

Executive Committee Meeting Minutes
April 11, 2019

Present: Debra Smith, Jason Alderson, Kevin Ferguson, Bruce Gartside, Robyn Gray, Megan Hanson, Bob Green, Ray Olfert, Janine Stannard, Sharolyn Sanchez

Absent with regrets:

Staff: Ron Sheppard, Kara Hamilton, Donna Williams

Meeting called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Smith.

1. Acceptance of the Agenda

Ferguson added an item to the end of the agenda, Item 13a. A Tale of Two Libraries

Motion by Stannard to accept the agenda as amended.

CARRIED

2. Acceptance of March 14, 2019 Executive Committee Minutes

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

CARRIED

3. Action Item List

Sheppard reviewed the Action Item List. Item 2 on the Action item list is to omit seconder from motions for board meetings. Sheppard reviewed some of his thoughts on the issue. A second to a motion is not a requirement, but more of a security measure, to prevent wasting time with a motion that doesn't have enough support to receive a second. After some research, it was not entirely clear what best practice should be, so Sheppard consulted PRL's lawyer.

It was suggested during the Executive Committee meeting that PRL develop its own policy on how the board wants to handle the issue. Sanchez will share her board's procedural bylaws with the Executive Committee. Green shared that Carstairs has seconders only for budgets and bylaw changes. The consensus was that PRL should create a policy for how seconders at board meetings are dealt with. The policy will need to be presented to the board for approval. This issue will be brought back to the May Executive Committee meeting.

Ideas for how to celebrate PRL's 60th anniversary remains pending.

Creating a questionnaire to evaluate the upcoming board meeting is complete as it was included in the April 11th board package.

Motion by Olfert to accept the Action Item list as presented.

CARRIED

4. Advocacy Committee Report

The Advocacy Committee had their first meeting on March 14th. At the meeting, the committee identified four advocacy goals. Due to the Provincial election, committee members decided on focusing on an advocacy campaign that could be tailored to appeal to any candidate running for elected office.

Despite the short time to develop, an Advocacy Infographic, an advocacy platform, key messages, proof points, and supporting statistics were assembled and sent out to PRL board members, municipal administrators, library managers, and member library board chairs. The Advocacy Infographic was very well received. The Key Messages document was reviewed and thought to be too high level for our current target audience.

The question was raised of who would present reports to the Executive Committee and the board. The Advocacy Committee met later that day to decide this issue.

Motion by Green to accept for information

CARRIED

5. DRAFT 2018 Audit

Presented to the Executive Committee in their package was the Parkland Regional Library Financial Statements and Independent Auditor's Report, and Report to the Board. In the documents, the auditors state:

In our opinion, these financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Parkland Regional Library as at December 31, 2018, and its financial performance and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards.

Moreover, there were no prior year recommendations to note, and there are no current year recommendations to note related to improving our financial processes. This is the **tenth year** with no recommendations.

Some items of note:

- Accounts Receivable was down from 2018.
- PRL has now completed spending of Hoopla dollars in March. Hoopla has been discontinued.
- Williams was happy with the Report to the Board.
- Partly due to vacant staff positions in 2018, Parkland enjoyed an excess in revenue over expenses of \$82,824

Motion by Stannard to recommend that the board approve the Parkland Regional Library Financial Statements and Independent Auditor's Report for 2018 as presented.

CARRIED

6. Review of PRL Investments

According to Parkland's Annual Agenda policy, the Executive Committee is to review PRL's investments at least twice a year. The meetings for the review of investments in 2019 occur in April and October.

In past years, PRL only invested its funds in GICs and in a conservative, managed bond portfolio.

According to the Investments statement of PRL's Finance Policy:

Short term investments may include, but are not limited to, guaranteed investment certificates (GICs) and the management of funds in PRL's current bank account(s). The Director and/or designate has full discretion to make decisions and changes to PRL's short term investments.

However, PRL's interest rate at Servus Credit Union for on demand funds is set at Prime less 1.85%, currently making the rate of return on our current chequing account 2.1%. Given the marginal difference in returns between GICs and Parkland's current account, staff do not plan on investing in GICs at this time. There is also a high likelihood that due to our new headquarters building project that large amounts of funds may be necessary at short notice. Parkland does not want to be caught in a situation where funds are tied up in investments when sudden large expenditures could create cash flow problems.

Motion by Gartside to leave PRL's investment strategy as is.

CARRIED

7. Budget 2020

Sheppard and Williams outlined the 2020 budget.

Due to the long process Parkland has for arriving at an approved budget within the constraints of PRL's master agreement, PRL must begin planning for Parkland's 2020 budget now. According to the master agreement:

The PRL Board shall prior to November 1 of each year submit a budget to the Parties to this Agreement and an estimate of the money required during the ensuing fiscal year to operate the library system. [Reg. s.25 (1)(f)]

Almost all of PRL's revenue comes from either municipal levies or operating grants from the Government of Alberta (GOA). For the current 2019 budget year, approximately 45.5% of our budgeted income comes from GOA grants.

