

Whitby Public Library Board Minutes

Date: Mar 19, 2025

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Place: Board Room, Central Library

Present:

Liam Nichols (Chair)
Kate Campbell
Art Maki
Geoff Anderson
Chris Leahy
Maria McDonnell (Virtual)
Peter Creer (Virtual)
Akhil Kapoor (Virtual)

Regrets:

Lorraine Gray

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

1. Call to Order/Approval of Agenda

Meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m.

2. Declaration of Conflict of Interest

No conflict of interest was declared.

3. Consent Agenda Items

Moved by Kate Campbell

Seconded by Geoff Anderson

That the Consent Agenda items be approved as distributed.

CARRIED

4. Chief Executive Officer's Report

March Break numbers were the closest we have seen to pre-pandemic numbers. The children's Bluey event was very popular, with 500 kids attending at all 3 library branches.

Rhonda attended two events with Town of Whitby Mayor Elizabeth Roy; an International Women's Day event, as well as an annual luncheon.

Jaclyn Derlatka resigned from WPL as the Manager of Strategic Initiatives and accepted a new role at the Pickering Public Library.

Some members of the Town of Whitby staff will be moving their offices into two buildings located beside the Central library, at 316 Colborne and 117 King.

Group discussion occurred around the topic of WPL's decision to end their use of the social media platform X, following suit to the Town's decision to do the same. Conversations about Facebook and its contributions to misinformation continue to take place.

5. Councillor's Report

It has been relatively quiet at the Town with March Break.

There are a few initiatives that the Town is currently working on, one being trying to find a way for Metrolinx to provide free Durham region transit for past and current members of the Canadian Armed Forces. This proposal has been brought forward to the Region.

There is a new 10-year capital plan for extra investment in affordable housing. The majority of the funding required for this would need to come from senior levels of government.

The most impactful item for this Region that came from the recent Provincial campaign and election was the possible elimination of 407 tolls for a portion of the highway.

There are concerns around United States tariffs and the Town is looking into adjusting their purchasing policies, to use their purchasing power to better support Canadian businesses.

6. Business Arising from Previous Minutes

a. Antisemitism program

Rhonda Jessup reported that this event was extremely well attended, including by Board members. This demonstrated a desire in our community for people to have

these types of important connections and conversations. This event exceeded expectations and the panel of speakers did a phenomenal job discussing the issues. The Board congratulated WPL staff on its success with this informative event and stated that it was a credit to the library, as it promoted strong engagement and discussion among the attendees, as well as working to combat hate. It was also noted by the Board members that it would be a good idea to continue to hold more events of this nature at WPL.

The panel speakers were impressed that this event was held at the library in response to the graffiti and expressed their gratitude. It was an impactful event, with an overall feeling of hope and community among the attendees, from whom we received very positive feedback.

b. Board Practices (A. Maki)

Art Maki provided a status update from the last Board committee working group meeting. The goal is to have their recommendations ready for the June Board meeting. The team will first orient themselves on the terms of reference, then review the work completed by the Board committees during the last few years. It was recommended that the Ajax, Pickering and Oshawa libraries' Board committees, as well as those at OLA and OLS, also be reviewed.

The Board committee working group will come up with their recommended alternatives and present them to the Board for discussion at the May or June board meeting.

7. New Business

a) Visiting Library Service Policy (motion)

Moved by Kate Campbell

Seconded by Art Maki

That the Visiting Library Service Policy be approved as distributed.

CARRIED

b) Board By-laws (discussion)

The Board discussed the fact that the Board bylaws are up for review. Normally, the Board's planning committee would take on this task. It was agreed that staff would handle this task this year.

c) Annual Board Dinner (discussion)

Dialogue occurred to discuss the Board member's availability for a date for their annual Board dinner, which will be held before the summer break on a Wednesday evening. Also, local restaurant preferences were discussed.

Michelle will send a follow-up email on this topic to the Board members.

d) Advocacy Update (L. Nichols)

It was noted that the Board committees are currently suspended temporarily but Liam reported that advocacy plans where Board members meet with members of Council before the summer recess will proceed. Plans for meetings with Town Council are underway and this is something that all Board members are encouraged to take part in and contribute to this advocacy dialogue. Currently, WPL staff are working to prepare key advocacy messages.

e) Labour Relations Update (M. Frenette) (in camera)

Moved by Chris Leahy

Seconded by Art Maki

That the meeting go into closed session at 7:44 p.m. to discuss this item

CARRIED

Moved by Kate Campbell

Seconded by Chris Leahy

That the meeting go back into open session at 7:57 p.m.

CARRIED

8. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 16, 2025, at 7:00 p.m., in the Board Room, Central Library, 405 Dundas Street West, Whitby

9. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:58 p.m. on a motion by Art Maki.

Board Chair

Secretary