



**Halifax Regional Library Board
Meeting Minutes
November 7, 2019
Halifax Central Library, 3rd Floor Boardroom
4:30-6:30pm**

Present

Cindy O’Driscoll, Board Chair
Kim Brooks, Board Vice-Chair
Marika Warren
Tara Gault
Alfred Burgesson
Sharon Costey
Tim Outhit (via telephone)

Regrets

Lisa Blackburn

Staff

Åsa Kachan, Chief Librarian and CEO
Debbie LeBel, Senior Manager Access
Kathleen Peverill, Senior Service Manager Central District
Cathy Maddigan, Labour & Employee Relations Manager
Terry Gallagher, Senior Manager Finance & Facilities
Alison Lucio, Executive Assistant & Board Coordinator
Karen Dahl, Senior Manager Programming and Community Engagement
Mairead Barry, Senior Manager Strategy
Sara Gillis, Senior Manager People & Culture

1.0 Call to Order/Approval of Agenda

Cindy O’Driscoll called the meeting to order. Kim Brooks put forth a motion to approve the agenda as circulated. This motion was seconded by Sharon Costey.

The board agreed with the request to move Capital Budget Process Update to an in-camera agenda item.

Motion approved.

2.0 Minutes of September 19, 2019

Marika Warren put forth a motion to approve the minutes of September 19, 2019. This motion was seconded by Kim Brooks. The following edits will be made to the minutes:

Under agenda item 6.3 Finance & Audit Committee, the approved motion should read as *“THAT Tara Gault join the Finance & Audit Committee until an alternative Committee member is named.”*

Motion approved.

3.0 Chair’s Report

Cindy O’Driscoll welcomed everyone to the meeting, including Councillor David Hendsbee who attended the meeting as an observer. As part of the Chair’s Report, the Board Chair provided an update on the work of the Board Executive Committee.

Cindy O’Driscoll reported to the Board that the Board Executive met on October 23, and discussed the current Board composition with the recent departure of the two provincial appointees (Leah Hamilton and Brad Munro). The Committee reviewed the organization’s current orientation material and determined the material will provide a strong foundation for incoming board members.

Cindy O’Driscoll reported that HRM’s Clerk’s Office requested that the Library complete a short questionnaire to assist in filling the city’s vacancies on agencies, boards, and commissions. This questionnaire was completed and provided to the Clerk’s office.

Cindy O’Driscoll spoke to the recent media request to the Board from The Halifax Star. The Star initially contacted the Library seeking information regarding the composition of the Library Board. The publication is examining the composition of various boards across Canada; our board composition is 66% women populated. Cindy reported that she participated in an interview with the publication earlier last week and they requested a photo be taken of the Board Executive. The article will be published this coming Wednesday.

4.0 Business Arising

4.1 Chief Librarian and CEO Report

The CEO & Chief Librarian spoke to the report that was included in the meeting package. Åsa Kachan reported that over the past month the newly formed Senior Team has been meeting regularly and taking part in leadership and team building sessions. All District Managers are now in place as part of the Strategic Workforce Plan.

The incoming NSUPE-14 Executive was elected this week. Management has already met with the new team and will be working with them through the staff transition planning.

As part of staff recognition and celebrating our staff, a contest was held across the organization to acknowledge staff who go above and beyond. The prize for the winning entry (recipient and nominator) was tickets to attend the President Barack Obama event at Scotiabank. Over 100 entries were submitted, and a small team (including the Union President) reviewed submissions and the stories were incredibly heartwarming. The organization announced that Winnie Clayton from Halifax North branch and nominator

Sarah Ziolkowska. All levels of staff were nominated and it proved to be an excellent way to engage staff and hear impactful stories.

Åsa Kachan reported that the organization is currently working on business plans for next year.

The CEO & Chief Librarian reminded the Board that the organization has some upcoming milestone events: JD Shatford will be celebrating its 50th Anniversary and Central will be celebrating its 5th anniversary in December. Initiations to both events will be sent along to the Board.

The CEO & Chief Librarian reported that at the most recent CULC meeting held in Truro Accessibility Act was discussed. Government will be announcing that Libraries (as well as other public bodies) will need to prepare to meet the accessibility standards established by the Province. The directive speaks of accessibility in a broad context, including more than just physical space. The organization has already completed accessibility audits for all branches. This item will be brought forward in the future as an agenda item.

4.2 e-book Library Advocacy

Åsa Kachan spoke to the summary that was included in the board package.

