

## 2021 Annual General Meeting Minutes – September 10, 2021

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### Land Acknowledgement:

We acknowledge that the work undertaken by CELA and our member libraries takes place on traditional Indigenous territories across Canada and we are grateful for the opportunity to live and work on this land and provide inclusive services to all Canadians.

## **Attendance**

### **Present**

Catherine Biss, Board Chair, CEO Markham Public Libraries  
Peter Bailey, CEO, St. Albert Public Library  
Grace Dawson, Regional and Community Services Librarian, Prince Edward Island Public Library Service  
Mélanie Dumas, Director, Universal Collection, Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec  
Jefferson Gilbert, Executive Director, CULC/CBUC  
Teresa Johnson, Director of Research & Planning, New Brunswick Public Library Service  
Åsa Kachan, Chief Librarian & Chief Executive Officer, Halifax Public Libraries  
Gwen Schmidt, Senior Manager, Neighbourhood Services, Saskatoon Public Library  
Heather Scoular, Director of Customer Experience, Fraser Valley Regional Library  
Tara Wong, Chief Executive Officer, Oakville Public Library

### **Regrets**

Carolyn Minor, Section Head, Special Services, Winnipeg Public Library

### **Also Present**

Lindsay Tyler, Senior Manager, Operations, CELA  
Laurie Davidson, Executive Director, CELA

## **Call to Order**

Catherine Biss, occupied the Chair and Jefferson Gilbert, acted as Secretary of the meeting.

## **Establishment of Quorum**

A quorum of members being present, the Chairperson declared the meeting to have been regularly called and properly constituted for the transaction of business.

## **Approval of 2021 Annual General Meeting Agenda**

### **MOTION**

Moved by Gwen Schmidt

Seconded by Grace Dawson

THAT the Agenda for the 2021 Annual General Meeting be approved.

CARRIED

## **Approval of 2020 Annual General Meeting Minutes**

### **MOTION**

Moved by Grace Dawson

Seconded by Jefferson Gilbert

THAT the minutes from the 2020 Annual General Meeting on November 13, 2020 be approved.

CARRIED

## **Annual Report**

- Expansion of partnerships that Rina had started (NNELS and Penguin Random House)
- Excellent work of the staff.
- Focussed on the reinstatement of federal funding.

### **MOTION**

Moved by Mélanie Dumas

Seconded by Tara Wong

THAT the Annual reports be received.

CARRIED

## **Financial Statements**

Doug Guyatt, Auditor joined the meeting

- Materials/catalogue is being amortization over 10 years
- No travel because of COVID-19
- Used the Temporary Wage Subsidy
- P. 4 Government Loan – if \$30,000 is paid back by December 2022, \$10,000 is forgiven
- Working to build up the reserve to cover cash flow
- Election happening in two weeks, uncertain about funding

Doug Guyatt left the meeting

### **MOTION**

Moved by Jefferson Gilbert

Seconded by Heather Scoular

THAT the financial statements and the report of the public accountant for the Corporation for the fiscal period ending March 31, 2020 be received.

CARRIED

### **MOTION**

THAT Guyatt + Moffatt are appointed the public accountants of the Corporation, to hold office until the close of the next annual meeting of the members or until

their successors are appointed, subject to the provisions of the *Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act*, and the directors are authorized to fix their remuneration.

Moved by Jefferson Gilbert

Seconded by Åsa Kachan

CARRIED

## **Election of Directors**

### **MOTION**

Moved by Tara Wong

Seconded by Åsa Kachan

THAT the following individuals be elected to become directors in accordance with the General Operating By-Law No. 1.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Term</b>	<b>Term Expiry</b>
Peter Bailey	3 years	September 26, 2024
Grace Dawson	3 years	September 26, 2024
Heather Scoular	3 years	September 26, 2024

CARRIED

## Board of Directors Term Expirations

### MOTION

Moved by Grace Dawson

Seconded by Mélanie Dumas

THAT the Board of Directors of the Corporation be confirmed together with expiry dates for each directors' term of office as follows:

