Public Library | Colchester-East Hants

Colchester-East Hants Public Library Board
Meeting Minutes
4th Regular Meeting of 2025-26
November 25, 2025, 6:30-9:30pm

Present:
Councillor Michael Perry (Chair)
Councillor Michael Cooper
Councillor Norval Mitchell
Councillor Alison Graham
Councillor Pam Osborne
Councillor David LeBlanc

Virtual:
Melissa Feaver
Nathan Little
Donna MacGillivray

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

Regrets: Councillor Charlene Fletcher

1) Call to Order

M. Perry called the meeting to order at 6:31 pm and read the CEHPL Land Acknowledgement and People Recognition Statement.

2) Approval of Agenda

Added to the agenda under New Business:
Item 10D – Holiday gift cards for staff
Added to the agenda under Member Roundtable:
Item 11A – In Camera session

The amended agenda was approved by consensus.

3) Previous minutes

M. Perry clarified that he is a councillor and not deputy warden.
The motion for Item 8C was corrected for accuracy.
It was noted that the meeting was adjourned having completed the agenda, instead of by motion.

Motion: That the minutes of the September 23, 2025 meeting be approved as amended. MITCHELL/Perry. Motion Carried.

4) Correspondence

No correspondence received.

5) Executive Director's Report

J. Mercer had confirmed that volunteers are covered under CEHPL insurance and communicated this to the Board via email after the previous meeting; P. Osborne asked that this information be added in addition to the Executive Director's report as distributed.

A. Graham led discussion about the possible uses for the laptops donated the Library by NSCC. The Board agreed to send a letter thanking NSCC-Truro for the generous donation.

A. Graham inquired about the status of the pilot project between SSPL, CEHPL and AVRL examining shipping alternatives to Canada Post. J. Mercer reported that the 1st phase involving the use of an internal staff-led solution was completed, and that the 2nd phase using a contract courier service was underway and should be completed within February 2026. He added that analysis and reporting will then be conducted, with results to be reported at the next Board meeting if they are available.

Motion: That the Executive Director's report be approved as presented.
GRAHAM/Mitchell. Motion carried.

6) Treasurer's Report

J. Mercer reported that the budget is on track. He noted that some transfers have not yet been done, which is consistent with previous years.

Motion: That the Treasurer's report be approved as presented.
OSBORNE/Feaver. Motion carried.

7) Unfinished Business

a. Truro Branch Manager positions:
J. Mercer and P. Osborne led discussion on the proposed reclassification of staff as Truro Branch Managers. P. Osborne advised that documents for any items of unfinished business should be included in Board meeting packages until decisions have been made; J. Mercer committed to doing so for all future meetings. The Board agreed that this was a top priority, as Truro is the only branch without this position in place. The individuals being considered for reclassification have been doing most of this work already, and this would also allow L. Brann and J. Atkinson to focus on regional responsibilities in their roles as Directors. Board discussion clarified that this is a reclassification.

Action: J. Mercer to attach all pertinent information for unfinished business in the document packages for all future meetings of the Board.

Motion: That the positions of Patti Miller (Adult Services Lead) and Cathie Landsburg (Youth Services Lead) each be reclassified as Truro Branch Manager, with the associated new pay rate to be retroactively dated to October 1, 2025.

OSBORNE/Mitchell. Motion carried.

b. Nova Scotia Nominee Program

Motion: That CEHPL proceed and support staff in the Nova Scotia Nominee Program process. MITCHELL/Osborne. Motion carried.

c. CEHPL 75th Anniversary:
A. Graham reported that the gala event was a great success – it was completely sold out and was a fabulous night with overwhelmingly positive feedback from those in attendance. She wanted to note that P. Osborne sold $825.00 of tickets for the Joy Laking painting raffle that evening alone!

J. Mercer reported that preliminary numbers indicate revenue for the evening at $117,000 and expenses at $33,000, resulting in approximately $84,000 raised for a new library vehicle. A few outstanding expenses and revenues are still to be finalized, but we will have funds beyond what is needed to purchase the vehicle, so the surplus can be put into reserves for the next vehicle or other needs.

