

Whitby Public Library Board Minutes

Date: Jan 21, 2026

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Place: Board Room, Central Library

Present:

Liam Nichols (Chair)
Geoff Anderson
Art Maki
Annette Cianchino
Akhil Kapoor (virtual)
Peter Creer (virtual)
Maria McDonnell (virtual)
Niki Lundquist (virtual, until 8:04 pm)

Regrets:

Kate Campbell

Also Present:

Rhonda Jessup, Chief Executive Officer
Joel Sutherland, Director, Community and Service Development
Michelle Frenette, Director, Corporate Services
Mandy Beaton, Finance and Administration Associate

1. Call to Order/Approval of Agenda

Meeting was called to order at 7:12 p.m.

Moved by Geoff Anderson

Seconded by Art Maki

That the Agenda be approved as distributed.

CARRIED

2. Declaration of Conflict of Interest

No conflict of interest was declared.

3. Welcome and Introductions

The Board welcomed new Board Member Annette Cianchino who was recently appointed to replace Lorraine Gray and Councillor Niki Lundquist as the Mayor's Designate for 2026.

4. Consent Agenda Items

Moved by Peter Creer
Seconded by Art Maki

That the Consent Agenda items be approved as distributed.

CARRIED

5. Election of Officers: Chair and Vice-Chair

Moved by Liam Nichols
Seconded by Geoff Anderson

That Rhonda Jessup take the chair to conduct the election of Chair.

CARRIED

Rhonda Jessup called for nominations for Chair of the Whitby Public Library Board for 2026.

Moved by Geoff Anderson

That Liam Nichols be nominated as Chair for 2026.

Liam Nichols accepted the nomination.

There being no further nominations, Liam Nichols was acclaimed Chair.

Liam Nichols called for nominations for Vice-Chair of the Whitby Public Library Board for 2026.

Moved by Akhil Kapoor

That Akhil Kapoor be nominated as Vice-Chair for 2026.

There being no further nominations, Akhil Kapoor was acclaimed Vice-Chair.

6. Chief Executive Officer's Report (R. Jessup)

WPL received a generous patron donation, which we are using to purchase an office pod for the Central Library. We hope to secure grant funding to purchase more pods in the future. It was noted that this is a positive addition to the library, particularly for patrons who may have sensory sensitivities.

The Rotary Club of Whitby will be donating \$1.5K for Battle of the Books this year. WPL also received 2 more donations of \$500 each at year end 2025.

Systems staff are working on creating a SharePoint page for the Board members to use in the future where they will be able to view the Board Packages, minutes, and other resources.

The Town of Whitby and Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority (CLOCA) are partnering with WPL to install a butterfly/pollinator garden at Central's location. This will be located beside the children's program room, in the reading garden and is expected to be started this spring, dependent on funding.

WPL Archivist Sarah Ferencz presented at the Oshawa Museum's event, "Women of Whitby Township" event. This event had 63 attendees.

Discussion occurred on our newly imposed spending cap on Hoopla, as this offering has become less sustainable over time, due to increasing prices. This spending cap will be evaluated yearly. There is currently no Durham libraries approach to Hoopla subscriptions.

7. Councillor's Report (N. Lundquist)

Councillor Lundquist shared that Town Council has been back in session for one meeting so far this year.

The fountain beside Celebration Square has been removed from the Town's list of capital projects for repair, as the quote was too expensive. She recommends that the WPL Board consider other possibilities for the space.

A motion is being brought forward to require that landlords of multi-residential buildings without in-unit air conditioning provide air conditioned common spaces to provide residents with relief from the heat.

Councillor Lundquist also sits on the Downtown Whitby Business Improvement Area (DWBIA) Board and asked this Board to consider whether we would like to partner with

them on future events or initiatives. Please reach out to her if so, as she could act as the link contact person for this possible collaboration.

8. Business Arising from Previous Minutes

a) 2026 Budget Process (verbal update)

As this was the first time Whitby worked through a Strong Mayor's Act Budget, the recently completed budget process was discussed, including how it differed from previous years.

b) 2026 Operating Budget (motion)

Staff reviewed the budget presented and answered questions.

It is proposed that the Board authorize WPL to use up to \$93.6K of its reserve funds, which would match the amount the Town is contributing from its own reserve fund, to cover the projected operating deficit for the 2026 fiscal year only.

It was reiterated that this is a short-term solution, which would only be applicable for 2026 to prevent cuts to the library. This is not a sustainable solution but rather it is a stop-gap measure. For 2027 and onwards, there is a permanent cut to the municipal operating budget, we will now be operating at a lower baseline. WPL staff were thanked for doing a good job in identifying cost-saving opportunities, as was required.

Moved by Art Maki
Seconded by Peter Creer

That the Operating Budget be approved as distributed.

CARRIED

c) Capital Budget (motion)

Moved by Maria McDonnell
Seconded by Akhil Kapoor

That the Capital Budget be approved as distributed.

CARRIED

d) CEO Evaluation (discussion)

This has not been completed by the Board yet, due to the holidays. Liam Nichols will act on this shortly in order to move this item forward.

9. New Business

a) Disconnecting from Work Policy (motion)

Moved by Maria McDonnell

Seconded by Peter Creer

That the Disconnecting from Work Policy be approved as distributed.

CARRIED

b) Electronic Monitoring Policy (motion)

Moved by Art Maki

Seconded by Akhil Kapoor

That the Electronic Monitoring Policy be approved as distributed.

CARRIED

c) Occupational Health and Safety Policy (motion)

Moved by Geoff Anderson

Seconded by Peter Creer

That the Occupational Health and Safety Policy be approved as distributed.

CARRIED

d) Workplace Harassment and Violence Prevention Policy (motion)

Moved by Akhil Kapoor

Seconded by Maria McDonnell

That the Workplace Harassment and Violence Prevention Policy be approved as distributed.

CARRIED

e) Library Board Meeting Dates (motion)

Moved by Peter Creer

Seconded by Art Maki

That the Library Board Meeting Dates be approved as distributed.

CARRIED

It was clarified between the group members that even though this is an upcoming election year, meetings will still be held in the fall for the WPL Board.

f) Board Work Plan (motion)

Moved by Annette Cianchino

Seconded by Peter Creer

That the Board Work Plan be approved as distributed.

CARRIED

10. Next Meeting

Wednesday, February 18, 2026, 7:00 p.m.

Board Room, Central Library, 405 Dundas Street West, Whitby

11. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:10pm, on a motion by Art Maki.

Board Chair

Secretary