

Addition D.5

L.E. Shore Library Board of Directors

May 16, 2016

Thornbury, ON, N0H 2P0

Dear Chairman Mayor McKean and Directors,

I am a writer whose novels have been circulating in Canadian and international libraries since 1971. As a longstanding member and recent Chair of The Writers' Union of Canada (TWUC), I appreciate the value of libraries to all writers and readers. As an active member of this community since 1999, I appreciate the extraordinarily good qualities of L.E. Shore Library and am grateful to community minded citizens such as yourselves who volunteer your valuable time and expertise to maintain the library's high standards of service to the community. Thank you!

As you know, about ten years ago problems in regard to management of the library arose and relations between concerned community members and the library's Board of Directors became very strained. A major issue then was the head of the library firing several staff members. Members of the community protested that the staff members were unjustly fired.

Eventually the head of the library, who was not even a qualified librarian, resigned and a new highly qualified and competent CEO, Carol Cooley was hired and the library was well managed during her tenure.

I am by no means alone in seeing parallels with what happened ten years ago and what is happening now and concluding that there is something wrong with the governance of our library that needs to be fixed in order to prevent this recurrence of multiple staff, valued by the community, being fired and the Board of Directors being seen as out of tune with the community it represents.

I worry that relations between the library Board and our community will be seen as so difficult that good citizens will no longer be willing to serve on our library Board. I also worry that our community will be viewed from the outside as so dis-harmonious no well qualified librarians will want to apply to work in our 'system'.

Here are four easy to do things that could fix the problem with our system of governing the library.

1. Create a resource position, a kind of Human Resources person on the library Board for library staff members to lodge complaints with about labour relations.
2. The library Board should be required to investigate complaints of staff who have been fired and consider their justification in regard to the current CEO's reasons.
3. The library board should give 2 weeks public notice so that community members can be informed and attend a Board meeting in which the Board is considering making a major change to our library or how it is managed.
4. Have a public vote on whether or not it is *ever* acceptable to use firing of the entire staff as a means to structuring or re-structuring the library staff positions or responsibilities.

I submit that it should never be acceptable as a means to any end in continuing business. And the Board should investigate why those staff members who did not re-apply for their positions did not re-apply. The suspicion is that firing all staff with a view to their re-applying was a means to firing staff that could not have been fired with just cause.

Our community is in fact remarkably harmonious and appreciative that the library Board is from and of our community. We all care about our exceptional library being well managed. When multiple firings of staff occur, alarm bells should be rung.

Implementing the above 4 points could be done quickly and easily to improve our system of governance so that staff has regular, easier access to human resources on the Board. The Board keeps the community more informed about possible major changes in the library. Multiple firings of staff will be prevented and firing the entire staff will never again be used as a means to *any* further business. There will be no cause for community uprisings and the L. E. Library Board of Directors should have an easier time of it and be duly honoured.

Yours sincerely,

Dorris Heffron

