

# **Western Counties Regional Library**

## **Board Meeting Minutes**

**June 19, 2025**

The regular quarterly meeting of the Western Counties Regional Library Board was held on Thursday, June 19, 2025 in the Community Room of the Izaak Walton Killam Memorial Library building in Yarmouth, Nova Scotia.

### **Present:**

Councillor Sherry Thorburn Irvine, Board Chair, Municipality of Shelburne.

Councillor Kathy Bourque, Municipality of Argyle.

Councillor Réanne Evans, Municipality of Clare.

Councillor George Manzer, Municipality of Digby.

Councillor Phil Mooney, Municipality of Yarmouth.

Mayor Clay Kenney, Town of Clark's Harbour.

Councillor Elizabeth Acker, Town of Shelburne.

Councillor Belle Hatfield, Town of Yarmouth.

Clifford Hood, Yarmouth Public Library & Museum.

Erin Comeau, Secretary – Treasurer.

### **Present via Zoom:**

Councillor William McCormick, Town of Digby.

Councillor Candace Malik, Town of Lockeport.

### **Regrets:**

Councillor Amy MacKinnon, Municipality of Barrington.

### **1. Call to Order.**

The Board Chair, Sherry Thorburn Irvine calls the meeting to order at 2:12 pm. and welcomes everyone to the meeting.

## **2. Adoption of the Agenda.**

There being no additions to the agenda, Phil Mooney moves and Belle Hatfield seconds the adoption of the agenda. Motion carried.

## **3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting.**

The minutes of the March 20, 2025 board meeting are circulated.

Erin addresses edits, correcting the dates and spelling. Belle Hatfield moves and George Manzer seconds the approval of the March 20, 2025 board meeting minutes, with corrections. Motion carried.

## **4. Business arising from the minutes.**

### **4.1 Communications RE: Library Funding (See 10.2)**

This item will be addressed later in the meeting.

## **5. Chair's Report.**

Sherry Thorburn Irvine reads her report. She calls for councillors to advocate for libraries in consultation with Erin. She also reports that the Library Boards Association of Nova Scotia (LBANS) has dissolved. Each region will receive some funds from LBANS once the dissolution is complete. These funds have not yet been received and discussions on how to spend the funds will be addressed later in the meeting.

## **6. Director's Report.**

Erin expresses her concerns over informing stakeholders about the upcoming service reductions due to inadequate funding. More about public relations will be discussed later in the meeting. She reviews the Management Activities 2024-2025 Annual Report. She points out that her and Shannon will likely not be able to accomplish much this year in terms of new projects since they will be doing the bookkeeping while bookkeeping services are reviewed.

## **7. Financial Statement.**

The May 31, 2025 Financial Statement was circulated. Erin makes a note that this will be the format that the board will be receiving financial reports going forward. Clifford

Hood moves and Candace Malik seconds to accept the May 31, 2025 Financial Statement as submitted. Motion carried.

**8. Review of Proposed 2025-2026 Budget.**

The Audit, Risk and Finance Committee presents a balanced budget which includes reductions in book/materials purchasing and branch coverage hours. Candace Malik expresses concerns over the potential frequency of closures in one-person branches if coverage hours are significantly reduced. Erin explains that these closures are already happening when there are staff shortages. The reduction in coverage hours will be considered regionwide and all efforts will be made to fairly allocate available coverage hours for planned absences.

Clifford Hood moves and Phil Mooney seconds the approval of the 2025-2026 Budget as presented. Motion Carried.

**9. Review of Plain Language Policies.**

The plain language translations for the Art Exhibit Policy, Community Rooms Policy and Fax Charges Policy are reviewed. Belle Hatfield moves and Phil Mooney seconds the approval of the plain language policies as presented. Motion carried.

## **10. New Business.**

### **10.1 Management Activities 2025-2026.**

Erin presents the Management Activities for 2025-2026. Kathy Bourque moves and George Manzer seconds the approval of the Management Activities 2025-2026. Motion carried.

### **10.2 Board Communications regarding funding situation.**

A discussion is held on the WCRL Communications Strategy that Erin previously circulated. Erin asks the board to review the letter for municipalities. A few edits are made.

Erin recommends that the funds that WCRL will receive from LBANS be used to hire a Public Relations Consultant to help develop a stakeholder communications strategy in response to current funding challenges and what these challenges could mean for the future of library services in the region. Candace Malik moves and Kathy Bourque seconds that the funds from LBANS be used to hire a Public Relations Consultant to help Erin develop a stakeholder communications strategy. Motion carried.

A discussion is held on Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities (NSFM) role in moving the library funding review forward. Sherry Thorburn Irvine encourages board members to get their councils to send directives to NSFM to advocate for libraries.

## **11. Other.**

Kathy Bourque, Chair of the Audit, Risk and Finance Committee, reports that the ARF Committee had a pre-audit meeting with Andrew Perkins (White Perkins Associates) on April 14 to discuss the 2024-25 audit. The committee met again with Andrew on June 5 to review the draft financial statements. They also reviewed the proposed 2025-2026 budget, management service awards and mutual funds.

Kathy Bourque moves and Clifford Hood seconded the management service award for the public relations manager be paid in full at the value of his retirement date. Motion carried.

Kathy Bourque moves Elizabeth Acker seconds the remaining managers be paid out their management service award based on the obligations accrued as of March 31, 2025 financial statement. Motion carried.

Kathy Bourque moves and Clifford Hood seconds the RBC Select Very Conservative Portfolio – Series A Fund Charitable Association be transferred to the Literacy Legacy Fund. William McCormick indicated a conflict of interest and abstained from voting on this motion. Motion carried.

**12. Around the Table.**

None

**13. Next Meeting.**

The next quarterly board meeting will be held on Thursday, September 25, 2025 at 1:00 pm in the Community Room of the Izaak Walton Killam Memorial Library.

**14. Adjournment.**

The meeting adjourns at 3:15 pm.