



Date: June 22, 2023

To: Committee of the Whole (COTW)

Author: Terry Fink, Special Projects Coordinator

RE: Facilities Assessment – Ezra Fox Municipal Building

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

RECOMMENDED ACTION

1. That Committee of the Whole **RECOMMEND** to Council that the Ezra Fox Municipal Building be deemed as surplus to the needs of the municipality as per policy;
2. That Administration **BE DIRECTED** to obtain a Market Appraisal of the Ezra Fox Municipal Building and sell the property;
3. That the Treasurer **BE DIRECTED** to deposit proceeds of the sale of Ezra Fox Municipal Building to the Facility Lifecycle Reserve for future use;
4. That Administration **BE DIRECTED** to meet with the Essex County Library to relocate resources and service hours from the Ruthven Library to the Kingsville Library;
5. That Administration **BE DIRECTED** to meet with the Ezra Fox family to rededicate the plaque from the Ezra Fox Memorial Library to a prominent location in the Kingsville Library to recognize Ezra Fox's commitment to a public library for the town of Kingsville.

BACKGROUND

Facility Description:

The Ezra Fox Municipal Building is a two-storey building of solid brick and wood construction. The building is approximately 2,300 sq.ft. split between the Ruthven branch of the Essex County Library accessible to the front of the building at grade, and space leased to house a private Ruthven Montessori Academy Day Care, accessible from lower grade to the rear of the building.

Facility Use:

The building was opened in 1989 as the Ruthven Branch of the Essex County Library, strategically located across from the Ruthven Public School. In 2013, the Ruthven Public School was closed and sold. The new owners are a Mennonite Church that is not engaged with the library system. The Library operates a total of 16 hours/week at this branch. In 2006 and 2007, the Essex County Library reported that the Ezra Fox Memorial Library had over 500 memberships, which has declined to approximately 200 in the first quarter of 2023. Tangible circulation has similarly dropped from a high of just under 12,000 in 2005 to 605 for the first quarter of 2023. The overall decline in membership and circulation can be linked to the school closing, despite significant residential development in the area during the same period.

By comparison, Woodslee (with a reported population of 100, vs a reported population of 240 for Ruthven) had a total membership of 539 in first quarter of 2023 and circulation of 2,844 in the same period.

Residents of Ruthven have the choice of visiting a library in the Municipality of Leamington, or the Town of Kingsville main branch. Both alternative libraries have extended hours beyond the Ruthven Library. Options to seek out similar service levels through other means (e.g. a book mobile, or an alternative means within Ruthven) were discussed with the CEO, but no alternatives were confirmed. Further discussions will be required.

Financial Considerations:

Ezra Fox Municipal Building	ACTUALS			
	2019	2020	2021	2022
Revenue (Montessori Day Care)	\$ 10,200	\$ 10,200	\$ 10,200	\$ 10,200
Operating Expenses	\$ 701	\$ 911	\$ 132	\$ 1,001
Net Operating Revenue (Expense)	\$ 9,499	\$ 9,289	\$ 10,068	\$ 9,199

The Capital Replacement Value of the property is set at \$1,938,000.

DISCUSSION

Needs Assessment:

The general condition of the exterior and interior of the building is very good. The heating and air conditioning unit for the library was replaced in 2023. The air conditioning unit for the Montessori school is at its end of life and due for replacement. Each unit costs approximately \$15,000. Both washrooms need to be updated and flooring should also be scheduled for replacement.

PREPARED BY:

Terry Fink

Terry Fink

Special Projects Coordinator

REVIEWED BY:



John Norton

Chief Administrative Officer