



Halifax Regional Library Board Meeting - Minutes

Halifax Central Library
Thursday, July 31, 2025
4:30-7:30pm

Present

Ayo Aladejebi
Mary-Ann Rowlston
Killian McParland

Online:

Sue Murtagh
Christian Browne
Laura Godsoe
Tony Mancini

Regrets

Laura White
Jan Jensen

1.0 Call to Order & Welcome

Ayo Aladejebi, Library Board Chair, called the meeting to order.

Mr. Aladejebi opened the meeting with speaking about how tomorrow, August 1, marks Emancipation Day in Canada. This day serves as a day for reflection, education, and engagement. The Slavery Abolition Act of 1833 came into force on August 1, 1834, abolishing slavery throughout the British Empire, including Canada. No Africans were compensated through this Act. We still have much work to do, and it is imperative to remember that no one is free unless everyone is free.

Chair Aladejebi spoke to August being recognized as Acadian Heritage Month. Reflecting on the diversity of our region, the Library is not a stranger to supporting marginalized voice being intentional with this work. The Board Chair thanked Library staff for their continued dedicated service.

2.0 Approval of Agenda & Minutes

Laura Godsoe put forward a motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of the Library Board of June 2025. This motion was seconded by Christian Browne.

Motion approved.

3.0 Chair's Message

Chair Aladejebi provided an update as part of his welcome to the meeting.

4.0 Chief Librarian & CEO Report

Chief Librarian & CEO Åsa Kachan provided a verbal report. Highlights included:

- Library branches are busy this summer. The Summer Reading Program is happening – there is excitement! Following last year's successful initiative, adults have the book bingo so that everyone can participate and have fun with your summer reading.
- Respectful Workplace Policy training is happening across the organization. Feedback has been positive, and a number of managers have volunteered to provide this training in partnership with colleagues and HR staff.
- Data collection for the Social Impact Study is complete. We anticipate that we hear more about next steps in September.
- Åsa Kachan reported that she attended the Sheet Harbour sod turning for the new shared facility with Fire and Recreation. It was a wonderful event and very exciting for the community.
- Halifax Municipality CAO Cathie O'Toole has announced that she is leaving this position. Åsa shared with the Board that she appreciates Ms. O'Toole's leadership and always valued her insight and feedback. She is a valued colleague, and Åsa thanked Ms. O'Toole for her leadership.
- Ms. Kachan showed the Library *"Need more Friendship"* video that highlights the importance of Libraries and highlights a multigenerational approach.

5.0 Board Committee Reports

5.1 Board Executive

The Board Executive Committee did not meet between Board meetings.

5.2 Finance, Audit & Risk Committee

Finance, Audit & Risk Committee Chair Mary-Ann Rowlston provided an update to the full Board. Ms. Rowlston shared that the most recent financials were included in the meeting package. The Committee shared with the Board that the over expenditure related to compensation was expected with a vacancy management target that did not consider the resumption of full service at Keshen Goodman Library. This was noted and understood by HRM Senior leadership.

Mary-Ann Rowlston thanked Shannon McAllister and her team for their continued dedication and excellent work.

5.3 Planning & Performance Committee

Committee Chair Sue Murtagh provided an update to the full Board. Ms. Murtagh shared that there was a briefing note included in the Board package that outlines the background of this EDIA Statement being brought the full board for consideration and decision.

Chief Librarian & CEO provided an overview to the Board about the work of Human Resources with respect to the renewed EDIA Statement and the accompanying Briefing Note.

Åsa Kachan spoke to the adjustments to the EDIA Statement. The Library updated the existing EDIA statement, and the Planning & Performance Committee has worked with Management and the HR team with this work. This updated statement sits above others within the organization and speaks to how the organization approaches equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility.

Committee Chair Sue Murtagh thanked staff for their work in this area.

Sue Murtagh put forward the following motion:

THAT the Halifax Regional Library Board approve the EDIA Statement as presented.

This motion was seconded by Mary-Ann Rowlston.

Motion approved.

6.0 In Camera

At this time, Ayo Aladejebi thanked Union Representatives for attending the business meeting of the Library Board.

Laura Godsoe put forward a motion to move to the in camera portion of the meeting. This was seconded by Christian Browne.

Motion approved.

7.0 Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned.