



Halifax Regional Library Board

Meeting Minutes

March 11, 2021

Zoom, 4:30-7:30pm

Board Members in Attendance:

Cindy O’Driscoll, Board Chair
Kim Brooks, Board Vice-Chair
Alfred Burgesson
Marika Warren
Sharon Costey
Linda MacKay
Emily Miller
Tim Outhit
Heather Rose
Tony Mancini

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

Kate MacDonald, Manager Halifax North Memorial Public Library

Hannah Colville, Manager, Programming and Community Engagement, *Central District*

Union Observer:

Leah Pohlman

1.0 Call to Order/Approval of Agenda/Approval of Minutes of January 28, 2021

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

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

Motion approved.

As part of the welcome, Board members and staff were encouraged to share in the chat feature books or movies that they would recommend to the group. A list of suggestions was circulated to attendees after the meeting.

Tim Outhit put forward a motion to approve the minutes of January 28, 2021 as circulated. This motion was seconded by Marika Warren. A spelling error in Sharika Weatherdon's name will be amended.

Motion approved.

As part of the meeting welcome, Cindy O'Driscoll informed the Board that she will be incorporating a land acknowledgement statement to Board meetings going forward. Board Chair Cindy O'Driscoll spoke to how the Library and the Board has incorporated land acknowledgements into our larger, more public events. As part of recent public service training, government spoke to how everyone can introduce ways to demonstrate reconciliation and amplify voices. Cindy spoke to the desire to have the land acknowledgement very intentional and an important part of our meetings and part of our ongoing EDI.

Cindy O'Driscoll informed the Board that she was very recently informed that Council has approved a new Board member; no further information will be shared with the Library until the individual has formally accepted the position. Cindy thanked Board member Sharon Costey – whose term expired in November – for her continued service on the Library Board until a replacement was appointed. Cindy and all members of the Board thanked Sharon for her service and reminded the Board that a celebration will be planned to thank Board members whose terms ended during the pandemic: Tara Gault, Leah Hamilton, and Sharon Costey.

2.0 Chair's Report

Board Chair Cindy O'Driscoll provided an update on the Risk Assessment. The Risk Registry will be shared and discussed first at the upcoming Finance & Audit Committee meeting. The Finance Committee will have an opportunity to review and provide any feedback in advance of the April 22nd Board meeting. Cindy O'Driscoll informed the Board that the Risk will be the main focus of the April 22nd Board meeting.

3.0 Chief Librarian & CEO Report

Åsa Kachan provided a verbal update to the Board. Highlights included:

- Budget presentation was made to Council. The Councillors were incredibly supportive of the Library and the Library's response to the pandemic. There was good dialogue with Council during the presentation, and now the proposed budget has gone forward for approval. Two Library items were approved to be placed in the "parking Lot", and Council will vote item by item on those over budget requests from each department and unit. The proposed budget includes provision

for salary increases that are scheduled and accounts for reduction in fines, etc. TPW and Parks & Recreation have not presented their budgets yet for approval. Åsa Kachan thanked the Board for their support.

- The province has provided some funds, and the Library has been able to secure funds for a number of impactful initiatives to **Bridge the Digital Divide**:
 1. TD Bank, a great supporter came to us in the early days of covid-19 and the Library requested funding to support our community members with access to the internet. Last week the Library launched a project out of Captain William Spry loaning Chromebooks and MiFis.
 2. Continuing to work with partners with lending Galaxy tablets
 3. Grant from HRM to work with Family Resource Centres to lend technology
 4. \$50,000 secured for reusable bags for Home Delivery. This signals an end to plastic and will be accompanied by a re-launch of the Home Delivery service.
 5. Library Development Fund secured of \$54,000 to use to purchase a novel branch (kiosk). This kiosk will be placed in the St. Andrews Rec Centre. We are also hoping to use some of these funds to boost WiFi in this location.
 6. \$284,000 secured from the province to cover our EdNet fees, and to purchase a number of tech lockers (like a kiosk) and lendable technology inside (Chromebook, MiFis, etc.). Locations of these kiosks are yet to be determined.

Åsa Kachan thanked all Library staff for working tirelessly with an entrepreneurial spirit to access grants and funding, and use all resources wisely to provide the best possible service to the community.

Terry Gallagher, Senior Manager of Finance & Facilities provided an update on the upcoming renovations planned for Keshen Goodman Public Library, and shared some “sneak peek” renderings from Fathom Architects. These renovations are planned to enhance customer experience and improve accessibility. The building mechanical and electrical systems will also be upgraded. Management is considering a possible second phase (addition of event space) to help future-proof the capital build. These planned renovations are building to a \$2.5 million budget. The project will be tendered in May 2021 after finalization of the design. Construction is scheduled to happen in March-April 2022. It is our intention that the Library will remain open during the renovations. Staff are very excited and are looking forward to having the customers experience the renovated space.