Staff have been informed that the GOA operating grants will likely be stable for the current year but will remain calculated at the 2016 population levels. Therefore it is unwise to assume any increase in GOA funding for 2020. With provincial funding at a plateau, there will be challenges meeting inflationary operating costs.

The question staff asked the Executive Committee to consider is how much of an increase to the Municipal requisition should staff build into the budget?

As a service provider, PRL staffing expenses constitute a significant portion of our costs. Our wage and salary grid affords an annual step increase of 2.5% to all positions. In addition, to keep the salary grid current, a cost of living allowance (COLA) is also provided.

While COLA will have to be calculated again before the end of May, for the purpose of providing an estimate, PRL developed a budget with the current COLA of 1.6% and all staff moving up the grid one step. Just to provide staff increases in accordance with the Compensation Policy will require an increase in the per capita requisition of seventeen cents. In the sample budget presented at the meeting, no other lines were adjusted and any increase in the Director's salary had not been included. The total increase to the Municipal levy is \$39,190. This amounts to an increase of approximately 2.1%.

There are many things that impact our budget. These include:

- The demand for additional eContent
- The drop in the value of the Canadian dollar
- The need to increase materials (book) allotment
- The fact Parkland cannot expect an increase in provincial funding

The Executive Committee agreed that they are willing to consider an increase, because if there is no increase this year, then the increase in future years will be more significant.

The Executive Committee did not put a specific dollar limit to how much the budget can increase.

The question was asked, if the Executive Committee would like a 3 year budget or one year at a time. The committee is satisfied with a one year budget. Staff were instructed to develop an ideal budget to bring back to the Executive Committee in May. Producing various scenarios is acceptable. If requisition amounts are too high, the committee will explore various options reducing the 2020 budget requisition.

8. Building Update

Parkland received a set of blueprints from Tricon on March 27th. Staff asked for the “dream building” based on our functional requirements.

Unfortunately it was over 7000 square feet bigger than the original plan.

The total size equaled 21,708 square feet on two floors. This is actually more space than our current building. Part of the reason for the size is that staff are trying to project into the future for possible population growth and the City of Red Deer joining the system.

Tricon provided an average construction cost of \$180 per square foot. That would mean total construction costs would be just over \$3.9 million not including the purchase of land, installation of the SuperNet, or the purchase of new furniture.

Based on a quick estimate, PRL estimates that the board has close to \$5 million to dedicate to this project: See below for the breakdown.

- \$2.4 million – GOA Grant
- \$2 million – sale of current building
- \$250,000 - Building Reserve
- \$50,000 – Furniture Fixture Reserve
- \$200,000 - Unrestricted Operating Fund. The fund is currently valued at \$404,000 but we need to replenish the Technology Reserve.

Total \$4,900,000

Staff have met to discuss the blueprints and have a number of excellent ideas for reducing the building’s footprint without impacting its overall efficiency and long term usefulness.

Staff are setting up a meeting with Tricon to discuss revisions to the building design.

Staff are also still looking to find the least expensive land available.

Motion by Green to accept for information.

CARRIED

9. Pilot Projects

In PRL’s 2019-2021 Strategic Plan, Goal 2, objective c) states:

Member libraries are able to offer increased public library programming options through the initiatives and resources developed at the regional level.

In response to this objective, the PRL Consultant Librarians have teamed up to create two new pilot projects. They will enable Parkland libraries to increase the variety of

programming they offer to their communities, without having to incur a prohibitive upfront cost.

Magic of Coding kit

One of these innovative projects focuses on STEAM programming. Parkland has a number of successful children's programming kits, but few currently employ technology. The Harry Potter Kano coding kit supplements the Kano coding program and will allow children (and adults) to learn about coding. Each kit includes a wand that activates programs created on Kano World software. The software has 70+ creative challenges, which use step-by-step connect code blocks to demonstrate JavaScript functions. There is also a play mode, which will allow users to experiment once they are comfortable with the basics. This kit would include 10 tablets, screen protectors, cases, and the Kano Harry Potter wands and software.

The estimated cost to create this kit is \$3,150

Large Print Book Clubs

The other pilot project involves Large Print Book club kits, an initiative that has been requested by several libraries. These would be targeted towards adults who require large or alternate print formats. PRL intends to create three kits, each containing 10 large print books and two audio books, with a DAISY format available if any print-disabled participants require it. Libraries will be able to request these kits to be used by local book clubs.

The estimated cost to create these kits would be \$1,500

The Executive Committee was very supportive of these two endeavors. The estimated cost for both projects with a buffer to cover unexpected costs is \$6,000.

