

Halifax Regional Library Board
Regular Meeting

Boardroom - Alderney Gate Public Library
Monday, June 15, 2009 ~ 12:00 noon

- Present:** Leo McKenna, Chair
Councillor Sue Uteck, Vice Chair
Councillor Jackie Barkhouse
Lorna Crawley
Philip Moscovitch
Kathrine Sullivan
Councillor Jennifer Watts
- Present from Staff:** Judith Hare, CEO
Francisca Goldsmith, Director, Branch Services
Bruce Gorman, Director, Information Technology and Collection Management
Al LeBlanc, Director, Finance and Facilities
Cathy Maddigan, Director, Human Resources
Susan McLean, Director, Public Services / Deputy CEO
Paula Saulnier, Director, Corporate Research and Development
- Regrets:** Councillor Peter Lund

1. Call to Order / Approval of Agenda

The Chair requested that the item 6.4 - CLA Conference Report be added to the Agenda under New Business. Philip Moscovitch asked that Consent Agenda Item Virtual Reference Report be moved to the Regular Agenda as item 6.5. Councillor Jennifer Watts asked that a discussion about the new Provincial Government be added to the agenda as item 6.6.

Moved by Philip Moscovitch and seconded by Councillor Jackie Barkhouse that the Agenda be approved as amended. Motion carried.

2. Motion to Approve Consent Agenda

Moved by Lorna Crawley and seconded by Philip Moscovitch that the Consent Agenda, including the minutes from the May 11, 2009 Regular Meeting be approved. Motion carried.

3. Business Arising

.1 Pandemic Planning

A few years ago, HRM set up a Business Continuity Planning Committee to list and prioritize municipal services should HRM be faced with a situation, medical or otherwise, that would affect large numbers of employees. Al LeBlanc and Bruce Gorman represented the Library on this Committee.

As Library operations are labour intensive, it was determined that once the Library's available labour force dropped below 70%, operations would cease. Essential functions, such as payroll would be transferred to HRM and Senior Management would continue to work and communicate with employees from home.

The HRM Committee has continued to meet, renaming itself the Infectious Diseases Committee. The Library was left out of Committee communications for a time, but that has been corrected and Bruce Gorman is once again an active member.

.2 Real Estate Strategy

As requested by the Board, a report was presented on the current status of Library facilities and preferences for the future.

Across Canada, the general model is for municipalities to build, own and operate their own facilities. Exceptions are made when a preferred branch location is within a facility where ownership is not possible or when a temporary facility is required. Halifax Public Libraries has a larger than average proportion of leased facilities as a result of amalgamation. No facilities were closed or relocated at that time.

It would be preferable for the Library to build and own its facilities, as this would allow control over design and would result in purpose built facilities as opposed to landlords modifying an existing facility. Unfortunately, building a facility takes capital funds that are most often unavailable so the lease option allows facilities to be developed faster.

.3 Spring Garden Road Library Asbestos Management Plan

An update was provided to the Board. Floor plans have been drawn up, showing areas where asbestos is known to exist, areas that are clear of the substance and those whose status is unknown. All surfaces known to contain asbestos which had been previously disturbed by renovation and repair work have been sealed off in an appropriate fashion.

The Library has received a compliance extension to July 31st to arrange and provide training for staff. Specialized training based on the types of asbestos in the building is being developed by Pinchin Leblanc. In addition, Maritime Testing has conducted air quality tests; although it is anticipated that the tests will come back clear, this will provide a baseline as well as peace of mind.

4. CEO Report

.1 Monthly Report

Senior Management is focusing on Woodlawn. Although the branch will not be opening until late fall, decisions regarding materials, colour schemes and floor plans are required now to allow for the initiation of tenders and permits.

The CEO reported that a revised Capital Budget will be printed, showing \$2 million for the Central Library design for 2009/10, and funds totalling \$55 million in the following years for construction.

Preparations for the 2009 Summer Reading Program, using the national theme 'Agent 009', are well underway. Imperial Oil, a longtime supporter, has announced they will not be funding the Library's program after this fiscal year; after 10 years, the company is looking to move its funding around. The Library will be evaluating the program after its completion to determine how to proceed and will also address the funding issue.

.2 Strategic Plan Update

The CEO reported on final meetings with the consultant; the completed work has been turned over to the Library. It is now a matter of refining the document to get it to its final form. It is anticipated that a draft will be put to the Executive Committee over the summer with the final document being presented to the Board in the fall.

