

**Valleyview Library Board
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, April 17, 2024 @ 5:30 p.m.**

In attendance:

Trustees: Kelli Reimer; Debbie Wedel; Tracie Craig; Annette McCullough; Judy Smith; Ken Wittig; Tina Caron; Scott Biggin

Library/

VCLC Staff: Kerri Danner; Christin Trofimenkoff; Liz Griffiths; Pat Mabley

Guests: Diane Haskell; Theo Robertson; Fhea MacGregor; Amanda Roy; Loris Laycock; Anne Nichol; Jess McCallum; Jan Soto; Shirene Napier; Keanna Joachim; Travis Werklund; Dana Balisky; Adam Norris; Gail Hrushka; CJ Olsen; Drew Melvin; Donna Chorney; Tammy Donovan

1. **Call to order** – Chair, Kelli Reimer called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.
2. **Welcome guests** – Kelli Reimer welcomed the guests from the public.
3. **Adoption of Agenda** – Debbie Wedel made a MOTION to accept the agenda with the amendment of moving 11.0 – TVV Trustee Comments to 5.0. All in favour. Carried.
4. **Adoption of Minutes for March** – Judy Smith made a MOTION to accept the minutes of the March 13 meeting. Tracie Craig seconded the motion. All in favour. Carried.
5. **Staff & Board Morale** – Kelli Reimer explained that the library staff and board have been negatively impacted by the tension and uncertainty caused by budget cuts, changes in board members, and rumours about financial mismanagement circulating in the community, about the future of the library. Kelli Reimer also stated that these circumstances have had a negative effect on staff morale.

Kelli asked everyone to think about ways the board can help rebuild trust and confidence with the staff and for ways that the Board can work on being a united board working in the best interest of the library and to return to making the library board an enjoyable, rewarding experience for all trustees. Annette McCullough stated that as a new member she finds the situation alarming and that there's a lot of silence around the table. There are people from the public here for a reason and they need to be heard. Kelli agreed but asked that at this time public hold their concerns and questions until 12.0 General Discussion.
6. **Town of Valleyview Announcement** – Kelli Reimer invited Councillor/Library Trustee, Ken Wittig to speak about email to Mayor Lymburner regarding the Letter of Commitment between the Town of Valleyview, MD of Greenview #16 and Northern Gateway School Division. Kelli Reimer requested that members of the public hold any questions until afterwards. Councillor Wittig confirmed that a letter had been signed between the three organizations which included the possibility of moving the library to the proposed new public school.

7. **VCLC Manager's Report** – Christin Trofimenkoff presented her report and outlined all of the programs VCLC is running in April/May. Tracie Craig made a MOTION to accept the report as information. All in favour. Carried.
8. **Financial Report** – Kerri Danner presented the current financial report up to March 31, 2024. Debbie Wedel made a MOTION to accept the reports as information. All in favour. Carried.
9. **Library Manager's Report** – Kerri Danner presented the Library Manager's report for April. Liz Griffiths talked about current programs that are running at the library and in partnership with VCLC. Scott Biggin made a MOTION to accept the reports as information. All in favour. Carried.

10. Action Items

- 10.1 - **Canadian Linen Contract** – At the March 13, 2024 meeting a motion was made to approve the Canadian Linen Contract for another 36 months with a cost-cutting reduction of reducing bi-weekly service to every four weeks. Following the meeting, Tracie Craig requested that the motion be rescinded until the matter could be discussed further. A discussion was held regarding options of going ahead with the reduced service contract or the potential of purchasing mats and having them maintained by staff. Debbie Wedel made a MOTION to approve having Kerri Danner sign a new 36-month contract for Canadian Linen to provide service every four weeks and a reduction in the number of mats used. Tina Caron seconded the motion. All in favour. Carried.
- 10.2 - **Annual General Meeting Planning** – Kelli asked for volunteers from the Board and Friends of the Library to plan the Annual General Meeting to be held on June 5, 2024. Judy Smith suggested striking a committee. Tina Caron, Judy Smith and Annette McCullough volunteered to plan the event. Kerri will advertise the meeting on Facebook and send out invitations.

11 Discussion Items:

PLSB – Board Orientation – The Public Library Services Branch will be able to provide a Library Board Basics Session and have asked us to give them a few dates to choose from. After a short discussion, it was determined that Debbie Wedel would inquire with Oscar Adolphson School to see if the session could be held there to accommodate Library Trustees, Town and MD Council, who will be invited to attend. Debbie Wedel confirmed that OAP School would be available on May 4 and June 8. Kerri Danner will bring these dates to the PLSB and get back to the Board when a date is selected.

12.0 General Discussion:

Town of Valleyview – Ken Wittig commented that he would like to see things continue to move in a positive direction.

MD of Greenview Library Board – Judy Smith said the MD of Greenview Library Board is currently reviewing their policy manual.

Trustee comments – Tracie Craig asked if Kerri and Liz could provide more information on the programs being offered at the Library. Liz will give a presentation at the next meeting and Kerri will forward the 2023 list of programs to all trustees. Tracie also asked whether our library offered literacy backpacks as she has seen something like this elsewhere. Kerri indicated that the library has several storytime kits, and other kits purchased through the WOW grant that

organizations can check out, and that library staff are always looking for new ways to serve the community and that grants can be investigated to fund projects like this.

