



Halifax Public
Libraries

**Halifax Regional Library Board
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, May 30, 2019
Halifax Central Library, 3rd Floor Boardroom**

Present

Tara Gault, Board Chair
Cindy O’Driscoll, Board Vice Chair
Brad Munro
Kim Brooks
Alfred Burgesson
Marika Warren

Regrets:

Lisa Blackburn
Tim Outhit
Sharon Costey
Leah Hamilton

Staff

Åsa Kachan, Chief Librarian and CEO
Debbie LeBel, Director of Access
Kathleen Peverill, Director of Public Service
Karen Dahl, Manager of Program Development
Sara Gillis, incoming Senior Manager, People & Culture
Cathy Maddigan, Director of Human Resources
Terry Gallagher, Director of Finance & Facilities
Shannon Robilliard, Manager of Finance
Alison Lucio, Executive Assistant & Board Coordinator

1.0 Call to Order/Approval of Agenda

Tara Gault called the meeting to order. Ms Gault put forth a motion to approve the agenda as circulated, with the addition of item **9.6 Board Awards**. This motion was seconded by Marika Warren.

Motion approved.

2.0 Minutes of April 18, 2019

Brad Munro put forth a motion to approve the minutes of April 18, 2019 as circulated. It was noted that there was a misspelling of a former board member’s name in the minutes under agenda item 3.0. This will now read:

“Board Chair Tara Gault welcomed everyone to the meeting. Ms. Gault introduced everyone to board member Sharon Costey, who has been appointed to fill the recent vacancy made when LeQuita Porter stepped down from the board.”

This motion was seconded by Marika Warren.

Motion approved.

3.0 Chair’s Welcome

Tara Gault welcomed everyone to the meeting. Ms. Gault reminded everyone that Cindy O’Driscoll will be running in this year’s Bluenose marathon as part of the Library team. Everyone was encouraged to donate if they can, and cheer on Cindy at the Bluenose event.

4.0 Business Arising

4.1 Library Funding

Åsa Kachan provided an update to the Board regarding the change of the provincial funding for libraries in Nova Scotia. The funding change is expected to provide an additional \$370,000 to HPL’s provincial grant beginning 2020. The province has provided one year’s notice to the municipalities.

The Library’s municipal funding has been received.

5.0 Chief Librarian and CEO Report

Åsa Kachan spoke to the branch highlights that were included in the meeting package. Åsa highlighted that these reports provide an interesting selection of what is happening across the library system and we try to capture moments of excellence and innovation to share with the Board.

Åsa Kachan reported that she recently attended the CULC (Canadian Urban Library Council) meetings in Montreal where a number of national library issues were discussed. Ms. Kachan spoke to the e-book advocacy campaign that is currently ongoing among public libraries in Canada. E-book pricing structures are currently unfair to libraries, with libraries being required to pay much higher prices than general consumers. Of further concern, is a move on the part of some publishers to no longer allow libraries to purchase certain titles in electronic format, including important Canadian content, due to exclusive access to digital services such as Audible. CULC has hired an Ottawa based lobbying firm to coordinate efforts, including conversations with key members of parliament. Åsa Kachan committed to keeping the Board informed of any developments.

Ms. Kachan spoke to the most recent federal budget with respect to libraries. \$22.8M has been provided to the publishing industry to support creation of titles in formats for individuals with print disabilities. Additional funds have also been provided to promote the development of indigenous language materials.

Public Library safety being discussed at the national table. The CULC leadership group discussed Winnipeg's response to public library safety. Winnipeg Central library currently uses significant security screening measures with mandatory bag checks and hand-held metal detection before entering the library.

Other highlights included:

- Åsa Kachan informed the board that she will be involved with a research project (8Rs Canadian Library Human Resource Study) looking at the required competencies for those who work in libraries along with other human resource issues affecting public libraries in Canada.
- CULC will be hosting a European study tour for senior library administrators in April 2020. Halifax Public Libraries is interested in sending a couple of staff on that tour.
- Åsa Kachan attended the NS Health & Safety Leadership Charter event. This Charter represents a commitment from leaders in Nova Scotia to the continuous growth of a positive workplace safety culture. By supporting this Charter, leaders commit to share best practices and together improve the health and safety performance in Nova Scotia with the belief that a safer province is a more productive and prosperous province.
- Ms. Kachan reported that she has recently met with each of the managers within the organization to have a conversation about the Strategic Workforce Plan and speak about what roles interest them within the new structure.
- Laurel Taylor and Åsa Kachan met with a donor who has committed \$100,000 to the Library. This person is interested in supporting the library's work with individuals caught up in the justice system, and has named HPL in his will.
- HPL hosted this year's PLL (Public Library Leaders) cohort. Twenty-five of the brightest library leaders within the country were hosted; Åsa Kachan taught a financial management module and the group toured a number of our branches.