5. Financial Report

Al LeBlanc, Director, Finance and Facilities announced that the Library completed the 2008-09 fiscal year with a surplus of \$2,752.

Moved by Lorna Crawley and seconded by Kathrine Sullivan that the unaudited Financial Statement for the period ending March 31, 2009 be approved. Motion carried.

The audit is currently underway; the auditor's report will be presented to the Board in September. As reported in May, HRM is looking to have its audit completed by the end

of June; it may be necessary for the Executive Committee to approve the Library's statements to meet HRM's timeline.

6. New Business

.1 Social Media

As requested by the Board, Bruce Gorman, Director, Information Technology and Collection Management presented a report on social media activities being undertaken by the Library.

Over the last two years, the Library has undertaken a variety of projects to increase both staff and public participation in and understanding of social media, including a Podcamp held at the Alderney Gate Library, the blog thereader.ca and reference bookmarks set up on delicious.com.

A website development and social media team has been set up to make recommendations surrounding plans, policies and procedures for developing the Halifax Public Libraries's website and use of social media according to regional priorities.

It was requested by the Board that a web / social media plan be presented in 6 months' time.

.2 Australia Presentation

The CEO reported on her attendance at MetLib2009, an International Federation of Library Association (IFLA) conference specifically for directors of metropolitan libraries. This year's conference took place in Brisbane, Australia with the themes of Community, Collections, Creativity and new media and Capability and careers.

At the conference, the CEO presented "Community-Led Libraries: The Halifax Experience," detailing Halifax Public Libraries' involvement with the Working Together project.

.3 Authorization of the Executive Committee to Act

This motion has been passed each June in order to continue the work of the Board when calling of a special meeting is not feasible.

Moved by Councillor Sue Uteck and seconded by Councillor Jackie Barkhouse that the Halifax Regional Library Board authorize the Executive Committee to act on its behalf as necessary during the summer recess; all decisions to be reported to the Board. Motion carried.

.4 CLA Conference Report

Board member Lorna Crawley and Director, Public Services Susan McLean reported on their attendance at the 2009 Canadian Libraries Association (CLA) conference in Montreal.

Recurring themes at the conference were community engagement and social software. Halifax Public Libraries had staff presenting on both these topics at the conference. The conference is also seen as a good networking opportunity both for library staff and board trustees.

.5 Virtual Reference Report

Halifax Public Libraries offers two remote reference services: e-mail (Ask-a-Librarian) and live chat (Homework Help). As these services have not been reviewed in several years and in light of new developments and best practices in virtual reference, the services are being revisited.

There are a number of concerns related to these services:

- Students are unable to use Homework Help while at school as chat programs are blocked during school hours;
- Teachers may be using questionable information sources for their classes;
- Funding cutbacks to school libraries is resulting in the public library system shouldering more and more of the library role for students; and
- A variety of tools are available to reach patrons who are looking for information; however, not all demographics are comfortable with all methods (ie: social media).

The report recommends that a pilot be undertaken to re-vitalize both Homework Help and Ask-a-Librarian. The outcome of the pilot will determine the viability of expanding virtual reference to a full-scale, all ages virtual reference service.

.6 Provincial Government

A question was raised regarding the position of the new provincial government in terms of public libraries and their funding.

It was recommended that the Board continue to follow LBANS' plan in terms of relationship building. It was also recommended that the Board send a letter to the new Minister of Education, congratulating her on her Cabinet position and noting the outstanding provincial appointments to the Board.

The Chair noted that MLA Leonard Preya (Halifax Citadel - Sable Island) has invited the Chair and the CEO to Caucus to talk about the Central Library. Accepting the invitation needs to be timed correctly.

In preparation of the new government taking office, the Provincial Library has requested up-to-date financial statements from the regions so that the Library Funding Task Force MOU can be updated.

7. Other Business

None.

8. The Board moved into In-Camera Session

Moved by Councillor Jackie Barkhouse and seconded by Councillor Sue Uteck that the Board move into In-Camera Session. Motion carried.

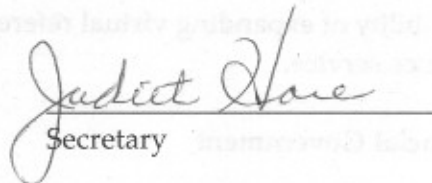
9. Motion to approve Motions from the In Camera Meeting

Moved by Councillor Sue Uteck and seconded by Councillor Jennifer Watts that the motions from the In-Camera Meeting from May 11, 2009 and June 15, 2009 be approved. Motion carried.

10. Adjournment



Chair



Secretary