



Halifax Regional Library Board

Meeting - Minutes

Halifax Central Library
Thursday, January 22, 2026
4:30-7:00pm

Present

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

Regrets

Killian McParland
Tony Mancini

Staff

Åsa Kachan
Mairead Barry
Kevin Crick
Janice Fiander
Kathleen Morris
Megan Gainer
Dave MacNeil
Ken Williment
Alison Lucio

1.0 Call to Order & Approval of Agenda and Minutes

Ayo Aladejebi, Library Board Chair, called the meeting to order and welcomed members to the first meeting of the Library Board for 2026.

Laura White put forward a motion to approve the agenda of the meeting of January 22, 2026. This motion was seconded by Mary-Ann Rowlston.

Motion approved.

Mary-Ann Rowston put forward a motion to approve the minutes of the December 2025 meeting of the Library Board. This motion was seconded by Sue Murtagh.

Motion approved.

2.0 Chair's Report

Board Chair Ayo Aladejebi welcomed Library Board members to the first meeting of the year, noting how quickly January had passed and expressing enthusiasm for the opportunities ahead in 2026.

Chair Aladejebi spoke about the upcoming African Heritage Month, noting that his first formal involvement with the Library had been through this important commemoration. He thanked Library staff for continuing to lead and support meaningful programming and community engagement during the month.

The theme for this year's African Heritage Month is "Strength in Unity." The Board Chair noted that this theme serves as a reminder of the importance of working collectively and ensuring the Library continues to grow alongside the diverse communities it serves across the region.

Board members were encouraged to attend the many events taking place throughout the month, including:

- The Provincial Launch at the Black Cultural Centre on January 22.
- The Official HRM Launch at Halifax Central Library on January 28, delivered in partnership with the Library. Chair Aladejebi noted that he would be speaking at this event and invited Board members to attend.

Members were also encouraged to review the Library's website for a full listing of African Heritage Month programs and events.

3.0 Board Committee Reports

3.1 Board Executive

The Board Executive Committee did not meet between Board meetings.

3.2 Finance, Audit & Risk Committee

Finance, Audit & Risk Committee Chair Mary-Ann Rowston provided an update to the Board.

Committee Chair Rowston thanked Library staff for their work in preparing a comprehensive briefing note regarding proposed updates to Library-generated revenue fees. The proposed changes include adjustments to several fees while maintaining the ability to waive or reduce fees in circumstances where equity considerations apply.

Mary-Ann Rowston put forward the following motion:

THAT the Halifax Regional Library Board approve the proposed adjustments to Library-generated revenue fees as presented.

This motion was seconded by Laura Godsoe.

Discussion included remarks from Chief Librarian & CEO Åsa Kachan, who noted that Council had previously asked departments and Business Units to consider areas where revenue increases might help offset potential tax increases. The proposed fee adjustments were therefore incorporated into the Library's submitted municipal budget. Ms. Kachan noted that staff worked carefully to ensure the process was straightforward while maintaining fairness and accessibility.

Motion approved.

Ms. Rowston also provided an update on the Library's financial results to December, which were included in the meeting package. Compensation continues to track over as expected due to the vacancy management targets set by HRM. This number was established based on 2024-25 actuals (when Keshen Goodman was under renovation); HRM Finance has been aware of this since the budget was set that this target would not be met this year with the return to full service of Keshen Goodman. In addition, approximately \$250,000 of savings in lease costs of the Regional Library Shared Facility will be re-directed toward fit-up costs for the space.

The Committee noted that there were no unexpected financial concerns.

3.3 Planning & Performance Committee

The Planning & Performance Committee did not meet between Board meetings.

4.0 Chief Librarian & CEO Report

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

- Ms. Kachan thanked the Chair for highlighting African Heritage Month and encouraged Board members to attend upcoming programs and events. She acknowledged the significant work of Library staff and community partners in organizing these activities.
- Ms. Kachan shared that she recently met with MLA Dave Ritcey, along with Councillor Tony Mancini and former Library Board member and MLA Tim Outhit, to discuss Library funding and the important role the Library plays in the community. The meeting was positive and constructive.
- The Board was advised that the Halifax North Library project continues to advance. A special information session of the Board will be scheduled in mid-February to review

preliminary design concepts and provide Board members with an opportunity to see the proposed plans.

- Management noted that if Board members are unable to attend the information session, individual briefings can be arranged to ensure all members have the opportunity to review the design work for this important project.

5.0 In Camera

Laura Godsoe put forward a motion to move to the in-camera portion of the meeting to discuss the following:

- Library Funding Update and Overview
- Facilities Update

This motion was seconded by Sue Murtagh.

Motion approved.

6.0 With no further business, the meeting was adjourned.