



PRLS BOARD TALK

Highlights of the Parkland Regional Library Board Meeting

MAY 21, 2026

2025 Parkland Audit

Parkland's audit was presented to the board by MNPs Lindsey Bauman and Erin Moir. The audit reports were previously presented by Bauman and Moir at the March Executive Committee meeting where they were approved.

Moir noted that there were no recommendations in the management letter this year, which shows the commitment of Parkland Staff to ensuring Parkland has sound financial management.

A copy of the Auditor's Report and Report to the Board has been sent to your municipality.

PRLS 2027 Budget

Parkland has begun working on the 2027 budget. Following the discussion at the board meeting, staff have been instructed to develop multiple scenarios which vary from no increase in the per capita requisition to one suggestion that the levy be increased by over a dollar. What fueled the discussion was the sustainability of Parkland's reserves. Traditionally, the Parkland Board has never allowed for funds to be budgeted for reserves or amortization expenses. Both Parkland's vehicle and Technology reserves could be entirely depleted in four years or less if additional income is not forthcoming. All major capital purchases made by Parkland are made by using reserve funds. The only way Parkland's reserves are replenished is through operating surplus. However, Parkland has seen a decline in surplus over the last few years and so reserve values are dropping. Another relevant factor is that the Government of Alberta has

made it clear that the provincial government will not be providing any increase in the provincial operating grant in the foreseeable future.

CAP Libraries

Parkland, along with all the major public libraries in Alberta, continues to lobby for increased funding for libraries. Unfortunately, but not surprisingly, no increase in library operating grants will be forthcoming in the Government of Alberta's (GOA) 2026-2027 budget. Notwithstanding this fact, Parkland and the other major libraries in Alberta will keep trying to persuade the GOA to provide more operational funding to library boards and an improved grant structure.

While Alberta's major public libraries are attempting to obtain additional funding, work continues to dissuade the GOA from involving itself in the curation of public library collections.

Concerningly, the Omnibus Bill 28 was passed on May 13th and includes provisions granting the Minister responsible for public libraries sweeping powers of inspection. The intent of this legislation is to keep materials that are considered to be pornographic unavailable to minors without some form of age verification or parental consent for patrons under 16 years of age. One of the problems with this scenario is that determining what is "pornographic" is highly subjective.

Public libraries across Alberta have expressed concerns about being able to meet potential new requirements. For example, libraries have identified significant cost pressures, including the construction of physically separate spaces, additional staffing to mediate access and verify age, and uncertainty related to an inspection regime that has not yet been fully defined.

The Minister has indicated these costs will not be funded by the province, leaving municipalities to absorb them; an expectation many may not be able to meet.

Concerns over Bill 28 has led to the development of the Coalition of Alberta Public Libraries (CAP Libraries). Collectively, this group represents 324 service points across Alberta, serving 99% of Albertans. Its membership includes libraries of all sizes and from every region of the

province, including Alberta's seven regional systems.

CAP has a steering committee of four which include:

Pilar Martinez, CEO Edmonton Public Library

Sarah Meilleur, CEO Calgary Public Library

Ronald Sheppard, Director Parkland Regional Library System

Sharon Siga, CEO Strathcona County Library

Sheppard and Martinez were selected to be the principal media contacts for CAP.

After some discussion, the board agreed that they should support CAP in relation to their advocacy efforts regarding Bill 28.

Committee News from Trustees

The Alberta Library Trustees' Association (ALTA) has three years of the Lorne MacRae Intellectual Freedom Fund bursary to give out. The bursary is awarded to a person or organization who exemplifies the values and beliefs of Lorne MacRae and encourages, enlightens, and empowers the importance of Intellectual Freedom. See the application form

here: <https://forms.gle/3JKaAH7G89fq1PZg6>

Sylvan Lake Municipal Library is undergoing an organizational review and considering investing in a new building in the next 5 years. They have also recently installed security cameras.

Cremona Municipal Library is celebrating their 55th anniversary on July first. For the 55 days prior to their celebration, they are posting positivity regarding the public library each day on social media.

Join the fellowship of the **Camrose Public Library** and the Chester Ronning Centre for an evening of film and conversation focused on the challenges facing public libraries and how we can support them in Alberta.

The event will feature a screening of [*The Librarians*](#) and a panel discussion with Kerri Danner and Alyssa Martin, moderated by Joseph Wiebe.

Board Members Present

(In-Person) Janet Adam, Jackie Almberg, Denise Boniface, Laureen Clarke-Rennie, Curtis Cook, Shelley Cook, Teresa Cunningham, Sarah Fahey, Richard Forsberg, Elaine Fossen, Shaleah Fox, Dwayne Fulton, Dustin Gillespie, Barb Gilliat, Matthew Goudy, Pam Hansen, Lindsay Holmen, Haley Amendt alt. for Joe

Iwanicki, Dana Kreil, Troy Lambert, Hazen Letwin, Lori Lindseth, Julie Maplethorpe, Lyle McKellar, Joy-Anne Murphy, Scott Pfeiffer, Bill Rock, Matthew Sumegi, Leona Thorogood, Cory Twerdoclib, Carla Lloyd alt. for Teri Underhill, Carlene Wetthuhn, Shannon Wilcox, Stephen Wyse

Regrets

Delijiah Antaloczy, Skyla Attfield, Alison Barker-Jevne, Lana Curle, Todd Dalke, Kathy Hall, Ryanna Hansen, Bryce Liddle, Ricci Matthews, Leah Nelson, Cindy Orom, Maxine Steil

Absent

Les Fee, Kimberlee Hunter, Victor Kelly, Paul Looser, Darryl Motley, Marc Mousseau, Amanda Peffers, Sandy Shipton, Naomi Tercier

Guests

Lindsey Bauman & Erin Moir, MNP

Next Meeting: September 17, 2026 (Zoom)

For more information, or if you want a copy of the draft minutes from this board meeting, please contact PRLS.