



## Halifax Regional Library Board

### Meeting Minutes

October 29, 2020

Zoom, 4:00-6:30pm

#### **Board Members in Attendance:**

Cindy O'Driscoll, Board Chair

Kim Brooks, Board Vice-Chair

Marika Warren

Lisa Blackburn

Alfred Burgesson

Sharon Costey

Linda MacKay

Emily Miller

Tim Outhit

Heather Rose

#### **1.0 Call to order / Approval of Agenda / Approval of Minutes of September 17, 2020**

Board Chair Cindy O'Driscoll welcomed everyone to the meeting and called the meeting to order.

Sharon Costey put forth a motion to approve the agenda as circulated. This motion was seconded by Kim Brooks.

Board Chair Cindy O'Driscoll requested that item:

##### **4.0 Governance Professionals Conference**

be added under Business Arising to allow Alison Lucio to provide a brief update on the recent online conference that she attended.

*Motion approved.*

##### **Approval of Minutes of September 17, 2020**

Marika Warren put forward a motion to approve the minutes of September 17, 2020.

This motion was seconded by Linda MacKay. The minutes of September 17, 2020 will be adjusted to reflect that the Board package will be distributed in advance; ideally a week before the meeting.

*Motion approved.*

#### **3.0 Chair's Report**

Board Chair Cindy O'Driscoll spoke to the Board regarding the recent municipal election. She commented that it is encouraging to now see gender parity on Council. Ms.

O'Driscoll commented that it was unfortunate that the two Councilors could not be in attendance for the Board meeting, as their attendance was required at the swearing-in ceremony being held at the same time.

Cindy O’Driscoll reported that the municipality has opened applications for appointments to board and commissions. There is one available position for a member of the public to be appointed by Council to serve on the Library Board. Applications are open for a few weeks.

Board Chair Cindy O’Driscoll shared with the Board that it is incredibly positive that all furloughed library staff have returned to the organization.

Cindy O’Driscoll reported that Board members will each be receiving a link to complete the CEO Evaluation. In addition to the formal evaluation by the Board and Senior Staff, the CEO will also seek input from all staff on what they believe priorities should be for the CEO. This process of garnering feedback from the Board, Senior Staff, and the organization will be valuable.

#### **4.0 CEO’s Report**

Åsa Kachan provided an update to the Board regarding a number of issues at Halifax Public Libraries. Highlights included:

- All branches are back up to being open at pre-COVID (full) hours
- Staff have adjusted very well to changed protocols, cleaning regimes, etc. Everyone is incredibly proud of how staff have returned and the way they continue to provide excellent service to the community.
- Halifax Public Libraries is very unique in being able to be open at this level; many public libraries in the country are not as fortunate. The Library, and the province as a whole was able to ramp back up relatively quickly thanks to supports from Dr. Strang and the province.
- Self-check use has increased dramatically through the pandemic. The Library’s move to being fine free may be part of this increase, as fines would often require staff intervention. Regardless of the impetus, this increased level of independence for the public is a very positive development.
- The organization is beginning to do some in-person programming on a small scale with key communities that experience risk. This is exciting, as program staff are eager to re-connect with community members.
- The Strategic Workforce Plan (SWP) Transition Plan has been distributed to the staff this week. The Transition plan (which was developed jointly by a union and management team) has been endorsed by management, however the union will need to endorse it as well if it is to be implemented. The Union has indicated they will put the decision to a member vote. More updates will be shared at the future Board meetings.
- The province has indicated they will make an additional \$50,000 to every library system in Nova Scotia to assist with COVID-related pressures. HPL is currently identifying a key project for this funding.

- TD has committed an additional \$75,000 in continuing African Heritage month funding. TD has also provided the Library with a donation to support a pilot technology lending service. This would allow the Library to lend a laptop and/or a hotspot to those who do not have internet. More details on the program will be provided as it develops.
- There are a number of capital projects in process. The Dartmouth North construction bids came are being reviewed. Once those are approved, the project can begin. The is also in the process of finalizing a temporary branch re-location during construction.
- Federal and provincial funding for Sheet Harbour Lifestyles Centre has been announced. The land assessment has not been completed yet. Updates will continue to be provided to the Board.

#### **4.0 Moving toward social and racial equity**

The Diversity and Inclusion survey being conducted by the Library through CCDI was included with the Board package. Survey results will be provided to the Library in aggregate format. Based on trends and our organization's response, CCDI will also advise the Library on areas of greatest need for improvement and provide benchmarks against other organizations. CCDI offers a continuous service; it's a live analysis of what the Library's workforce looks like. For the next few years, CCDI has a commitment to keep that information accurate and up-to-date. Once results are received from the survey, they will be brought to the Board to discuss themes.

CCDI also provides training for Inclusivity and Diversity. Active learning is an important part of this initiative. Social equity is much broader concept than BLM, and the Library needs to ensure that we are using best practice in all areas and education opportunities and making sure our staff are confident and well-trained.

#### **4.0 Governance Professionals Conference**

Alison Lucio provided a brief update on the recent conference she attended for Governance Professionals. Themes of the conference included: Governance response to COVID, and how governing boards can best support their organizations through the navigation of operating during the pandemic. Ms. Lucio spoke to how Climate Change, Whistleblower policies and ensuring diversity on boards are also current focuses of many boards.

The Board suggested that a number of possible Education Sessions be scheduled for future Board meetings.

### **5.0 Committee Reports**

#### **5.1 Board Executive**

Board members were reminded that the Board Retreat is scheduled for November 21. There will be a reading list provided by Maureen Reid that will be circulated to the Board.

## 5.2 Finance & Audit

Marika Warren reported that the Finance & Audit Committee met twice between scheduled Board meetings.

The Workplan for the Committee was included in the Board package. Committee Chair Marika Warren flagged that risk reporting will come from the work that will happen post-retreat.

Marika Warren put forth the following motion:

***THAT the Halifax Regional Library Board approve the Workplan for the Finance & Audit Committee as circulated.***

This motion was seconded by Kim Brooks.

*Motion approved.*

Marika Warren spoke to the opportunity for re-allocation of available operating funds. Management is reviewing options and will apply the funds to areas of greatest need.

The Committee Chair shared that revenues are less than originally budgeted. These expected decreases in revenue are a result of lost lease revenue from Pavia, and lower parking usage. Marika Warren reported that the Finance & Audit Committee had no significant concerns for the discrepancies between the budget and actuals.

Committee Chair Marika Warren informed the Board the Committee continues to be discussing compliance reporting and looking at what information the Committee would like to review, along with recommended rhythm of reporting.

## 5.3 Planning & Performance

Kim Brooks provided an update to the Board regarding where the Committee is at with the Governance Manual. Previous work included Board Chairs Cindy O'Driscoll and Tara Gault conducting a first pass at the organization of the document. They made recommendations as to what material should be part of the Board Manual and what information is best existing elsewhere. The document was converted into a single document, and organized accordingly. It is the hope of the Committee that everything regarding how the Board operates and runs will be covered within the Board Manual and Bylaws. Kim Brooks explained that the first 10 pages (approximately) is what has been circulated to the Board for review. Input and feedback is encouraged through the entire process of the creation of the Board Manual.

The Board approved the direction so far, and voiced their appreciation for this work. It was suggested that once the document is finalized that it could be available online for reference.

**In-Camera Session**

Alfred Burgessson put forth a motion for the Halifax Regional Library Board move to an in-camera session for the purposes to discuss:

**6.0 Leases**

This motion was seconded by Sharon Costey.

*Motion approved.*

The meeting was adjourned after the in-camera session.