

**Advocacy Committee Meeting Minutes  
April 11, 2019**

Present: Gord Lawlor, Debra Smith, Norma Penney, Barb Gilliat, Janine Stannard, Jeanny Fisher

Absent with regrets: Steven Levy,

Absent: Cora Knutson

Staff: Ron Sheppard, Kara Hamilton, Colleen Schalm

Meeting called to order at 1:10 p.m. by Lawlor.

1. Acceptance of the Agenda

There were no additions or deletions to the agenda.

Motion by Stannard to accept the agenda as presented.

CARRIED

2. Acceptance of the March 14, 2019 Advocacy Committee Minutes

Motion by Penney to approve the March 14, 2019 minutes as presented.

CARRIED

3. Creation of an Action Item List

It has become a standard practice at Executive Committee meetings to have an Action Item list to ensure assigned work is not forgotten and is completed in a timely manner. Staff believe such a list would be useful for the Advocacy Committee.

The Committee agreed to the creation of an Action Item List.

4. Reports to the Executive Committee and the Board

According to the Advocacy Committee's Terms of Reference:

*While the Advocacy Committee does report to the board, it reports to the Executive Committee between board meetings.*

It is very important that the Advocacy Committee ensure there is ongoing communication with the Executive Committee and board members. This is not only to keep all board members involved, but also to add credibility to the Advocacy Committee's work should the time arise when the committee may need to request funding for a particular endeavor.

After discussing the matter, it was decided that Stannard would report to the Executive Committee and the board.

Presumably Advocacy Committee minutes should be included in Executive and board packages.

Motion by Gilliat to appoint Stannard to report to the Executive Committee and the board for the Advocacy Committee.

CARRIED

5. Review of the Election Advocacy Campaign Materials

Given the short turnaround time available to prepare the election advocacy campaign documents, staff asked what the committee thought of the final product.

The question of what the committee thought of the campaign despite the short turn around was asked, and everyone liked the Advocacy Infographic. It was said to be very eye catching, easy to read and accessible.

Conversely, The Key Messages documents was said to be more for people who already understand libraries. The consensus was that the Advocacy needs to start at the grass-roots level, and build up from there. The Key Messages were seen as expecting too much. It was mentioned that the document should be tailored to people who don't know the intricacies of public libraries.

As the committee discussed who the next target audience should be, it was decided that our own PRL board members should be the next target audience. The committee discussed ways to inspire the board to be passionate about advocacy. Without passion, all the materials and handouts in the world won't do any good.

6. Post-Election Advocacy Activity

At the March Advocacy Committee meeting, the committee began working through a process to develop an advocacy plan. When creating a plan, a goal needs to be developed, then steps and actions to support that goal need to be established.

The Committee decided on four primary advocacy goals for PRL:

1. Libraries need stable funding
2. Libraries need to be seen as a core community service
3. Stakeholders understand why libraries are important
4. Residents will be aware of and use the array of library services

Committee members agreed that with the immediacy of the up-coming provincial election, ensuring libraries get stable funding and support should be the immediate focus. The remainder of the meeting was spent developing election-related messaging.

The committee also agreed that advocacy for public libraries must also continue past the election and through the provincial budgeting process to ensure that library funding is not cut by any government, municipal or provincial, that may be looking to reduce expenditures.

Now that election advocacy materials have been created and disseminated, the committee needs to return to the general advocacy plan work that was started in March - that is, looking at the goals that were established, prioritizing them, and then working through the process of developing key messaging for them, developing proof points, then looking at what needs to be created (tools, etc.) to initiate and support the advocacy effort.

Now with the election well under way, we need to determine what our next post-election advocacy priority is and what tools we will need to achieve it.

It was mentioned that the Advocacy Infographic could be broken down a little more for people who don't know libraries and what they have to offer. I.e. explain what a virtual visit and interlibrary loan is. The goal being to explain what Parkland provides for value for municipal dollars.

It was decided that the first focus of the Advocacy efforts should be the PRL board. That will become the foundation to inspire the board to go out and advocate for Alberta libraries. Some points include:

- To instill a passion in the board about what regional systems and libraries do.
- Understanding what an important resource PRL and its libraries are for the community and the municipality. "What's in it for us?"
- Teach them how to advocate
- Give them something to advocate for

It was also decided that in order to know how to start inspiring the board members, the committee needs to know what board members think. A short 3 or 4 question anonymous survey will be created to send to the board members. In order to encourage participation, all entrants who choose to will be entered to win a \$25 Amazon gift card.

Staff will prepare a survey with the following questions:

1. What does your library mean to you?
2. How do you use the services your library offers?
3. Do you think the library is important to your community? Why?

A paper copy can be sent if any board members don't want to submit it online. The survey will go out as soon as possible.

It was decided that the Advocacy Committee members will not respond to the survey.

The survey results will give the Advocacy Committee a direction to go in and a place to start. The survey results will not be shared with the board.

Several years ago, Parkland created a databank of "library stories" which may prove inspirational to board members. Staff were instructed to send the stories to members of the Advocacy Committee and let each member select their top three preferred stories. The chosen stories would be reviewed at the next Advocacy Committee meeting for selection and inclusion in the May board package. The stories will be sent to committee members as soon as possible.

7. Next Meeting

For future meetings, staff suggest that an "all-call" for agenda items be sent out by email. If committee members have a topic they would like added to the agenda, they may do so. The committee agreed that an "all-call" is a good idea.

8. Adjournment

Motion by Stannard to adjourn the meeting at 3:04 p.m.

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Chair