



Halifax Regional Library Board

Meeting Minutes

January 28, 2021

Zoom, 4:30-7:30pm

Board Members in Attendance:

Cindy O’Driscoll, Board Chair

Kim Brooks, Board Vice-Chair

Marika Warren

Sharon Costey

Linda MacKay

Emily Miller

Tim Outhit

Heather Rose

Tony Mancini

Regrets

Alfred Burgesson

Staff:

Åsa Kachan, Chief Librarian & CEO

Terry Gallagher, Senior Manager Finance & Facilities

Mairead Barry, Senior Manager Strategy

Debbie LeBel, Senior Manager Access

Sara Gillis, Senior Manager People & Culture

Alison Lucio, Executive Assistant

Ken Williment, Manager of Programming & Community Engagement (Basin District)

1.0 Agenda

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

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

Motion approved.

Approval of Minutes of December 11, 2020

Kim Brooks put forward a motion to approve the minutes of December 11, 2020 as circulated. This motion was seconded by Linda MacKay.

Motion approved.

2.0 Chair's Report

Board Chair Cindy O'Driscoll welcomed everyone to the first meeting after the winter holiday break, and wished everyone a *"Happy New Year!"*. Cindy O'Driscoll welcomed Ken Williment, Manager of Programming & Community Engagement (Basin District), who would be presenting to the Board later in the meeting. Cindy O'Driscoll, on behalf of the entire Board, shared deep condolences to Board member Tony Mancini whose mother recently passed.

Cindy O'Driscoll reminded that the Opening Festivities for African Heritage Month will be happening at 7:00pm tonight. This year the event has moved online, and hopefully that will mean that even more people can enjoy the event.

As part of her remarks, Cindy O'Driscoll informed the Board that the Risk material has been placed on a slight pause as staff work to focus on budgeting, business planning, and other immediate priorities. The Risk work is continuing and will come to the Board at a future meeting.

3.0 Education Session – The Board's Role in Climate Change

CEO Åsa Kachan introduced Ken Williment to the Board. Many Board members may be familiar with Ken as he has been with the Library for approximately 15 years, and has made impact in the communities he's worked in.

Åsa Kachan spoke to Climate Change at the Board table, and the conversations that are happening at the Board level. Climate Change is something that Boards need to be looking at, and examining and discussing climate change within the context of the organization, but also at a different level of engagement and climate risks being examined by the Board.

Possible ways that boards can manage climate risk include: asking questions, putting climate change on the agenda and assess any potential climate change risks for the organization, explore the adoption of a Board and/or organization position statement, and stay informed through board education.

Ken Williment provided an update on the internal initiatives that are happening at the Library. The organization has established an internal group: the HPL Climate Changers. These are representatives from branches and departments and they will have an eye on the local implementation of the climate change initiatives at the organization. This group has a wide variety of staff participating, and engagement is very high. West Vancouver Memorial Library has been focusing on this issue for over a decade, so it has been advantageous to see what has been working there. The HPL Climate Changers began exploring some projects such as landscaping choices, energy-efficiency of buildings, etc. within the context of the Library. Libraries have been lending various

equipment, such as radon detectors, but perhaps with an extended sharing environment, library loaning can be extended to other items – keeping items out of the landfill and helping the community at the same time.

The group has also been exploring in-branch practices to examine for energy and green savings. Areas such as waste management and energy consumption are being explored, but the team will also looking at workplace culture and looking at every day practices that can be green-improved. Community education and programming on Climate Change will be a focus as well.

The Library will continue to strengthen relationships and partnerships with various climate community groups such as SolarNS, HalifACT 2050 Team, HRM Solid Waste and others.

As next steps, the team is excited about the public library being the trusted organization to help bringing people together to exchange ideas. Our facilities will see changes and there will be further education – climate experts, and library case studies. There is a need to add climate change to the Board and Committee macros, adopt an ecological framework, and include climate change to regular reporting methods such as Strategic Plan, Business Plan, Risk Registry, and Annual Report. There is work to be done.

