

Western Counties Regional Library

Board Meeting

December 8, 2022

The regular quarterly meeting of the Western Counties Regional Library Board was held on Thursday, December 8, 2022 in the Community Room of the IWK Memorial Library building.

Present in person:

Councillor Sherry Thorburn Irvine, Chair, Municipality of Shelburne
Councillor Kathy Bourque, Municipality of Argyle
Councillor Carl Deveau, Municipality of Clare
Ellen Burton, Yarmouth Public Library & Museum

Present via Zoom:

Councillor George Manzer, Municipality of Digby
Councillor Patti Durkee, Municipality of Yarmouth
Councillor Kent Balish, Town of Lockeport
Councillor Wade Cleveland, Town of Yarmouth
Erin Comeau, Secretary-Treasurer

Regrets received:

Shaun Hatfield, Municipality of Barrington
Councillor Louann Link, Town of Clark's Harbour
Mayor Ben Cleveland, Town of Digby
Elizabeth Acker, Town of Shelburne
Patti Simpson, Province of Nova Scotia

Vacant - Admiral Digby Library & Historical Society
Vacant - Shelburne Library Building Association
Vacant - Province of Nova Scotia

1. Call to Order

The Board Chair, Sherry Thorburn Irvine, called the meeting to order at 12:59 p.m. and thanked all the members who were able to make today's board meeting.

2. Adoption of Agenda

It was moved by Carl Deveau and seconded by Kathy Bourque:

“That the agenda be approved as presented.”

Motion carried

3. Minutes of the Previous Meetings

- 3.1 The minutes of the September 15, 2022 meeting were circulated. There being no errors or omissions, it was moved by Kent Balish and seconded by Wade Cleveland:

“That the minutes of the September 15, 2022 board meeting be approved as circulated.”

Motion carried

4. Business Arising from the Minutes

None

5. Chair’s Report

Sherry Thorburne Irvine wished to thank all the WCRL staff for the day-to-day operations that they do so well. While attending the NSLA/LBANS Conference held in Cape Breton in the fall, she saw the professionalism of library staff and how they dealt with the many challenges facing libraries today.

6. LBANS Representative Report

Sherry Thorburne Irvine reported that the LBANS Executive met with the Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage on December 6. Discussions included: the LBANS Strategic Plan; the role of LBANS; libraries deemed essential; accessibility plan; library staff stress; funding; difficulty getting provincial appointees.

7. Director’s Report

Erin Comeau introduced Shannon Raynard. She is the new Deputy Directory.

Erin’s report was circulated prior to the meeting. She emphasized that, given the small size of the organization, management often has to shift priorities as new projects are introduced. Although not included in this year’s goals and objectives, management is developing a digital literacy-training program, which they will deliver to the public in 2023. This program is in response to the needs of people who are unfamiliar with the technology that they need in order to access various government services and programs.

The Council of Regional Librarians (CORL) recently met to discuss the need to review the funding formula for libraries. CORL will work with the Department of Communities Culture Tourism and Heritage (CCTH) and provincial and municipal stakeholders to review the formula. CORL is also submitting a request for bridge funding from the province to help offset increased operating costs.

Management is reviewing staff schedules and library open hours in Barrington and Weymouth. The reviews were triggered by recent staff vacancies. Vacancies will be filled once the reviews are complete.

It was moved by Carl Deveau and seconded by Kent Balish

“That the Director’s report be accepted as circulated.”

Motion carried

8. Financial Statement

The October 31, 2022 Financial Statement was circulated.

Erin noted that while salaries and benefits expenses are a little high, this is to be expected given the recent increase in wages and salaries and the increase in the board’s contribution to the health benefits plan. If required, WCRL will use funds from its reserve account in order to balance the budget at the end of the year; however, Erin does not believe this will be necessary.

It was moved by Kathy Bourque and seconded by Kent Balish

“That the October 31, 2022 Financial Statement be approved as presented.”

Motion carried

9. Health Benefits Sub-Committee Report

Erin reported that the board’s sub-committee met in December for the first time. Initial committee tasks include reviewing multiple health benefits plan options and developing a communications and consultation plan to help guide the decision making process for the library’s future health benefits plan.

It was moved by Carl Deveau and seconded by Kent Balish:

“That the Health Benefits Sub-Committee Report be accepted as presented.”

Motion carried

10. New Business

10.1 Delivery Vehicles Discussion

The library is currently operating with one book delivery vehicle, which is now 8 years old. New small cargo vehicles are not available to purchase directly from dealerships; they must be pre-ordered. The 2022 Transit Connect that was ordered in February 2022 to replace the 8-year-old vehicle is still in the queue for production with no estimated delivery date. Given the significant delays in production, a second delivery vehicle should be ordered soon to ensure that regular operations are maintained. The board discussed the potential for ordering an electric vehicle. Concerns with the current availability of parts and repair services were brought forward and members felt that the time is not right for ordering an electric or hybrid vehicle. Electric vehicles will be considered in the future.

It was moved by Carl Deveau and seconded by Kathy Bourque:

“That the Director tender for a new vehicle by invitation to dealerships in the tri-counties who can supply a vehicle suitable to the library’s needs, and that a vehicle be purchased at a cost of up to \$60,000.”

Motion carried

10.2 Dress Code Policy

The new Dress Code Policy was reviewed and discussed. Members present were pleased with the policy as long as it allowed staff to dress appropriately and professionally for work.

It was moved by Kathy Bourque and seconded by Wade Cleveland:

“That the Dress Code policy be accepted as presented.”

Motion carried

11. Correspondence

An email was received from the Village of Westport in reply to Erin Comeau’s letter regarding re-naming the Westport Library. They look forward to hearing from the board once a Naming Policy has been implemented.

12. Other

None

13. Around the Table

None

14. Next Meeting

Thursday, March 23, 2023 at 1:00 p.m. in the Community Room of the Izaak Walton Killam Memorial Library building.

15. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 2:12 p.m.