Library Services

This Library Services Sheet was developed for presentation to the Okanagan Falls Incorporation Study Committee at its meeting on November 21, 2023. The sheet was prepared using information available at the time of writing. Changes will be made if new information becomes available.

Information presented on the Okanagan Falls Incorporation is based on the following assumptions:

> *That following incorporation, the Okanagan Falls municipality would continue to receive Library Services from the Okanagan Regional Library*

THE PRESENT

➢ What service is provided?

Although not delivered directly by the Regional District, the RDOS provides library services to Okanagan Falls through the Okanagan Regional Library (ORL). The RDOS participates on the library board, contributes toward the upkeep of local branches, and collects taxes that are forwarded to the ORL.

ORL is a large library system of 30 branches that has a service area stretching from Osoyoos to Golden, and a service population of more than 425,000. In 2022, the ORL had more than 100,700 active card holders. The RDOS is one of four regional districts whose electoral areas receive service from ORL. A total of 19 municipalities and one First Nation also participate in the system.

Okanagan Falls is served by a branch located in Okanagan Falls (Figure 1). The Okanagan Falls branch is open four days a week for a total of 25 hours (closed Monday, Thursday and Sunday). ORL Library cards are free to those who live in, or own property within Area "D", including in Okanagan Falls.

In addition to the selection of fiction and non-fiction books, magazines, newspapers, and reference materials available at the local branches, the ORL library card gives access to:

- programs for children and adults
- free Internet access at computer workstations as well as wireless access
- DVDs, CDs, audiobooks and eBooks
- services for members who are print disabled, living in remote areas or seeking materials in other languages
- BC public libraries via the BC OneCard

Figure 1: Okanagan Falls Library, 850 Railway Lane



➢ Who makes decisions?

ORL is a stand-alone corporation established under the authority of the *Library Act.* ORL's governing body is its Board of Trustees comprised of representatives of the system's member jurisdictions. As per the legislation,

each of the 19 participating municipalities appoints a council member as a trustee to the ORL Board. In addition, each of the four participating regional districts appoints one electoral area director as a trustee to represent the regional district's electoral areas as a group.[1] The Board consists of 24 trustees, including one trustee appointed by Westbank First Nation.

ORL's Board of Trustees makes all major decisions related to the service. The entire Board votes on all matters. Most decisions, such as policy, are made using a corporate voting model, in which each Board member receives one vote. Decisions related to the budgets and expenditure of monies, however, are made using a weighted vote system that awards votes to members in proportion to the population size of their respective jurisdictions. With an unincorporated population participating in the service of 19,232, RDOS receives 19 weighted votes (the total for the Board effective August 2023 to September 2024 is 425).

The Board is supported in its decision-making by staff, as well as by three permanent standing committees: the Policy & Planning Committee, the Personnel Committee and the Finance Committee. The Board is also assisted by advisory groups, including two advisory committees created in 2023: the Accessibility Committee and the LGBTQIA2S+ Advisory Group.

It is important to understand that the boards of participating regional districts, and the councils of participating municipalities, have no formal involvement in ORL governance other than through their appointed representatives on the ORL Board. ORL is an independent corporation, separate from the municipal and regional district corporations that participate in the system.

The only direct involvement RDOS has in the library service is through approval for branch furnishings, fixtures or equipment on an as-needed basis. Support for the fixtures or equipment for the individual Okanagan Falls branch comes from the Area "D" Rural Projects budget. As with any expenditures made from this budget, guidance is provided by the Electoral Area Director. The budget amount itself is set and approved by the entire Board.

➤ Who delivers the service?

ORL staff are responsible for the delivery of all aspects of the library service, including:

- front-line branch services (e.g., check-out reference, children's programs, etc.)
- branch support services (e.g., transporting collections between branches)
- head office functions (e.g., administration, planning, HR, finance, information systems)

Staff in most branches are assisted in some aspects of the service by community volunteers.

➤ What is spent by RDOS on the service?

Figure 2 shows the total 2023 budgeted cost for delivering the ORL library service to the RDOS at $917,832. This amount reflects the requisition from the ORL, plus any funds set aside in reserve funds, and is the total cost for delivering the service to the participating electoral areas (Areas "A", "B", "C", "D", "E", "F", "G" and "I"). Municipalities are billed directly by the ORL. The RDOS's own overhead administration charge that is added to every service is *not* included in the total amount. (The RDOS's administration charges have been removed from all local services and accounted for in a separate *Administration Service Sheet*.)

Figure 2: Service Operating Costs (2023)

SERVICE	COST[1]	TAX REQ
Library (ORL)	$917,832	$911,368
Total	**$917,832**	**$911,368**

[1] *Cost and tax requisition figures are from RDOS 2023 budget for entire service area (not just OK Falls or Area D). Administration allocation is not included.*

[1] The Director for Electoral Area "I" represents the RDOS's electoral areas at present

The RDOS does not have a reserve account specifically for the Okanagan Falls library branch. Any fixtures or equipment are currently funded for through the Area "D" "rural projects" budget as requested.

➢ How are the costs recovered?

