



Board Meeting

Wed Sep 17, 2025 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM EDT

Last Motion 25-31

1. Call to order & introductions

A regular meeting of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library Board was called to order at 6.58pm.

D. Novak introduced guests Kirsten McCauley and Fiona Main.

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

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

Guests: Kirsten McCauley (Director of Community & Development Services), Fiona Main (Senior Policy Planner)

2. Approval of Agenda

MOTION 25-32: Moved by R. Foster that the agenda be approved. **CARRIED**

3. Declaration of Conflict of Interest

None

4. Board Education: Official Plan Update

Kirsten McCauley, Director of Community & Development Services

Fiona Main, Senior Policy Planner

Town Planning staff presented an update on the Town's Official Plan, highlighting projected population and housing growth in Niagara-on-the-Lake and the importance of aligning with provincial planning policies. The Glendale area was identified as a key strategic growth zone, with potential for a future community hub that may include a library space.

5. Delegations

None

6. July 16th, 2025, Board Meeting Draft Minutes

MOTION 25-33: Moved by K. Wiens that July 16th, 2025, board minutes be approved.

CARRIED

7. Operational Updates

L. Tait

7.1. Staff Report

L. Tait presented the September staff report, noting strong engagement with new EarlyOn programming, recent staff transitions and training, and recognition of volunteer contributions. She also highlighted upcoming programs and events and shared plans for a new community reading initiative with the Lord Mayor.

7.2. Summer Reading Programming Report

D. Krause reported on the 2025 summer reading and programming, noting strong engagement across age groups and highlights including Dog Man Club and Tiny Tech. Despite some weather-related cancellations and scheduling changes, St. David's programming saw significant growth, and recommendations were made to repeat successful formats and reduce paid programming.

7.3. Media Coverage Report

L. Tait reported on the positive media coverage in both local newspapers surrounding the launch of EarlyOn and local author events.

7.4. Correspondence

None

8. Business Arising

8.1. Finance Committee

8.1.1. 2025 End of Year Projection

L. Tait reported on the projected 2025 year-end budget, noting strong performance in donations and grants and the positive impact of recent community support. She highlighted progress toward eliminating the Library Development Reserve deficit by year-end and indicated that, should a surplus materialize, funds will be directed to strengthening reserves to ensure financial resilience going into 2026.

MOTION 25-34: Moved by D. Novak that the Board direct staff to review the year-end financial projection and, where feasible, bring forward into 2025 any expenditures planned for 2026 that are certain and can be reasonably advanced, in order to minimize surplus rollover. **CARRIED**

8.1.2. 2026 Proposed Budget

L. Tait presented the 2026 budget proposal, noting a 0% municipal grant increase, elimination of the Library Manager position, removal of programming fees, wellness benefits for part-time staff, stable collection funding, and minor capital upgrades.

MOTION 25-35: Moved by W. Scott that the Library Board approve the 2026 Budget Proposal, which sustains core services, eliminates program fees, introduces wellness supports for part-time staff, and secures stable funding for collections with no increase in the municipal grant request; and that it be forwarded to the Lord Mayor for consideration. **CARRIED**

MOTION 25-36: Moved by W. Scott that the Library Board approve the 2026 Capital Budget as presented, including \$40,000 for Collection Development and funding for scheduled IT upgrades. **CARRIED**

8.1.3. 2026 User Fees

L. Tait presented the proposed user fees for 2026.

MOTION 25-37: Moved by R. Foster that the Library Board approve the 2026 User Fees as presented, including the elimination of program fees and an increase in Rotary Room and Commons Meeting Room rental rates. **CARRIED**

8.2. Advocacy & Fundraising Committee

R. Foster reported on the September committee meeting highlighting upcoming new fundraising and advocacy initiatives starting in the Fall.

8.3. Governance Committee

W. Scott introduced the updated Intellectual Freedom Policy and noted that additional policies will be brought forward before year-end, including Financial Control & Oversight and the CEO Selection & Hiring Bylaw.

ACTION: Governance Committee to revise the Intellectual Freedom Policy and bring it back with the Collection Development Policy for Board consideration at a future meeting.

L. Tait introduced the new Board Policy SharePoint site. Board members requiring assistance with access were advised to contact staff for support.

8.4. Strategic Plan Working Group

W. Scott presented an updated timeline and next steps for the Strategic Plan process.

ACTION: L. Tait to distribute a poll to confirm the Board workshop date.

9. Community Engagement & Inquiries

None

10. Other Business

10.1. Acknowledgment of the Passing of Library Board Member Ilze Andzans

The Board acknowledged with sadness the passing of board member Ilze Andzans. Members reflected on her dedication and contributions to the Library, and expressed their condolences to her family.

L. Tait reported on planned tributes for Ilze, including a reading list display, a tribute article in The Lake Report, and Board donations to the Read It Forward campaign.

MOTION 25-38: Moved by D. Novak that the Board donate \$30 each to the Read It Forward Campaign, designated specifically for photography in memory of Ilze.

CARRIED

10.1.1. Board Member Vacancy

ACTION: D. Novak to contact the Lord Mayor to confirm the Board's legal obligations regarding membership following the recent vacancy. The Board will support recruitment efforts if the Town proceeds with seeking a replacement.

10.2. CBC: A Shadow War on Libraries

D. Novak led a discussion on the CBC documentary and related article; this conversation occurred earlier in the meeting during the Intellectual Freedom discussion.

11. Meeting Termination

MOTION 25-39: Moved by K. Wiens that the meeting be terminated at 9.15pm. **CARRIED**

Next meeting Wednesday, October 15th, 2025, 7pm