



# PRLS Board Meeting Minutes

September 12, 2024

The regular meeting of the Parkland Regional Library System Board was called to order at 10:03 a.m. on Thursday September 12, 2024 in the Small Board Room, Lacombe.

**Present:** Barb Gilliat, Gord Lawlor, Ray Reckseidler

**Present via Zoom:** Jackie Almberg, Laureen Clark-Rennie, Deb Coombes, Teresa Cunningham, Cal David, Dana Depalme, Jeff Eckstrand, Sarah Fahey, Richard Forsberg, Elaine Fossen, Shaleah Fox, Barbara Gibson, Twyla Hale, Kathy Hall, Pam Hansen, Bryce Liddle, Julie Maplethorpe, Ricci Matthews, Marc Mousseau, Joy-Anne Murphy, Jackie Northey, Jacquie Palm-Fraser, Jas Payne, Leonard Phillips, Diane Roth, Sandy Shipton, Debra Smith, Les Stulberg, Carlene Wetthuhn, Shannon Wilcox, Janice Wing

**With Regrets:** Alison Barker-Jevne, Dwayne Fulton, Dana Kreil, Naomi Tercier, Bill Windsor

**Absent:** Jul Bissell, Wayne Clark, Edna Coulter, Todd Dalke, Cody Hillmer, Cody Johnson, Stephen Levy, Jordon Northcott, Shawn Peach, Ron These, Harvey Walsh

**Staff:** Kara Hamilton, Paige Mueller, Ron Sheppard, Tim Spark

## 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.

Motion by Teresa Cunningham to excuse Alison Barker-Jevne, Dwayne Fulton, Dana Kreil, Naomi Tercier, and Bill Windsor from attendance at the board meeting on May 16, 2024 and remain a member of the Parkland Board in good standing.

CARRIED  
PRLS 25/2024

## 1.1 Agenda

### 1.1.2 Adoption of the Agenda

Gilliat asked if there were any additions or deletions to the agenda.

Motion by Len Phillips to accept the agenda as presented.

CARRIED  
PRLS 26/2024



**1.2. Approval of Minutes**

Gilliat asked if there were any amendments to the May 16, 2024 minutes. Jacquie Palm-Fraser was in attendance and requested the minutes be updated.

Motion by Ray Reckseidler to approve the minutes of the May 16, 2024 meeting as amended.

CARRIED  
PRLS 27/2024

**1.3. Business arising from the minutes of the May 16, 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 Jacquie Northey to approve the consent agenda as presented.

CARRIED  
PRLS 28/2024

**3.1 Parkland 2025 Budget**

Sheppard reviewed. The board has already seen and endorsed this budget in May, so there were no surprises. The population dropped by 9,277 due to the switch from Treasury Board Estimates back to Municipal Affairs Population Lists. Due to the switch, 18 municipalities will see a reduction in the requisition in 2025.

For 2025, the municipal requestion increase will be \$0.63 cents per capita bringing the rate to \$9.81. While the per capita rate is going up to account for the population change, overall expenditures are anticipated to increase by only 1.9% in 2025.

The current rate of inflation is running about 2.7% so Parkland’s overall increase is well below inflation.

The total estimated requisition for 2025 equals \$2,178,075 with the levy increase amounting to only \$54,713 spread over all PRLS municipalities.

Approximately 42.4% of PRLS’ income will come from Government of Alberta grants in 2025.

Motion by Deb Coombes to approve the Parkland Regional Library System 2025 budget as presented.

CARRIED  
PRLS 29/2024

**3.2 Vacant Seat on the Executive Committee**

Sheppard reviewed. In June, Parkland received notice that Jamie Coston, the Executive Committee member representing the town of Rimbey, is no longer on the Parkland Board. As such, she has also resigned from the Executive Committee. Parkland informed



Bentley, Eckville, Gull Lake, Parkland Beach, Ponoka, Ponoka County, and Rimbey (Area 5) that their seat on the Executive Committee was vacant.

Parkland sent letters to the board members of Area 5 informing them of the vacancy and offering them the option of appointing another member to the vacant seat. Parkland received one response. Marc Mousseau volunteered from the Summer Village of Parkland Beach.

Gilliat called for nominations and volunteers at the meeting but Mousseau was the only volunteer.

Motion by Cal David to appoint Marc Mousseau to the Executive Committee for Area 5.

