service and 3 bookmobiles.

Through NBPLS, the provincial government is responsible for strategic planning, general administration, provision and supervision of programs and services, human resources, collection development, cataloguing and processing of materials, management of the provincial catalogue, automation, as well as administrative, operational and professional support. Participating municipalities are responsible for providing and maintaining facilities as well as furnishings and equipment required for the provision of quality public library service.



For public-school libraries, school districts are a third partner, contributing half the salaries, curriculum-related collection development, and providing and maintaining necessary facilities to serve school users. In this type of partnership, participating municipalities have the same responsibilities towards the community as in partnership agreements for public libraries.

Overall, the Provincial government provides approximately 70% of the budget allotted to the provision of public library service in the province, while the contributions of participating municipalities represent about 30%.

The provincial office of NBPLS is responsible for ensuring that the intent of the *New Brunswick Public Libraries Act* is carried out. It manages the provincial budget, sets standards, policies and guidelines, and ensures that they are respected.

The five regional offices (Albert-Westmorland-Kent (A-W-K), Chaleur, Fundy, Haut-Saint-Jean (H-S-J), and York) manage, supervise and coordinate the provision of public library services and bookmobiles in their individual areas.

Public libraries, public-school libraries, and bookmobiles are responsible for providing direct service to New Brunswickers.

Each library region has a library designated as a resource centre (5 of the 63 public libraries in the province). The resource centre plays a lead role in reference, children's, young adult / adult services, and circulation services for the region.

Each public or public-school library has a library board, with members appointed by the participating municipality or by an association of persons acting as a municipality. The library board oversees the management of the budget allocated by the municipality for its areas of responsibility and ensures that the library facilities are adequate. It also plays a support role by promoting the library in the community and by ensuring that services offered meet the community's needs. The library board does not oversee the management, development and delivery of services by staff as this is a provincial responsibility.

Twice a year, representatives from the public library boards from each region meet in regional forums to discuss common issues and share



information. The Regional Directors chair forum meetings. The regional forums elect one representative each to the New Brunswick Public Libraries Board.

Members of the public library boards (trustees) can belong to the New Brunswick Library Trustees Association Inc., an independent organization that promotes public library service in the province and fosters the education and training of library trustees.

Within the public library system, there is a New Brunswick Public Libraries Board consisting of five elected representatives, one from each region, plus eight additional members appointed from the public at-large by the Minister responsible for public library service. The Provincial Librarian also serves on the Board as a non-voting member. The Board studies issues, makes recommendations to the Minister, and assists the New Brunswick Public Libraries Foundation.

The New Brunswick Public Libraries Foundation, consisting of ten members, conducts fundraising activities and encourages, facilitates and carries out activities to improve funding for collections and services in public libraries.

## **NBPLS Response to Framing Questions**

### **Services**

- 1. How would you describe the services Canadians, including Aboriginal Canadians and new Canadians, are currently receiving from libraries and archives in Canada?*

The public library services provided to New Brunswickers are constantly evolving to respond to community needs and global trends. NB public libraries have a broad mandate to serve all New Brunswick residents.

Our vision:

“that public libraries and bookmobiles are an essential part of the community infrastructure to help nurture a culture of learning in New Brunswick;



that New Brunswickers use public libraries and bookmobiles as a place to experience and actively engage in reading and lifelong learning opportunities; and

that New Brunswickers use their public libraries and bookmobiles as a community resource and springboard to greater opportunities”.

Our mission is to:

“provide equitable access to quality collections, programs and services by responding to the educational, information, cultural and recreational needs of the residents of the province. The public library system will support economic and social development and promote self-reliance by providing opportunities for New Brunswickers to enhance their knowledge and their creative capabilities”.

Our mandate is to:

“provide core library services without charge to the residents of the province”.

