Colchester-East Hants Public Library Board

Meeting Minutes

2024-25 Annual General Meeting

June 24, 2025, 6:30-8:20pm

Present:
Councillor Michael Perry, Chair
Councillor Norval Mitchell
Councillor David LeBlanc
Councillor Alison Graham
Melissa Feaver

Virtual:
Nathan Little

Guest:
Andrea Wilkie (Senior Manager, Baker Tilly Nova Scotia)

Staff:
Jeff Mercer (Executive Director and Chief Librarian)
Kathy Little (Finance Administrator)
Tracy Spence (Human Resources Administrator)
Bill Morgan (Director of Collections and Technology)
Lesley Brann (Director of Adult Services)
Jenn Atkinson (Director of Youth Services)

Regrets:
Councillor Charlene Fletcher
Councillor Pam Osborne
Councillor Mike Cooper
Donna MacGillivray

1. Call to Order
   M. Perry called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

2. Quorum
   Quorum was confirmed.

3. Welcome and regrets

Regrets were noted as above.

4. Land Acknowledgement and People Recognition Statement
   M. Perry read the Land Acknowledgement and People Recognition Statement.

5. Agenda
   Motion: That the agenda be accepted as presented.
   MITCHELL/Feaver. Motion carried.

6. 2024-25 Audit Presentation by Baker Tilly
   A. Wilkie reviewed the 2024-25 audited financial statement. She was pleased to share that Baker Tilly would be offering a clean audit report.
   Statement of operations – Use of reserve funds drive differences in revenue year over year; general operating grant revenue remains the same. This year there was an increase in salary and benefits.

   Statement of Financial position:
   Operating Fund revenue is $2.4M. Current ratio of assets to liabilities, including unrestricted cash, is 8.1:1. In other words, the Library has 1 dollar of debt to every 8 dollars of assets. They also noted deferred revenue of $230,000. Overall, financial health is very positive.

   The audit team was complimentary to K. Little and wanted to note the work she had done.

   M. Perry and J. Mercer thanked A. Wilkie for her work on the audit and for attending the evening's meeting.

   Motion: That the 2024-25 Audit Statement be accepted as presented
   GRAHAM/Mitchell. Motion carried.

7. Minutes of 2023-24 Annual General Meeting
   Motion: That the minutes of the 2023-24 Annual General Meeting on June 25, 2024 be accepted as presented.
   MITCHELL/Feaver. Motion carried.

8. Annual Reports
   a. Audit Committee

   b. Chair's Report
      M Perry presented the Chair's Report, commenting that 2024-25 marked another fantastic year of library service for CEHPL. In his report he pointed out 3 highlights: collections, food literacy, and the value added for staff to connect to their community.

He also noted that over 500 patrons have already signed up for summer reading, and that libraries are community hubs. On behalf of the Board he expressed their appreciation for all that the staff have done.

A. Graham spoke about the presentations she and J. Mercer had made for some of the Municipalities, and about J. Mercer's work on the organizing committee for the upcoming joint Libraries, Archives, and Museums conference. Shel also noted that as it was an election year we have new members joining our board, additionally highlighting that libraries are not just books.

M. Perry also thanked all board members and staff for their hard work and support.

Motion: that the Chair's Annual Report be accepted as presented.
MITCHELL/Graham. Motion carried.

c. ED Report

J. Mercer highlighted the following items:

- Summer reading and food literacy were big programs last year.
- The Foundation donated $40,000.00 last year to collections.
- Staff took a food handling course; it came from the food literacy grant.
- We sent eleven staff to the annual NSLA conference, and it was well worth the time and effort.
    - Feedback from those who attended was that there was a lot of useful information; of particular note was the session on emergency planning that highlighted provincial resources for putting together a preparedness plan, discussed emergency-related questions (like "what do you save in a floor or a fire?", "how can you save wet paper?"), and gave national examples of emergency planning and preparedness measures (e.g. apartment buildings with cold rooms).
    - D. LeBlanc asked if Board members can attend the NSLA conference, and J. Mercer confirmed that they can; it is a good opportunity to see what other library regions are doing.
    - Discussion was held about the Library providing a cooling place; we could do so during emergencies, and are an unregistered cooling location now for hot weather days. We've also been able to offer water on those days at all branches, due to funds from the Food Literacy grant; we also have a water filling station in Truro connected by the water line.