Motion by Stannard to move up to \$6,000 from the Unrestricted Operating Fund to cover the costs of these two pilot projects. (Currently the Unrestricted Operating Fund is valued at over \$404,000.)

CARRIED

10. Red Deer County Service Points

On March 27th, PRL's Director met with Red Deer County staff to discuss the creation of a library service point in the hamlet of Benalto. Ken Allan, a consultant with the Public Library Services Branch, (PLSB) also attended the meeting. The group discussed the various options for library service at Benalto and how provincial grant funding may change if the county formed either a municipal library board or inter-municipal library board.

Subsequent to that discussion PRL staff met with Red Deer County staff at the decommissioned school in Benalto which is the proposed site for the library.

Parkland staff determined that the site is well suited to be a library space and have begun work on a space plan. However, the county has yet to decide what model of service it will pursue. Right now their primary options are for a reading room, or forming a municipal or intermunicipal library board.

Staff and board members with the library society at Spruce View are willing to assist with the project. Staff are waiting to learn what option for service Red Deer County will choose to pursue.

11. First Nations Services Update

Last October Parkland agreed to participate in the Public Library Services Branch sponsored "Voices of Amiskwaciy" project. The project was supposed to be concluded by the end of March. Training related to the project is scheduled on April 8 and 9th at Parkland.

Since the project won't be completed by the end of March, PRL's Director requested an extension for the grant's reporting period until June 30th. The extension was approved by Colette Poitras, the Manager, Indigenous Public Library Outreach with the Public Library Services Branch (PLSB), Alberta Municipal Affairs.

Parkland is also working to establish a small semi-permanent library service at the Howard Buffalo Memorial Centre at Maskwacis. This would replace two "Pop-up" libraries currently set up at Maskwacis at the local mall and the Howard Buffalo Memorial Centre. The idea is to have a permanent location with a book drop, small library collection, and a couple of computers. While this does not constitute a true public library, it is a location that will be staffed consistently and will have regular open hours. Hopefully it is a precursor to a true public library run by members of the community. Expenses associated with setting up and running the library space are being paid for with provincial grant funding for First Nations Services.

Outreach to the O'Chiese and Sunchild reserves continues to be a challenge partly due to the distance from Lacombe. However staff are exploring a couple of options that may include local reserve residents providing the equivalent of a kiosk library service and/or another local public library extending service to reserve residents through contract. The Executive Committee and board will be kept apprised as developments proceed.

Another matter that demands attention is the effort being made by the City of Wetaskiwin library board to have all of the bands located on the reserves around Maskwacis reallocated to the Yellowhead Regional Library (YRL) system.

PRL's Director met with YRL's Director and staff from the Public Library Services Branch on March 20th to discuss this issue. PRL offered to relinquish responsibility for the bands at Maskwacis if it resulted in better service for area residents. However that was not considered the preferred option since PRL has successfully built relationships with band leadership on the reserves and the Maskwacis Education Schools Commission (MESK). MESK in particular is a vital component for the formation of a public library at Maskwacis.

At the meeting in Edmonton, a possible permanent solution to the problem of jurisdiction was discussed but it must be explored further by the PLSB. In the meantime, the PLSB considered a meeting with all the stakeholders involved.

Motion by Stannard to receive for information.

CARRIED

12. Board Meeting Evaluation

A draft survey was presented to the Executive Committee to measure the satisfaction of members with the upcoming board meeting in May. It was decided that the questions should be kept the same for continuity of information. It was suggested that paper copies be provided to the board members at the meeting to be handed in as they leave the meeting.

13. Fall P.D. Day – Trustee Education

Goal 3 of Parkland's Strategic Plan states:

Parkland Regional Library member municipalities will have an effective and responsive system board.

The Executive Committee was asked if they would like to have a trustee education component built into Parkland's fall Conference (P.D. Day) to be held on September 23, 2019. The response was enthusiastic, with a suggestion for an advocacy teaching component. When asked if they would like a specific focus, the Executive Committee didn't think that was necessary. The consensus was that a trustee stream would be developed with topics that include governance, local board vs. municipal council responsibilities, legislation, funding, the relationship between a library board and friends group, etc. The Committee also agreed that someone from Public Library Services Branch should present, and Green would assist.

13a. Kevin Ferguson – A Tale of Two Libraries

Ferguson talked about visits to different libraries, the Halifax Public Library and the New York Public Library. In the Halifax Library there were teenagers recording music in a sound booth, and a mother in a play room reading while her little children played with toy cars. It felt living and dynamic; alive. New York Library was very beautiful and awe inspiring. The New York Library was full of tourists and the Halifax Library was full of residents. He concluded by saying that he preferred the Halifax Library and that our libraries should be living, dynamic libraries, not 'museums'.

14. Adjournment

Motion by Sanchez to adjourn the meeting at 12:05 p.m.

Chair