Our core services/activities to meet our vision, mission and mandate include providing:

- access to a wide range of materials and information resources for all ages in a variety of formats for consultation or loan, including e-books and downloadable audio books
- reader’s advisory services
- reference and information services
- public access to computers and the Internet
- programming for all ages
- access to electronic library services
- access to online, interactive public library services
- public relations, promotion and marketing of public library services in the community
- outreach services, i.e. the ability to deliver services, resources and programs to targeted groups who may be un-served or under-served in a community (e.g. Collection Deposit Service to places like day cares, nursing homes; Home Library Service for patrons who are unable to visit the library due to a disability or illness, Books-by-Mail service for people unable to visit their local library)
- partnership development



- volunteer development and
- fundraising support<sup>i</sup>

NB Public Library Service has made it a strategic priority to develop services for Aboriginal people, new Canadians and people with disabilities.

In 2009, NBPLS hired an Aboriginal Services Librarian. This librarian has a provincial role to help libraries reach out to First Nations to offer library services in their community, to select publications written by or about Aboriginal people for public libraries, and develop resources to support public libraries in offering Aboriginal themed programs for children, youth and adults. Although there are no First Nation libraries in New Brunswick to date, there are some bookmobile stops on First Nations. NBPLS is still in the early years of developing Aboriginal Library services and building relationships with First Nations. A foundation in our development of Aboriginal Library Services has been the provision of Aboriginal Awareness Training for all public library staff in the province. This was done in 2011. Province-wide distribution of Aboriginal themed story time and reading circle kits has also been provided to libraries to support the provision of aboriginal themed programming.

Since 2009, NBPLS has made it a strategic priority to invest in a second-language learning online training resource for new Canadians. This is made possible through partnerships with other government organizations. As a bilingual province, NB public libraries provide French and English materials as part of the provincial collection budget. The provision of multi-lingual collections is made possible through local library board funds and local library partnerships/donations. In more urban centres, NB public libraries play a key role in helping to welcome new Canadians in the community by offering venues for second-language learning and access to information on settlement organizations.

Likewise, since 2009, NBPLS has made concerted efforts to improve access to library services for people with print disabilities.

Over the past 4 years, NBPLS has been putting in place the foundation necessary to provide more equitable access to public library service for people with print disabilities:



In 2009, NBPLS reviewed its long-standing talking book service by mail offered by a few libraries in the province, and implemented a provincial scope talking book service by mail, thereby ensuring a more consistent level of service and promotion of the service across the province to all New Brunswickers. The provincial talking book service by mail offers patrons commercial audiobooks as well as DAISY books from the CNIB Library and Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec (BANQ). The talking book service by mail also offers patrons the use of a DAISY player for those who do not have an accessible listening device in their home.

In 2010, NBPLS launched the pilot project Service Model for People with Print Disabilities in nine public libraries throughout the province. This pilot saw public libraries providing access to more commercial alternative format collections as well as access to an adaptive computer workstation equipped with such things as a wheelchair accessible desk, large screen monitor, large print keyboard, scanner, and screen reading and screen magnification software and a CCTV. NBPLS also established a partnership with the CNIB Library and Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec (BANQ), allowing NBers to access their extensive alternative format collections.

In 2012, a second pilot project was undertaken to further develop the Service Model for People with Print Disabilities. The purpose of this pilot was to determine the best way to provide deposit collections of DAISY books in NB public libraries. A commitment has been made by NBPLS to provide deposit collections in all public libraries by winter 2014.

Understanding that assistive technologies are an essential component to helping make public libraries more accessible to people with print disabilities, NBPLS has made it a strategic goal to provide an adaptive computer workstation in all public libraries in the province. In 2013, 38 of 63 public libraries will have an adaptive computer workstation.

Understanding that education and awareness is key to providing more equitable access to library services for people with print disabilities, NBPLS has developed a 1 day training session for all public library staff across the province to attend. The one day session will include training delivered by the Learning Disability Association of New Brunswick and the CNIB.



Recognizing the fact that many New Brunswickers with print disabilities in our communities are not aware of the CNIB Library resources available to them, CNIB's electronic alternative format titles have been integrated into the NBPLS provincial online catalogue. A New Brunswick public library patron can now discover through one search, NBPLS and CNIB holdings. The integration of holdings through the NBPLS catalogue has been in place since spring 2013. This is a first in the country.

In addition to these initiatives, NBPLS has taken steps to improve the accessibility of its provincial online catalogue and has established an advisory committee with membership from the print disability community to help advise NBPLS on issues of accessibility.

*2. Libraries are currently hybrid operations, constantly pulled toward traditional services by many core users and pulled, equally, by a concern for relevancy from other users and potential users. What issues are libraries facing as they try to make the transition to new service models?*

Public libraries are reflecting the diversity of our communities, offering not "traditional" services or new service models but a breadth of services. The future of public libraries in New Brunswick will see a continued diversification of services and the need for new, innovative spaces. The library world is constantly evolving. Libraries will be technologically sophisticated and modern –functioning as the community's living room where individuals and groups come to share, learn, read and engage.

An issue in the future will be fostering continued investment in library facilities at the municipal level. Many NB public libraries, both rural and urban, are becoming increasingly challenging to operate due to their limited seating spaces, meeting rooms, and general space shortage that prevents the installation of additional technologies and new service initiatives. New Brunswick has seen significant capital investment in public library facilities in the last 10 years by many of our municipal funding partners. This trend will need to continue. Public libraries will need to incorporate and reflect the vibrancy of the community through such things as meeting, technology and programming spaces, as well as public art and exhibitions space. Special spaces will be needed throughout the facility for people of all ages who want to sit quietly or meet in groups. All aspects of the library facility will need to



be universally accessible for all individuals. The public library will continue to be open to everyone, offering adaptive and flexible space that will be able to evolve over time with advancements in technology and new demands from the community.

In addition to modernizing library facilities, NB public libraries face challenges in staff training, in particular, with regards to IT, universal library design, early literacy development and building core managerial competencies of library managers/directors. To address these challenges requires financial and human resources that are beyond current operational budgets.

Other challenges include non-library users basing their knowledge of public libraries on stereotypes or preconceived notions of how public libraries are used or not used by the public. An accurate, informed understanding of public libraries in our communities is needed that is based on real data.

### *3. How do libraries and archives measure outcomes of their service and community impacts?*

NBPLS measures usage of services through quantitative performance indicators such as circulation and number of programs and occasionally surveys as budgets permit. NB public library managers/directors rely on Statistics Canada data to build community profiles as well as their tacit knowledge of their community to develop programs and initiatives.

As a whole, our library system relies on the research carried out by universities as our public libraries do not have the resources to carry out research on our own.

### *4. Are libraries the appropriate institutions to catalog, store, and provide access to research data? If not, which institutions should provide these services?*

Yes. Access to research data should be a university library responsibility. Public libraries have a role to collect research based publications intended for a general audience.



## **Community Outreach and Awareness**

*1. Would Canadians know of, or understand, the contribution you make to library/archival service in Canada?*

No. The challenge in New Brunswick is the lack of funds as well as the authority and flexibility at the provincial level to do social marketing specific for the public library system. At the local library level, it is the Library Manager/Director or Library Assistant who is responsible for community outreach along with providing front line services. As a result, it is difficult for library staff to do outreach outside the library while also maintaining library operations with only 1-2 staff members. With this being said, it is difficult to carve out space in the diverse landscape of community organizations, social media, radio, TV for public libraries. It requires dedicated resources to keep libraries front of mind with potential and even established community partners and media outlets.

*2. Describe the services provided directly to users within your context, or whether they are consortial in nature; please describe the mechanisms in place to define, refine and measure the impact of the services.*

NBPLS offers one integrated library system for all public library service points in the province. NBPLS offers one card, one provincial online catalogue with provincial sharing of collections and provincial licenses to electronic resources for the benefit of all New Brunswick residents. NBPLS uses standard and custom reports to generate data to measure use and gaps in our collections.

