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# PRLS BOARD TALK

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## Highlights of the Parkland Regional Library Board Meeting

FEBRUARY 24, 2022

### Parkland Annual Report

Each year Parkland is required to submit an annual report to the Public Library Services Branch (PLSB) at Municipal Affairs. Some highlights are worth noting:

- Parkland obtained 28 smart hubs donated by TELUS with unlimited data and have been distributing them to our small, rural member libraries since April 8th, 2021. They have been circulated 389 times! (Data as of February 14).
- On September 22-24, 2021, Parkland Regional Library System, The Alberta Library, Peace Library System, and Yellowhead Regional Library hosted the Stronger Together Virtual Conference for a second year in a row. The conference consisted of 23 sessions, 2 wellness sessions, 2 keynotes, and a pre-conference keynote. Total registrations equaled a stunning 1,126.
- Parkland provided an extra \$25,000 for additional eContent paid for from reserves.
- Parkland renewed its internet service contract allowing an increase in bandwidth of 25% for the entire PRLS region while saving over \$5,500/year
- Parkland held an open house and BBQ event last June with over 400 attendees to celebrate PRLS' new headquarters
- Created a Tik Tok account and incorporated more video content to reach younger generations

- The Parkland board very much appreciates that public libraries were recognized as an important service in 2021. The services libraries provided were essential to the mental well-being of many and offered many vital resources to families who found themselves unintended homeschoolers.

### Outlet Annual Reports

The Parkland Board is the governing board for four library service points. Under the Alberta Libraries Act, the PRLS Board must approve the annual reports for these service points. They are:

**Brownfield Community Library** – County of Paintearth  
**Nordegg Public Library** – Clearwater County  
**Spruce View Community Library** – Red Deer County  
**Water Valley Public Library** – Mountain View County

As with Parkland's annual report, the last two years of COVID restrictions have made it difficult to establish service benchmarks or comparative statistics. However, it was clear that Parkland's four outlet libraries had done much to adapt their services in an attempt to support their patron base through a very difficult period of time. After reviewing their annual reports, in view of the impressive efforts made by Parkland's outlet libraries, the board requested that the board chair draft a letter of appreciation expressing the boards thanks for the work done by staff and volunteers of the four outlet libraries.

### OverDrive Reciprocal Lending

**Agreement** Since 2019, Parkland has been sharing eBooks and eAudio books from its CloudLibrary Collection with the four library systems that make up The Regional Automation Consortium (TRAC). This ability to 'interlibrary loan' eContent has saved countless dollars and proved to be a hugely beneficial service to library patrons.

Following on this success, Parkland has recently entered another agreement with TRAC to share the eBooks and eAudio books available on our other major eContent platform OverDrive. There is no cost for this service.

As of January 24, 2022, OverDrive eBooks and eAudiobooks are now being shared between Parkland, Yellowhead Regional Library, Peace, Northern Lights, and Marigold library systems offering patrons access to tens of thousands of new items.

## Strategic Plan 2023-2025

The major component of Parkland's needs assessment process for a new 2023-2025 strategic plan was online focus groups. The focus group meetings were held on:

Thursday, February 10th, 1:00 to 4:00 PM

Thursday, February 10th, 6:00 to 9:00 PM

Friday, February 11th, 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM

63 people attended over the three meetings. Some common themes include:

- Marketing and Advocacy
- HR and OH&S assistance
- Library communications assistance
- Mental Health First Aid

The target audiences for these focus groups included library managers and board members, municipal councilors and administrators, Parkland Regional Library staff, and members of the Parkland Regional Library Board. Shari Hanson, a Community Development Officer with the Community Development Unit from Alberta Culture and Status of Women, facilitated the meetings.

In addition to the focus groups, a system services survey has been sent to member libraries and a review of member library plans of service has also been undertaken.

## Advocacy Committee

The Advocacy Committee has identified their goals for 2022. These include:

- Positioning libraries to emerge advantageously following the upcoming provincial election.
- Advocating for increased library funding from the Government of Alberta.
- Assisting libraries with the marketing of their services. This is particularly important as libraries recover from the drop in use caused by COVID-19 restrictions.
- The creation of a unified advocacy strategy for all public libraries since advocacy is most effective when it is presented with consistent messages and a unified voice.

The committee also believes that two advocacy goals from 2021 need to be considered ongoing:

- To continue to focus on advocacy to the system board and ensure there is an advocacy learning component at each board meeting.

- To continue helping libraries advocate for themselves at the local level.

## Committee News from Trustees

**Stettler Public Library** held their third Wine Survivor fundraiser via Facebook Live and it was such a success that they will continue to use it in future events. Friends of the Library brought in \$10,000 in a tough year and are using some of it to renovate the children's area in the library.

The new **Blackfalds Public Library** is now open and has been very well received.

**Bentley Municipal Library** is holding early literacy programs and is now also lending cakepans.

**Bashaw Municipal Library** won the highest percentage at *Read for 15* for the third year in a row.

**Castor Municipal Library** is forming a Friends of the Library group.

**Penhold and District Public Library** has many programs running: *1000 books before kindergarten*, quilting, watercolor and ukulele lessons, game night and after-school club. Minigolf has been popular with over 100 people. Thank you to Didsbury for providing the minigolf registration forms!

The Innisfail Trade Show is being planned and the **Innisfail Public Library** will be participating once again. The library has formed great partnerships with organizations like the Dayhome Society to provide programs for providers, parents and children that are literacy and activity based.

## Board Members Present

Debra Smith (Board Chair), Gord Lawlor

**Next Meeting: May 19, 2022,  
10:00 AM (Zoom)**

For more information or if you want a copy of the draft minutes from this board meeting, please contact PRLS.