Board members discussed the importance of having climate change discussed at the Board level; there are opportunities for future education sessions. Libraries have becoming places of weather refuge. There is recognition that many individuals – especially youth - feel great anxiety and pressure around climate change and the Library can continue to be a trusted resource. The Board suggested that perhaps a future Board Book Club book could focus on Climate Change.

On behalf of the Board, Cindy O’Driscoll thanked Ken for this thoughtful presentation. This conversation will continue.

4.0 Chief Librarian & CEO Report

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

- AHM Opening Event is tonight. Åsa thanked the exceptional staff who shifted the event to an online event. There are many programs, and the Library has extended the program offerings well beyond the African Heritage month of February.
- THE CCDI Report is expected to be received within the next couple of weeks; this will be brought to the Board.
- Thanks to Mairead Barry, Terry Gallagher, and Shannon Robilliard for their work with the Business Plan and budget. The Library will have an opportunity to provide an overview of budget pressures speak to some of the work of the past year.

- The Memorandum of Understanding for the Strategic Wrokforce Plan has been drafted and provided to the Union. Updates will continue to be provided to the Board.
- Åsa Kachan reported that she is participating on a number of panels. It is important to keep connected, and moving panels and talks online has meant that perhaps more people are available to participate.
- The Covid-Steering Committee continues to meet regularly. Terry Gallagher and his team conducted an air handling review, and the results were very positive.
- Visited Dartmouth North (under renovation) and Farrell Hall (Dartmouth North temporary location) with Board member and Councillor Tony Mancini and Councillor Kathryn Morse.

5.0 Moving toward Racial and Social Equity

The Board Book Club groups will be meeting to discuss the first book. Management is also exploring some other training options for the Board, including links, talks and events. This is a continuing conversation.

The province has arranged for training sessions for Board members. These sessions are scheduled for the second week of February and will be facilitated by Shakira Weatherdon. Feedback on these sessions will be discussed at the next Board meeting.

Marika Warren suggested that a learning needs question could be included with the Skills Matrix.

6.0 Board Committee Reports

6.1 Board Executive

Board Chair Cindy O’Driscoll reported that March 4 has been set as the date for the Strategic Planning Session – this is a continuation from the full day that was originally scheduled and then adjusted to two online sessions. The agenda will be circulated along with any pre-readings.

6.2 Finance & Audit

Committee Chair Marika Warren reported that the Committee recently met to approve the Business Plan and budget.

Marika Warren spoke to the business plan and budget that was included in the meeting package. Board members were reminded that the format and template provided by HRM needs to be used, and therefore an additional document was provided that illustrates the proposed budget in a format that the Board is familiar with. There will be an additional slight change in the submitted budget to Council that just will show an additional column illustrating that there is not an enormous change from the original budget, but a change from the *covid-adjusted* 2020 budget.

Åsa Kachan reported that future pressures and potential “parking lot” (over-budget submissions) items were discussed at the Finance meeting.

Marika Warren put forth the following motion:

THAT the Halifax Regional Library Board approve the Business Plan and 2021-22 Budget as presented by Management.

This motion was seconded by Kim Brooks.

Motion approved.

Councillor Tony Mancini stated that HRM is in relatively good financial state considering covid-19 impacts. The approval of the full HRM budget is a significant undertaking, but the Councillors are cautiously optimistic that the budget will be approved.

Cindy O’Driscoll thanked the Finance & Audit Committee, along with Library staff for this work.

6.3 Planning & Performance

Committee Chair Kim Brooks spoke to the working draft of the Board Manual that was included in the meeting package. At the most recent meeting of the Committee, there was great discussion about the roles and terms of positions and committees. This work is continuing, and any Board members interested in participating in the discussion are welcome to attend meetings. The Committee is welcome to any feedback, and more suggested changes will continue to come through.

It is expected that this portion of the manual will come to the March meeting for further discussion. You will see the suggested changes come through.

In-Camera Session

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

- 7.0 SWP Update
- 8.0 Capital Update

This motion was seconded by Emily Miller.

Motion approved.

9.0 Other Business

There was no further business.

10.0 Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned after the in-camera session.