NIAGARA FALLS PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
January 21, 2026
CONFERENCE ROOM 3, VICTORIA AVENUE LIBRARY & GOOGLE MEET

PRESENT: A. Andres-Jones (Chair), J. Anstruther (Vice Chair), M. Fraiman, L. Lococo, S. Mongrain, J. Roddy, T. Tredwell

REGRETS: B. Ness, K. Tsiantoulas

STAFF: A. Subnaik Kilgour, C. Lee, M. MacLaren, K. Rimnyak

Meeting was chaired by A. Andres-Jones

CALL TO ORDER:
Meeting called to order at 4:33 pm

THE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT STATEMENT WAS READ INTO THE MINUTES
The Chonnonton people have called these lands where we are gathering home for thousands of years and more recently, the Anishinaabe and the Haudenosaunee have been sharing the land as One Dish, One Spoon Treaty territory. We would like to acknowledge the enduring resilience of the First Nations, Metis and Inuit people who call this territory home.

1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION: 2026-001 To approve the agenda of the January 21, 2026 Board Meeting
MOVED BY: S. Mongrain
SECONDED BY: T. Tredwell
MOTION CARRIED

2. DISCLOSURE OF PECUNIARY AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

None

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

3.1. Regular Minutes of December 17, 2025 Board Meeting

MOTION: 2026-002 To approve the minutes of the December 17, 2025 regular meeting
MOVED BY: T. Tredwell
SECONDED BY: L. Lococo
MOTION CARRIED

4. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

None.

5. CONSENT AGENDA

5.1. Department Reports

5.1.1. Program Evaluation Report, B. Dixon, Manager of Operations

Board members noted that while the number of teen programs has increased, attendance has declined. C. Lee advised that teen participation tends to fluctuate as cohorts age out and new groups take time to engage, and that programs shaped by teen input are typically more successful than those designed solely by staff. A. Subnaik Kilgour added that recent staff turnover in the teen programming role has required rebuilding relationships and community connections, and staff are continuing to monitor participation and adjust programming accordingly.

5.1.2. Incident Wrap Up 2025 Report, B. Dixon, Manager of Operations, A. Lowe, Customer Service Associate / Joint Health and Safety Co-chair

5.1.3. NFPL In the Media - December 2025, K. Stewart, Communications Associate

5.2. Board Information and Correspondence

5.2.1. EarlyON Press Release, Niagara-On-The-Lake Museum

It was clarified that NFPL operates the program using space at both the Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library and the Museum, with the Museum providing space at no cost. The Museum schedule is in addition to the library location schedule. Board members asked about coordination with local early literacy programming to avoid duplication. A. Subnaik Kilgour advised that staff are reviewing scheduling and program mix to avoid overlap. It was noted that EarlyON staff are certified early childhood educators. The value of intergenerational programming in Niagara-on-the-Lake was also noted.

5.2.2. Public Ontario Operating Grant Payment Notification, Government of Ontario

A Board member asked whether the provincial Public Library Operating Grant had changed and how long it has remained unchanged. A. Subnaik Kilgour confirmed there was no change to the grant amount and advised that she would confirm the number of years without an increase through sector contacts. Discussion followed regarding the long-term impact of the grant remaining static, the continued downloading of costs to the municipal tax base, and the importance of pursuing additional funding sources. EarlyON funding was cited as an example of a program that meets community need while being financially neutral to the Library overall. A. Subnaik Kilgour advised that provincial library associations and the Federation of Ontario Public Libraries continue to advocate for an increase, and that staff continue to explore grants and other revenue opportunities to maintain service levels.

5.2.3. Thank You/Holiday Card, University of Niagara Falls

5.2.4. Form Letter to Minister Lightbound regarding Changes to Canada Post Corporations Act, Dina Stevens, Executive Director, Federation of Ontario Public Libraries

5.2.5. Ontario Building Destination Niagara, Ontario Newsroom

5.3. Articles

5.3.1. Are Toronto libraries the city's most underrated third space?, NOWToronto
5.3.2. Public Libraries, Loneliness, and the Quiet Power of Belonging, Ontario Library Service
5.3.3. Mayor Diodati claimed UNF students would revitalize downtown. What happened?, The Pointer
5.3.4. Nearly 85K homeless in Ontario, up 8% in 1 year, Global News
5.3.5. IFLA MetLib 2025 Addresses Social Isolation and Civic Engagement, Library Journal

MOTION: 2026-003 To receive the consent agenda of January 21, 2026
MOVED BY: S. Mongrain
SECONDED BY: T. Tredwell
MOTION CARRIED

6. ACTION ITEMS

6.1. Library Space Leasing Policy

A. Subnaik Kilgour advised that the draft policy had been developed based on prior Board direction, reviewed by senior management, and shared with City staff, who raised no concerns. Board members supported the development of a formal policy framework and suggested several amendments. It was recommended that eligibility language be broadened to "other legal entities approved by the Board" rather than organizations only. Board members advised that a specific nonprofit discount percentage should be removed from the policy to avoid creating fixed expectations, and that any discount structure should instead be addressed through procedures, potentially using a matrix to support consistent application.

A. Subnaik Kilgour advised that IT infrastructure and connectivity had been intentionally removed from cost calculations to avoid cybersecurity and support obligations, and that such matters would be addressed in individual leases. The example referring to additional IT services was noted to be removed from the policy language in amendment.

Board members discussed how the policy would apply to current community partners using space under memorandum of understanding, noting that future arrangements involving exclusive space and on-site storage would transition to formal lease agreements, while occasional use would continue through room bookings. Following approval of the policy as amended, A. Subnaik Kilgour advised that staff intend to seek general leasing authority from City Council using the new framework to avoid repeated approvals for individual leases, and to allow the Library to pursue potential tenants for currently unused space.

MOTION: 2026-004 To approve the Space Leasing & Rental Policy as submitted at the January 21, 2026 Board Meeting as amended
MOVED BY: S. Mongrain
SECONDED BY: M. Fraiman
MOTION CARRIED

6.2. EarlyON Policy Manual Report, L. Martin, Community Engagement Manager

6.2.1. Niagara Falls Public Library EarlyON Child and Family Centre: Operational Policy Manual
6.2.2. EON101 - Vulnerable Sector Police Check Policy
6.2.3. EON102 - First Aid and CPR Certifications Policy
6.2.4. EON103 - Student Placement Policy
6.2.5. EON201 - Serious Occurrence Reporting Policy
6.2.6. EON202 - Hot and Cold Weather Policy
6.2.7. EON203 - Sanitation and Maintenance for EarlyON Areas & Materials Policy
6.2.8. EON301 – Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy

Board members acknowledged the scope of work involved in developing the EarlyON policy framework. A. Subnaik Kilgour advised that the policies reflect legislative requirements for EarlyON programming and were developed with significant involvement from Human Resources, and that the Board's approval pertains to the policy framework only, with procedures to continue evolving internally.

Questions were raised regarding how conflicts between EarlyON policies and existing NFPL policies would be handled. A. Subnaik Kilgour advised that for EarlyON operations, the legislated program requirements would take precedence.

Board members raised questions about the Serious Occurrence Reporting Policy. C. Lee advised that staff would review the language against ministry guidance and adjust as needed. Board members further suggested that policies should reference provincial definitions and reporting frameworks. Staff agreed to incorporate this approach into the policy statements.

MOTION: 2026-005 To approve the Niagara Falls Public Library EarlyON Policy Manual, as amended at the January 21, 2026, meeting, as a standalone policy framework to support legislated EarlyON operations, and authorize staff to implement and maintain the manual in accordance with ministry requirements. This includes the following policies:

- EarlyON Vulnerable Sector Police Check Policy
- First Aid and CPR Certifications Policy
- Student Placement Policy
- Serious Occurrence Policy
- Hot and Cold Weather Policy
- Sanitation and Maintenance for EarlyON Areas & Materials Policy
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy

MOVED BY: J. Anstruther
SECONDED BY: L. Lococo
MOTION CARRIED

6.3. Scholarship Program Update Report, C. Grayley, System Schedule/Volunteer Coordinator, K. Hetherington, Operations Supervisor, S. Nicholson, Customer Service and Programming Associate, K. Reyes, Finance and Administrative Technician, M. MacLaren, Finance and Executive Associate

Board members reviewed the revised scholarship model focusing on student volunteers. Eligibility language requiring proof of post-secondary acceptance was identified as outdated and removed. It was confirmed that the program is limited to graduating Grade 12 and 12B students who have volunteered with the Library, and that applicants may apply more than once but may only receive the award once. Discussion noted that the revised program better recognizes volunteer service and provides a meaningful incentive and expression of appreciation. Board members expressed support for the approach and acknowledged the staff work that developed the program.

MOTION: 2026-006	To approve the Volunteer Scholarship Program Update Report, including the program details as amended outlined therein, as presented at the January 21, 2026 Board Meeting
MOVED BY:	J. Anstruther
SECONDED BY:	J. Roddy
MOTION CARRIED	

7. COMMITTEE-OF-THE-WHOLE SESSION

MOTION: 2026-007	To move into Committee-of-the-Whole
MOVED BY:	M. Fraiman
SECONDED BY:	T. Tredwell
MOTION CARRIED	

The Niagara Falls Public Library Board went “in camera” at 5:41 pm in order to address matters pertaining to:

- Personal matters about an identifiable individual; and
- a proposed or pending acquisition or disposition of land by the board.

MOTION: 2026-011	To rise from Committee-of-the-Whole
MOVED BY:	M. Fraiman
SECONDED BY:	J. Roddy
MOTION CARRIED	

The “in camera” session was completed at 6:19 pm.

MOTION: 2026-012	To accept the business conducted in-camera on January 21, 2026
MOVED BY:	J. Anstruther
SECONDED BY:	T. Tredwell
MOTION CARRIED	

8. OTHER BUSINESS

Board members were reminded to implement two-factor authentication on their Library email accounts by the end of the month to maintain cybersecurity insurance coverage, with staff offering assistance as needed. Board members were also advised that tickets would be available for the State of the Region address on February 27, 2026, and that those wishing to attend should notify the office.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 6:25 pm

NEXT MEETINGS

February 18, 2026
March 18, 2026
April 15, 2026