



*Canadian Union of Public Employees
Syndicat canadien de la fonction publique*

January 27, 2020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Local 3120 which represents over 75 library workers in Thunder Bay is alarmed with the proposed cut to Thunder Bay Public Library's (TBPL) budget, with the possible elimination of an entire branch.

“Each community hub (branch library) within the library system has a unique mix of resources: collections, programming, services, etc. These resources are in response to the community's needs, allowing community members to improve the quality of life and to participate in the life of the community in meaningful ways. To cut one branch from the system is to cut an entire community,” says 3120 President Margaret Demillo. “Council might view a library branch as a nice neighbourhood feature and yet another line item in a budget. But libraries are not just a building; they are local residents meeting in communal space, neighbourhood children coming to play in learning areas, teens and adults participating in workshops and looking up information on employment, health and social services.”

Beyond the cutting of the physical location, the potential loss of full time positions is of grave concern to CUPE 3120. “The nature of library work is customer-centric and requires huge amounts of personal interaction. The public might think you can replace library workers with Google, but the fact is people come to us when Google didn't have the answer, or when the patron couldn't use Google. Library work is about personal relationships, not transactions. We are the centre of many people's word, many of them some of the most vulnerable in society.” Demillo adds, “City council has a duty to be fiscally responsible. Cutting a library, cutting access to ideas and knowledge eliminating democratic communal space is completely irresponsible.

-- 30 --

Contact: Margaret Demillo, President CUPE 3120
807-629-3797

