

Whitby Public Library Board Minutes

Date: May 21, 2025

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Place: Board Room, Central Library

Present:

Lorraine Gray (Chair)
Kate Campbell
Art Maki
Geoff Anderson
Maria McDonnell
Peter Creer
Akhil Kapoor (virtual)

Regrets:

Liam Nichols
Chris Leahy

Also Present:

Joel Sutherland, Director, Community and Service Development
Michelle Frenette, Director, Corporate Services
Christy Harper, Director, Technology and Operations
Mandy Beaton, Finance and Administration Associate

1. Call to Order/Approval of Agenda

Meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m.

2. Declaration of Conflict of Interest

No conflict of interest was declared.

It was noted by the Board Chair that it would be meaningful for the Board members and WPL management staff to reflect this month on National Red Dress Day (observed on May 5th), which is a day of action to raise awareness and remembrance for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People (MMIWG2S). The day is a response to the disproportionately high rates of violence experienced by Indigenous women, girls, and two-spirit people in Canada.

Also, May is Mental Health Awareness month. Board members were encouraged to continue to educate themselves on these topics, including researching materials that the library has to offer on these subjects.

3. Presentation: Intellectual Freedom Case Study – Joel Sutherland, Director, Community and Service Development

Joel Sutherland led the Board through a fictitious case study exercise on the topic of Intellectual Freedom. He emphasized that Intellectual Freedom is a core value that libraries stand for.

4. Consent Agenda Items

Moved by Geoff Anderson

Seconded by Peter Creer

That the Consent Agenda items be approved as distributed.

CARRIED

5. Chief Executive Officer's Report

In Rhonda Jessup's absence, this report was shared on her behalf by Michelle Frenette, Director, Corporate Services.

The employee engagement survey being conducted for WPL staff has concluded. Management will receive the results of this survey in approximately 3 weeks. There was a very high participation rate of 91% for this survey.

WPL is moving to using a new Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for its staff and will now be using Telus Health.

The Town Brewery will be hosting a Whitby Music Fest event in Celebration Square on June 29th.

Eva Reti, who has served in the past on the WPL Board of Directors, recently won the 2025 Whitby Mayor's Senior Volunteer Award.

Joel Sutherland attended an event highlighting the organization We Grow Food's partnership with the Durham District School Board and other local community groups to create the Edible Garden Project. This group of volunteers will be installing gardens at various Durham Public Schools.

Christy Harper and Joel Sutherland attended a Durham Region Poverty Response Community Workshop in Ajax on May 21st.

The annual Board dinner will be held on Wed. Jun. 4th at 6:30pm at One Ten Kitchen, Whitby. Please RSVP to Mandy Beaton for this event.

Joel Sutherland recently won the OLA Forest of Reading's Yellow Cedar Award for his book "Haunted Canada: The Graphic Novel 01 - Four Terrifying Tales."

6. Councillor's Report

Deferred to the next Board meeting.

7. Business Arising from Previous Minutes

a) Board Practices Update (A. Maki)

Art Maki shared that this Board committee working group has met twice. It was determined that the Planning and HR Committee terms of reference were out of date.

It is likely that the recommendation will be to eliminate these two committees. The Board will still have the flexibility to form future ad hoc committees - for example, a committee based on Board advocacy for the WPL. This topic will be tabled for the next meeting and the goal is to have this wrapped up before the summer break.

b) Board Procedural By-laws (motion)

This motion to approve has been deferred to the next Board meeting. The proposed language for this will be adjusted and presented at the next meeting.

8. New Business

a) Board Member Recognition Policy (motion)

Moved by Geoff Anderson

Seconded by Maria McDonnell

That the Board Member Recognition Policy be approved as distributed.

CARRIED

b) Purchasing Policy Amendment (motion)

Moved by Peter Creer

Seconded by Art Maki

That the Purchasing Policy Amendment be approved as distributed.

CARRIED

c) Accessible Customer Service Policy (motion)

Moved by Kate Campbell

Seconded by Geoff Anderson

That the Accessible Customer Service Policy be approved as distributed.

CARRIED

d) Drag Queen Storytime Verbal Update (Joel Sutherland)

Joel Sutherland shared with the Board that this event is coming up on May 31st at 1:00 at Heydenshore Pavilion in Whitby, which is a new location for this event.

The related safety and security plans have been fine-tuned and are in place. WPL staff met with the DRPS at the Pavillion to plan for this event. The area was scoped out for security.

Joel reviewed staffing and other plans for the event, including the presence of police and by-law officers.

Regarding risk mitigation, the event's location was moved due to the possibility of rain, since there would not be enough room inside the Central Library location. It is now a more contained event which is less visible to protestors and should be free from disruptions. Blockades will be set up and fire and ambulance personnel will be on site. DRPS cruisers will also be present and MP Ryan Turnbull has confirmed his attendance.

Board members were asked to let Rhonda know if they plan to attend this event.

9. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 18, 2025, at 7:00 p.m., in the Board Room, Central Library, 405 Dundas Street West, Whitby

10. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:14 p.m. on a motion by Kate Campbell.

Board Chair

Secretary