



Halifax Regional Library Board
May 8, 2025 Board Meeting Minutes
Central Library, 3rd Floor Boardroom

Present

Ayo Aladejebi
Sue Murtagh
Laura Godsoe
Killian McParland
Mary-Ann Rowlston
Christian Browne
Laura White
Jan Jensen

Regrets – Mary Ann Rowlston & Tony Mancini

Staff

Asa Kachan, CEO & Chief Librarian
Alison Lucio, Manager Governance & Risk
Mairead Barry, Director of Strategy
Cathy Maddigan, Director, Human Resources
Kathleen Morris, Director, Central District
Janice Fiander, Senior Service Manager, Basin District
Darla Muzzeral, Manager of Research and Analysis
Dave MacNeil, Manager, Collections and Access

1.0 Call to order

Board Chair Ayo Aladejebi called the meeting to order and provided a land acknowledgement.

2.0 Agenda & Minutes

Laura Godsoe put forward a motion to approve the agenda as circulated. This motion was seconded by Killian McParland.

Motion approved.

Laura Godsoe put forward a motion to approve the minutes of March 20 as circulated. This motion was seconded by Killian McParland.

Motion approved.

3.0 Chair's Message

Board Chair Ayo Aladejebi shared that much has happened in the world since the Board's last meeting. A federal election has held, and Pope Leo XIV was announced. Ayo reflected on Prime Minister Mark Carney's book and shared with the Board a section regarding humility – how it is time work together as a call of action and humility does not equate passivity. Board Chair Aladejebi invited everyone to keep reflecting on what we can achieve collectively, together.

4.0 Chief Librarian & CEO Report

Chief Librarian & CEO Åsa Kachan provided a number of updates to the Library Board. Highlights included:

- Renovations at Alderney Gate are now complete. The branch will be celebrating their 35th anniversary and looking forward to welcoming the community in to see the refreshed space.
- Halifax North capital project continues. Responses are being prepared and the RFPs will be scored once received.
- Café Service solutions for Central Library and Keshen Goodman are being reviewed by the Committee in the next week. We are hoping for a robust response to the call for services.
- Dartmouth North continues to be closed due to a building issue.

The Board thanked Åsa for the updates.

5.0 Board Committees

5.1 Board Executive Committee

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

5.2 Finance, Audit & Risk Committee

Åsa Kachan provided an update to the Board. Shannon McAllister and the finance team did a superb job in forecasting throughout the year. The draft year-end financials were included in the package. Åsa shared that although there are few adjustments to be made, overall the small shortfall is considered balanced.

For this current fiscal year, as shared previously with the Board, salaries have increased, along with janitorial costs and other associated costs – creating pressures in various areas.

5.3 Planning & Performance

Respectful Workplace Policy

Sue Murtagh, Chair of the Planning & Performance Committee, provided an update to the Board. The Respective Workplace Policy was included as part of the Board package for decision. Cathy Maddigan, Director of Human Resources provided an overview to the Board, along with the Briefing Note that was included. This represents an update to the policy and reflects HRM's Policy, but includes specificness with respect to the Library. The Policy and associated training is designed to identify issues as early as possible – for early resolution and application before issues increase in severity. Cathy Maddigan provided an overview of the training that will be provided to all staff.

Board Chair Ayo Aladejebi thanked Management for their efforts with the updating of this policy, and thanked the Planning & Performance Committee for their work on the policy.

Sue Murtagh put forward the following motion:

THAT the Halifax Regional Library Board approve the Respectful Workplace Policy as presented and circulated.

This motion was seconded by Laura Godsoe.

Motion approved.

Strategic Plan

Mairead Barry provided an update on the development of the Strategic Plan. The Planning & Performance Committee will see the 'final' version at their next meeting and then it will be presented to the full Board. Highlights of the presentation included:

- The creative direction is meant to highlight the joyful and playful nature of the Library and community.
- The brand will remain, and the decision was made to not use photos of people, but to integrate the illustrated versions of people within beautiful photos of Library spaces.

- The plan is centered around five areas of focus:
 - Building Thriving Neighbourhoods
 - Belonging
 - Free to Explore
 - Literacy Champion
 - A Strong Foundation for the Future
- This plan does not represent a complete reimagination, but builds on the current, very successful plan.

The Board was very supportive of the direction and look of the Strategic Plan in development and looks forward to seeing the final version within the next coming weeks.

6.0 In Camera Session

At this time, Sue Murtagh put forward a motion to move in camera. This motion was seconded by Laura Godsoe.

Motion approved.

With no further business, Ayo Aladejebi adjourned the meeting.