NIAGARA FALLS PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
November 19, 2025
CONFERENCE ROOM 3, VICTORIA AVENUE LIBRARY & GOOGLE MEET

PRESENT: A. Andres-Jones (Chair), M. Fraiman, L. Lococo, B. Ness, J. Roddy, T. Tredwell

REGRETS: J. Anstruther (Vice Chair), S. Mongrain, K. Tsiantoulas

STAFF: 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: 2025-177	To approve the agenda of the November 19, 2025 Board Meeting
MOVED BY:	M. Fraiman
SECONDED BY:	J. Roddy
MOTION CARRIED	

2. DISCLOSURE OF PECUNIARY AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST
L. Lococo – 2026 operating budget

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
3.1. Regular Minutes of October 15, 2025 Board Meeting

MOTION: 2025-178	To approve the minutes of the October 15, 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. Community Centre Capital Improvements Report, B. Dixon, Manager of Operations

5.1.2. Genre Champions Report, S. Topping, Information, Resources, and Connections Leader

5.1.3. Internal & External Forms Audit Report, S. Topping, Information, Resources, and Connections Leader

5.1.4. NFPL In the Media - October 2025, K. Stewart, Communications Associate

5.1.5. 2025 Q3 Statistics, L. Martin, Community Engagement Manager

5.1.6. Q3 Progress Report, Year 2 Work Plan / 2024-2028 Strategic Plan, L. Martin, Community Engagement Manager, B. Dixon, Manager of Operations, A. DeGiorgio, Human Resources Administrator, A. Dronyk, Manager of Information, Resources & Connections

5.1.7. Q3 Finance Update, K. Rimnyak, Finance and Administrative Coordinator

5.2. Correspondence

5.2.1. Confirmation of annual information return filing, CRA

5.2.2. Notice of filing omission, CRA

A. Subnaik Kilgour advised that the Public Library Operating Grant (PLOG) filing omission will be addressed once the 2024 financial statements are approved by the Board. In the interim, the Library has reported to the Ministry on the current status of the PLOG grant. A. Subnaik Kilgour further advised that the auditor has committed to attending the December meeting, which should allow the outstanding documents to be submitted and payment to be received before year end.

5.2.3. Notice: Public Library Operating Grant on Hold, Ontario Ministry of Tourism Culture, and Gaming

5.2.4. Email re: Volunteer Recognition Award, B. White, Volunteer and Community Member

A. Andres-Jones referred to correspondence with B. White, who was nominated by the Library to receive a volunteer recognition award. B. White was noted as having been influential within the Chippawa community during the branch closure, the town hall meeting, and the reopening, and as having provided thoughtful written feedback that reflected multiple perspectives. A. Andres-Jones advised that the Library received an email response from B. White expressing appreciation for the nomination.

A. Andres-Jones also drew attention to a letter of gratitude received from a local teacher regarding positive class experiences on Library Day.

5.2.5. Letter to B. White re: Volunteer Recognition Award, Niagara Falls Public Library

5.2.6. Letter of Gratitude re: Library Day, M. Bourdeau, Simcoe Street Public School

5.3. Board Information

5.3.1. Board Succession Slidedeck, P. Takala, Chief Librarian, Hamilton Public Library, and L. Barrie, CEO, Burlington Public Library

5.3.2. Library Board Orientation Manual 2023, Burlington Public Library

5.3.3. Artificial Intelligence, B. Pichman, Evolve Project

A. Andres-Jones spoke about Board Day, a workshop for library boards across the region, held on November 1. The session was described as well organized, with effective speakers. Discussion focused on the artificial intelligence presentation, including comments on the rapid pace of change and challenges in distinguishing real from artificial content. A. Subnaik Kilgour advised that consideration is being given to inviting the presenter to return for a staff focused session, noting that the presenter was engaging and knowledgeable.

5.3.4. 2024-2026 People Plan, City of Niagara Falls

Discussion took place regarding the City's People's Plan and its inclusion of the Library. It was noted that the document is a public City initiative and was generally well written, and that the Library's inclusion reflects the evolving relationship between the City and the Library. A. Subnaik Kilgour advised that there is a clear delineation between City and Library responsibilities and that the Library is considering developing its own version aligned to its specific context, which may be shared with the City in the future. Board members discussed the importance of clarity and alignment in external documents, particularly as they relate to public perception, and noted that ongoing collaboration and improved working relationships with the City are intended to support this process.

5.3.5. Canadian Library Month Round-Up Email, Ontario Library Association

5.3.6. Consultation: Poverty Reduction Strategy, Joint Submission of the Federation of Ontario Public Libraries & the Ontario Library Association

5.3.7. Why Task Forces? CFLA's New Structure, Canadian Federation of Library Associations

5.3.8. CFLA's Recent Accomplishments: Impact for the Canadian Library Sector, Canadian Federation of Library Associations

5.3.9. CFLA Update - October 2024, Canadian Federation of Library Associations

5.3.10. Impact of technology services in Ontario public libraries - Bridge 2023/2024 Report, Library Impact Ontario

5.3.11. LEADERSHIP BRIEF: Leading Social Impact: Reflections from the ULC CEO Roundtable 2025 Leadership, Urban Libraries Council

A. Subnaik Kilgour spoke to the Leadership Brief, noting that it reflected learning from a conference attended in June and subsequent discussions with the senior team. It was advised that many of the themes outlined in the brief will be reflected in the strategic plan for the coming year. A. Subnaik Kilgour further noted that goal champions are scheduled to speak to the Board next month and that the organization is shifting toward focusing on a smaller number of projects delivered more impactfully. Board members were encouraged to reread the Leadership Brief in advance of the December meeting.