CARRIED

PRLS 30/2024

### **3.3. PRLS Plan of Service (Strategic Plan)**

Sheppard reviewed. Recently there have been some significant changes to the Alberta Libraries Act and Regulation. Until now, library systems had to file a plan of service (strategic plan) with the Public Library Services Branch at Municipal Affairs every three years. With the changes in the legislation, plans of service for library systems can now be up to five years in length.

After having reviewed the current goals, staff believed that the current plan is still relevant and recommended the board revise the date range for the current plan from 2023-2025 to 2023-2027. This would not only give staff more time to work on achieving the plan's goals, it would also save considerable staff time and money since 2025 would be the needs assessment year were Parkland to develop a new plan commencing in 2026.

Another change in the legislation is the removal of sections 18(3)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e) from the *Libraries Regulation*. This means the board can remove the entire section labeled "*Activities that Support the Strategic Plan*" from the current plan.

Having reviewed the matter at their June meeting, the Executive Committee passed the following motion:

*Motion by Janice Wing to recommend that the board change the operational date of Parkland Regional Library System's strategic plan from 2023-2025 to 2023-2027*

CARRIED

After some discussion, the board decided to extend the operational date of Parkland's Strategic Plan from 2023-2025 to 2023-2027.

Motion by Janice Wing to approve the operational date of Parkland Regional Library System's current strategic plan from 2023-2025 to 2023-2027.

CARRIED

PRLS 31/2024



### 3.4. Board Meeting Management Working Group Report

Gilliat reviewed. Back in December 2023 the Executive Committee formed a working group to develop a policy governing board member conduct. Having met three times, their work is now complete. The working group presented a draft policy for how to deal with “Complaints Against Board Members”.

The group also shared a brief board self-assessment survey to be conducted following the September board meeting, the final board meeting before the November organizational meeting. The results of the self-assessment survey will be discussed/presented at the next Executive Committee and board meetings following the board meeting with an emphasis on making improvements where opportunities are identified.

The working group also recommended that at the October meeting of the Executive Committee, the group have an informal discussion allowing the committee to consider how effective it was over the course of the year.

There was also considerable discussion among members of the working group over whether further policy development was necessary related to board meeting conduct and management. After careful consideration, the group decided that the Board Chair is already sufficiently empowered by commonly accepted rules of governance to manage meetings effectively. As a result, the working group saw no need for a formal policy on board meeting management. However, the working group did recommend sending out a brief version of the board meeting “ground rules” with every board package.

Also, the working group commissioned the creation of a board member recruitment document so that when municipalities appoint individuals to the system board, they would have some idea of the preferred qualifications of candidates and what their role will be. This document will be sent out when Parkland communicates annually with member municipalities regarding who they are appointing to the Parkland board.

At their August 15<sup>th</sup> meeting, the Executive Committee reviewed the policy and documents provided and endorsed them all. They also passed the following motion:

*Motion by Deb Smith to recommend the board pass the “Complaints Against Board Members” policy as presented.*

*CARRIED*

The board agreed with the working group and Executive Committee regarding the recommendations for board meeting management.

Motion by Deb Smith to pass the “Complaints Against Board Members” policy as presented.

CARRIED

PRLS 32/2024



**3.5. Policy Revisions**

Sheppard reviewed the recent policy revisions. Years ago, Parkland used to have a budget line to cover legal expenses. Due to its infrequent use, this budget line was cut. The idea was that if a major legal matter arose, or should a consultant need to be hired unexpectedly, funds could be drawn from the Contingent Liability and Consultation reserve. The purpose of the reserve is:

*“To provide funds for possible severance or litigation payout not specifically covered by insurance and to pay for unbudgeted legal or other consulting services.” (See Policy 4.4.13)*

In emergency cases, finance policy 4.4.18 states:

*“The Director is authorized to move up to \$5,000 per reserve per fiscal year for unbudgeted purchases into operations... The Director will inform the Executive Committee and Board each time funds are moved from reserves to make purchases.”*

However, between 2020 and now Parkland has spent over \$84,000 in legal fees. There have been four separate human resource issues which all required legal opinions, Parkland’s IT network was compromised and while our response was immediate, legal opinions were sought on a number of matters related to data protection. Then there was also COVID-19 when Parkland had to seek legal guidance on numerous matters including employee privacy, vaccination status, mask exemptions, and other related matters. Finally, there have been numerous inquiries with our lawyer regarding our membership agreement. The aforementioned \$84,000 does not even include all our legal expenses. For example, the majority of our legal costs related to the network compromise were paid by insurance.