J. Mercer also reported that the Buildings and Vehicles Committee will be meeting on November 26, 2025 to review the bids for the vehicle tender and make a recommendation to the Board on awarding the tender. He added that an event to thank the sponsors and to unveil the plaque thanking them for their sponsorship and that will be displayed in the Truro Library will be held at the Truro Library on December 16, 2025 at 10:30am.

Action: J. Mercer will send a calendar invite for the plaque unveiling event to the Board.

8. New Business
   a. Policies for Review
      i. Alternative Working Arrangements Policy
      Staff did not recommend any changes. Board consensus accepted the staff recommendation.

      ii. Civic Leave Policy
      Staff did not recommend any changes. P. Osborne suggested that the policy be revised in include municipal election, subsequent to a jurisdictional scan. M. Feaver offered to do the jurisdictional scan.

      Action: M. Feaver to conduct a jurisdictional scan of election leave policies and bring a review to the next meeting.

      iii. Respectful Workplace Policy
      A draft of a new policy was presented for initial review. N. Little suggested format changes would be needed such as a table of contents, bullet points changed to a numbered list. P. Osborne recalled that there may be an existing policy that be used in place of the new draft. Board consensus was to review and compare the two policies.

Action: P. Osborne to bring the existing policy to staff and Board for review.

Motion: That the draft Respectful Workplace Policy be tabled pending further review and revision.
OSBORNE/Feaver. Motion Carried.

b. Library Funding Formula Review
D. MacGillivray reported that a lot of research had been conducted, but no increase in funding is in progress at this time. Bridge funding of $1.6 million was provided to libraries over the previous and current fiscal years to help with costs, and it is projected that continued bridge funding is likely to continue for now. The current funding formula review process is now over, and other options for continued reporting and research may be put in place.

c. EDIA
J. Mercer reported that Lorne Julien, an Indigenous artist from Millbrook, was the featured artist at the Truro Library art display in October as part of Mi'kmaq Heritage Month. He also reported that CEHPL partnered with Autism NS to host participants in their Community Leadership program as volunteers at the library. He further reported that we partnered with Futureworx to give tours of the Truro Library and introduce their clients to the library's collections, services and programs. D. MacGillivray reported that she attended the special event renaming the TAAC Grounds to the No. 2 Construction Battalion Athletic Facility, and noted that the Unity Room in the Truro Library is dedicated to the African-American community.

d. Holiday Gift Cards
Discussion was held around the donation/bequest for staff appreciation, which has been used for holiday gift cards for several years, and if that had been depleted.

Action: J. Mercer and staff to investigate and report back on funds that may be remaining from that donation.

Motion: That the Board give staff $100 grocery gifts cards for the holiday season, in recognition of their hard work.
OSBORNE/MacGillivray. Motion Carried.

9. Members Round Table:

D. MacGillivray - The Unity Room will be used for career paths.
M. Feaver - Work is extremely busy, no news of a promotion or raise; have adopted a new dog, who is 125 lbs!
N. Little – Work is very busy; he is now a "double uncle" as his brother has a new child.
P. Osborne - Christmas celebrations in Stewiacke on December 6 will include a tree lighting and breakfast with Santa; Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.
N. Mitchell - Elmsdale is honouring an Olympic boxer from the area; Christmas parade is on December 6; fire dept food drive is on Sunday; Happy Holidays and Merry Christmas to all, be good and well.
D. LeBlanc – Will be wrapping books to give to a family to read over the holidays; he is playing Scrooge at a holiday event.

M. Cooper - Fire dept is putting on a food bank drive and a craft fair; nod out to Colleen Jones. Happy Holidays.
A. Graham – Has decided to put house up for sale!
M. Perry - read a letter from Karen Smith regarding the Christmas index program, asking would the Board be willing to personally donate or as a board? Board consensus was to consider donating individually, and for anyone interested to contact T. Spence or L. Brann. Good News story: Although the IWK will not recognize the drugs needed by Keelin Nickle for coverage (approximately $7-8000), the community arranged fundraising events like shaving heads and turkey dinners, and in 7 weeks raised $74,000 to help the family! Merry Christmas and be safe, happy holidays eat drink and be merry.

Motion: To move in camera, 8:48pm
MITCHELL/Perry. Motion carried.

Motion: To move out of camera, 9:12pm
MITCHELL/Osborne. Motion carried.

10. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned having completed the agenda, 9:12pm.