



Halifax Regional Library Board Meeting Minutes February 13, 2025

Present

Chair, Ayo Aladejebi
Vice-Chair, Sue Murtagh
Mary-Ann Rowleston
Killian MacParland
Laura Godsoe
Laura White
Jan Jensen
Tony Mancini

Regrets

Christian Browne

Staff

CEO & Chief Librarian, Åsa Kachan
Mairead Barry
Alison Lucio
Lori MacNeil

1.0 Order & Welcome

Board Chair Ayo Aladejebi called the meeting to order. Union representative Kassondra Torraville was present and the Board Chair provided greetings.

2.0 Approval of the Agenda & Minutes of December, 2024

Laura Godsoe put forward a motion to approve the minutes of the previous meeting and the agenda as circulated. This motion was seconded by Mary-Ann Rowleson.
Motion approved.

3.0 Chair's Message

Board Chair Ayo Aladejebi provided greetings and thanked Board members giving of their time. The Chair shared that he has been reflecting on the work of the Library even more lately, intensifying his huge appreciation for the Board.

Ayo Aladejebi shared that African Heritage Month was an excellent time to connect with community through various activities around HRM; there are still a few more weeks to go and Board members were encouraged to look to opportunities to participate. The Library has a very robust programming that is in place, and the Chair shared that he considered it a privilege to attend and participate in the opening of African Heritage Month and the HRM lunch. It was an excellent event, and the vibe really reflected how the Library shaped everyone's lives in a positive way.

4.0 CEO Update

CEO & Chief Librarian Åsa Kachan provided an update to the Board. Highlights included:

- Welcome to HR team members Lori MacNeil, Manager of Health, Wellness & Safety and Cathy Maddigan, Director of Human Resources.
- Cathy Maddigan has been working tirelessly on ensuring the details of signing the Collective Agreement and finalizing the document to get ready for signing.
- Very proud of the work of the African Heritage Month team; they have worked tirelessly to put together a wonderful selection of events.
- Met last week with Minister Dave Ritcey and NS CEO Library representatives to provide an overview of the provincial Library Funding Model proposal. The Minister was very positive, and understands the impact and work of libraries.
- Met with members of City Hall regarding Library projects on the Capital budget. It is exciting to see the Halifax North branch renovation project making progress.
- Over the next 3-4 years, a number of capital projects are anticipated: significant upgrade of Alderney Gate, Mill Cove, and the collaborative project with Fire & Recreation in Sheet Harbour.
- Number of employees attended OLA last month. As Chair of CULC, Åsa attended. She shared that a number of very critical conversations, especially around the concept of Intellectual Freedom. The CEO spoke to the Board regarding the recent CBC Fifth Estate episode on Valleyview, Alberta. This is an alarming example as the city forced the public library into a school. This narrows the breadth of information available at the public library. These changes reflect what is happening in United States as well. We are making arrangements for James Turk to attend a future Board meeting.

- Halifax Public Libraries has had a number of book challenges over the past couple of years, regardless whether the argument comes from the left or the right, removing materials goes against Intellectual Freedom.
- We celebrated three HPL employees who graduated from the PLL program at OLA – Danielle Dungey, Hilary Skov-Nielson, Hannah Colville.

Board Chair Ayo Aladejebi requested that notes of congratulations to the graduates be provided from the Library Board.

5.0 Board Committee Reports

5.1 Board Executive

The Board Executive did not meet between meetings of the Library Board.

5.2 Finance, Audit & Risk Committee

Mary-Ann Rowston put forward the following motion:

THAT the Halifax Regional Library Board accept and approve the proposed 2025-26 Business Plan and Municipal Budget submission.

This motion was seconded by Sue Murtagh.

The Library's Municipal Budget presentation and overview was provided to the Board as part of the meeting package. Mairead Barry provided a thorough overview of the material to the Board, allowing for questions and discussion.

Discussion included how HRM used to belong to a national benchmarking group, although no longer participates so the national benchmarks are no longer alongside. Management suggested these could be reviewed at a future meeting of the Planning & Performance Committee. Generally, HPL enjoys higher engagement from our counterparts across the country. Circulation, in person use, key measures are areas where HPL has performed much better than similar sized counterparts across Canada.

Vacancy management was identified as a risk. There may need to hold key positions, but definitely will need to manage this number, or identify to HRM that there is a risk to meet the set vacancy management target. Management will continue to work with the Finance, Audit & Risk Committee throughout the year.

After discussion, the Chair called for the question, and **the motion was approved.**

5.3 Planning & Performance

Sue Murtagh, Chair of the Planning & Performance Committee, provided an overview to the Board regarding the two policies that were included in the meeting package for review and decision.

Laura Godsoe put forward the following motion:

THAT the Halifax Regional Library Board approve the Display Policy.

This motion was seconded by Killian MacParland.

Chief Librarian & CEO Åsa Kachan spoke to how the Library wants to ensure diversity of viewpoints and show the breadth of the Library's collection.

The Board shared their support for the policy, and thanked the Committee and Staff for their work.

After discussion, Chair Ayo Alaedjebe called for the decision on the motion.

The motion was approved.

Occupational Health & Safety Policy

Killian MacParland put through the following motion:

THAT the Halifax Regional Library Board approve the Occupational Health & Safety Policy.

This motion was seconded by Jan Jensen.

Chair of the Planning & Performance Committee, Sue Murtagh, provided an overview of the Policy. This policy employs simplified language, and is updated with the inclusion of psychological safety. Included in the policy is the intranet listing of the internal resources related to the policy, including the Manual and the Table of Contents of the Manual. This policy relates to the provincial government policy & procedures.

After discussion, the Chair called for the motion, **and the motion was approved.**

6.0 In-Camera Session

Ayo Aladejebe put forward a motion to move in camera. This motion was seconded by Mary Ann Rowston.

Motion approved.

7.0 Adjournment

With no further business, Chair Ayo Aladejebi adjourned the meeting.