Guest comments:

Kelli Reimer thanked the public guests for their patience during the meeting, she reminded guests to keep their questions and comments professional, then opened the floor for discussion. The following are highlights of the comments and questions from the public:

- T. Robertson – expressed disappointment in the lack of communication on behalf of the Town of Valleyview about issues concerning the library budget and the recent closed meetings held by the Town. She asked that Councillor Wittig take her concerns back to Town Council and asked for a commitment that going forward, the Town will have better communication and allow the public to be involved in decision making. Councillor Wittig indicated that he will bring these concerns forward to Mayor and Council.
- T. Donovan – stated that she thinks the Town of Valleyview should issue an apology to the Library Board and Library Manager for not including them in discussions and decisions made regarding the Library. Ken Wittig indicated he will bring these concerns back to Mayor and Council.
- J. McCallum – stated that as a parent and library user, they were upset and concerned when they heard at a recent school council meeting that the Town, MD and Northern Gateway were considering moving the public library to the new school. She said that the parents she spoke to are scared and concerned about the lack of communication/consultation.
- A. Nichol – asked whether the letter of commitment specified if the library would be included in the new school. She feels that the Province is downloading financial responsibility onto local municipalities. Ken Wittig said that the letter of commitment was an agreement to have all parties working together to build the new facility.
- K. Danner – reminded everyone that according to the Libraries Act, the Library Board has full management and control of the Library, including where it is housed and that it is the decision of the Library Board, not Town or MD Councils to make the decision. The Library Board as a whole should have been involved in the discussions and any decision-making. There are many factors to consider that require Board and Library Management input. Ken Wittig disagreed.
- G. Hrushka – stated that a number of people have been attempting to attend Town Council meetings as they have concerns about Council decisions, but that the past three meetings, the public have been asked to leave as Council has gone in camera. She asked Councillor Wittig why the Town won't allow access to the public or consulting the community before making decisions like moving the library.
- C. Olsen – As an Indigenous person, he is concerned about unconscious bias and racism and stated that he has experienced this from one of the new library trustees. He asked that the Library Board consider Diversity training to help combat bias and racism. Kelli Reimer indicated that the board will be looking at a number of educational opportunities for board development and that DEI training will be investigated.
- J. Soto – Asked whether the letter of commitment specified what funding streams will be involved. Ken Wittig mentioned that there will be additional funding from the government and new computers as one of the benefits.

- A. Roy – asked whether it was Northern Gateway Regional Division who wants the library in the school. Ken Wittig said he didn't know but would follow up with Northern Gateway for more information.
- D. Melvin – Asked if the letter of commitment is available to the public. Ken Wittig replied that he wasn't sure but would check with the Town.
- L. Laycock – Asked why the library budget was cut in December. Ken Wittig replied that Town Council made budget cuts across the board and that hopefully funding can be reinstated in future. Kelli Reimer commented that the Library Board understands the Town's position at this time and are working within the budget available.
- T. Robertson – mentioned wanting better transparency going forward and would Councillor Wittig please share these concerns with the rest of Town Council. Ken Wittig agreed to bring this issue up with Council.
- T. Werklund – Asked about a Code of Conduct for Trustees. He mentioned that Gay-Straight Alliance groups that take place on school property require school administrators to inform parents if their children attend and that if the public library is located in the new school it will be taking away a safe space for youth in the community. Tracie Craig asked for clarification as to whether the library would be located on school property. Ken Wittig indicated that they would like to see the library adjacent to/attached to the new school.
- T. Werklund – feels that the Town is more interested in building the highway business corridor rather than the downtown area and asked if the library moves and leaves an empty building, what will continue to bring people downtown? Questioned a rumour he had heard that the Lutheran Church wants the current library building.
- Tracie Craig asked whether having the library in the new school would necessarily mean programs had to be cut. Especially if the library is not on school property. Kerri Danner said these were all issues that needed to be discussed.
- C. Trofimenkoff – gave a background on the history of Northern Gateway Regional Division Trustee, Gerry Steinke approaching the Town and MD about this issue in 2022 and how the Board went along on the tour to Grimshaw and that at the time, the School Board was unable to answer many of the questions the board had, so at that time, the Board decided it was not in the best interest of the Library to move to the new school.
- D. Chorney – said that public libraries and school libraries are very different and that they had many concerns about putting the two together.
- D. Melvin – stated that he has attempted to attend the past three meetings but they have gone into closed session. Why all the secrecy? The public is being left out of conversations that will affect their use of public facilities. He suggested consulting with all stakeholders including seniors, parents, gymnastics clubs, etc. There has been no public consultation and that leads to speculation.
- Kelli Reimer agreed that communication and transparency has been lacking.
- A. Nichol – suggested that the Library Board write a letter to Mayor and Council for Councillor Wittig to bring forward with all the concerns mentioned.

Kelli Reimer brought the discussion to a close and thanked everyone for their input and thanked Councillor Wittig.

**12 Next Meetings: Regular Board Meeting
Wednesday, May 15, 2024 at 5:30 p.m.**

Annual General Meeting
Wednesday, June 5, 2024 at 5:30 p.m.
(Tentatively at Sherk's RV for a potluck BBQ prior to the AGM)

13 **Adjournment** – Scott Biggin made a MOTION to adjourn at 7:45 p.m. All in favour. Adjourned.

Lina Carow
Chair

Debbie Wedel
Vice-Chair

June 19, 2024
Date

June 19, 2024
Date

