



Halifax Regional Library Board

Meeting - Minutes

Halifax Central Library
Thursday, October 30, 2025
4:30-6:00pm

Present

Sue Murtagh, (Chair for this meeting)

Mary Ann Rowlston

Laura Godsoe

Laura White

Killian McParland

Ayo Aladejebi

Tony Mancini

Christian Browne

Åsa Kachan

Mairead Barry

Dave MacNeil

Alison Lucio

Jan Jensen

Kassondra Torraville (union observer)

1.0 Call to Order & Welcome

Ayo Aladejebi called the meeting to order and added that it was very nice to see everyone during such a busy time. Ayo thanked everyone for making themselves available for the meeting.

2.0 Approval of Agenda & Minutes

Killian McParland put forward a motion to approve the agenda as circulated. This motion was seconded by Mary-Ann Rowlston.

Motion approved.

Mary-Ann Rowlston put forward a motion to approve the minutes of September 2025 as circulated. This motion was seconded by Laura White.

Motion approved.

3.0 Chair's Message

Board Chair Ayo Aladejebi shared that it is 'difficult to believe that October is wrapping up' as time

is moving quickly and we will soon be heading into the cooler days. The Board Chair shared that he is thankful and considers it surprising that this iteration of the Board has been together for a year doing impactful work supporting the Library. Ayo shared that since becoming Chair of the Library Board, he has certainly received a better understanding and appreciation for Åsa and all Library staff who are doing this wonderful work. Ayo drew board members' attention to the HRM accessibility Town Hall event being held on November 5 at Central Library 6:30-8:30pm. The advisory committee will present on the initiatives and plans for the future for the municipality.

4.0 Chief Librarian & CEO Report

Åsa Kachan provided a verbal update. Highlights included:

- She provided thanks to everyone for attending on the Board Retreat on Sunday. Everyone's participation and the engagement and interest was high and very much appreciated. There is incredible value talking about risk and discussing how the Library might respond.
- Library branches are BUSY and programs remain popular.
- Shout out to Kassondra Torraville for her and team for all of their work providing exceptional program offerings.
- The organization is working on finalization of a Social Impact Study. The first draft of the report has been received. The final version of this document will be brought to the board for review and discussion.
- Management is busy continuing to work with the finance team at HRM discussing pressures, etc. as the budget target is being set and business plans being crafted. . Thank you to Mairead and Shannon who do so much with this.
- Timeline for budgeting this year has been pulled forward. Meeting in early December (before Nov 11). Hoping for the Dec 5 for the Board meeting to approve the Business Plan, but this date may be impacted.
- Excited to be welcoming Megan Gainer back from maternity leave. Thank you to Mairead who has stepped in with facilities oversight.Example of all of the ways Mairead steps up. Great support to Megan and that team.

5.0 Board Committee Reports

5.1 Board Executive

The Board Executive did not meet between meetings.

5.2 Finance, Audit & Risk Committee

Mary-Ann Rowlston provided an update.

- Spoke to the AFS
- KPMG presented this to the FAR Committee last week.
- Highlights – clean audit and no errors or omissions.
- Risk listed of management over-ride of data – This risk is present in ALL entities and is listed with all organizations.
- KPMG assessed other risks as low – clean audit opinion.
- GOLD STANDARD. 😊

- The AFS attached – balance sheet is stable year over year.
- No major shifts
- Income statement, as Shannon has advised us – we would be very close to balance and this is what is reflected in the balance sheet.
- Some expenses with high admin relates to post-strike payments.
- Standard note disclosures.
- FA&R

Page 11- Capital Breakdown appreciation question -

The Library has an evergreen practices with computers so they are refreshed on a regular basis. Automated pushes, etc. It also has to do with the rate of depreciation of computer assets. This is a continual process. We also work with the procurement office of HRM to ensure we have an efficient standing order.

Thank you to Shannon and her team for the heavy lift of the audit. We appreciate this of her. No surprises. Landed right where we said we would land.

Mary-Ann Rowlston / Sue Murtagh

THAT the Halifax Regional Library Board approve the Audited Financial Statements as put forward by the Finance, Audit & Risk Committee, and provided by KPMG.

5.3 Planning & Performance Committee

The Board Executive did not meet between meetings.

6.0 In Camera

With Staff:

Facilities Update

Facilities Template going to P&P for review/approval. We have a lot of branches in state of flux.

- Dartmouth North has an opening plan that is taking shape. Estimation of opening early in the new year. Might be moving into Rec space first
- Halifax North – moving forward. Two full days of work with the team and the media has started. Design-build team. Upcoming community events planned – board members are welcome to attend any of the events. **ALISON TO SEND ALONG? 22nd and ??**
- Contract for Regional Shared Facility signed. This prompts the interior design and build-out.
- Verbal agreement on café contracts. Asa has signed and we are waiting for their signatures. She said the name. Opening date to be announced. We will know a little better once we know their anticipated changes.
- Woodlawn – sewer back up. The main pipe is broken in one place and plumbers are there repairing. Hopeful they can complete the work today.
- Final Two kiosks – East Dartmouth Community Centre and other community office in MValley office. Thank you to Dave's team.
- Minor risk update – banking request change made. Was stopped at HRM due to

safeguards in place. Thanks to the HR team as well. Interesting – cyber fraud always

- Thank you to Alison to planning the retreat.
- Do you want a survey?

Ayo – current mobile library – how is it working out? It's small. Better than nothing, but they miss the branch. It's restricted and we are keen to move into the rec space – anxious to move inside before the winter weather. Team also is doing work outside of the trailer and in the schools (lunch hours, etc.)

Feedback from staff is that it is challenging but the public is incredibly respectful and takes turns, etc. Still getting complaints that we aren't open – we are missed in the community for sure.

We will have been closed for about a year at Dartmouth North from this sewer break. This highlights the fragility of our municipal systems and the pressure being put on them.

How do we keep people abreast of what is happening/concerns for the public?

Communications team working with HRM on announcements.

How is it decided where the kiosks go? Look at where we have neighbourhoods where there isn't ready access to a branch. Gaps of service and who can host it – reliable Wi-Fi, etc. Reasonable security, etc. pop-up adjacent programming possible?

COME TO THE BOARD WITH A ONE-PAGER REGARDING THE KIOSKS with locations, data, etc.

7.0 Adjournment