

Western Counties Regional Library

Board Meeting Minutes

December 11, 2025

Present:

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

Councillor Kathy Bourque, Municipality of Argyle.

Councillor George Manzer, Municipality of Digby.

Councillor Phil Mooney, Municipality of Yarmouth.

Mayor Clay Kenney, Town of Clark's Harbour.

Councillor William McCormick, Town of Digby.

Councillor Belle Hatfield, Town of Yarmouth.

Clifford Hood, Yarmouth Public Library & Museum.

Erin Comeau, Secretary – Treasurer.

Present via Zoom:

Councillor Amy MacKinnon, Municipality of Barrington.

Councillor Réanne Evans, Municipality of Clare.

Regrets:

Councillor Candace Malik, Town of Lockeport.

Councillor Elizabeth Acker, Town of Shelburne.

1. Call to Order.

The Chair, Sherry Thorburn Irvine, 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, Belle Hatfield moves and Phil Mooney seconds the adoption of the agenda. Motion carried.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting.

The minutes of the September 25, 2025 board meeting are circulated. Belle Hatfield moves and Phil Mooney seconds the approval of the September 25, 2025 board meeting minutes. Motion carried.

4. Business arising from the minutes.

4.1 Communications Strategy – CORL Update and discussion

Erin reports that the Council or Regional Librarians discussed communication strategies that will help regional libraries demonstrate the value of their services. Erin will start working on budget scenarios in the new year to present to the board in March. Multiple scenarios will be presented including one with reduced funding. Public communications about the future of library services will depend on financial decisions for the fiscal year 2026-2027. Erin noted that the headquarters space no longer meets the library's operating needs and that significant renovations are required. The WCRL will need to fund these renovations. A more in-depth discussion on budget and spending will be held at the March 2026 board meeting.

4.2 Guidelines for Naming of Buildings

Erin notes that the development of the guidelines are postponed until other priorities including transitioning the bookkeeping services, reviewing the operational needs for headquarters and developing budget scenarios are met. The guidelines will be kept on the agenda until the 2026-2027 Management Activities are approved by the board.

5. Chair's Report.

Sherry noted that board members, our Executive Director and staff continues to serve residents with quality programming and services, despite many challenges. Prioritizing our core services remain at the heart of what we do as a library system in Southwest Nova Scotia. The Board remains committed to ensuring good governance and support to our Executive Director. She looks forward to the 2026-2027 fiscal year when all regional libraries in the province will be positioning their libraries to adapt to the current provincial funding reality that we face collectively, as sustainable provincial funding remains the goal.

6. Director's Report.

With Management staff down from 8 to 6, some duties have been redistributed in order to keep core operations going. Erin notes that a number of the 2025-2026 Management Activities have been postponed due to the redistribution of duties and staff capacity constraints.

7. Approval of the Financial Statement.

Erin presents the October 31, 2025 trial balance report. She notes that the staff wage increases and the retroactive pay were paid in November and will only appear in the November trial balance. Phil Mooney moves and Kathy Bourque seconds to accept the October 31, 2025 Financial Statement as submitted. Motion carried.

8. HR Governance Committee Chair's Meeting Report

Belle Hatfield, Chair of the HR Governance Committee, indicates that the HR Governance Committee met on November 27 to review two policies.

8.1 Respectful Workplace and Harassment Prevention Policy

Belle indicates that after review, the HR Governance Committee recommends approval from the board. Belle Hatfield moves and Phil Mooney seconds to accept the Respectful Workplace and Harassment Prevention Policy as presented. Motion carried.

8.2 Employee Code of Conduct Policy

Belle indicates that after review, the HR Governance Committee recommends approval from the Board. Belle Hatfield moves and George Manzer seconds to accept the Employee Code of Conduct Policy as presented. Motion carried.

8.3 Discontinued Policies

Belle indicates that after discussion, the HR Governance Committee recommends approval from the Board. George Manzer moves and Clay Kenney seconds that the following four policies be discontinued: Employee Code of Conduct, Code of Ethics, Staff Use of Library Materials and Equipment, and Political Activities by Employees.

Motion carried.

Belle notes that the HR Governance Committee also discussed the need to develop a performance review process for the Executive Director. A committee will be formed to do this.

8.4 Board Orientation Package

Erin indicates that she created a Board Orientation Package based on the information that is in the WCRL Information Booklet for Municipal Councillors. The new sections in the orientation package are: Conduct, Conflict of Interest and Supporting Documents. All new board members will receive this package as part of their orientation.

Belle Hatfield moves and Kathy Bourque seconds the approval of the WCRL Board Orientation Package. Motion carried.

A discussion was held on adding "Declaration of Conflict of Interest" to the board agenda, following "Adoption of Agenda". Also discussed was adding "In Camera" before "Adjournment". All agreed it was a good idea to add these two items to future agendas.

9. New Business.

9.1 Public Policy Review.

Six public policies are presented for review. They are: Privacy Policy, Volunteers, Photography and Video in the Library, Library Use and Behaviour Code, Children in the Library and Fundraising. Belle Hatfield moves and Phil Mooney seconds that all six public policies be approved as amended. Motion carried.

10. Other.

Erin indicates that the library still has one cashable GIC in the bank with a lower interest rate than what is offered through the library's High Interest Savings Account (HISA). She would like to cash the GIC and move it to the HISA to simplify bookkeeping and generate more funds for the library. Kathy Bourque moves and Belle Hatfield seconds

that the Library's cashable GIC be cashed and placed in the Library's. High Interest Savings Account. Motion carried.

11. Around the Table. - none

12. Next Meeting – proposed date.

The next quarterly board meeting date is Thursday, March 19, 2026 at 1:00 pm.

13. Adjournment.

The meeting adjourns at 2:05 pm.