



Halifax Regional Library Board

Meeting Minutes

April 22, 2021

Zoom, 4:30-7:30pm

Present

Board Members in Attendance:

Cindy O'Driscoll, Board Chair

Kim Brooks, Board Vice-Chair

Marika Warren

Emily Miller

Tim Outhit

Heather Rose

Raymond Sewell

Regrets:

Alfred Burgesson

Linda MacKay

Tony Mancini (*attending Council*)

Staff:

Åsa Kachan, Chief Librarian & CEO

Terry Gallagher, Senior Manager Finance & Facilities

Mairead Barry, Senior Manager Strategy

Debbie LeBel, Senior Manager Access

Alison Lucio, Executive Assistant

Colleen Fraser, Marketing & Communications

Ashley Radisic, Marketing & Communications

Union Observer:

Leah Pohlman

1.0 Call to Order

Board Chair Cindy O'Driscoll called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone to the meeting. The Board Chair shared the following land acknowledgment:

"I'd like to begin this meeting by acknowledging the Mi'kmaq Nation on whose unceded traditional territory Halifax Public Library branches are located. We are in Mi'kma'ki and our Board recognizes the need for action and leadership in the reconciliation process."

Kim Brooks put forward a motion to approve the agenda as circulated. This motion was seconded by Marika Warren.

Motion approved.

Heather Rose put forward a motion to approve the minutes as circulated. This motion was seconded by Marika Warren.

Motion approved.

2.0 Chair's Report

Board Chair Cindy O'Driscoll welcomed the Raymond Sewell to the Halifax Regional Library Board. Mr. Sewell was recently appointed by the Municipality.

The Board and Senior Management took a few minutes to provide a brief introduction of their work with Halifax Public Libraries.

3.0 Annual Report Update

Colleen Fraser and Ashley Radisic of the Library's Marketing & Communications Department provided an overview of the Annual Report themes and content ideas to the Library Board. It is hoped that we can have headshots taken of each Board member, along with a prompt question answer "What word best describes the Library over the last year?"

The Annual Report will be created for online consumption, although a number of print copies will be created. Colleen and Ashley shared with the Board how the online version will have small animation and flourishes to capture movement and provide an interesting interaction with the reader. The Library's colour and pixel theme will be utilized and the financial information will be presented along with a descriptive section outlining how the organization lives its values through alignment with budgeted priorities.

The Board thanked Ms. Radisic and Ms. Fraser for their presentation and excellent work to date on the Annual Report.

4.0 Chief Librarian & CEO Report

CEO & Chief Librarian Åsa Kachan provided an overview of some recent activities and initiatives at Halifax Public Libraries. Highlights included:

- The two "parking lot" (over budget requests) items were approved through Council. These funds represent \$100,000 for Collections and \$50,000 for Food Programming. Thank you to Councilor Outhit and Councilor Mancini for putting these initiatives forward for consideration.
- Mairead Barry is working with the Department of Community, Culture & Heritage with the creation of the Accessibility Framework. This work will come to the Board. Mairead

Barry has been working with this provincial-wide group, and Halifax Public Libraries plans on creating and adopting a more robust framework.

- Åsa Kachan reported that she continues to work with national Urban Library Council. The group is discussing many issues, including how libraries can best assist through the country's economic recovery after the pandemic.
- Renovations are happening in branches and departments where possible. Some branches are seeing some minor re-freshes – simple yet impactful renovations.
- Libraries will be closing for in-branch service tomorrow and the Library will providing curbside service only. This shift is unfortunate, but a necessary response to the increasing cases in the city. There is much more confidence in staff this time, as 'we've done this before', and so staff have a much better idea of what to expect and are ready to pivot to curbside service.
- A staff appreciation video has been developed and will be shared with the organization.
- To thank staff for their dedication over this past year, branches and departments were given treat baskets and every staff member received a hand-written thank-you card from an SET member.

5.0 Moving toward Racial & Social Equity

The Board discussed the most recent meeting of the two groups of the Board Book Club. The two group names are: The Book Binders and Reading Between the Spines.

Feedback from the meetings was very positive; the book discussions are a good way to connect and have a conversation. Board members shared that the discussions were interesting and enjoyable.

A Doodle poll will be sent out to find a meeting time to discuss the next book.

6.0 Board Committee Reports

6.1 Board Executive

The Board Executive Committee did not meet between March 11 and April 22, 2021.

6.2 Finance & Audit

Committee Chair Marika Warren spoke to the recent meeting of the Finance & Audit Committee. The Committee discussed the Board Manual's suggested requirement to have a community member with a CPA designation serve on the Finance & Audit Committee as a non-voting member. This recommendation will be reflected in the Board Manual that will come to the Board for approval.

Marika Warren spoke to the financials that were included in the meeting package. The Committee did not have any concerns with the financials as presented, and the Board reviewed the financials as presented. The Board was reminded that the actuarial costs are estimated at this time and a final figure will be provided by HRM. The Finance & Risk Committee started the review of the Risk Registry and will review in further detail and will discuss the Registry at the May Committee meeting.

6.3 Planning & Performance

Committee Chair Kim Brooks provided an overview of work to date on the Board Manual. Board members are asked to review the document and provide any feedback and it is anticipated that the Manual will be put forward for approval at the next Board meeting.

After the Manual is approved, there will be a review of the Governance policies as listed in the Appendix, and the review of a couple of additional policies that have come from the creation of the Board Manual.

Board members provided positive feedback on the work to date. Newly appointed member Raymond Sewell was encouraged to provide honest feedback with his perspective as a new Board member.

At this time, the Board moved into an in-camera session for the purposes to discuss:

7.0 Risk Registry (Governance Risk Session)

8.0 SWP Update

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned.