

Western Counties Regional Library

Board Meeting Minutes

September 25, 2025

The regular quarterly meeting of the Western Counties Regional Library Board was held on Thursday, September 25, 2025 in the Community Room of the Izaak Walton Killam Memorial Library building in Yarmouth, Nova Scotia.

Present:

Councillor Kathy Bourque, Municipality of Argyle.

Councillor George Manzer, Municipality of Digby.

Councillor Phil Mooney, Municipality of Yarmouth.

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 Réanne Evans, Municipality of Clare.

Councillor Candace Malik, Town of Lockeport.

Regrets:

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

Councillor Amy MacKinnon, Municipality of Barrington.

Mayor Clay Kenney, Town of Clark's Harbour.

Councillor William McCormick, Town of Digby.

1. Call to Order.

The Vice-Chair, Phil Mooney calls the meeting to order at 1:00 pm. and welcomes everyone to the meeting.

2. Adoption of the Agenda.

There being no additions to the agenda, Elizabeth Acker moves and Kathy Bourque seconds the adoption of the agenda. Motion carried.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting.

The minutes of the June 19, 2025 board meeting are circulated. Belle Hatfield moves and George Manzer seconds the approval of the June 19, 2025 board meeting minutes. Motion carried.

4. Business arising from the minutes.

4.1 Communications Plan RE: Library Funding.

Erin Comeau indicates that a public relations company was hired to help develop a stakeholder communication roadmap regarding potential service cuts due to insufficient funding. Erin will present the plan to the Board at the December board meeting. Some municipalities sent letters to the Minister to urge the Province of Nova Scotia to review the library funding formula. The plan will thank those municipal units who sent letters of support. The plan will also thank the Province for the bridge funding received for this fiscal year.

5. Chair's Report.

Sherry Thorburn Irvine is unable to attend today's meeting as she is travelling. She sent a message via email that the library remains stable for 2025-2026. She met with CUPE in July and will be meeting again October 17 for a wage re-opener. Bridge funding is in place for 2025-2026.

6. Director's Report.

Erin Comeau circulated the Management Activities. Shannon Raynard and Erin will continue to do bookkeeping until the end of the fiscal year. Ian White will be retiring the end of December and will not be replaced at that time. Breanne Muise was hired as Community Outreach Manager for the next 3 years and will take over some of the PR Manager's duties until further funding is in place.

7. Financial Statement.

The August 31, 2025 Trial Balance report was circulated. Kathy Bourque moves and Réanne Evans seconds to accept the August 31, 2025 Financial Statement as submitted. Motion carried.

8. Audit, Risk and Finance Committee Chair's Meeting Report

8.1 Bookkeeping Recommendations.

White Perkins Associates conducted an evaluation to identify alternatives available to fill the role of bookkeeper. Four alternatives were identified and it is recommended to outsource bookkeeping services to the same firm used by AVRL and CBRL. It is recommended that the firm be hired to start bookkeeping services April 1, 2026. The bookkeeping for the Charitable Association will remain in-house. Kathy Bourque moves and George Manzer seconds that WCRL outsource bookkeeping services to the firm used by AVRL and CBRL. Motion carried.

8.2 Review Reserve Accounts.

Erin Comeau inquired at the bank regarding high interest savings account for the reserve fund currently in the cash account. Clifford Hood moves and Belle Hatfield seconds that the cash that is in the reserve fund in the general account be put in a high interest savings account. Motion carried.

8.3 Budget Review and Recommendations.

After a review of the 2026-27 budget, Kathy Bourque moves and George Manzer seconds that the 2026-27 budget (Actual Proposed) be approved as presented. Motion carried.

8.4 External Audit Services Proposal.

Elizabeth Acker moves and Clifford Hood seconds that the Board accept White Perkins Associates' proposal for auditing services for fiscal years 2025-26, 2026-27 and 2027-28. Motion carried.

9. New Business.

9.1 Sponsorship Agreement.

At the September 2024 board meeting, the Board approved sponsoring the Deputy Director so that she could complete her Masters in Library and Information Studies. Erin Comeau presents the sponsorship agreement for review. Clifford Hood moves and Elizabeth Acker seconds the approval of the Sponsorship and Service Agreement as presented. Motion carried.

9.2 Policy Review.

A package of six public policies to review was circulated. There will be 14 more to review as part of the plain language public policy project. A discussion was held on the Naming of Library Branches and Buildings. It was agreed that Erin Comeau draft guidelines for naming libraries in the future. The draft will be presented to the Audit Risk and Finance Committee later in the year 2026. Belle Hatfield moves and Candace Malik seconds approving the policy packages, except for the Privacy Policy which will be reviewed with Clifford Hood's recommended changes at the December meeting. Motion Carried.

10. Around the Table.

No Around the Table.

11. Next Meeting.

The next quarterly board meeting will be held on Thursday, December 11, 2025 at 1:00 pm in the Community Room of the Izaak Walton Killam Memorial Library.

12. Adjournment.

The meeting adjourns at 2:02 pm.