Name	Term	Term Expiry
Tara Wong	3 years	September 26, 2022
Åsa Kachan	3 years	September 26, 2022
Teresa Ann Johnson	3 years	September 26, 2022
Carolyn Minor	3 years	September 26, 2023
Mélanie Dumas	3 years	September 26, 2023
Gwen Schmidt	3 years	September 26, 2023
Jefferson Gilbert	3 years	September 26, 2023
Catherine Biss	3 years	September 26, 2023
Peter Bailey	3 years	September 26, 2024
Grace Dawson	3 years	September 26, 2024
Heather Scoular	3 years	September 26, 2024

## Confirmation of Acts

### Motion

Moved: Åsa Kachan

Seconded: Teresa Johnson

THAT all acts and proceedings of the directors, officers, and members since the previous AGM on 13th day of November 2020 be approved and confirmed.

CARRIED

## Adjournment

There being no further business, on motion the meeting then terminated at 2:30 pm.

Moved: Teresa Johnson

Approved unanimously



Chairperson



Secretary

## Appendix 1 – Report of CELA Board Chair 2020–2021

**Date:** September 10, 2021  
**To:** Members of the Board  
**From:** Catherine Biss, Chair

The past 18 months have helped me more fully realize how important CELA services are. I have faced the social isolation, the challenges of operating in an increasing digital world and the difficulty in accessing services that our users face every day. CELA, working with Public Libraries across the country has provided an essential human service during this most difficult of times.

I want to express my sincere appreciation to Laurie Davidson and her team: Lindsay Tyler *Senior Manager*, Theresa Power *Content and Access Librarian*, Rachel Breau *Member Services Manager*, Fabine Bobier *Training and Outreach Coordinator*, Karen McKay *Communications Manager* and Christina McNish *Information and Access Specialist*. Together they have accomplished Board priorities and more. A few examples include the NLS agreement, moving forward with loading 80,000+ titles, the Penguin Random House Canada agreement and the restoration of Federal funding for 21/22. In particular, I would like to thank Faline Bobier for 20 years of service and Theresa Power for 10 years. Your dedication is the foundation of CELA's success.

To our current Board members – Asa Kachan, Grace Dawson, Gwen Schmidt, Jefferson Gilbert, Teresa Johnson, Peter Bailey, Tara Wong, Heather Scoular, Mélanie Dumas and Carolyn Minor, I would like to say thank you for championing the rights of Canadians with print disabilities to receive the same level of access to reading materials through public libraries as all other Canadians.

Human contact is so important to us as social beings. While there were brief periods of limited services, staff always maintained that human contact and worked very hard through local libraries to ensure that our users never felt left behind. We know that CELA Services – access to reading has never been more important as we remain isolated from one another so I will repeat what I said in last year's Chair's remarks: "reading brings us closer together and lifts our spirits like nothing else can".

Sincerely,

Catherine Biss  
Chair, CELA

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## Introduction

Overall, FY20-21 saw significant growth and change for CELA. Rina Hadziev completed her one-year term with CELA as its Executive Director and returned to Greater Victoria Public Library in October 2020. CELA welcomed its new Executive Director, Laurie Davidson, on September 21, 2021. A key focus of the year was managing services and expectations during COVID-19 that offered both new opportunities and challenges. CELA finalized the partnership with Penguin Random House Canada, began work on processing the 80,000+ titles provided by the National Library Service for the Blind and Print-Disabled (NLS), and increased outreach and user training in a virtual environment. CELA also collaborated with the National Network of Equitable Library Service (NNELS) on a number of projects, including a combined federal advocacy campaign that saw full restoration of funding for FY21-22.

