



**Halifax Regional Library Board  
Meeting Minutes  
Zoom  
December 3, 2021**

**Board Members in Attendance**

Kim Brooks, Chair  
Marika Warren, Vice-Chair  
Emily Miller  
Heather Rose  
Linda MacKay  
Tony Mancini

**Regrets**

Cindy O'Driscoll  
Alfred Burgesson

**1.0 Call to Order**

Board Chair Kim Brooks called the meeting to order.

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

*Motion approved.*

Tony Mancini put forward a motion to approve the minutes as provided in the meeting package. Linda MacKay seconded this motion.

*Motion approved.*

Heather Rose will be removed from the list of October meeting attendees as she was not in attendance.

**2.0 Chair's Report**

Kim Brooks provided a brief report to the Board. Kim Brooks and Marika Warren recently met with the Municipal Solicitor to discuss the understanding of board governance and in particular the dual role Councillors play in sitting both on Council and the Library Board. Conversations will continue.

Serena Cassidy has decided to resign from the Board as her work commitments are higher than she anticipated. Board Chair Kim Brooks added that everyone is disappointed that Serena will not be participating on the board, we understand and

accept her decision. We hope that in future she may reconsider and reapply. The timing of her departure matches with the current municipal recruitment for Boards and Commissions which means that this vacancy will be filled relatively soon.

As both Chair Kim Brooks and Vice-Chair Marika Warren's are up for possible re-appointment, Board officer Linda MacKay, Chair of the Finance, Audit & Risk Committee, will be participating in a selection meeting to provide feedback on behalf of the Board, along with the CEO.

### **3.0 Chief Librarian & CEO Report**

The CEO provided an update to the Board. Highlights included:

#### Strategic Workforce Plan

A more detailed report will come to the Board once all staff placements have been finalized. The placements for the Branch Leads and Specialists has been completed, after over 450 interviews for the assessment. The Library has talented staff members, and the interviews proved to be an excellent way to learn more about the staff across the organization. Feedback has been largely positive. The Branch Leads are scheduled to start December 6.

The next step in the process is to place direct front-line staff (Service Advisor and Service Support roles). Those assignments have been completed and we are ready to communicate to staff next week.

Management recognizes the SWP implementation has been a very stressful period for our staff. What is interesting – and positive - to see is that there are many individuals who expressed interest in new roles, and most of these requests can be accommodated, which is positive for staff.

Through the implementation of the SWP, management has had the desire to achieve a workforce where more staff have stable full-time employment, more staff have benefits and there will be less hierarchy. The changes will still take some time to finalize, but management believes that the outcomes we set out to accomplish will be achieved.

This is a marathon for staff; senior staff are tired as well.

The Board acknowledged that Management should look to ways to alleviate the strain on the organization and on management.

Lead bootcamp is upcoming and will provide a thorough orientation to the Leads – this is a level of onboarding into the organization that has not existed previously. There will be an intense one-week boot camp session, followed by regular training offerings as part of ongoing bootcamp. Thanks to many on the Senior team who are helping make this a very positive learning experience for the Leads.

Management is scheduled to present the Library budget to Council during the first week of March. Management is currently working on developing a budget based on the envelope provided to us from the municipality. The budget will not include any potential salary increases as that may be coming next year as part of collective agreement negotiations.

The Library received a relatively flat budget envelope for 2022-23 with a small decrease. Councillor Mancini offered that the budget will look somewhat different for some departments with respect to Climate Change offset costing.

Debbie LeBel, Senior Manager of Access spoke to the development and partnership with St. Andrews Centre. There was a high need for the community centre to have WiFi provided, and we have partnered with this very positive initiative. During covid, the Library placed some PCs and Chromebooks for use in the space. A kiosk was installed in the space in the late summer, with a higher content of Arabic content to help meet community need. Library WiFi has also been placed in the space with negotiations through EdNet and Parks & Rec. This has been a positive community project for the IT and Collections team.

Åsa Kachan shared that here are some other areas and heat maps that we will be looking at and looking at pockets of poverty. Conversations are happening with the Fall River Councilor to assess how to best support that community. Expanding provision of library service, along with addressing areas of Library “deserts” through HRM will be a continuing conversation at the Board.

Åsa Kachan shared with the Board that all public libraries in Nova Scotia will be partnering with Public Health to distribute rapid tests into households. This initiative will help ensure safe gatherings and holiday season.

Management has taken the suggestion from staff to shift the Long Term Staff recognition away from the annual holiday party. Management wants to be inclusive and will be making changes to Long Service recognition and will be shifting to a Spring celebration that will not be associated with the holiday season.

Åsa Kachan shared that she recently participated in an exciting conversation with the Mi'kmaw Friendship Centre regarding Participatory Cities – a conversation from their perspective how do you draw people into the space, in creative and thoughtful ways. It was a very exciting partner conversation.

Åsa Kachan shared some of the recent numbers and data showing the impact of COVID-19. The Library expects to see continued increase in numbers of Library visits as people are return back to the space.

#### **4.0 Moving Towards Social Equity**

The provincial EDI toolkit was included as part of the Board meeting package. There are some links to some interesting videos and websites. After some discussion, Heather Rose put forward the following motion:

**THAT** the Halifax Regional Library Board incorporate videos and articles (from the EDI toolkit and beyond) as part of each Board meeting.

This motion was seconded by Marika Warren.

*Motion approved.*

#### **5.0 Board Committee Reports**

##### **5.1 Board Executive**

Board Executive Committee Chair Marika Warren informed the Board that the Executive Committee of the Board did not meet between Board meetings.

##### **5.2 Finance, Audit & Risk**

Committee Chair Linda MacKay spoke to the financials which were included in the meeting package. The Committee had no concerns with the financials as presented by Management.

Åsa Kachan provided an update regarding recruitment for the position of Senior Manager of Facilities. The position will not be structured the same as previously when Terry held the position. Shannon Robilliard will remain the primary finance person, and the position being recruited for will have a sole focus on facilities.

The Finance Audit & Risk Committee approved the posting for the Board Community member. This posting will be placed with on the NS CPA site.

##### **5.3 Planning & Performance**

Committee Chair Marika Warren shared that the Skills Matrix has been sent along to all members of the Board, please complete and return to Alison Lucio as soon as possible. The Committee will be meeting to discuss the results and will report to the full Board.

The Planning & Performance Committee unfortunately did not have quorum for the previous meeting.

At this time, Heather Rose put forward a motion to move in-camera.

*Motion approved.*

Marika Warren put forward a motion to move out of in-camera and return to the business portion of the meeting. This was seconded by Heather Rose.

*Motion approved.*

**8.0 Bedford Public Library**

Marika Warren put forward the following motion:

**Motion:**

THAT the HRLB endorses the CEO to list Mill Cove on the HRM supplemental information sheet as the anticipated location for a Bedford library through the HRM Capital planning process.

This motion was seconded by Emily Miller.

*Motion approved.*

Åsa Kachan assured the Board that conversations regarding this development will continue and be shared.

With no further business, Kim Brooks adjourned the meeting.