Colchester-East Hants Public Library Board

Meeting Minutes

1st Regular Meeting of 2025-26

April 22, 2025

The 1st Regular Meeting of 2025-26 was held in-person at the Truro Library and via Zoom Teleconference on Tuesday, April 22, 2025, with the following members present:

Councillor Norval Mitchell
Councillor Charlene Fletcher
Deputy Warden Michael Perry
Councillor Alison Graham
Councillor Mike Cooper
Councillor Dave LeBlanc
Councillor Pam Osborne
Ms. Melissa Feaver
Jeff Mercer

Regrets were received from Mr. Nathan Little, Ms. Donna MacGillivray
Also attending were: Bill Morgan, Director of Collections and Technology; Jenn Atkinson, Director of Youth Services; Lesley Brann, Director of Youth Services; Kathy Little, Finance Administrator.

1) Call to order
   Meeting called to order 6:36pm

2) Quorum

3) Land Acknowledgement and People Recognition Statement
   Deputy Warden Michael Perry read the land acknowledgement statement.

4) Welcome and regrets
   Regrets Mr. Nathan Little, Ms. Donna MacGillivray

5) Agenda
   Added to the agenda under New and Unfinished Business:
   e. Food Literacy/Security grant project update
   Councillor Mitchell moved and Councillor Osborne seconded the adoption of the agenda.

6) Minutes of the 5th Regular Meeting held on February 12, 2025

Correction: Councillor Dave LeBlanc should be listed under regrets.
Mike Cooper moved and Norval Mitchell seconded approval of the minutes with the correction made. Motion carried.

7) Business arising from the minutes
    a. GIC and reserve funds.
        i. Discussion of the GIC and Reserve Funds summary report and recommendations.
        ii. Councillor Perry provided a summary of GIC investment.
        iii. Councillor Osborne asked for total amount in bank acocunt and asked if a single, largeamount could be put into GIC. Jeff explained that amounts had to be parceled out due to the nature of the reserves.
        iv. Councillor Mitchell asked if the library still had a safety net if money was invested in GICs. It was comfirmed by Jeff and Kathy that it did.
        v. Coucillor Cooper asked re: bank interest rates – 2.85%
        vi. Councillor Graham made a motion to review the recommendations again at the AGM meeting in June. Councillor Graham rescinded motion. Board to table review of the recommendations to the June AGM meeting.
        vii. Discussion of draft investment policy re: maximum amounts.
        viii. Recommended change to section 5 of the policy to indicate that individual investment could be more than $250k . "Amendments to criteria would require a special meeting of the board. "
        ix. Motion – Jeff and RMT to review and make adjustments to the policy and resend the board.
        x. Ms. Feaver moved, Councillor Mitchell seconded, motion passed.

    b. AIP and staff
        i. Jeff provided an update on the staff member who is trying to attain permanent residency. Staff is working on attaining it through a federal program and their work permit has been extended till Sept. Jenn added that they applied for a new work permit that would be valid for another 3 years once approved.

    c. Meal Allowances
        i. Jeff presented research conducted on relevant municipality/provincial meal allowances. Councillor Graham asked about our alcohol/gratuity policy. The library does not cover alcohol purchases, but would allow gratuity if within the meal allowance amount. Deputy Warden Perry asked if receipts were required or it would just be just a per diem. Discussion re: meal allotment vs. per diem. **Deputy Warden Perry said Jeff's recommendations of 15/25/40 are in the middle of the muicipality amounts. Councillor**

Osborne moved motion to adopt new rates, seconded by Ms. Feaver. Motion passed.

d. Insurance coverage
    i. Jeff provided a copy of the insurance policy and highlighted aspects of the policy of particular relevance to the insurance question posed by Councillor Mitchell at the Feb. 12 meeting.
    ii. Councillor Mitchell asked if there was a Canadian alternative to our director's insurance, and Councillor Graham asked if we had a Buy Canada First policy. Jeff explained we do (if not explicitly called that). Councillor Perry explained that some governments are walking back the Buy Canada policies due to cost. Ms. Feaver asked if it is possible to find better insurance rates. Councillor Mitchell asked if any issues with the company, and there are not any issues that the library is aware of. Councillor Cooper asked if it covers library if community member sues. Councillor Perry asked if Jeff can research what other libraries are using for their insurance.

8) Correspondence
    a. No correspondence to report.