Property taxes represent the primary source of funding for the library service. Each year, the ORL determines the total amount it requires from its members. The total requirement is then allocated among the participating jurisdictions based on a combination of converted assessment (50%) and population (50%). Cost sharing on the basis of property assessments reflects a community's ability to pay; cost sharing on the basis of population reflects a community's usage (or potential usage) of the library. The RDOS then apportions that cost among all property owners on the basis of property assessments (land and improvements).

Each jurisdiction is responsible for providing the branch furnishings, fixtures and equipment within its boundaries. In RDOS, the Area "D" rural projects budget is used to fund these improvements. Although the rural projects budget will be referenced in the *Administration Service Sheet*, it is worth nothing there are no expenditures related to the library branch specifically identified in the rural projects budget for the next five years.

Financial statements for the ORL for the year ending December 31, 2022, indicate that the Okanagan Falls branch had a budget of $128,817 and actual expenses of $131,071, which was approximately $10,000 higher than the previous year (2021). However, Okanagan Falls residents pay a share of the broader ORL costs, and the requisition is not dependent on the local branch costs alone.

The total tax requisition for the ORL service area within RDOS in 2023 was $911,368 as shown in Figure 3. Based on the resulting property tax, taxpayers within the Okanagan Falls Incorporation Study Area contributed close to $116,400 in 2023.

➢ What is the cost to a typical residence?

The cost of the RDOS library services is recovered from Okanagan Falls taxpayers on the basis of property assessments. A residence assessed at $500,000 in the Okanagan Falls Incorporation Study Area paid $55.92 in taxes in 2023 for library services, as shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Cost Impact on Typical Residence (2023)

SERVICE	RES RATE	OWING[1]
Library (ORL)	0.1118	$55.92
	Total	**$55.92**

[1] *Impact is calculated on a home assessed at $500,000. Amount excludes 5.25% Surveyor of Taxes fee charged in unincorporated areas*

INCORPORATION

➢ What impact would incorporation have on these services?

If the Okanagan Falls Incorporation Study Area were to be incorporated as a municipality, it could choose to continue having ORL operate its local library branch, or it could choose to withdraw from the ORL and establish its own municipal library under the *Library Act* (similar to that provided by the City of Penticton). It is reasonable to assume that the new municipal council would continue with the ORL. Based on this assumption, no change would occur to the service as provided through the Okanagan Falls Branch.

➢ How would decision-making change?

If an Okanagan Falls municipality were created, the RDOS would be replaced as the local government by the new municipal corporation; similarly, the RDOS's Board of Directors would be replaced as the local governing body by the new Municipal Council for the newly incorporated area.

Council would consist of a mayor and either 4 or 6 councillors, all of whom would be elected at-large to represent the community as a whole. Council, together, would be responsible for making all major decisions. With respect to library services, the new Council would have authority over the decision whether to continue having the ORL operate its local library branch, or to withdraw from the ORL and establish its own municipal library under the *Library Act*.

Assuming the new municipality remained with the ORL, the ORL Board of Trustees would continue to make decisions for the library service. The new municipal council would appoint a trustee to the board — the total number of ORL board trustees would increase from 24 to 25. The number of weighted votes the municipality would have depend upon its population in any given year. Given the estimated population of 2,760 the municipality's weighted vote would be two (one weighted vote for every 1,000 residents). The weighted vote for RDOS would be adjusted based on the reduced population in the participating unincorporated areas. Using 2023 numbers, the RDOS weighted vote would be 16.

➤ How would service delivery be impacted?

As noted above, the municipality would have the option to provide their own library. A decision to withdraw from the service would likely only be made in response to local dissatisfaction with the ORL services, and with a full examination of options (i.e. setting up its own library, contracting with the Penticton Library), and the cost implications. As noted previously, the 2022 budget and actual costs for the Okanagan Falls branch exceed the funds currently raised through taxes by the Okanagan Falls Incorporation Study Area.

➤ How would service cost change?

Municipalities are billed by the ORL directly for the service. The estimated ORL requisition for the new municipality (and all participants) is based upon on the population and assessment base of the incorporated area.

The estimated ORL requisition for the new municipality would be $124,325, based on 2023 ORL budget numbers, and on the population and assessment base in the Incorporation Study Area. Council could choose to set aside additional funds specifically for the Okanagan Falls branch. No branch funds are included in this analysis, as none were included in the RDOS budget (Area D rural projects).

Based on the ORL requisition, a residential property valued at $500,000 within the new municipality would pay $59.72 for library, as shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Cost of Municipal Services and Taxes

SERVICE	RES RATE	OWING[1]
Library (ORL)	0.1194	$59.72
	Total	**$59.72**

[1] *Impact is calculated on a home assessed at $500,000*

SUMMARY OF TAX IMPACTS

Figure 5 presents the tax impact of the two scenarios – the current situation (RDOS) and incorporation (MUNICIPAL).

Figure 5: Tax Comparison of Regional District and Incorporation Scenarios

SERVICE	RDOS[1]	MUNICIPAL[1]
Library (ORL)	$55.92	$59.72
Total	**$55.92**	**$59.72**

[1] *Impact is calculated on a home assessed at $500,000*