



Halifax Regional Library Board

Meeting - Minutes

Halifax Central Library
Thursday, September 18, 2025
4:30-7:30pm

Present

Sue Murtagh, (Chair for this meeting)

Mary Ann Rowlston

Jan Jensen

Laura Godsoe

Laura White

Åsa Kachan

Mairead Barry

Dave MacNeil

Alison Lucio

Kassondra Torraville (union observer)

Regrets

Ayo Aladejebi

Christian Browne

Tony Mancini

Killian McParland

1.0 Call to Order & Welcome

Sue Murtagh called the meeting to order.

2.0 Approval of Agenda and Minutes

Laura Godsoe put forward a motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of the Library Board of July 2025. This motion was seconded by Mary Ann Rowlston.

Motion approved.

3.0 Chair's Message

Vice Chair Sue Murtagh provided an update as part of her welcome to the meeting. As Board Chair Ayo Aladejebi was unable to attend the meeting, Vice Chair Sue Murtagh Chaired the meeting of the Library Board. Sue shared her concern regarding recent events in the United States regarding

the deterioration of free speech. Sue added the importance and relevance of public libraries has never been greater, as public libraries throughout North America are the 'last bastions' of freedom and democracy. It remains incredibly important to continue the work of the public library.

4.0 Chief Librarian & CEO Report

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

- Ryan Dowd visited the Library again to provide exceptional training for library staff and community partners. This empathy-based training resonates incredibly well with library staff.
- The Summer Reading program participation was excellent.
- Åsa reported that she has been continuing to meet with Councillors to talk about library services in their districts as well as Regional initiatives and the recently launched Strategic Plan.
- It has been announced that Brad Anguish will be temporarily replacing Cathie O'Toole as CAO.
- Dartmouth North remains closed while remediation occurs. There is currently a portable trailer onsite to provide limited service to the community during this time.

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 Library remains over budget with respect to compensation. Auditors, KPMG, will be in attendance at the next meeting of the Finance, Audit & Risk Committee to provide the audit results and presentation. Thank you to Shannon McAllister and the Finance team who all worked incredibly diligently throughout the audit process.

5.3 Planning & Performance Committee

5.3.1 Standing Agenda Item – Recommendation

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 the recommendation and discussion.

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

Mary Ann Rowlston put forward the following motion:

THAT the Halifax Regional Library Board add “Facility Projects” as a standing agenda item to all future board meetings of the full Board.

This motion was seconded by Laura Godsoe.

Motion approved.

5.3.2 Workplace Violence Prevention Policy & Respectful Workplace Policy

Sue Murtagh provided an update on this work to the full Board. There was a briefing note included in the Board package that outlined the request and the changes that were made to both the Respectful Workplace Policy and the updated Workplace Violence Prevention Policy.

Committee Chair Sue Murtagh thanked staff for their work with these policies. Thank you especially to Lori MacNeil and the HR team and to Board member Killian McParland.

Laura White put forward the following motion:

THAT the Halifax Regional Library Board accept the Workplace Violence Prevention Policy and Respectful Workplace Policy with the friendly amendment to outline the changes made to the policy to the end of the policy for ease of use and interpretation.

Motion approved.

6.0 In Camera

At this time, Sue Murtagh thanked Union Representative Kassondra Torraville for attending the business meeting of the Library Board.

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

Motion approved.

7.0 Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned.