



PRLS Board Meeting Minutes

May 16, 2024

The regular meeting of the Parkland Regional Library System Board was called to order at 10:03 a.m. on Thursday May 16, 2024 in the Small Board Room, Lacombe.

Present: Barb Gilliat, Gord Lawlor, Ray Reckseidler

Present via Zoom: Jackie Almberg, Alison Barker-Jevne, Laureen Clark-Rennie, Deb Coombes, Jaime Coston, Teresa Cunningham, Todd Dalke, Cal David, Dana Depalme, Sarah Fahey, Richard Forsberg, Elaine Fossen, Dwayne Fulton, Barbara Gibson, Twyla Hale, Kathy Hall, Pam Hansen, Cody Hillmer, Cody Johnson, Dana Kreil, Bryce Liddle, Julie Maplethorpe, Ricci Matthews, Marc Mousseau, Joy-Anne Murphy, Jordon Northcott, Jackie Northey, Jacquie Palm-Fraser, Jas Payne, Leonard Phillips, Diane Roth, Sandy Shipton, Deb Smith, Les Stulberg, Harvey Walsh, Carlene Wetthuhn, Shannon Wilcox, Bill Windsor, Janice Wing

With Regrets: Edna Coulter, Jeff Eckstrand, Stephen Levy, Shawn Peach

Absent: Jul Bissell, Doug Booker, Doug Francoeur, Darryl Motley, Ron These

Visitors: Lindsey Schmidt, Erin Switenky, Tim Field (Village of Big Valley), Trina Sather (Village of Hughenden)

Staff: Hailey Halberg, Olya Korolchuk, Paige Mueller, Tim Spark, Donna Williams

Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 10:03 a.m. by Barb Gilliat. Gilliat reviewed the ground rules of the meeting.

As part of PRLS' legislative compliance procedures, board members who send regrets are excused at the beginning of each meeting.

According to section 31 (1) of the Alberta Libraries Act,

Board member disqualification

31(1) A person is disqualified from remaining a member of a board if the person fails to attend, without being authorized by a resolution of the board to do so, three consecutive regular meetings of the board.



The following board members have sent their regrets and cannot attend today's board meeting. To ensure their continuance on the Parkland Library Board in compliance with the legislation the following motion will be made.

Motion by Gord Lawlor to excuse Edna Coulter, Jeff Eckstrand, Stephen Levy, and Shawn Peach from attendance at the board meeting on May 16, 2024 and remain a member of the Parkland Board in good standing.

CARRIED
PRLS 11/2024

1.1 Agenda

1.1.2 Adoption of the Agenda

Gilliat asked if there were any additions or deletions to the agenda. Joy-Anne Murphy mentioned that the timed agenda should be noted as approximate so that there is no motion necessary if the time allotment goes over.

Motion by Ray Reckseidler to accept the agenda as amended.

CARRIED
PRLS 12/2024

1.2. Approval of Minutes

Gilliat asked if there were any amendments to the February 22, 2024 minutes.

Motion by Gord Lawlor to approve the minutes of the February 22, 2024 meeting as presented.

CARRIED
PRLS 13/2024

1.3. Business arising from the minutes of the February 25, 2024 meeting

Gilliat asked if there was any business arising from the minutes. There was none.

2. Business Arising from the Consent Agenda

Gilliat asked if there was any business arising from the consent agenda.

Motion by Diane Roth to approve the consent agenda as presented.

CARRIED
PRLS 14/2024

3.1 Presentation of the 2023 Parkland Audit

Gilliat turned the meeting over to Lindsey Bauman and Erin Switenky from Parkland's audit company, MNP, to review and discuss any questions from the 2023 Financial Statement's and Audit Findings.



The audit statements and findings were previously presented by Lindsey Bauman and Erin Switenky at the March Executive Committee meeting where they were approved. The auditors stated that;

"In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Library as at December 31, 2023, and the results of its operations, changes in its net financial assets and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards."

Bauman noted that there is no management letter this year, or recommendations, which shows the commitment of Parkland Staff to ensuring Parkland's financial management is sound.

Motion by Gord Lawlor to receive for information.

CARRIED
PRLS 15/2024

Lindsey Bauman and Erin Switenky left the meeting at 10:41 a.m.

3.2 PRLS Membership Agreement

Gilliat reviewed. At the February board meeting there was discussion about the possibility of opening and thoroughly revising Parkland's membership agreement.

At their March 21st meeting, the Executive Committee discussed whether it should recommend opening Parkland's agreement. After much discussion, the majority of Executive Committee members present at the meeting approved a motion recommending the board leave the membership agreement as it is.

Not including staff time, or additional stakeholder meeting costs, Parkland's legal firm, Chapman Riebeek, estimated that legal costs associated with a major revision of the membership agreement would cost between \$5,000 - \$7,500.

As for timelines, Parkland's Director inquired with the other library systems which undertook changes to their agreement and one system took five years, a second took between four and five years, and a third took about one year for a single amendment.

Since legislation has changed over the years, the Public Library Services Branch with Municipal Affairs would have to review any changes to the membership agreement for legislative compliance. It would also be advisable to consult with our municipal membership to see what changes they might want since the Parkland agreement is an intermunicipal agreement.

After some discussion, it was agreed that there is nothing so outdated that the agreement needs to be changed at present.

Motion by Janice Wing to receive for information.

CARRIED
PRLS 16/2024



3.3. Employee Retention - Deb Smith

Smith reviewed her submission to the board package, talking about Parkland's product being its staff and that it is important to value and compensate the specialized staff that Parkland has.

Motion by Dana Kreil to receive for information.

CARRIED
PRLS 17/2024

3.4. PRLS Compensation Policy

Gilliat reviewed. The Parkland board passed a new compensation policy along with a new salary grid at the board meeting in November 2023. The new grid and policy will not take effect until January 2025. At the start of 2024 staff worked with the Executive Committee on how the new salary grid would be implemented since how staff are placed on the new grid would have significant budget implications.

Williams reviewed the potential changes. When examining the new compensation policy within the context of implementing the new grid, it became apparent that some clarification in the wording of the policy would be useful. Issues for revision included:

- Clarify when a staff member qualifies for a salary increase when returning from an authorized leave
- Clearly stating that adding a cost-of-living adjustment to the grid will be optional
- Removing the sentence at the end of the policy where it states that the compensation policy can only be changed at the February board meeting because the board can change its policies at any time
- Other alterations amounted to minor changes in wording designed to clarify the policy

Deb Coombes left the meeting at 10:50 a.m.

Motion by Janice Wing to approve the changes to Parkland's 4.4.10 *Cost of Living and Compensation Policy* as amended.

CARRIED
PRLS 18/2024

3.5. PRLS 2025 Budget

Williams presented the budget. In response to direction provided by the Executive Committee staff have prepared the draft 2025 budget. Some points included:

- Overall, expenditures are anticipated to increase by 1.9% in 2025.
- Now that they are being updated, switching back to Municipal Affairs Population Lists instead of the Treasury Board Estimates for invoicing municipalities resulted in a drop of 9,277 population which Parkland will no longer invoice on. Other systems are also facing a drop in the populations they are invoicing on for the same reason.



- To balance the budget, it will be necessary to increase the municipal requisition/levy by sixty-three cents.
- Had it been appropriate for Parkland to continue using the population figures supplied by the Treasury Board, the 2025 requisition would have been between forty and forty-one cents per capita lower.
- For 2025, twenty-one expense lines are projected to remain unchanged from 2024, thirteen will see increases, and four will decrease.
- The Government of Alberta has indicated operating grants will be funded at the same level as 2024. The system operating grant will remain at \$4.75 per capita and the rural library services grant at \$5.60 per capita (lines 1.1, 1.4, and 2.1).
- The new nine-step salary grid will be implemented by putting staff on the grid at the nearest dollar amount to where they are now but not lower. There will be no additional step increase and no COLA adjustment was added. The increase to the salary line equals approximately 2.8%.
- Reduced population figures mean the *Allotment Funds Issued to Libraries* and *Member Library Computer Allotment* lines (lines 2.2 and 2.11 respectively) have also been reduced.
- Internet connection fees have been increased slightly due to demands from member libraries (line 2.8)
- eContent (eBooks, eAudiobooks, etc.) has been increased slightly due to demand (line 2.19)
- Audit fees have increased because Parkland's current three-year agreement for audit services with MNP will expire and it will be necessary to review Parkland's audit service provider. For 2025, audit fees are estimated (line 3.1).
- Building Maintenance fees are up primarily due to the cost of maintaining the elevator in Parkland's headquarters (line 3.4).
- The travel line (line 3.14) has continued to drop over the years. Since Parkland started running two staff vehicles, mileage reimbursement has dropped considerably. Also, a number of food items which had been charged against the budget line are now being expended against the Workshop/Training expense line (line 2.17) when food is purchased for events for member libraries or member library staff.

All other adjustments to budget lines, up or down, are based on multi-year estimates or adjustments for inflation.

A letter from Ric McIver, the Minister of Municipal Affairs, confirming that library funding will be stable in 2025 was included in the package.

The budget with the full notes will be brought back to the board in September for formal approval. At this meeting board input is being sought as staff adjust to the return to the population figures supplied by Municipal Affairs to invoice municipalities.



Motion by Ray Reckseidler to approve the 2025 Parkland budget as presented.

CARRIED

PRLS 19/2024

3.6. Audit Policy Statement

Williams reviewed. At the May 18, 2023 meeting of the Parkland board, the following motion was made to empower the Executive Committee to review and approve Parkland's audit;

Motion by Deb Smith to change PRLS Executive Committee policy to read "The Executive Committee is responsible for reviewing and approving Parkland's audit which will be forwarded to the board at the board's next meeting".

CARRIED

PRLS 30/2023

While policy 2.6 the "Role of the Executive Committee" was updated, a further change in 4.4.4 of Parkland's audit policy statement was not updated. Since the direction and motion approved by the board was clear, Parkland has updated the wording of 4.4.4 to correctly reflect current practice and ensure policy 4.4.4 reflects the change made by the board.

Motion by Teresa Cunningham to receive for information.

CARRIED

PRLS 20/2024

3.7. Board Room Recording Equipment

Williams reviewed. With the advent of COVID-19 and Parkland's switch to virtual "Zoom" meetings, the technology allowed Parkland to record board discussions and motions. While the board opted for virtual meetings for 2024, many board members prefer in-person meetings and there is always the possibility Parkland will return to in-person board meetings in the future.

At the October 2023 Executive Committee meeting, a motion was made that all board meetings be recorded and posted publicly. For board meetings to be recorded, Parkland will either have to remain holding board meetings online in perpetuity, or implement upgrades to the board room's sound system to accommodate the recording of in-person meetings.

Parkland solicited a quote from the same audio/visual company that installed our current board room set up. The estimated cost is over \$33,000 to install recording equipment. Parkland has no budget line to pay for this upgrade, so funds would have to be provided from reserves.

The system Parkland looked at was a very inexpensive system which will also require significant additional staff training plus additional staff to operate during in-person board meetings. More sophisticated systems could be purchased, but costs could more than double.



After reviewing the matter at their January 25th meeting, Parkland's Executive Committee decided to table the decision on whether to upgrade the board room with recording equipment until after the auditors confirm if Parkland has a surplus from 2023, and if so, in what amount.

When expenditures from reserves in 2023 are taken into account, Parkland's net change in financial assets decreased by \$236,248. To site one example, the new websites developed for Parkland's libraries completed last year cost \$200,000 from the Technology Reserve. For 2024 technology purchases for Parkland and member libraries are anticipated to be over \$212,000. Parkland does not budget funds for reserves, and with reserve levels dropping, the Executive Committee needed to decide on what Parkland's spending priorities should be. Parkland only replenishes its reserves when there are budget surpluses.

The matter was discussed at the March Executive Committee meeting and they agreed that purchasing equipment for recording board meetings is not a priority at this time, especially if board meetings remain virtual.

Unless the board wants this matter pursued, no further action will be taken.

Motion by Teresa Cunningham to receive for information

CARRIED

PRLS 21/2024

3.8. Marketing and Advocacy Committee Report

Gilliat turned the meeting over to Gord Lawlor, the Chair of the Advocacy Committee.

Parkland's new Return on Investment documents are available on Parkland's website.

In past years, the sharing of resources among libraries was calculated only using the statistics for those counties with an outlet library. However, when calculating the ROI amounts for items such as materials allotment, technology savings, and the Rural Library Services Grant, the combined statistics for all area libraries were used.

Staff discussed this matter with the Advocacy Committee and the Executive Committee. Both committees voiced strong support for including the full resource sharing numbers from all the libraires in the counties for the sake of consistency.

Copies will be sent to each municipality. As board members, your advocacy assignment is to please ensure that the ROI for your member municipality is presented to council. If council or administration has any questions about their ROI that you can't answer, please have them contact Parkland directly and staff will be happy to answer any questions or meet with municipal council or administration.

On May 10th, Parkland celebrated its 65th anniversary. There was a small celebration with cake and good company. Parkland purchased some art for the occasion and gave building tours to people who hadn't visited the new building before. Thank you to everyone who came out for the get together.



Finally, included in the package was a letter drafted and distributed by the Library Association of Alberta (LAA) on the issue of the Government of Alberta's position on *Parental Rights*. This letter was sent to all major news outlets, the LAA membership, and to all Parkland libraries by LAA's President. This is the first time in living memory a library association has taken a position on a political issue in Alberta. Parkland has been a member of LAA for decades. LAA is a multi-sector library association.

Parkland's Executive and Advocacy Committees reviewed LAA's letter. Subsequently, Parkland made inquiries with our local member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) Jennifer Johnson and were informed no legislation has been drafted. This means the LAA was taking a position on legislation that does not yet exist.

In addition to sending Parkland's response letter to the LAA, it was sent to all Parkland member libraries. This is because the President of the LAA sent it to all Parkland libraries through her Parkland email account and not an LAA email address.

A response to Parkland's letter from the LAA was received on May 6th and another letter was received from the City of Camrose Public Library Board on May 7th. A response from PRLS Board Chair Barb Gilliat was sent to the Camrose Library Board on May 9th.

Joy-Anne Murphy from the City of Camrose spoke to the letter from the Camrose Public Library (CPL) Board. She voiced three concerns:

1. There seemed to be the same lack of consultation by Parkland with its libraries before writing their resignation letter as Parkland had pointed to LAA's lack of consultation with its members before distributing their original letter.
2. PRLS speaks to remaining impartial, on political or social issues. CPL believes the issue of intellectual freedom should not be categorized as political as it applies to all patrons in libraries.
3. CPL is concerned that this issue has created division, which could negatively impact Parkland's smaller libraries in regards to access to services from LAA.

Motion by Joy-Anne Murphy to bring back the issue of Parkland's LAA membership for review by the board in September.

CARRIED
PRLS 22/2024

3.9.1. Director's Report

3.9.2. Library Services Report

3.9.3. Finance & Operations Report

Gilliat asked if there were any questions regarding the Director's Report, Library Services Report, or the Finance & Operations Report. There were none.

Motion by Gord Lawlor to receive the Director's, Library Services, and Finance & Operations Report for information.

CARRIED
PRLS 23/2024



3.10. **Parkland Community Update**

Hardisty Public Library has partnered with Vision Credit Union to receive a helping hand grant for \$5,000 to provide cement steps and hand rails for the library. They also have a ground level automatic door at the side entrance to the library.

Bentley Municipal Library is celebrating their 75th anniversary on the 15th of June.

Innisfail Public Library celebrated their 120th anniversary on April 13th with a cake and time capsule. They have also launched a new program, a human library, in cooperation with the Innisfail Welcoming and Inclusive Community Committee. A resident who emigrated from Sri Lanka presented on May 15th at the library.

Camrose Public Library is starting a fund in cooperation with the Battle River Community Foundation, but needed seed money of \$10,000, which was provided by an anonymous donor. They will be adding monies to the fund in the future. They also have 3 summer students hired with help from a federal government program. Lastly, they are holding intellectual freedom training on May 27th with James Turk for the Camrose staff and library board.

Stettler Public Library have their summer student pages returning for the 4th year in a row.

Penhold and District Public Library acquired a telescope and are creating a policy to lend it out to the public. They are currently gearing up for summer reading club. The library manager and Board Chair came to Parkland's 65th anniversary and appreciated the time capsule on display.

4. **Adjournment**

Motion by Ray Reckseidler to adjourn the meeting at 11:53 a.m.

CARRIED

PRLS 24/2024

Chair