

# Whitby Public Library Board Minutes

**Date:** Feb 19, 2025

**Time:** 7:00 p.m.

**Place:** Board Room, Central Library

**Present:**

Lorraine Gray (Chair)  
Liam Nichols  
Kate Campbell  
Art Maki (until 7:45 p.m.)  
Geoff Anderson  
Maria McDonnell  
Peter Creer  
Akhil Kapoor

**Regrets:**

Chris Leahy

**Also Present:**

Rhonda Jessup, CEO  
Joel Sutherland, Director, Community and Service Development  
Michelle Frenette, Director, Corporate Services  
Christy Harper, Director, Technology and Operations  
Mandy Beaton, Finance and Administration Associate

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**1. Call to Order/Approval of Agenda**

Meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m.

**2. Declaration of Conflict of Interest**

No conflict of interest was declared.

**3. Consent Agenda Items**

Motion to update the agenda by moving item 7.e. to 7.a.

Moved by Geoff Anderson

Seconded by Art Maki

CARRIED

Motion to approve the Agenda items, with amendment above.

Moved by Peter Creer

Seconded by Kate Campbell

CARRIED

#### 4. Chief Executive Officer's Report

Several staff attended the OLA SuperConference during Jan 29<sup>th</sup>-31<sup>st</sup> and subsequently presented at a management meeting the new ideas they had learned at the conference. It was a positive staff development and networking experience.

To recognize Library staff's 96% overall customer service satisfaction result from the Forum Research survey, management set up a staff appreciation day. This will include thank you cards, snacks and more.

The Town of Whitby is discussing the possibility of passing a bylaw which would restrict protestors' proximity at upcoming events such as Drag Queen Story Time.

Jay Whittington, a Children's and Adult Fiction Assistant at the Library was contacted by one of our online vendors, Beanstack, who were impressed with our engagement numbers on their platform as a result of his work. They invited him to attend their next quarterly meeting to share his innovative ideas on engaging the local community.

Rhonda was recently elected as Vice-Chair of the Chief Executives of Large Urban Public Libraries (CELUPL).

As a response to recent acts of vandalism, the Library will be hosting **Understanding Antisemitism: A conversation on history, impact, and solutions** at the Central Library on March 5<sup>th</sup>.

#### 5. Councillor's Report

As Councillor Leahy was not in attendance, this item was deferred to next Board meeting.

#### 6. Business Arising from Previous Minutes

None at this time.

#### 7. New Business

##### a) Board Practices (L. Gray)

Dialogue took place around revisiting the structure of the Board committees. There is currently a Planning committee and an HR committee. The Board will evaluate whether this structure is still optimal and whether any changes should be made, in relation to which activities the Board plans to pursue. It was noted that some of the work, such as the

CEO evaluation, must be completed on a regular basis, while some tasks such as working on the strategic plan are only required every few years. Trustees interested in being part of the working group are asked to advise Mandy Beaton by next week.

Moved by Liam Nichols  
Seconded by Akhil Kapoor

That the Board strike a working group to further evaluate this topic and bring recommendations back to the Board at the April meeting. Committee work will be paused while this is ongoing.

CARRIED

**b) Disconnecting from Work Policy**

Moved by Kate Campbell  
Seconded by Liam Nichols

That the Disconnecting from Work Policy be passed as distributed.

CARRIED

**c) Electronic Monitoring Policy**

Moved by Peter Creer  
Seconded by Liam Nichols

That the Electronic Monitoring Policy be passed as distributed.

CARRIED

**d) OLA Super Conference Trustee Boot Camp (A. Kapoor)**

Akhil reported to the Board that he attended the OLA Super Conference Trustee Boot Camp event, along with Rhonda Jessup, and that it was a positive experience.

Takeaways from this event included the fact that leadership at municipal levels is critical and that this requires effective leadership from all Board members. Navigating memorandums of understanding was discussed, as well as the topic of responding to safety issues in public libraries. Questions were raised on how libraries can support patrons with complex needs, as well as their own staff, with the possibility of having a social worker on site at the Library being a potential solution. Board legacy documents were discussed and perspectives from different library boards were also shared at this

event. Akhil noted that the Library is ahead of the curve in most of these areas of discussion.

**e) Graffiti at Central Library (Discussion)**

Christy Harper has been working with the detective assigned to this case.

The Library will be hosting an Antisemitism community discussion program at its Central location on March 5<sup>th</sup> in the children's program room. This should provide an excellent opportunity to educate the community on this topic. The event will include a panel of speakers and a moderator. Joel Sutherland was thanked for pulling this event together quickly.

Questions about security for the event were raised and it was noted that management will be present, as well as a security guard. Since this is addressing a topic of trauma, Library staff will be cognizant of the fact that people may react in their own way to this topic and providing a quiet space could be useful.

The Board stated that they were proud of staff's handling of this graffiti issue and the effort made by staff in response to this incident on an operational level.

**f) Planning Committee Update (L. Nichols)**

Ontario's Big City Mayors' (OBCM) is seeking support from the Board on their Solve the Crisis Project campaign. They are calling on the provincial government to take immediate action on homelessness and mental health issues in cities across Ontario by providing funding.

Moved by Liam Nichols

Seconded by Maria McDonnell

That the CEO be directed to draft a letter of support for OBCM's campaign on behalf of the Board.

CARRIED

**g) HR Committee Update (P. Creer) (in camera)**

Moved by Liam Nichols

Seconded by Akhil Kapoor

That the meeting go into closed session at 8:30 p.m. to discuss this item

CARRIED

Moved by Geoff Anderson  
Seconded by Akhil Kapoor

That the meeting go back into open session at 8:50 p.m.

CARRIED

Moved by Peter Creer  
Seconded by Geoff Anderson

That the 2025 CEO goals and objectives be approved as presented.

CARRIED

### **8. Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 19, 2025, at 7:00 p.m., in the Board Room, Central Library, 405 Dundas Street West, Whitby

### **9. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 8:52 p.m. on a motion by Kate Campbell.

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Board Chair

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Secretary