



**Halifax Regional Library Board
Meeting Minutes
Halifax Central Library
October 27, 2022**

Present

Kim Brooks
Marika Warren
Emily Miller
Heather Rose
Linda MacKay
Tony Mancini
Kathryn Morse
Chi Harris
Erin Wynn
Christian Browne

Staff Present

Åsa Kachan
Mairead Barry
Sara Gillis
Alison Lucio

1.0 Call to Order / Approval of Agenda

Board Chair Kim Brooks called the meeting to order.

Linda MacKay put forward a motion to approve the agenda as circulated. This motion was seconded by Heather Rose.

Motion approved.

Approval of Minutes

Kathryn Morse 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 Kim Brooks welcomed everyone to the meeting.

3.0 Chief Librarian & CEO Report

Chief Librarian & CEO Åsa Kachan introduced Megan Gainer, Director of Facilities, to the organization. Megan has joined the Senior Team at the Library and has already visited many branches, and met with many staff. Megan's arrival to the organization is well timed as we have a number of capital projects in flight with more planned. Megan is

qualified under Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification, and will be working on the organization's Accessibility plans. Welcome to Megan.

A number of capital highlights were provided to the Board:

- KG renovation continuing and noisier than anticipated. We are looking keeping closure times limited.
- Exploring where the Library may fit within the Mill Cove library development and the best outcome for library service.
- Halifax North – having conversations with Planning and community members regarding possible development opportunities.
- Capital Working Group – this municipal group has informed the Library that there will be anticipated strains on budgets next year. The Library anticipates significant inflation on collection materials.

Councillor Tony Mancini offered that this year's budget process is expected to be challenging. It is essential that Libraries continue to be adequately funded as it is clear how much the community leveraged the Library through the pandemic, and the Library remained open and available for the community.

4.0 Accessibility Update – Mairead

Mairead Barry, Director of Strategy provided an Accessibility update to the Board. Highlights included:

- The Library has been working with the province with implementing accessibility matters and the Library has a range of individuals who serve on an Advisory Committee.
- We've done work to remove barriers and will also be focusing on supporting community with accessibility as well.
- Accessible materials in the collection include: large print, audio & Wonderbooks, descriptive and closed captioned videos, print-braille and v-braille books for children, and accessible downloadable/streaming books, magazines, music and movies. In addition, the Library also has alternative format collections (CELA & NELLs) with over 450,000 accessible items
- Cynthia Gatto along with others is working with a group to push to have publishers provide accessible materials to begin with (versus having NELLs make accessible)
- Autism Tool Kits are popular – great bundles of items for families to borrow and gauge appropriateness before families purchase. Collections is ready to launch a series of Alzheimer's Toolkits
- The Library strives to promote our accessible collection and various formats, and promote accessible materials and materials created by those with accessibility challenges
- Removing Library Fines was a significant removal of a barrier for many

- We have expanded our WiFi; this improvement has resulted in great benefit for the community, especially those with mobility issues.
- We are seeing an increasing need for Home Delivery and Borrow by Mail.
- In-branch activities are also popular; when adding any new features, etc. we consider *how* to make it accessible to *everyone*.
- Also important to raise awareness and partner with other organizations to raise awareness. To this end, the Library works closely with HRM to build awareness campaigns. The Library also has an accessibility portal on our website.
- Many programs are offered in collaboration with community and community partners, including sensory friendly concerts.
- Our spaces are also seeing accessible improvements. Accessibility audits were conducted and the majority of issues have been resolved. We do a good job at making our public spaces accessible, but less so in our staff spaces. There have been staff desk accessibility improvements, entrance improvements at Captain William Spry, etc. The Library sees the value in smaller scale improvements with large impact.
- The goal is to meet the requirements of Accessible NS by 2030. Building Standards have been released and libraries are included so we are excited about how to incorporate the recommendations.
- Library Employment – management has focused on removing barriers to employment. The organization went through the SWP, and implemented changes to education and included more expansive with lived experience.
- 16% of our staff identify with having a disability – we have focused on this through work of Lori MacNeil, Manager Wellness Health & Safety in ensuring an inclusive work culture; this is an area where we need to invest more time and energy.
- Board members are encouraged to share good accessibility experiences with organizations; we can learn from one another.
- We will always be improving accessibility of our existing spaces.

The Board thanked Mairead Barry for the timely and informative update; this work is very impressive to date.

6.1 Board Executive Committee

The Board Executive did not meet.

6.2 Finance Audit & Risk

Linda MacKay, Chair of the Board Finance, Audit & Risk Committee provided an update to the Board.

Risk Registry

Linda thanked Alison Lucio for the work done on the Risk Registry. The Registry was provided to the Board in its entirety for annual review. Also included in the package was the Risk Report that provides an overview of the findings.

The Board discussed their appreciation for including threats to Intellectual Freedom as a risk. Åsa Kachan shared that library leaders across North America are seeing an extraordinary number of Intellectual Freedom challenges, with major movement to limiting information, particularly LGBTQ2S+ and reproductive health information in many areas of the US. These efforts are also growing in Canada. Management will continue to keep the Board engaged on this matter.

6.3 Planning & Performance

Marika Warren, Chair of the Planning & Performance Committee, reported that the Committee met twice since the last Board meeting. Included in the package are two policies for consideration:

- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Ethical Conduct & Conflict of Interest Policy

Board members are asked to consider these two policies; these two policies will return for decision at the December meeting. Based on this – come for decision in December.

The Committee and Management continues to work on the Respectful Workplace Policy; this discussion and this is coming back to the Committee.

7.0 In-Camera

Kim Brooks put forward a motion to move in-camera. This motion was seconded by Marika Warren.

Motion approved.