



**Halifax Regional Library Board
Meeting Minutes
Zoom (Videoconference)
February 8, 2023**

Present

Marika Warren, Vice Chair
Emily Miller
Heather Rose
Linda MacKay
Tony Mancini
Kathryn Morse
Chi Harris
Erin Wynn
Christian Browne

Staff Present

Åsa Kachan
Mairead Barry
Megan Gainer
Alison Lucio
Ashley Lorette

Regrets

Kim Brooks, Chair

1.0 Call to Order/Approval of Agenda

Marika Warren, Vice Chair, called the meeting to order.

Linda MacKay put forward a motion to approve the agenda as circulated. This motion was seconded by Emily Miller.

Motion approved.

Approval of Minutes of December 15, 2022

Heather Rose put forward a motion to approve the minutes of December 15, 2022 as circulated. This motion was seconded by Kathryn Morse.

Motion approved.

2.0 Chair's Welcome

Marika Warren informed everyone that Board Chair Kim Brooks has sent their regrets, and may join later in the meeting if possible.

Marika Warren shared with the Board that the CEO Evaluation process and content is being considered, and more will come to the Board in future.

3.0 Chief Librarian & CEO Report

Åsa Kachan provided an update to the Board regarding a number of issues. Highlights included:

- Ashley Lorette has been named as Director of People & Culture. Ashley introduced herself to the Board and provided a brief biography. Ashley shared that she most recently was Director of Human Resources at NSCAD University, and also has municipal HR experience. She holds CPHR designation and has a Master of Public Administration. Ashley shared that she is looking forward to her work with the Library.
- Åsa provided an update on the recent challenges the Library experienced over the weekend during the extreme cold temperatures. Dartmouth North remains closed as there was a burst pipe. Keshen Goodman encountered a burst pipe in the women's washroom, and leakage occurred at Woodlawn as well. Åsa expressed that the built environment is an integral part of providing library service, and she is concerned about the ability for the Library to respond to building issues, due to reductions made to the Library's general buildings capital account. Director of Facilities, Megan Gainer shared that she is looking at energy retrofitting various building envelopes of Library assets as a means of reducing vulnerability in extreme weather.
- Keshen Goodman renovations are moving somewhat slower than planned. The Library team meets regularly with the project leads and builders to keep apprised of any developments and impacts.
- Åsa shared that she hosted a meeting at Central Library with the recently newly appointed CAO, Cathie O'Toole. There was excellent conversation and plans for a regular meeting schedule.
- The OLA Conference (Ontario Library Conference) was recently held in Toronto. The Library sent five individuals to the conference. This conference represents the largest library conference in Canada with many national meetings and great education sessions. There was one particularly interesting session regarding how to harness various sets of library data to provide improved service. The Library will be reaching out to the presenters of the session to explore the possibility of meeting with the Library's leaders to see how this framework can be applied at HPL.
- Åsa Kachan was a recent guest on Peter Mansbridge's podcast to speak about Intellectual Freedom and the Freedom to Read week. She also was a recent guest on Maritime Noon to speak on the impact of public libraries.
- Manager of Halifax North Memorial Branch, Randolph White, was recognized by the CBC as a Black Changemaker. Congratulations, Randolph!

4.0 Board Committee Reports

4.1 Board Executive

The Board Executive Committee did not meet.

4.2 Finance, Audit & Risk Committee

The Finance, Audit & Risk Committee met earlier this week. The full Board was invited to attend the meeting to review and provide input to the Library's Business Plan and Budget Presentation. Linda MacKay thanked everyone for making themselves available.

Director of Strategy, Mairead Barry, spoke at a high level to the Business Plan and presentation that was included in the package and presented at the recent meeting of the Finance, Audit & Risk Committee. Highlights included:

- The budgeting process was challenging this year, as financials are tight.
- Due to increasing costs in many areas, this slight budget decrease may be challenging to meet.
- All budget line items were scrutinized, and budgets in many areas were scaled back to realize savings.
- As part of the Budget Adjustment List, the Library will present Council with the option of reducing the collection budget (as this is one of the only areas without fixed spending requirements), as well as a request for a budget increase to the collection budget. The collection is currently underfunded, and HRM has a higher library use-rate per capita. To meet the national average for collections holdings would require an approximately \$4M investment.
- The compensation budget includes \$1M in vacancy management.
- The Library is experiencing a continued growth in providing spaces, programming, and support for newcomers. We hear from many that Halifax Public Libraries is an imperative support in this regard – more now than ever.

Linda MacKay, Chair of Finance, Audit & Risk, put forward the following motion:

THAT the Halifax Regional Library Board approve the 2022-23 Library Operating Budget and Budget Presentation as provided.

This motion was seconded by Kathryn Morse.

Motion approved.

Manager of Finance, Shannon Robilliard, provided an update to the Board regarding the financials as provided in the meeting package. The Library continues to forecast to a balanced year-end position.

4.3 Planning & Performance

Marika Warren, Chair of the Planning & Performance Committee, provided an update to the Board regarding the recent meeting of the Committee. The Committee received an update regarding the timing of the Strategic Plan; this timeline was provided to the Full Board as part of the meeting package. The Committee and Board shared their support for the timeline and proposed approach, which begins with public consultations. Further updates will be provided to the Board as the work progresses.

5.0 In Camera Session

At this time, Marika Warren put forward a motion to move to an in-camera session. This was seconded by Linda MacKay.

Motion approved.

6.0 Adjournment

Marika Warren put forward a motion to adjourn the meeting. This motion was seconded and approved.

Motion approved.