6.0 Board Committee Reports

6.1 Board Executive Committee

Tara Gault provided an update on from the Executive Committee. The agenda for the board meeting was discussed at the most recent meeting, and an update on Collective Bargaining was provided to the Committee. The Committee also discussed how the upcoming policy work of the Policy & Planning Committee.

6.2 Board Planning & Performance Committee

Cindy O'Driscoll reported that the Committee will be meeting on June 12. Tara Gault and Cindy O'Driscoll have reviewed all of the policies and will be prepared to present the work to the Committee.

6.3 Finance & Audit Committee

Leah Hamilton was not present at the Board meeting and therefore did not provide an update. Åsa Kachan spoke to the Finance & Audit Committee conference call that was held earlier this week in with the F&A Committee this week to review the draft financials in advance of the full board meeting.

Terry Gallagher, Director of Finance & Facilities provided an overview on the financial update included in the package, and spoke to the draft financial statements. Mr. Gallagher emphasized that it was useful for the Board to review the financials in the format provided as this will be how the financials will be reported in the Audited Financial Statements. Highlights from the overview included:

- HPL's financial assets, cash, accounts receivable, and HRM funds have not changed much from previous years
- HPL has no debts
- Page 5 outlines HPL's financial assets
- Note three explains the accumulated surplus in respect to the Restricted Funds
- Overall, HPL continues to be in a very strong financial position
- Revenue: HPL's small donations and gifts revenue line within the operating budget reflects small amounts received, rather than larger donations. The latter are immediately directed to restricted funds.
- The vacancy management goal is built into the administration compensation line, but the savings are achieved at each branch. The "over spend" under Admin is realized within savings at other branches. Next year the organization may explore the possibility of adjusting this and have vacancy management as its own line item
- Assets are found mostly in some computers and furniture, it represents a very small amount as HPL is a non-profit.
- Page 6 outlines the statement of cash flows and the reconciliation, showing how money moves through the organization. There are no indicators of risk.
- Note 3 outlines how the reserves are held. There are a couple of areas that HPL holds grant funds, but the vast amount of this represents restricted donations that are used for strategic projects. Capital amounts may be placed in this account if fund are provided by a donor for Capital and the project is not ready to access the capital.
- Page 15 outlines the expenditures by function.

7.0 New Business

7.1 Draft Annual Report

Åsa Kachan reported that the Annual Report is coming together very nicely and is almost ready to go to print. The report will be highlighting people we serve and great events.

8.0 Other Business

8.1 Educational Session

Kathleen Peverill, Debbie LeBel, and Karen Dahl spoke to the Board regarding Intellectual Freedom. This is an issue that is very pertinent, as public libraries in Canada are facing an increasing number and complexity of Intellectual Freedom challenges.

Highlights included:

- The Canadian Library Association has a statement on Intellectual Freedom and Libraries that we reference: http://cla.ca/wp-content/uploads/CLA_Intellectual_Freedom_Position_Stmt_27sept2015_ltrhd.pdf
- Intellectual freedom challenges have increased in complexity over the past number of years. Once there were complaints about certain books, restricted movies, lyrics in songs on CDs. The challenges are becoming more complex and pertain to a wider range of community activities such as invited speakers, room rentals, and hate speech appearing in books.
- Issues are more challenging to defend. Used to be one person presenting a challenge and you could speak directly to them. Now with social media, it is easier for groups to gather a voice and gain traction.
- Kathleen Peverill provided examples from libraries across Canada.
- Karen Dahl spoke to de-platforming (a form of political activism or prior restraint by an individual, group, or organization with the goal of shutting down controversial speakers or speech, or denying them access to a venue in which to express their opinion.)
- As a library system, we need to know and understand what standing up for Intellectual Freedom means. Without free expression, we lose democracy. If there was no freedom of expression, there could not be challenges.
- HPL is well situated to deal with challenges appropriately as the organization has an independent governing Board that will be ready for any challenges that may be presented.

Next steps regarding this issue will be for the Planning & Performance Committee to consider this while completing the policy review. The Board requested that staff pull some samples of what other libraries have as their Intellectual Freedom policy. The Board agreed that this issue would be well suited for discussion at the next Board Retreat.

Tara Gault thanked the three presenters for their thoughtful education session.

9.0 Motion to move in-camera

Cindy O’Driscoll put forth a motion to move into an in-camera session to discuss the following agenda items:

- 9.1 SWP Update
- 9.2 NSUPE Collective Agreement Negotiation
- 9.3 LBANS Update
- 9.4 Eastern Shore Lifestyles Centre Update
- 9.5 CEO Contract
- 9.6 Board Awards

This motion was seconded by Brad Munro.

Motion approved.

Kim Brooks put forth a motion for the Board meeting to move out of the in-camera session. This motion was seconded by Cindy O’Driscoll.

Motion approved.

10.0 Adjournment

With no further agenda items, Tara Gault adjourned the meeting.