



**Halifax Regional Library Board
Meeting Minutes
Zoom
October 28, 2021**

In Attendance:

Kim Brooks (Chair)
Marika Warren (Vice Chair)
Cindy O’Driscoll
Linda MacKay
Heather Rose
Emily Millier
Alfred Burgesson
Councillor Tony Mancini

Regrets:

Serena Cassidy
Councillor Tim Outhit

Staff in Attendance:

Åsa Kachan
Mairead Barry
Debbie LeBel
Alison Lucio

1.0 Call to Order/Approval of Agenda

Kim Brooks 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 Alfred Burgesson. Through discussion, the Board decided to move item: 7.0 Bedford Library Update from the in camera portion of the meeting to the business portion of the meeting.
Motion approved, and the agenda was approved with the amendment.

Approval of Minutes of September 16, 2021

Linda MacKay put forward a motion to approve the minutes of September 16, 2021 as circulated. This motion was seconded by Cindy O’Driscoll.
Motion approved.

2.0 Chair's Report

Board Chair Kim Brooks spoke to the recent re-opening of Dartmouth North. She reported that she attended the Grand re-opening and by all accounts was a successful event. Councillor Tony Mancini also attended the small ribbon-cutting event. The branch had events through the week to welcome the community back into the renovated space.

Kim Brooks spoke to how there are a number of members of the Board whose terms are set to expire. Cindy O'Driscoll's second term is ending, and once a replacement has been found she will vacate the Board. The Chair reported that along with herself, Marika Warren and Alfred Burgesson have first terms that expire in November. The municipality has informed the organization that new municipal board appointments are likely to be announced early in 2022.

3.0 Chief Librarian & CEO Report

Åsa Kachan provided a report to the Board. A written report was circulated; Ms. Kachan provided the following highlights:

- Covid restrictions have been adjusted. Initially Public Health announced public library access was to be restricted through proof of vaccination; this has now been changed by the province. Some restrictions (POV) is in place for programs and 1:1 activities, but general access to library common spaces and services will not be restricted to vaccinated individuals only.
- To assist with community safety, the Library has hosted a number of pop-up vaccination events in branches.
- The organization is currently in the first assessment period of the SWP to fill Branch lead and specialist positions. Approximately 500 interviews have been scheduled with 8 interview teams. It's a marathon for everyone, however managers speak of positive interactions/interviews and are enjoying meeting staff from across the organization. Once these interviews are completed, a second round of interviews will be scheduled for Service Advisor/Service Support hours distribution.
- The Library has begun budget discussions with the municipality. This week the CEO, Senior Manager of Strategy and Manager of Finance met with HRM leadership to discuss potential budget impacts. The Library is currently scheduled to present the budget to Council on March 2, 2022.
- Strategic Plan: The Library's intention had been to come up with a new, updated Strategic Plan to come into effect in 2022 and some preliminary work has been done to this end. However, Management is considering extending the current Strategic Plan 2017-2021 for an additional year. Many organizations are landing at a similar decision for many reasons: public participation is imperative when developing a strategic plan, and the pandemic has hampered the Library's ability to hold these essential conversations. In addition, the Library's staffing capacity is overlapping with the SWP. Our current Strategic Plan is still resonating with the Library and more importantly the

community. The currently plan has been allowing us to push and do the work of the past few years, including the flexibility required through the pandemic.

Through conversation, the Board agreed in principle, and Tony Mancini put forward the following motion:

THAT Management provide the Board with an update on the current Strategic Plan; ideally in January.

This motion was seconded by Marika Warren.

Motion approved.

- Dartmouth North re-opening was successful

Åsa Kachan provided an update on a number of Capital projects:

Musquodoubit Outdoor Deck

- This outdoor space provides additional room for gathering.
- Not a high cost project (\$20-\$25K), but will very impactful for the community, expanding the footprint of the branch.

Alderney Gate – Phase One

- This branch will have a temporary entrance beginning Nov 1
- Removal of the glass wall at the current entrance, and renovations will result in fully accessible public washroom on main floor with an adult change table
- Changes to the circulation staff area
- New study room for public use within the library
- This is the beginning of a series of phased renovations for this branch.
- This is a joint project with HRM, with two contractors doing work in adjacent space.

Keshen Goodman

- Tendering happening this fall with construction expected to begin Feb/March 2022
- Costs of materials are increasing, and costs are coming in higher than anticipated due to pandemic costing.
- There will an interior refurbishment included in the renovation.
- It is currently a noisy branch, there are noise absorption improvements in the renovation.
- This renovation includes an addition, and is being undertaken to easily allow for a further expansion at some time in the future (could be added on adjacently) for a performance/meeting space.
- This is a heavily used branch with very high circulation.

Central Back Plaza

- Design is complete on this space.
- Tender is expected to go out the fall with construction anticipated in March

- Would be a small scale project, which will result in increased use of the outdoor space.

Halifax North

- Tender for architectural consultants is going out before the end of the year.
- Very early analysis of how space could possibly be allocated in the design.
- There will be great community consultation happening for this project.

(agenda item 7.0)

Bedford

- The branch is currently in leased space in Bedford.
- Money is earmarked within HRM's capital budget over the coming years for this build.
- Concern over the past few years has been that suitable land has been difficult to secure in this part of HRM.
- There is substantial data that the organization has collected that will impact the site selection decision. There has been considerable development and change within Bedford and these changes need to be taken into consideration.
- There are currently differing opinions of where the best possible site for the Bedford library may be. As the Board considers this in the coming months it will be important to evaluate the demographic data and considerations such as transit, catchment area, climate change and the future role of neighbourhood libraries.

In response to a question, Åsa Kachan responded that the Preston Township Library Office is currently in leased space in East Preston with staff working in the location for limited hours and doing considerable work out in the community.

4.0 Board Committee Reports

4.1 Board Executive

The Board Executive did not meet between September 16 - October 28, 2021.

4.2 Finance Audit & Risk

Committee Chair Linda MacKay provided an update to the Board. The Finance Audit & Risk Committee met on September 22 and is scheduled to meet next week. Linda MacKay reported the Shannon Robilliard provided a thorough financial update to the Committee; the organization is currently under budget (financials were included in the meeting package). Ms. MacKay reported to the Board the organization is exploring uncoupling from the HRM procurement processes for some smaller purchases. Further information will be provided to the Board as this progresses.

Åsa Kachan confirmed that HRM approached the Library to recommend the Library create a separate (but similar) procurement policy and an accompanying Service Level Agreement with HRM Procurement. They acknowledged that the Library sits independently from HRM and don't necessarily fit into all HRM policies including the

standard procurement approval framework. Updates will continue to be provided to the Board Finance and Audit Committee as these conversations continue.

4.3 Planning & Performance

The Planning & Performance Committee did not meet between September 16 – October 28, 2021.

At this time, Cindy O’Driscoll put forward a motion to move in camera for the purposes to discuss:

- 5.0 Human Resources Update – SWO
- 6.0 Staff Vaccination Policy

8.0 Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned.