



Board Meeting

Wed Feb 11, 2026 5:30 PM - 7:30 PM EST

Last motion 25-51

1. Call to order & Introductions

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

Present

In-person: Susan Elliott, Wayne Scott (Board Co-Chair)

Remote: Benoit Beausoleil, Robin Foster, Daryl Novak (Board Co-Chair), Heloisa Varesio, Adriana Vizzari (Town Council Representative), Katie Wiens

Staff: Debbie Krause (Community Engagement Coordinator), Laura Tait (CEO)

Regrets: Maria Mavridis (Town Council Representative)

2. Approval of Agenda

MOTION 26-01: Moved by D. Novak that the agenda be approved as amended. **CARRIED**

3. Declaration of Conflict of Interest

None

4. Delegations

None

5. Dec 10, 2025, Board Meeting Draft Minutes

MOTION 26-02: Moved by K. Wiens that December 10, 2025 board minutes be approved.

CARRIED

6. Staff Introduction: Emily Ing, Programs & Outreach LSA

Deferred

7. Operational Updates

7.1. Staff Report

L. Tait provided an update on programming highlights and new initiatives, emphasizing AI-focused learning opportunities, enhanced teen programming, and plans for March Break activities.

7.2. Media Coverage Report

L. Tait reported on recent media coverage related to screentime events and black history month.

7.3. 2025 Statistics Review

L. Tait presented the 2025 statistics, noting stable membership levels alongside increased active use. Overall circulation experienced a slight decline, primarily due to reduced demand for physical media, while children's circulation continued to show strong growth. Digital use shifted in format preferences, with magazines representing a significant portion of activity. Use of self-serve and alternative access points grew, particularly at the St. Davids location, while the Virgil locker and vending machine showed limited use; staff are reviewing potential relocation options. Engagement indicators, including website visits, in-person visits, social media activity, and program attendance, showed overall positive trends. The data reflects steady use, strong engagement among families, and continued interest in flexible access models.

7.4. 2025 Operational Plan Review

L. Tait presented the 2025 Operational Plan Review, highlighting meaningful progress across all strategic pillars, including strengthened reading and digital literacy initiatives, expanded community partnerships, enhanced visibility through new branding and anniversary activities, and improvements to internal systems and staff development. Work advanced on long-term planning for future service locations, increased integration into community and municipal planning, and the establishment of a sustainable collections funding strategy. The review emphasized that 2025 positioned the library for continued growth, clearer community insight, and stronger organizational capacity heading into 2026, and staff contributions throughout the year were acknowledged.

ACTION: L. Tait to prepare a formal written report on the 2025 Operational Plan.

7.5. 2026 Draft Operational Plan

L. Tait presented the 2026 Operational Plan for the first time, noting its alignment with the Board's Strategic Plan and the addition of Intellectual Freedom initiatives and Business-as-Usual activities. The plan outlines key priorities for the year, including advancing digital and AI literacy, strengthening early literacy and teen engagement, enhancing and diversifying collections, building staff capacity through training and policy review, renewing school outreach, and expanding inclusive engagement with underserved and new residents. The plan is intended to guide progress, strengthen staff readiness, and support evolving community needs throughout 2026.

MOTION 26-03: Moved by H. Varesio to approve the operational plan for 2026.

CARRIED

7.6. Correspondence

None

8. Board Education: OLA Conference

Staff and Board members shared their conference experiences, noting key takeaways related to the importance of AI literacy and Intellectual Freedom.

9. Business Arising

9.1. Finance Committee

L. Tait reported that there was little new information to share, as the 2025 financials are not yet finalized and it is too early in 2026 to provide a substantive update.

9.2. Advocacy Committee

S. Elliott provided an update from the Advocacy Committee and introduced the key messages being developed to support Board members in speaking confidently about the new Strategic Plan.

9.3. Governance Committee

W. Scott reported on the Governance Committee's January meeting and noted that the policy compliance report confirms all annual and term requirements are on track.

ACTION: That the reworking of the library's values statements be delegated to staff, with the Governance Committee providing support as required.

MOTION 26-04: Moved by W. Scott that the revised mission statement be approved.

CARRIED

9.4. Board Transition Committee

D. Novak provided an overview of the committee's planned work, which will begin in April. The committee will review the MOU with municipal staff and town council, support board member recruitment, prepare legacy documentation, and work toward ensuring continuity into the next term.

MOTION 26-05: Moved by W. Scott that the membership and terms of reference for all 4 committees be approved for 2026. **CARRIED**

9.5. Strategic Plan Working Group

W. Scott summarized the group's remaining tasks, which include finalizing updates to the associated policies, designing a communication plan, developing supporting collateral, and conducting a process debrief to capture lessons learned.

10. Community Engagement & Inquiries

The Board suggested potential outreach initiatives related to the upcoming documentary screening.

ACTION:

L. Tait and S. Elliott will take the lead on the promotion of the documentary.

11. Other Business

12. In Camera

MOTION 26-06: 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 26-07: Moved by R. Foster that the Board rise from the in camera session with no report. **CARRIED.**

13. Meeting Termination

MOTION 26-08: Moved by D. Novak that the meeting be terminated at 7:32pm. **CARRIED**