4.0 Moving Toward Racial and Social Equity

Kate MacDonald, Manager Halifax North Memorial Public Library and Hannah Colville, Manager, Programming and Community Engagement for Central District provided an overview of African Heritage 'month' initiatives, programs and partnerships. Highlights included:

- March is the most intense month of AHM programming, and there is such energy with the opening event of 'Lift Every Voice'.
- Themes for this year encompassed Black History Matters – Listen, Learn, Share & Act, with each area having its own focus.
- TD and partners have been pleased with how the Library has extended Black History Month programming; M&C has started using #notjustamonth and using new and creative ways to showcase information.
- This year was one-of-a-kind with holding events during the pandemic. Staff in branches were incredibly flexible and team worked well across all branches.
- There was a submission for tote bag art, and selected design was from Bloom media. There were extra funds to the Library did a second run with another artist.
- Community conversations – with lots of Zoom panel submissions – are a clear way for the Library to support and curate, to provide a template to use with other celebrations to continue the conversation (Pride, etc.)
- Overall, there has been very successful programming and thousands in our community engaged in AHM programming. Due to the public health measures, the Library worked with Northwood to broadcast Opening Night to residents – still ensuring our community is connected with the Library when they are unable to come to the branch. The Library is reaching beyond Halifax with some of our events. Opening Night – we had people from across the country 2,500 people reached. The virtual format has been successful and good learnings originating from this year's AHM.
- Youth programming has been more targeted this year. Online art classes and cooking classes are very popular and we received great feedback. These events have been great ways to bringing in teen teams together from across the branches.

Åsa Kachan and the Board thanked Hannah Colville and Kate MacDonald for their continued work.

Åsa Kachan informed the Board that the Library continues to work with the CCDI on inclusion programming.

This week Åsa Kachan met with staff to discuss the creation of a Black Caucus or Forum to help provide a place for dialogue and for staff to speak freely about their experiences. The province has committed to provide information and a tool-kit based on the excellent training recently provided by Shakira Weatherdon. The Library is employing a multi-pronged approach to ensure voices are heard and changes are made.

5.0 Wellness Break

6.0 Board Committee Reports

The Board agreed to adjust the agenda to have item 6.3 Planning & Performance appear first under Board Committee Reports, as Committee Chair Kim Brooks was required to leave the meeting slightly early.

6.3 Planning & Performance

Committee Chair Kim Brooks provided an update on the draft Board manual that was included in the meeting package. As this will be the Board's governing document, Board members were encouraged to provide any feedback. Kim Brooks outlined some of the updates to the manual including:

- Section 3.5 – includes our work with Maureen Reid
- 3.6, 3.7 3.8 are position descriptions – listing out in this method provides transparency and clarity of the positions and responsibilities
- Board Standing Committees are listed, and the Committee is recommending that the Board Awards Committee be named a standing committee of the Board; a motion was put forth later in the meeting after discussion
- Committee Terms of Reference are not new but now included in the Board Manual. Board members were reminded that the additional responsibilities for the Planning & Performance Committee have been incorporated and appear in this version.
- The role and responsibilities of the Executive Committee was thoroughly discussed at the Committee level, and at the Board level as well. As discussion, the Committee's role and function has adjusted and decreased. There are some responsibilities that will remain with the Executive Committee as a recommendation: CEO Human Resources responsibilities and Emergency use (as outlined in the Manual). Still one more piece that resides in the Bylaws as the responsibility of the Executive Committee which is the recommendation of Committee membership. You will see that this has been addressed in the Manual by having the P&P Committee recommend membership to all Committees to the Executive Committee. A bylaw adjustment will be required to change the responsibility of Committee membership from Executive to P&P.
- The recommendation to keep the Executive with its limited responsibility is to keep a concentrated group of experts (Committee Chairs and Board Chair) for emergencies. The HR responsibilities need to be completed regardless, it would just be a different committee name responsible for this work.

- These changes are completely transparent and it is good to pare down the responsibilities of the Executive Committee.

The Board discussed the need to have any meeting of the Executive Committee transparent and clear regarding necessity and purpose. If the Board Executive is required to meet in an Emergency situation, notice is to be provided to the Board to provide context and input and meetings reported to the Board. In addition, the Executive Committee would be required to report to the full Board at the next meeting of the Board.

Feedback from the Board discussion included:

- Might be useful to outline the difference between the provincial and municipal appointments
- The Board Awards Committee will have listed that the Committee does not typically meet throughout the year, and Terms of Reference will eventually be included
- The transparency regarding the relationship between the Executive and Board is clear and is an improvement.

Board members were encouraged to provide any feedback to the Committee.

Heather Rose put forward the motion

THAT the Halifax Regional Library Board name the Board Awards Committee as a Standing Committee of the Library Board.

This motion was seconded by Marika Warren.

Motion approved.

6.1 Board Executive Strategic Planning Session

Mairead Barry, Senior Manager of Strategy thanked the Board for participating in the separately held Strategic Planning session. The slides and prompt questions were included in the Board package; Board members were encouraged to send along any feedback.

Mairead Barry spoke to the upcoming staff and public engagement planned. Reporting of the Strategic Planning process will now come through the Planning & Performance Committee. Anticipated timing would be drafting the plan in the late summer; the Board will receive regular updates.

6.2 Finance & Audit

Committee Chair Marika Warren provided an update to the Board. The most recent financials were included in the Board package. It is anticipated that next month's financials will provide a closer view to year-end financials. The Committee is scheduled to meet next week.

The Finance Team is currently focused on year-end, and is benefitting from Shannon Robilliard's second year leading this process.

Åsa Kachan spoke to the implementation of some building improvements and projects. Management is watching these initiatives closely and will reallocate any funds that cannot be spent to allocated projects before year-end.

Marika Warren spoke to the video of HRM Legal's Insurance presentation from the most recent Finance & Audit Committee. Marika reported that the Committee enjoyed the presentation and was reassured to have confirmed the Library's excellent management of the small number of claims it has.

In camera

Marika Warren put forward a motion that the Halifax Regional Library Board move incamera for the purposes of discussing:

- 7.0 SWP Update & Diversity and Inclusion Survey**
- 8.0 Other Business (with CEO present)**

This motion was seconded by Sharon Costey.

Motion approved.

9.0 Adjournment

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