Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library

Board Meeting Minutes

Wed Apr 15, 2026 5:30 PM - 7:30 PM EDT

Last motion 26-08

1. Call to order & introductions

A regular meeting of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library Board was called to order at 5:31 pm by D. Novak.

Present: Benoit Beausoleil, Susan Elliott (Remote), Daryl Novak (Board Co-Chair), Wayne Scott (Board Co-Chair), Heloisa Varesio, Adriana Vizzari (Town Council Representative), Katie Wiens

Staff: Debbie Krause (Community Engagement Coordinator) Emily Ing (Programs & Outreach LSA), Laura Tait (CEO), Ciara Wagner (Administrative Assistant)

Regrets: Robin Foster, Maria Mavridis (Town Council Representative)

2. Approval of Agenda

MOTION 26-09: Moved by K. Wiens that the agenda be approved.
CARRIED

3. Declaration of Conflict of Interest

None

4. Delegations

None

5. Feb 11, 2026, Board Meeting Draft Minutes

MOTION 26-10: Moved by H. Varesio that February 11, 2026 board minutes be approved.
CARRIED

6. Staff Introductions: Emily Ing, Programs & Outreach LSA, Ciara Wagner, Administrative Assistant

The Board was introduced to E. Ing, Programs & Outreach LSA, who shared her background in history, information studies, archives , and museum studies. She highlighted her interest in programming and community outreach. C. Wagner, Administrative Assistant, was also introduced, she noted her educational background in Child and Youth studies, Information Studies and Records management. She also highlighted her experience working in public libraries.

7. Operational Updates

7.1. Staff Report

L. Tait provided an overview of key programming highlights, staffing matters, professional development activities, new service initiatives, and upcoming events and programs.

7.2. Media Coverage Report

L. Tait provided an update on recent media coverage highlighting March Break programming, Trivia Night, Therapy Tails, the Annual Report, and the Community Centre's 15th anniversary.

7.3. Q1 Statistics

L. Tait presented the Q1 Statistics Report, summarizing trends in circulation, digital services, visits, and program participation for the first quarter of 2026. Overall activity reflected continued community engagement across multiple service areas.

7.4. Correspondence

None

8. Business Arising

8.1. Finance Committee

L. Tait presented the Finance Committee Report for April 2026, including a Q1 budget update. Revenues and expenses are tracking close to budget, with total variances projected to remain within approximately one per cent by year-end. The Library remains financially stable and on track. The Board recommended that future reporting provide a more detailed breakdown of staffing expenses, specifically distinguishing between administrative and programming costs. She also provided a verbal update on the 2025 year-end financial results and will bring forward a final report on year end and reserve funding at the May meeting.

8.2. Advocacy Committee

S. Elliott provided an update from the Advocacy Committee, including plans for the upcoming movie screening, progress on developing key messages for the strategic plan, and recommendations for board newspaper articles.

ACTION: The Advocacy Committee will provide further direction regarding newspaper articles at the May Board meeting

8.3. Governance Committee

W. Scott reported on the Governance Committee's March meeting, including the initiation of operational policy reviews and updates to policy governance processes.

The Board reviewed proposed updates to operational policies, including OP-08 (Facility Rental), OP-09 (Community Information), and OP-20 (Public Libraries and Political Elections). Amendments were discussed prior to approval.

MOTION 26-11: Moved by W. Scott that the Board approve the changes to GOV-05 Policy Development. **CARRIED**

MOTION 26-12: Moved by W. Scott that the Board approve OP-20 Public Libraries and Political Elections as amended, including:
• removal of Bullet Point 7 under Section 2; and
• amendment of Section 4, Bullet Point 4, with the addition of the words “or supporting candidates” to the end of the sentence. **CARRIED**

MOTION 26-13: Moved by D. Novak that the Board approve OP-08 Facility Rental. **CARRIED**

MOTION 26-14: Moved by W. Scott that the Board approve OP-09 Community Information as amended. including:
• amendment of Section 2, Bullet Point 7, second bullet point with the addition of the words “or political views” to the end of the sentence. **CARRIED**

L. Tait presented a report on the development of a new values statement, created by staff at their most recent meeting. The formal foundational document will be brought forward for approval at the May meeting.

MOTION 26-15: Moved by W. Scott that the Board approve the 2026 work plan.
CARRIED

W. Scott raised the need for Board education on Intellectual Freedom and suggested providing additional resources on the Board’s SharePoint site.

amendment of Section 2, Bullet Point 7, second sub-bullet, with the addition of the words “or political views” to the end of the sentence.

8.4. Board Transition Committee

D. Novak provided an update on preparations for engaging with Town officials regarding Board recruitment and transition processes. The Committee will review the MOU and relevant legislation with the town's CAO and other appropriate staff, and agree on the role that the library will play in the recruitment and selection process.

8.5. Strategic Plan Working Group

W. Scott provided an update on the strategic plan, it has moved into the communication phase. Key messaging and supporting materials are being developed, with a target for Council-related communications by June.

9. Community Engagement & Inquiries

The Board discussed community engagement trends and opportunities. Members note the strength and diversity of current programming, including partnerships and inclusive initiatives that support a wide variety of community groups. The importance of word-of-mouth in driving participation was highlighted, along with the Library's approach to evaluating programs-balancing attendance data with community value, particularly for youth and specialized programming. The board acknowledge he Library's responsiveness in adapting and refining programs to meet evolving community needs.

10. Other Business

The Board discussed ongoing advocacy efforts, including the development of key messaging aligned with the strategic plan. Members were encouraged to support community awareness and Board recruitment by contributing articles to local media highlighting the Library's impact and the role of Board Service.

L. Tait presented proposed organizational values; Welcoming, Connected, and Curious, developed through a staff engagement process. The Board discussed the importance of aligning these values with current practices and embedding them into staff development and future planning. Approval of the proposed organizational values will take place at the May board meeting.

11. In Camera

MOTION 26-16: Moved by W. Scott that the Board move in camera to discuss personal matters about an identifiable individual, in accordance with s.16.1(4)(b) of the Public Libraries Act. **CARRIED**

MOTION 26-17: Moved by Heloisa that the Board rise from the in camera session with the recommendation to approve the application of the Town's updated 2026 salary grid to the affected library positions, as required for consistency, pay equity, and market competitiveness. **CARRIED**

12. Meeting Termination

MOTION 26-18: Moved by K. Wiens that the meeting be terminated at 7:28 pm. **CARRIED**