Motion: That the Executive Director's Annual Report be accepted as presented.
FEAVER/Mitchell. Motion carried.

d. Building and Vehicles Committee

J. Mercer presented the Building and Vehicles Committee Report, noting that:

- Progress has been made to the heating and cooling of the building.
- The Town put up the non-landing devices to help with the pigeon issue; many of the birds have moved to the police station.
- We had a fire alarm while open, with patrons in the building; it went very well. There is a new contact at the Town of Truro for facility issues.
- Stewiacke has a new beautiful mural; the local Home Hardware gave a discount for the paint used!
- The fundraiser in the fall is for a new vehicle, but we do have reserves available. N. Mitchell advised that CAA offers discounts on many other things that may be useful to the library, and we should look into it.

Discussion was held concerning if the library be capable of making needed deliveries if we had to go down to one vehicle. J. Mercer affirmed that while outreach and deliveries would be a challenge, operating with one vehicle is possible. In response to a question on vehicle lifespan, J. Mercer stated that we have approximately 2-3 viable years with the current vehicle if needed, and the Library will be looking for a more fuel-efficient vehicle when purchasing a new vehicle. M. Perry noted that it can take between 6-18 months to receive a new vehicle.

Action: J. Mercer to investigate CAA membership for CEHPL.

Motion: That the Building and Vehicles Committee Annual Report be accepted as presented.
MITCHELL/Feaver. Motion carried.

e. Personnel Committee

J. Mercer presented the Personnel Committee Report, as previously circulated. He highlighted that there has been some staff movement and that we also celebrated service milestones this year:

Staff Movement: Paige Evergreen's contract term has ended; Lori MacWha and Sarah Wood resigned; Layne Ramberg and Janet McLellan retired; Hannah Cullen accepted a new position with CEHPL, and Amanda LeBlanc joined the team.

Service Milestones: Cyril Adams (Elmsdale) 5 years, Katie Cameron (Truro) 5 years, Sharon Norman (Tatamagouche) 5 years, Megan Cameron (Truro) 10 years, Kim Legge (Mount Uniacke) 15 years and Bernadette Isle (Mount Uniacke) 20 years.

J. Mercer also noted that in addition to regular First Aid recertification and the NSLA, staff training this year included Non-Violent Crisis Intervention, Food Safety (Food Handler) certification, Naloxone Nasal Inhalant, Cyber Security, and Mental Health First Aid.

Motion: That the Personnel Committee Annual Report be accepted as presented.
MITCHELL/Graham. Motion carried.

9. 2024-25 Disposition of Surplus

On behalf of the Audit Committee, J. Mercer presented a proposal for the disposition of the 2024-25 operating account surplus.

- There is a surplus of $43,318; the Committee recommends this be used for future automation and IT needs, equipment, library materials, and staff development.

J. Mercer also presented a proposal for the disposition of unspent funds at the end of 2024-25 for the Stanfield Memorial Fund.

- There is a surplus of $14,785; J. Atkinson recommended that this be used for future programing and equipment needs (furniture would be considered equipment).

Motion: That the proposals for the disposition of unspent funds be accepted as presented.
FEAVER/LeBlanc. Motion carried.

10. 2025-26 Operating and Stanfield Budgets

J. Mercer presented the 2025-26 Operating and Stanfield budget proposals, adding that these had been gone over in-detail by the Audit Committee the previous week.

Operating Budget

J. Mercer noted that this year the proposed budget included a 2.3% COLA for staff.

Motion: That the 2025-26 Operating Budget and the 2025-26 Salary scale be approved as presented.
MITCHELL/Perry. Motion carried.

Stanfield Budget

J. Mercer presented the Stanfield Budget, as previously circulated.

Motion: That the 2025-26 Stanfield Budget be approved as presented.
LITTLE/Mitchell. Motion carried.

11. Election of Officers and Committee Appointments

The Board's slate of officers and committee appointments were reviewed and discussed.

Motion: That the Officer and Committee appointments be extended until the next AGM.
MITCHELL/Graham. Motion Carried.

12. Adjournment

The 2024-25 Annual General Meeting was adjourned at 8:20 pm.