Programs and services are either provincial in scope (offered in all locations); regional in scope (delivered by libraries in one library region); or local in scope based on local community interests and needs. NBPLS has a series of provincial policies and procedures in place to ensure standardization and equitable services from library to library covering issues such as collection development, internet access, computers in libraries, establishment of libraries, volunteers, hiring of temporary employees to name a few. NBPLS also provides provincial manuals for staff explaining



loan services, cataloguing and processing so NBers regardless of which library they visit, will be offered a consistent service.

One mechanism that NBPLS uses to manage the standardization and development of services is a provincial committee structure. The NBPLS provincial committees (e.g. circulation services committee, reference services, children's services, young adult/adult services, cataloguing and technical services processing, etc.) leverage the expertise of professional librarians across the province to examine and evaluate current services, service gaps, and develop programs/services. These committees submit recommendations for approval and implementation to the NBPLS Provincial Management Team which is made up of the Executive Director (Provincial Librarian), 5 Regional Directors and senior librarians within NBPLS provincial office. It is through provincial committee work that NBPLS has developed training for such initiatives as *Every Child Ready to Read* in English and French; a program developed by the American Library Association that is based on research and best practices in carrying out story times.

### *3. In the digital era, what support for patrons do/should libraries provide?*

In New Brunswick, our library staff experience patrons wanting information literacy and technology literacy support. NB public libraries are providing programs on how to find and assess the quality of information in a digital era. NB public libraries are also providing programming for the public to "test and learn" new technologies, such as e-readers. NB public libraries are providing guides on how to use e-readers with the products/services we subscribe. In a digital era, public libraries need to provide internet and wi-fi access, and online service options as well as in-person services.

### *4. What in your opinion are the specific roles of libraries and/or archives and/or museums and other heritage institutions in community building and memory building?*

Public libraries, through partnerships, foster economic, social and cultural development. Examples of initiatives in NB include partnerships with the



Canada Revenue Agency in their Community Volunteer Income Tax Programs to provide tax preparation clinics through public libraries; partnership with the Government of New Brunswick's Population Growth Division to provide free online second language training resources for NBers; partnership with the provincial art gallery (Beaverbrook Art Gallery) to provide a copy of all publications produced; ongoing partnership with the Breast Cancer Foundation to provide NBPLS with grants to purchase collections and promote the resources available through libraries and the Breast Cancer Foundation.

NB public libraries provide access to local genealogy and historical publications, especially when there is no heritage, archives or museums in the community to take on this role.

## **New Directions**

### Digitization

#### *1. What are the main challenges of born-digital material for your institution?*

Our main challenge is access to a bilingual platform that can manage born-digital material ideally through our integrated library system. Partnerships with universities who have taken a lead in developing digital depositories may be an option for NBPLS in the future as well as the eBound Canada initiative led by the CULC eBook Task Force.

Ideally, a Canadian institution, such as Library and Archives Canada should have the role of preserving and providing access to born-digital Canadian publications, in particular federal government publications. This role has been taken up by the NB Legislative Library for NB government publications.

#### *2. What will be the function and future of a brick-and-mortar library or archive in a paperless future?*

The future of a brick-and-mortar library involves three functions: to provide access to physical and digital content; to provide access to technology; and to provide access to community public spaces for human interaction. The concept of a paperless future is contrary to the evolution of various technologies in our everyday lives –TV did not replace the need for radio, the



internet has not replaced the need for a library; e-books will not replace the need for print materials. The landscape will continue to diversify to meet varying needs. The banking sector is a good example of the evolution/diversity of services in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It was thought with the advent of bank machines and online banking that it would eliminate the need for bank tellers; instead what we see is a more diversified banking experience requiring brick-and-mortar facilities to provide self-service electronic options, bank personnel providing access to products and services in person and online, as well as online service options.