## Overall Collection Statistics and Usage

The selection and offering of materials to CELA users through public libraries is guided by the [CELA Collections Policy](#). The total number of items available to CELA users totaled almost 904,792 (as of March 31, 2021). Collection statistics are as follows:

- CELA continues to provide access to a collection now totalling 74,156 titles available in multiple digital and physical accessible formats, including human-narrated audio, braille, and eText. 7,039 new items were added to the collection in FY20-21.
- As of March 31, 2021, Bookshare offered 830,636 accessible books in eText, Braille, and synthetic voice to CELA users – 154,364 of which were added in the previous year.
- CELA has an agreement with Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec (BAnQ) that provides additional French material and support. As of March 31, 2021, 9,499 BAnQ French DAISY Audio titles and 4,727 French Braille titles have been added to the CELA collection, with 2,720 new titles added in FY20-21.
- In this year, CELA circulated 566,234 physical items (DAISY CD books/magazines and Braille) and had 859,311 online circulations.
- At the end of the year, CELA had 24,415 users, with 2,365 new users added throughout the year.

## Marrakesh, ABC and NLS

The Government of Canada officially acceded to the treaty in June of 2016, becoming the 20<sup>th</sup> country to do so and reaching the minimum number needed for the treaty to take effect. It officially went into effect on September 30, 2016.



CELA has access to materials through WIPO's Accessible Books Consortium's (ABC) Global Exchange, which provides a mechanism to share accessible materials with copyright stipulations for each country integrated within the process. As a result, CELA is able to increase the depth and breadth of its collection by sharing resources with other countries.

In FY20-21, CELA shared 931 titles with other countries on the ABC Global Exchange. CELA continues to work closely with ABC and CELA is offering our Marrakesh eligible collection to users worldwide participating in the ABC pilot for direct user access.

In FY20-21, CELA and NLS (National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled) entered into an agreement which allows the exchange of Marrakesh eligible titles between the two countries. CELA has received 80,000+ titles in braille and human-narrated audio from NLS and CELA is working to process and add these titles over the coming year. NLS has also received and begun loading titles from CELA's collection, particularly French language titles. These exchanges greatly enhance the breadth of our collection and offers a diversity of choice to our users.

### **Support, Training and Outreach**

- CELA makes it a priority to respond as quickly as possible to questions, concerns and title requests from users and libraries. We can report that nationwide we handled 33,132 user queries either by phone or email in FY20-21. Member Services staff at CELA handled 1,692 questions from member libraries and their staff.
- CELA also provides a broad and continually evolving range of information and resources on our website about accessibility, print disabilities, compatible devices and apps, and information about the Marrakesh Treaty and other external influences on the service we provide.
- CELA staff participated in as many online conferences and tradeshow and presentation opportunities as possible given the changing environment of COVID-19. Overall, CELA staff participated in 2 library conference events across the country reaching 454 people and 8 presentations to various other groups (CNIB clients, Points de Connexion, CCB etc.) reaching 460 participants.

- As libraries closed to the public, many were looking for staff training opportunities to keep staff busy from home. CELA responded to the increased need for online professional development opportunities by almost tripling the number of webinar sessions offered. In addition, many users were looking for additional information on how to take advantage of CELA services. For the first time, CELA offered webinars direct to users and families, in addition to library staff. Overall, CELA offered 65 webinars in FY20-21 plus 2 CELA user group zoom meetings. These webinars reached 1,827 participants, a dramatic increase over the 826 registrants from the preceding year. This increase in training opportunities and engagement will improve the ability of public library staff in member libraries across Canada to deliver accessible services to their users with print disabilities and will also improve the knowledge of CELA services for users, families, and friends.
- CELA's Outreach Committee meets bimonthly to lead and advise on support for public library outreach to users and disability organizations. The committee is currently working on an Outreach Practices Guide for use within the library community. Other committee work includes sharing strategies for including accessibility in all aspects of library promotions and outreach, assessing and developing new CELA promotional materials, and outreach specifically to children and youth.
- In 2020, CELA launched its Child & Teen Library Accessibility Interest Group, that offers semi-annual teleconference meetings. The Child & Teen Library Accessibility Interest Group supports library professionals as they share best practices for inclusive children and youth programming and collections.