Since needing consultants and lawyers has become increasingly common, staff suggested to the Executive Committee that a policy be created to allow staff to expend without prior authorization above the \$5,000 limit from the Contingent Liability and Consultation Reserve. Over the last four years legal fees have been occurring regularly at widely varying levels.

**Legal Costs by Year**

2020	\$40,778
2021	\$5,908
2022	\$13,068
2023	\$15,420
2024 (to date)	\$8,980

As a result of this discussion, the Executive Committee made the following motion:

*Motion by Dana Kreil to recommend the board change the policy to read: “The Director is authorized to move up to \$5,000 per reserve per fiscal year for unbudgeted purchases into operations with the exception of the Contingent Liability and Consultation Reserve which the Director can move up to the amount of \$10,000.*

*CARRIED*

One member also recommended putting a line for legal and consulting fees in the amount of \$20,000 into the budget for 2026. However, this would have to be discussed as part of the 2026 budget deliberation process.



The board agreed that the dollar amount that the Director can access should be changed from \$10,000 to \$15,000, and that a line should be put in the 2026 budget for legal expenses. The policy will now read:

*"The Director is authorized to move up to \$5,000 per reserve per fiscal year for unbudgeted purchases into operations with the exception of the Contingent Liability and Consultation Reserve which the Director can move up to the amount of \$15,000.*

Motion by Twyla Hale to approve Policy 4.4.18. as amended.

CARRIED  
PRLS 33/2024

### **3.6. LAA Membership**

At the May board meeting, Joy-Anne Murphy made the following motion:

*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

At the March 21<sup>st</sup> Executive Committee meeting, Parkland chose not to renew its membership with the LAA.

In recent years, there has been no real benefit derived from LAA membership. In previous years, the Alberta Library Trustee Association (ALTA) and the LAA had a joint committee that arranged the Alberta Library Conference (ALC) which used to be held in Jasper. This conference was very expensive to attend. Being a member of LAA provided a significant discount for conference attendance. This discount was the greatest benefit membership provided. Due to COVID-19, the ALC was cancelled for 2020 and has never been reinstated. With the demise of the Alberta Library Conference, continued membership in LAA is difficult to justify.

The Executive Committee reviewed the situation at their August 15<sup>th</sup> meeting and saw no reason to rejoin the LAA because there is no discernable benefit derived from membership and because the LAA has become politically militant when Parkland does not engage in party politics.

Motion by Joy-Anne Murphy to reinstate Parkland's membership with LAA.

DEFEATED  
PRLS 34/2024

### **3.7. Reserve Transfers**

Sheppard reviewed. The Executive Committee is empowered to allocate reserve funds between board meetings. The following transfer were made over the summer.

#### **Replenishment of Reserves**

As of April 30<sup>th</sup>, the Unrestricted Reserve was valued at \$208,578. At their June meeting, the Executive Committee moved funds from the Unrestricted Reserve to replenish two other reserves. They

- Moved \$25,000 to the Building Reserve to bring that reserve back to its recommended minimum level of \$250,000.



- Moved \$30,130 to the Contingent Liability and Consultation Reserve to bring the value of that reserve up to \$60,000.

### **Website Improvements**

On November 1, 2023, Parkland went live with its new website template for Parkland headquarters and its member libraries. While the implementation went reasonably well, staff need to enhance the useability of the website for library patrons by making a number of improvements.

- Library selector and direct linking functions
- Search engine optimization (e.g., increased exposure on Google and other search engines)
- Other miscellaneous enhancements and minor bug fixes

The Executive Committee approved this request for reserve funds. Also at their June meeting, the Executive Committee approved the expenditure of up to \$35,000 from the Unrestricted Reserve for additional development for the new website.

### **Staff Recruitment**

Finally, after an in-camera session held during their August meeting, the Executive Committee authorized the expenditure of up to \$15,000 from the Contingent Liability and Consultation Reserve to provide funds to recruit for two possible vacancies for specialized positions within the next year.

Motion by Ray Reckseidler to receive for information.

CARRIED  
PRLS 35/2024

### **3.8. 2025 Meeting Dates**

Sheppard reviewed. The board reviewed the tentative dates for Parkland’s 2025 board meetings which will be confirmed by the Board at the organizational meeting in November.