9) Executive Director's Report
    a. Councillor Osborne asked about the open Director of Community Engagement. Jeff explained that the management team will be looking at the duties of the position and to ensure that the position fits the operational requirements. Councillor Osborne discussed the Stewiacke council meeting and her concern about the information Jeff presented regarding the library's financial situation and the ability to fill the position. Jeff provided and explanation of the financial situation, funding review and status of the funding formula. Ms. Feaver asked about doing contingency planning, and Deputy Warden Perry explained that the library does not have the "person power" to do that level of planning. Councillor Osborne asked about the NS Federation of Municipalities conference coming up in Truro. Councillor Graham explained that the community wellness committee reviews issues that are brought forward, then NSFM will lobby (but not before that process occurs). A request to lobby for libraries needs to come from councils. If came from multiple councils, even better. Jeff to draft a motion that will be taken to councils by the following:

        i. Councillor Graham - Truro council
        ii. Councillor Osborne - Stewiacke council
        iii. Councillor Cooper – Colchester council
        iv. Councillor Mitchell and Deputy Warden Perry - East Hants council

b. Michael asked that everyone emails the board to inform when the motion brought to their council so everyone else can advertise that to their council. Councillors also encouraged to discuss at NSFM, with your local MLA. **Motion to accept Executive Director's Report moved by Councillor Graham, seconded by Councillor Mitchel. Motion passed**

10) Treasurer's Report

a. HST rebate designation
    i. Auditor contract review was conducted and there are clauses in auditor contract that don't allow us any recourse for previous failures to note discrepancies with our HST status and similar mistakes/oversights.
    ii. Cost of getting us designated properly is $6000-7000. Need to wait and see what CRA says, but all other libraries in the province have this designation

b. Review of Financial Statements
    i. General Operating - Jeff reviewed the deferred revenue for various grants received. Lesley explained the CRA volunteer income tax grant and what we are able to use the money for. Jeff pointed out deferred revenue under Board Generated Funds>Foundation Gifts, which is remaining from their donation of $10000 in 2024/25 for 75th anniversary prepration. He also noted that a transfer of funds from the Programs & Projects>Special Projects reserve to General Operating had been completed; this was in relation to the work being done by Baker Tilly relating to CEHPL's HST Municipal status with CRA.
    ii. Stanfield - $2000 transfer to General Operating for auditor expenses.
    iii. Money for gala will come out for new fiscal. Motion in previous minutes to see where money is being pulled from.
    iv. **Motion to approve Treasurer's Report moved by Ms. Feaver, seconded by Councillor Mitchell. Motion passed.**

11) New and Unfinished Business

a. LBANS
    i. LBANS will be having a meeting to dispense their remaining funds, and will then wrap up operations. Jeff asked if one of the board members can attend the meeting so they can achieve quorum (which was an issue at the previous meeting). Ms. Feaver volunteered to attend LBANS as the CEHPL representative. **Motion to appoint Ms. Feaver as the CEHPL representative at the LBANS meeting was moved by Councillor Osborne, seconded by Councillor LeBlanc**. Ms. Feaver requested direction from the board. Jeff explained that the options for the funds are: split it amoung 8 regions; split it between regions and NSLA; give all to NSLA

and set it aside as advocacy/staff training fund. The board agreed that Ms. Feaver is to support whatever option is the most fair and equitable.

Councillor Graham moved we defer New Business items b) and d) to the June meeting. Councillor Osborn seconded. Motion carried.

c. CEHPL 75th Anniversary
    i. Councillor Graham and Jeff provided an update on the Gala Committee. The Gala event will take place on Saturday, October 18 at the Truro library. The Host for the evening will be Jeff Douglas (CBC, iconic I Am Canadian commercial), and the theme is "An Open Door to the World for 75 Years"
    ii. The Fundraising and Events Coordinator is hired and will start May 1.
    iii. Councillor Osborne asked how the board could get more involved. Councillor Graham will return in June with ideas for board support. Ticket sales will be one area the board can help.
    iv. Councillor Mitchell questioned the cost of tickets and Councillor Graham explained the process of setting the price.
    v. Ms. Feaver suggested finding community locaitons where we can sell tickets.
    vi. Tentative goal of 250 tickets. Ask MLAs and MPs to purchase tickets.
    vii. Jeff to send out 75th branch events schedule.

e. Food Literacy
    viii. Lesley provided an update on the grant, highlighting collections, programming, and equipment (such as play kitchens). The take-and-make kits were very popular and she calculated that the library provided 10,000 servings of food across the region via these kits
    ix. 2 free pantries introduced in Elmsdale and Mount Uniacke. Lesley shared a letter from a Mount Uniacke patron thanking the library for the pantry.
    x. The grant fundined staff training, which included food safety for 24 employees. Paige also delivered presentations for the Employee Development Day and has made program outlines that are available for staff to recreate programs.
    xi. Lesley to send final report to Jeff when completed to send to the board.

12) Member Roundtable
    a. Councillor LeBlanc – nothing of note
    b. Ms. Feaver – away in May for work, but all is well.
    c. Jenn – March Break youth programming was a success.
    d. Kathy – auditors on site first week of May.
    e. Bill – mobile printing to start next couple of weeks
    f. Councillor Mitchell – thanks to staff for all they do

g. Councillor Fletcher – saw Jeff in Economy this past weekend for Community Wellness Event. Pancakes and sausages amazing. On May 13 will be making birdhouses with kids at the Truro Library from 6-7pm.
h. Councillor Osborne – excited about 75th. Stewiacke has a beautiful new mural in the library.
i. Deputy Warden Perry – attended meetings with Jeff and local MLAs.
j. Jeff – anytime there are questions or issues, let him know. Open to any input.

13) Next Meeting
    a. June 24 at 6:30pm
14) Adjournment
    a. Moved by Councillor Osborne, meeting adjourned.