## **Digital Platform**

CELA is continuing to improve its new digital platform, utilizing underlying Bookshare technology through Benetech, with custom development by CNIB for the front-end search and discovery services. CELA has also created an IT Roadmap with CNIB to chart our technological growth ahead over the next 18 months. The many benefits of the new platform are as follows:

### **Accessibility**

The interface is accessible to users, librarians, and CELA staff and provides an optimized experience for mobile devices, screen-readers and magnifiers

### **Discovery**

CELA and Bookshare Collections are integrated into one catalogue with a clear user interface focused on search & discovery

**Functionality**

All user and transaction data is kept on servers located in Canada, more granular reporting is available, and a simpler automatic registration process has been introduced

**Choice**

There is an increase in the volume of braille and synthetic audio from Bookshare, created on-the-fly and available via multiple content delivery options

**Copyright Protection**

Each file created through the platform is digitally watermarked – a method that provides protection against piracy without limiting the file to certain applications or readers – and fingerprinted to identify the user while protecting their privacy. Both methods are designed to be non-invasive and undetectable by the user

**Staff Development**

During FY20-21, a new process was put in place for staff for professional development and learning, called Annual Development and Learning Plans. As a part of this learning, as well as a way of sharing more information with each other as a group, CELA also established Tea/Lunch 'n' Learn sessions, where staff share key learnings with each other. Both of these initiatives have been successful and will continue into the coming year. In addition, this year we honoured both Faline Bobier and Theresa Power with significant work anniversaries, 20<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> respectively. Thank you to them for their commitment and service to CELA.

**Relationship with National Network for Equitable Library Service (NNELS)**

In FY20-21 there have been numerous discussions with the National Network for Equitable Library Service (NNELS) and real progress in working together. CELA has been working with NNELS to strengthen the existing relationship for the benefit of all people with print disabilities in Canada. Staff from both organizations were in frequent contact resulting in several mutual efforts, including:

- CELA participated in the Accessible Publishing Summit, hosted by NNELS, in January of 2020, which saw over 60 experts and stakeholders from publishing, government, education, accessibility, and related industries gather together to share information, network and plan next steps in advancing accessible publishing in Canada.

- Amanda Leduc's book 'The Centaur's Wife' was published on February 16, 2021 in all accessible and conventional formats simultaneously, thanks to a unique partnership between the author, Penguin Random House Canada and Canada's two accessible library services, the Centre for Equitable Library Access (CELA) and the National Network for Equitable Library Service (NNELS). Formats released were standard print and audio, but also accessible audio, e-text and braille.
- On Jan. 4, 2021, CELA participated in the World Braille Day celebration convened by NNELS and with participation from Braille Literacy Canada, VIRN, Canadian Federation of the Blind and Canadian Council of the Blind. CELA staff worked collaboratively on the programming, delivered a presentation on Accessible Book Clubs, and shared a braille title with NNELS to support the event.
- With support from the Canada Book Fund, NNELS (National Network for Equitable Library Service) and CELA (Centre for Equitable Library Access) are co-leading the Public Libraries Accessibility Resource Centre (PLARC) project, to engage with library staff to develop awareness and training in accessibility in all areas of the library, and help ensure the availability, procurement and delivery of accessible books and resources across Canada.

CELA staff also worked with colleagues at NNELS to coordinate joint purchasing and further reduce duplication of effort between the two organizations:

- NNELS and CELA made joint purchases of commercially produced audiobooks and coordination of braille production continued as in past years.
- NNELS and CELA established a formal agreement with Overdrive for joint purchasing of commercial books.
- NNELS and CELA signed a MOU for the exchanging and sharing of accessible books between the two organizations. For FY20-21, 100 titles have been exchanged, primarily in DAISY format, but also braille and epub.

CELA and NNELS also worked collaboratively on federal funding issues, including jointly contracting for lobbying services, running a successful joint advocacy campaign that restored funding for FY21-22, and ongoing work to ensure long-term sustainable funding.

### **Other Partnerships**

We are constantly seeking additional partnerships that can help strengthen our collections and reach the many people with print disabilities in Canada that could benefit from CELA services. In FY20-21, new and existing partnerships included:

**Accessible Media Inc.**

CELA has always had a strong relationship with AMI, providing interviews and insights on topics affecting Canadians with print disabilities. AMI and CELA have partnered to promote CELA services and collections in an ongoing segment that broadcasts every other Friday on their *Live at 5* radio program.