February 27, 2025	10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. (Annual Report, Year in Review)
May 15 or 22, 2025	10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. (2024 Financial Statements presented)
September 11 or 18, 2025	10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. (Budget presented)
November 27, 2025	10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. (Organizational meeting)

After some discussion the board chose the following dates for board meetings in 2025:

February 27, 2025  
May 15, 2025  
September 11, 2025  
November 27, 2025

The board also needed to decide if it wanted to continue meeting using Zoom, return to in-person meetings, or a combination of the two. Unfortunately, if the board returns to in-person meetings, Parkland lacks the technology to record them. Zoom meetings are recorded and



publicly available on our website. Recording in-person board meetings would require a significant upgrade in technology which, when discussed previously, was not an expense the board wished to incur. Parkland also lacks the technology to host hybrid board meetings. Meetings need to be either entirely in-person or virtual.

After some discussion, the board decided to continue holding board meetings via Zoom.

Motion by Twyla Hale to hold all board meetings in 2025 by Zoom.

CARRIED  
PRLS 36/2024

Motion by Gord Lawlor to receive the 2025 board meeting dates for information.

CARRIED  
PRLS 37/2024

### **3.9 Marketing and Advocacy Committee Report**

Gilliat turned the meeting over to Gord Lawlor, the Chair of the Advocacy Committee. In addition to the Advocacy Committee Report in the board agenda package, Lawlor spoke to the budget presentation that board members will be making to their councils. Parkland's Marketing Specialist, Paige Mueller, also gave a brief update on Parkland's marketing plan.

Motion by Teresa Cunningham to receive the Marketing and Advocacy Committee report for information.

CARRIED  
PRLS 38/2024

### **3.10 Libraries Act and Regulation Updates**

Sheppard reviewed. As part of the Jason Kenney government's Red Tape Reduction initiative, a review of the Alberta Libraries Act and Regulation were undertaken. In the spring of 2024, the Omnibus Bill 16 was passed which included changes to the Libraries Act and Regulation. Produced by the Government of Alberta, a document highlighting the impact Bill 16 has on library boards was included in the package for information. The legislative changes have little impact on system boards.

Motion by Deb Coombes to receive for information.

CARRIED  
PRLS 39/2024

### **3.11 Updates**

#### **3.11.1. Director's Report**

#### **3.11.2. Library Services Report**

#### **3.11.3. IT Report**

Sheppard asked if there were any questions regarding the Director's Report, Library Services Report, or the IT Report. There were none.





Motion by Carlene Wetthuhn to receive the Director's, Library Services, and IT Report for information.

CARRIED  
PRLS 40/2024

### **3.12. Parkland Community Update**

Stettler Public Library and Stettler County are collaborating with community partners on Culture Days events throughout September. The library is also collaborating with the Stettler Adult Learning Centre to offer "Come for a Byte" to help 50+ citizens manage their devices and learn to avoid online scams. The Friends of the Library are launching their 7<sup>th</sup> annual Wine Survivor fundraiser. The Summer Reading Club is wrapped up for another year and the feedback has been great. The Stettler Library also collaborated with the Stettler High School shop class to build a 9-hole mini golf course, which was put on County Museum property. They've built a gazebo and for culture days, each golf hole was named after a country.

Provost Municipal Library is celebrating their 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary on October third at 7:00 p.m., and the following Saturday, on October 5<sup>th</sup> are holding an escape room fundraiser at the library. Everyone is welcome to attend.

Carstairs Public Library is holding their second Mountain View Comicon event on Saturday October 19<sup>th</sup>.

Penhold & District Public Library had a very successful summer reading club with 31,400 minutes recorded on reading trackers.

Camrose Public Library has procured a grant for a part-time staff person that concentrates on newcomer welcome programming.

Innisfail Public Library started a new Human Library program this spring in partnership with the Welcome and Inclusivity Committee, which has been very popular and quite impactful.

Motion by Kathy Hall to receive the Parkland Community Update for information.

CARRIED  
PRLS 41/2024

### **3.13 Parkland Board Survey**

Gilliat introduced the new 3 question board survey, which was launched via Zoom just after the meeting adjourned. Board members were encouraged to fill it out before they left the meeting. Staff received 30 responses.

## **4. Adjournment**

Motion by Gord Lawlor to adjourn the meeting at 11:40 a.m.

CARRIED  
PRLS 42/2024

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Chair