5.3.12. Ontario Increasing Support to Municipalities through the Ontario Municipal Partnership Fund, Ontario Newsroom

5.3.13. Ontario Investing $7 Million to Support Literary Arts and Publishers, Ontario Newsroom

5.3.14. Notice of Public Meeting - Community Improvement Plan, Niagara Falls City Council

5.4. Articles

5.4.1. Fearing fraud, Canada rejects most Indian study permit applicants, Reuters/CTV News
5.4.2. Will Libraries Survive AI?, Association of Research Libraries
5.4.3. The library is not a department: Why public library boards matter, Municipal World
5.4.4. With Roles as Civic Hubs, Libraries Turn Over a New Page, Bloomberg
5.4.5. Libraries are struggling with digital demand, The Peak

MOTION: 2025-179 To receive the consent agenda of November 19, 2025
MOVED BY: T. Tredwell
SECONDED BY: J. Roddy
MOTION CARRIED

6. ACTION ITEMS

6.1. 2026 Operating Budget, K. Rimnyak, Finance and Administrative Coordinator

6.1.1. Risk and Finance Meeting Summary – Operating Budget, November 12, 2025

K. Rimnyak provided an overview of the proposed 2026 operating budget, noting that a detailed line by line review had taken place at the Risk and Finance Committee. The budget includes a proposed funding increase request to the City of 3.54 percent, or approximately $203,000. The total operating budget increases by approximately $872,063, bringing the overall budget to approximately $7.17 million. It was noted that this increase includes approximately $460,000 in EarlyON funding, which is cost neutral, as EarlyON revenues flow directly into the program with corresponding expenses, and any unspent amounts are deferred.

Key cost drivers were outlined, including labour related increases associated with cost-of-living adjustments, benefits, staff complement changes, and a buffer for ongoing pay equity analysis. Additional increases relate to software costs driven by the new integrated library system, contracted services, and rents and leases. Contracted services include a potential one-time $30,000 web design project funded through the automation reserve, which would proceed only if the project moves forward, as well as recreation programming services supported by offsetting grant revenue. Increases in rents and leases reflect the inclusion of Chippawa lease costs in 2026, base rent increases at multiple locations, and a contingency for TMI, with portions offset through reserve funding.

It was further noted that three capital projects funded through operating transfers are being brought forward alongside the operating budget, as they are directly informed by the operating budget framework. An adjustment to the utilities budget was also noted, with the budget reduced based on historical spending patterns and current forecasting.

Discussion also addressed the upcoming City review process. It was noted that the proposed budget will be forwarded to the City following Board approval and that meetings with City staff are expected prior to Council consideration. Appreciation was expressed for the work undertaken by staff and management in developing the budget, including broad departmental involvement in the process.

MOTION: 2025-180 To approve the proposed 2026 operating budget submission as presented at the November 19th, 2025, Regular Board Meeting.
MOVED BY: J. Roddy
SECONDED BY: T. Tredwell
MOTION CARRIED

Discussion regarding capital projects followed. A. Subnaik Kilgour noted that an alternative roofing approach has been quoted for the Victoria location, involving an overlay rather than a full roof replacement, with a potential savings of approximately half a million dollars. Staff are looking into this option. It was confirmed that the $400,000 overlay estimate has been included in the capital forecast.

Discussion also took place regarding accessibility at the McBain Centre. It was noted that a proposed ramp project had been included in City capital considerations but was subsequently deferred following an assessment that the facility meets minimum accessibility requirements through other exits. A. Subnaik Kilgour advised that the Library is exploring alternative approaches, and that EarlyON programming will proceed using alternative outdoor spaces in the interim.

MOTION: 2025-181 To approve the additional 2026 capital projects funded through operating transfers, as presented with the 2026 Operating Budget at the November 19, 2025 Regular Board Meeting.
MOVED BY: M. Fraiman
SECONDED BY: B. Ness
MOTION CARRIED

7. COMMITTEE-OF-THE-WHOLE SESSION

MOTION: 2025-182 To move into Committee-of-the-Whole
MOVED BY: T. Tredwell
SECONDED BY: J. Roddy
MOTION CARRIED

The Niagara Falls Public Library Board went "in camera" at 5:30 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: 2025-187 To rise from Committee-of-the-Whole
MOVED BY: T. Tredwell
SECONDED BY: B. Ness
MOTION CARRIED

The “in camera” session was completed at 6:45 pm.

MOTION: 2025-188	To accept the business conducted in-camera on November 19, 2025
MOVED BY:	T. Tredwell
SECONDED BY:	B. Ness
MOTION CARRIED	

8. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Subnaik Kilgour advised that tickets have sold out to the upcoming Trivia Night, and reminded Board members to indicate their attendance at the upcoming staff holiday party.

A. Andres-Jones noted that Library staff did an amazing job hosting Library Day on October 22, 2025. It was noted that the event was well-organized.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 6:52 pm

NEXT MEETINGS

December 17, 2025
January 21, 2026
February 18, 2026