**Braille Literacy Canada**

CELA has a mutually beneficial partnership with BLC, promoting both organizations' services to each other's respective audiences. BLC promotes the availability of CELA's braille collection, including music, via newsletter and other avenues. In turn CELA promotes BLC programs to CELA users via newsletter. This partnership also offers CELA another avenue for feedback from users.

**Canadian Council of the Blind (GGT and Visionaries Groups)**

Through the Patron Advisory Group, CELA has developed a strong relationship with the Getting Together with Technology (GTT) group. Started by the Canadian Council of the Blind (CCB) the GTT "helps blind and partially sighted residents to explore and integrate assistive devices in their home and work lives. The groups meet monthly to discuss new and updated devices, and participants teach each other how to include assistive technology in their daily lives. GTT groups meet at a variety of locations throughout Canada from Victoria to Halifax to support each other and to discuss different topics pertaining to the use of assistive technology."<sup>1</sup> CELA regularly shares information with the group, and the group is helping to promote and advocate for CELA services. CELA also has recently collaborated with the CCB Ottawa Visionaries Group, on a webinar on running inclusive book clubs.

**Canadian Urban Libraries Council**

CELA has the full support of the Canadian Urban Libraries Council/ Conseil des Bibliothèques Urbaines du Canada (CULC/CBUC), an organization consisting of public libraries representing communities or regions with populations exceeding 100,000. The 46 member library systems have over 7.5 million active users and operate almost 700 points of access, which are used more than 385 million times annually. CULC/CBUC member libraries employ more than 12,000 Canadians. Member libraries represent approximately 80% of the country's public library activity.

**Dolphin**

In the last year, CELA has offered joint webinars with Dolphin, an assistive technology developer, on the use of their EasyReader app, which allows the seamless delivery of CELA books to a user's iOS or Android devices.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://ccbnational.net/shaggy/get-together-with-technology/>

### **Indigenous Literary Partnerships**

CELA continues to seek opportunities to support literary programs for Indigenous works, including the Indigenous Voices Award, First Nation Communities Read and the Burt Award for First Nations, Inuit and Métis. CELA is also represented on the Canadian Federation of Library Association's (CFLA) Indigenous Matters Committee.

### **Literary Award Programs**

CELA continues providing accessible versions of books for major Canadian literary awards and programs such as the Giller Prize, the Governor General's awards and Canada Reads. Collaboration with these high-profile awards programs brings an increased awareness within the literary and publishing community about the need for developing and providing accessible materials to ensure all Canadians have the opportunity to take part in national cultural conversations. Through these collaborations, CELA is able to produce accessible versions of the short-listed books – based on confidential advance knowledge of the lists – and make them available at the moment the organizations announce their short lists, ensuring CELA users have the same opportunity as all Canadians to read and participate in the process.

### **Penguin Random House Canada**

CELA announced a partnership with Penguin Random House Canada (PRHC) in January 2021, which resulted in them gifting their existing audiobook collection and new material going forward to CELA. This will provide access to important and popular titles for CELA users. For the first round, CELA loaded close to 400 titles of popular PRHC offerings.

### **TD Summer Reading Club**

CELA continues to be a member of the TD Summer Reading Club (TDSRC) National Committee. In addition to an accessibility advisory role, CELA usually distributes an accessible version of the notebook in both English and French to children via libraries that participate in TDSRC. With the pandemic in 2020, we were unable to distribute the notebooks, and instead CELA did an accessibility review for the TDSRC. Since 2017, CELA also has offered an accessibility award to a French and English library for outstanding accessible practices for offering children's library services.

### **Vues et Voix**

CELA and Canal M, a radio show on the French Vues et Voix network, have conducted a series of interviews about books in the CELA collection, broadcast in French and available online.

## Communications

### Newsletters

Monthly newsletters to users and libraries, delivered in both English and French, provide a vehicle for CELA to share information about services and collections, educate users and member libraries about technology and accessibility options and offer an easy way for users and libraries to engage with CELA staff. User suggestions generated through these newsletters have been invaluable in influencing ongoing communications. In addition to Open Book and Open Book for libraries, CELA also publishes Open Book for Educators, a biannual newsletter aimed at educators who use CELA service to support their students.