Libraries across North America are struggling with the increased costs and restrictions from some publishers of e-books. Public demand for e-books continues to increase, and this increased demand presents a number of challenges. The cost for Libraries to provide digital content is actually higher than print. Publishers are now having digital collections expire, leaving libraries to re-purchase the content – regardless of how many times the digital content was checked out. In addition, many audiobooks have exclusivity rights and libraries can be unable to purchase, or wait until an established embargo is lifted. All of these pressures impacts accessibility and availability of the content to the public. Åsa Kachan continued to outline how national bodies are reacting to this pressure and provided an overview of various lobbying efforts.

In efforts to show support for the national e-content campaign, Kim Brooks put forth the motion:

THAT the Halifax Regional Library Board recommend to Halifax Regional Council:

THAT the Mayor, on behalf of Regional Council, write a letter, as outlined in the attachment indicating Halifax Regional Council's support and endorsement for increased access to digital content for library users across Canada, along with a request that the Federal government investigate the barriers faced by libraries in acquiring digital content, the problems it poses for vulnerable and other demographic groups in Canada, and develop a solution that increases public library access to digital content across Canada.

ATTACHMENT (as referenced in the motion):

WHEREAS, the Halifax Regional Municipality recognizes the important role that libraries play in our community. Libraries and the programs that they run are integral to developing proficient readers and ensuring that children succeed in school. More and more, digital literacy programs run by libraries also help ensure that citizens can contribute to our digital world. Additionally, vulnerable demographic groups, including seniors, low income families, youth, and new Canadians rely on access to libraries as an important tool for their participation in the community – from education to searching for jobs to consuming Canadian cultural materials, and

WHEREAS, libraries in our community recognize that our users increasingly seek to access e-books and other e-content offered by multinational publishers, and that access to those publications is too often curtailed by prohibitively high licensing fees or else entirely denied to Canadian libraries, and

WHEREAS, libraries must be in a position to offer e-books and other e-content to their users as part of their service offering to our community, particularly given the contemporary rapid pace of digitization of educational and cultural materials.

Now, therefore be it resolved that the Halifax Regional Municipality hereby:

- 1. Indicate our support for the Canadian Urban Libraries Council in its efforts to increase access to e-books and other e-content for library users in Halifax and across Canada;*
- 2. Call on the Federal government to investigate the barriers faced by libraries in acquiring e-books and other e-content and the problems that poses for vulnerable demographic groups in Canada; and*
- 3. Further ask the Federal government to develop a solution that increases access to e-books and other e-content across Canada and assists libraries in meeting the cost requirements to acquire e-books and other e-content.*

This motion was seconded by Marika Warren.

Motion approved.

4.3 Budget Process Updates

Operating Budget Process Update

Åsa Kachan reported to the board that the organization has not received the budget envelope from HRM to date. Åsa Kachan reported that she recently met with HRM CFO Jane Fraser to discuss budget pressures, including e-book pressures, building maintenance contracts, increased WCB premiums, and negotiated increases from the Collective Agreement. January 29 is the date scheduled for the Library presentation – this may be adjusted.

Capital Budget Process Update

Åsa Kachan reported that the Capital Budget is due to go to Council November 26. Council is working toward looking at a 3-year funding window with a 10-year extended view of capital projects. There is capacity to positively impact a great number of people through small improvements in our branches; the Musquodoboit branch renovations resulted in an increased use of over 200% in that branch.

Provincial Funding Update

Tara Gault and Sharon Costey attended the recent NSLA Conference where Minister Glavine made an announcement regarding provincial library funding. Provincial increases will be moving forward with increased investment. For the rural libraries of Nova Scotia, the provincial increase is significant.

4.4 LBANS Update

Tara Gault reported that she attended the LBANS meeting that was part of the AGM at the NSLA Conference. The most recent LBANS minutes were included in the meeting package.

LBANS is planning to begin Strategic Planning. The group will be holding discussions regarding the scope and direction of LBANS.

5.0 Board Committee Reports

5.1 Board Planning & Performance

Committee Chair Kim Brooks spoke to the recent meeting of the Planning & Performance Committee. Committee members are currently preparing a draft Governance Manual, and the draft framework (Table of Contents) was included in the package for information. The Committee will be discussing the Strategic Plan progress update (KPIs) at the November and January meeting.

5.2 Finance & Audit Committee

Committee Marika Warren spoke to the report and finances that were included in the meeting package. There were no questions regarding the material.

6.0 Motion to Move In-Camera

Kim Brooks put forth a motion to move in-camera for the purposes of discussing:

6.1 SWP Update

6.2 Sheet Harbour Update

This motion was seconded by Marika Warren.

Motion approved.

7.0 Adjournment

Cindy O'Driscoll called for adjournment of the meeting.

Motion approved.