As public libraries represent about 2% of publisher sales, it is vital to build positive, strong relationships with publishers regarding the role public libraries play in society in upholding Canadian's right to read, equitable access to information and intellectual freedom. As the public turns to public libraries to provide them with access to the new medium of ebooks, public libraries need to be able to purchase content that is Canadian and regional in scope. Current ebook models make it unprofitable for small Canadian publishers to make their content available through existing ebook library vendors. Initiatives like eBOUND Canada led by Canadian Urban Libraries Council (CULC) eBook Task Force to establish a shared platform to facilitate eBook purchasing and lending through libraries' existing catalogues will be important in this regard.

## Education

- 1. What changes, in your judgment, are necessary in the professional education and training of librarians/archivists in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?*

In NB, a strategic focus on hiring librarians with the following types of competencies are vital for meeting the 21<sup>st</sup> century needs of public libraries: Commitment to learning, creative thinking/innovation, results orientation, strategic thinking, team leadership, change leadership, analytical thinking, relationship/network building, project management, knowledge of training and instructional techniques, planning and organizing skills. The ability to use technology, software and applications, in particular information/systems



management within the library sector will continue to be vital. In NB, librarians are hired within specialty areas: management/administration; public services development; research and planning; cataloguing; systems management; reference services; children's services; young adult/adult services. As a result, librarians need a range of skills but with specializations.

- 2. What conversations do you think need to take place with library, archival, and information studies programs about professional competency requirements, and have they begun?*

The conversation began with the *8Rs Canadian Library Human Resource Study* and needs to continue with more research in this area.

#### Resources

- 1. Public libraries are primarily funded by local municipalities, with little funding from any other level of government. Many towns and rural communities are too small to support needed technology. How do we encourage the creation of library systems (or consortia) that can meet the increasingly sophisticated technology-driven needs of libraries – whether urban or rural?*

We believe NBPLS is a success story in this regard as we are a provincial system. NB public libraries are jointly funded by the provincial government and local municipalities with responsibilities framed in provincial legislation. Our libraries have regional and provincial supports in the areas of library integration (automation), information technology, cataloguing, human resource management, staff training, collections development, program and service development to allow library staff to focus on the front line service needs of patrons. This avoids duplication of effort and cost.

One way NBPLS has encouraged technology development in libraries is to “seed fund” province-wide initiatives or support pilot projects to get libraries



started. This is how NB public libraries have been able to obtain such things as training computer labs (in our 5 library resource centres), internet access computers, wi-fi access and adaptive workstations. NBPLS Provincial office has frequently covered the start up costs in some instances or obtained external grant funding. After a period of time, it then becomes the responsibility of the municipalities to maintain the given technology in the library.

*2. Assuming academic host institutions have financial resource constraints, and assuming academic libraries are equally constrained, how might these libraries attract funding adequate to meet the expectations of their users?*

Not applicable to public libraries.

*3. What percentage increase to your current budget would permit you to realize the aspirations of your users? If you received an increased budget and consistent adequate resources, describe your library/archives in 2017.*

The budget for the public library system (provincial and municipal share) would need to double (at a minimum) to permit us to realize the program and service aspirations of our users. In 2017 NB residents would see modern library facilities to make libraries a community centre for lifelong learning; more diversified programming and services options based on research and best practices for targeted groups such as preschoolers, people with disabilities, new Canadians, First Nations, entrepreneurs. NB residents would see more programming outside the libraries' walls as libraries would have reasonable staffing levels to permit personnel to do meaningful community outreach to underserved or unserved populations. NB residents would find up-to-date and relevant collections in print and electronic form as NBPLS would have a collection budget that meets the national average.

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<sup>i</sup> Public Libraries: New Brunswickers' Gateway to a culture of learning. A Five Year Strategic Plan for New Brunswick Public Library Service (2009-2014).