Total subscribers are:

- *Open Book* and *Livre ouvert*: 12,002 users
- *Open Book for Libraries* and *Livre ouvert pour Bibliothèques*: 1,235 library staff
- *Open Book for Educators* and *Livre ouvert pour enseignants*: 1365 educators

### Social Media

CELA makes use of social media in English and French to promote CELA's collection and services, share news, and engage with users, libraries, and educators. Total followers are:

- Twitter (users and libraries): 2,219
- Twitter (Educator Access): 162
- Facebook: 924

There was a continued steady growth of social media followers across all platforms. These increases can be attributed to the increase in presentations CELA has been doing over the past year, our advocacy campaign, as well as encouraging users and libraries to check social media for updates.

### Blog

This year, CELA also introduced a blog, which allows CELA to announce news and initiatives on an ongoing basis. Some of the blog posts in FY20-21 have included the Penguin Random House Canada announcement, information on recommended books and awards, and tips and tricks on accessibility, among others.

## COVID-19

During FY20-21, the pandemic continued to affect the lives of our users. Our services have been able to continue, with additional safety protocols in place. The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the lives of CELA users and the way libraries serve them, and the value of accessible library services for people with print disabilities has been reinforced for CELA and member libraries. Many CELA users belong to vulnerable groups such as persons over 60 and those with



underlying health conditions, and continued access to reading in the formats they require represents a true lifeline.

### **Communication and Support**

CELA maintains a website page to provide updates and information on the impact of COVID-19 on CELA services: <https://celalibrary.ca/covid-19>.

During the pandemic, CELA received a higher volume of inquiries than usual from family members and others in users' lives, asking how they could better support CELA users. This led to the creation of a new page on the CELA website about this role of those who support users, called designates:

<https://celalibrary.ca/designates>. It includes information on how one becomes a designate, role and responsibility of a designate, FAQs and provides a recorded webinar walking designates through how to use CELA and how they can support their loved one/friend/client.

### **Temporary CELA and Bookshare Registration Options**

CELA has adjusted registration policies and procedures to allow temporary registration of users who did not have a library card and could not get one due to library closure, ensuring no one would be prevented from accessing services and collections due to the pandemic. In consultation with Bookshare, CELA also established policy and practice to allow temporary access to Bookshare for users who did not have a proof of disability and could not get one due to closures of schools, doctor's offices, CNIB offices and other sources of professional verification.

When libraries and other organizations return to normal operations, CELA will ask users to connect with their public library to receive a library card and finalize their registration, and work with users and libraries to support this process as needed.

### **Enhanced Safety and Cleaning Protocols**

After the initial disruption of distribution services in April and May 2020, CELA has been able to continue distribution of physical CDs, braille and print-braille through the rest of the year. CELA works with CNIB for distribution of material and CNIB has implemented enhanced cleaning and safety processes for physical materials production and distribution.

### **CNIB Production from Home-Based Locations**

CELA has worked with our partners in CNIB Beyond Print to ensure the continued production of accessible materials. CNIB Beyond Print has worked hard to set up home-based audio recording stations, which allowed audiobook production to be on schedule. These alternative options to in-studio recording will continue to grow.



### **Library Staff and User Training**

As libraries closed to the public, many were looking for staff training opportunities to keep staff busy from home. CELA responded to the increased need for online professional development opportunities by nearly doubling the number of webinar sessions for library staff. In addition, many users were looking for additional information on how to take advantage of CELA services. For the first time, CELA offered webinars direct to users and families, in addition to library staff. Some of the new webinars CELA offered during Covid included a **Designate webinar** for family members, friends and helping professionals who helped manage CELA services for users during Covid. CELA also partnered with other organizations to offer webinars to both library staff and CELA users: a webinar entitled **All about reading disabilities** – a CELA-sponsored webinar given by Dyslexia Canada and a joint webinar with Dolphin EasyReader to instruct library staff and CELA users on how to use Dolphin's free accessible reading app.

## **Appendix 3 – Financial Statements**