

## **Friends of the Guelph Public Library**

### **Membership Coordinator's Report to the AGM, June 12<sup>th</sup> 2025**

In its work on a new Strategic Plan throughout 2024-25, The Friends of the Guelph Public Library (FGPL) Board identified a critical need to evaluate our current Membership model. This arose from several concerns: decreasing numbers in new or renewing memberships, decreasing attendance at AGMs, cumbersome record-keeping requiring considerable volunteer time, and income from membership fees accounting for an insignificant portion of the annual operating budget. Importantly and in contrast, we noted that interest in, and volunteer support for, FGPL events remain consistently high. We concluded that a definition of membership based solely on paid annual fees fails to be inclusive of our much broader community of supporters – and an Ad Hoc Membership Committee was struck to suggest a new Membership model to the Board. Their subsequent recommendations were debated extensively by the Board, circulated to current members for consideration and feedback (April 2, 2025 email), passed by the Board, and referred to the Governance Committee for a corresponding revision of FGPL's ByLaw.

The proposed new Membership model is seen to (in members' own words, from emailed feedback) "make sense" and as "a good model, sensible, responsive and forward thinking". It aims to be inclusive and sustainable, in keeping with the Strategic Plan's goal that the FGPL ensure its long-term organizational stability and vitality. The model, which is now presented at this AGM for approval, includes that:

- **Members** be redefined as the elected members of FGPL's Board, and Honorary Life Members. As is currently, Board members serve a maximum of 3 consecutive 3-year terms. This group will set organizational policy and have voting privileges at the AGM.
- **Supporters** be defined as all those who support and are involved with the activities of FGPL - whether as past fee-paying members, donors, volunteers/participants at FGPL-sponsored activities, or subscribers to our mailing list. Supporters are seen as foundational to the organization, essential to what has been achieved so far and to our ongoing mission of fundraising and advocacy for the Guelph Public Library. Supporters do not have voting rights but their input will be solicited at meetings called by the Board, for this purpose. They are invited to put their names forward for nomination as Board members, along with the general public.
- **Financial Support continues to be one of the many ways one can support the FGPL.** While the annual membership fee of \$10 has been discontinued, all Members and Supporters are encouraged to offer financial support, if/when they choose, by donations through the Canada Helps link on our website. Tax receipts will be issued for donations of \$10 or more.
- **All Members and Supporters continue to receive regular communications from the FGPL** – about our events and activities, along with invitations to participate.

Research has shown that this model for membership is commonly and successfully used by organizations like ours. We believe the model's adoption will mean that FGPL recognizes all who make up its broad community base of support, and expands that base to grow and thrive well into the future.

Submitted by Kathy MacLean, Membership Coordinator,  
Friends of the Guelph Public Library Board, May 19, 2025