2023-2026

SELWYN PUBLIC LIBRARY

BOARD LEGACY

Legacy Introduction

This legacy document highlights the activities, achievements, and priorities of the Selwyn Public Library Board during its 2023-2026 term. It records the progress made during this period, identifies work that remains underway, and outlines opportunities for the incoming Board to build on the foundation established by this Board.

It is intended to be a practical resource that supports continuity, informed decision-making, and a shared understanding of the Library's evolving role in the Selwyn community.

We Strive to Be

Selwyn Public Library strives to be a welcoming and inclusive community hub that fosters a love of reading and lifelong learning. Through accessible resources, responsive programs, and opportunities for connection, the Library supports community well-being and strengthens local identity.

Our Vision A welcoming and inclusive place that fosters reading, learning, social connection, and community identity.

Our Mission To empower the community to read, learn, connect, and be engaged.

Our Values

The following values guide the Library's services and the Board's decisions:

- People - valuing patrons, volunteers, and staff
- Service excellence
- Inclusive and equitable access
- Public stewardship, including fiscal, ethical, and environmental responsibility
- Intellectual freedom of thought, belief, and expression
- Community well-being and social connection
- Innovation and a focus on the future

Working Together

The Selwyn Public Library continues to have a strong and positive relationship with Selwyn Township Council. Council has consistently supported the Library and remained receptive to opportunities that benefit the community. The appointment of a new Chief Administrative Officer during this term created another positive opportunity for collaboration, and the new CAO has demonstrated enthusiasm for the Library and its goals.

Maintaining open communication and continuing to strengthen the relationship among the Board, Library leadership, Township staff, and Council will remain important for the incoming Board.

Board Perspective

Our term began as the Library completed its return to normal operations after COVID 19 had severely disrupted our business model. Our first year was largely preoccupied with ensuring our branches were once again able to offer a full range of services to the public.

The remainder of the board's term was focused on three main goals

1. As the availability of volunteers decreased in the post-COVID era and the demands of the new maker space became fully understood, we recognized the need to adjust our staffing model. Our part-time branch librarians had their hours increased and were made full-time. Additional part-time staff hours were added, and staff were able to identify third-party revenue sources to assist with seasonal and programming staff. The board recognizes and appreciates council's decision to increase our levy contribution to accommodate the expanded staff complement

   Maximizing the number of volunteer hours, ensuring appropriate training, reliable scheduling, and ensuring volunteers are appropriately recognized will be future priorities

2. The board and staff worked hard to expand third-party revenue for library operations. Government grants and private donations were successfully secured. The board took on the responsibility of hosting an annual large-scale fundraiser, with proceeds used to support Library programming

   As part of the new member board package, we have included undertaking fundraising as one of the responsibilities of new board members

3. The board completed a new strategic plan. Consultations were conducted with the community, and the board set five key objectives
   a. Ensure adequate funding to sustain ongoing operational functions
   b. Develop and strengthen the library's human resources
   c. Expand access to programs, services, and collections
   d. Provide sufficient versatile, welcoming, and safe library spaces
   e. Engage the community in developing and promoting resources and partnership opportunities

Building on the results of our strategic planning and as we conclude our term, the board is outlining key challenges the new board should consider addressing

- A reduction in volunteer engagement has placed additional pressure on paid staff resources, affecting the organization's ability to meet administrative, regulatory, collection, and programming needs
- The cost of new print and digital books is escalating significantly beyond the rate of inflation
- The current physical space within our branches is insufficient to meet the service, programming, and collection demands of projected population growth and demographic changes
- Maximizing the relevance, effectiveness, and return on investment of existing partnerships
- Ensuring our library remains affordable and accessible
- Digitizing local history collections and developing an effective approach to promoting and increasing access to these materials.

- Completing a comprehensive annual fundraising plan that includes short- and long-term initiatives, an annual fundraising goal, legacy giving, and a strategy for attracting and stewarding donors.

Accomplishments

People, Governance, and Capacity

- Transitioned the Library's five staff members to full-time positions.
- Created a part-time Assistant Librarian position.
- Supported volunteer, staff, and public awareness and training in areas including 2SLGBTQ+ inclusion and mental health.
- Continued the review of Library policies.
- Advocated for increased operational and capital funding.
- Developed the 2026-2030 Strategic Plan.

Collections, Technology, and Access

- Introduced special collections, including puzzles, board games, a travel collection, and Canadian Canoe Museum passes.
- Added PressReader, expanding access to electronic magazines and newspapers.
- Implemented new booking software for programs and collections, improving efficiency and ease of use.
- Enhanced the Library website.
- Established a reciprocal borrowing agreement with Peterborough Public Library.
- Began transitioning the Library's technology infrastructure to the Township's IT environment.
- Secured Canada Summer Jobs funding for a summer student supporting children's programming and Seniors Community Grant funding for seniors' programming.

Community and Fundraising

- Developed new and innovative fundraising initiatives.
- Strengthened the Library's partnership with Community Care.
- Increased revenue from the New-to-You stores.
- Continued successful annual events, including the Holiday Tea and Christmas Craft Show and the Fashion Show.

Ongoing Projects

Technology Transition

The transition to the Township's IT environment is intended to improve the reliability and speed of network services, strengthen cybersecurity and remote access, centralize printing and equipment management, and modernize communication through Microsoft 365 and cloud-based email. Better documentation, planning, and compatibility with Township systems will also help prepare the Library for future needs.

Policy and Organizational Development

The review of Library policies should continue so that governance and operational documents remain current, clear, and aligned with the Library's strategic direction.

Facilities

The expansion of the Lakefield branch remains an important consideration. The Library should also continue to assess the current and future facility needs of the Ennismore branch.

Future Opportunities

Strengthen the Volunteer Program

- Consider creating a paid staff position responsible for volunteer recruitment, training, and scheduling.
- Adapt the volunteer model to reflect the ways people now choose to participate, including flexible and shorter-term commitments.
- Develop a renewed recruitment strategy, with particular attention to student participation.

Expand Programs and Services

- Engage an experienced consultant to identify best practices for strengthening Makerspace services and programming.
- Continue to pursue third-party funding to sustain and enhance programming for children, teens, adults, and seniors.
- Complete the digitization and promotion of local history collections.

Develop a Year-Round Fundraising Approach

- Create an annual fundraising calendar with clear goals and short- and long-term initiatives.
- Explore an art auction featuring donated work from artists who display at the Library.
- Make year-end charitable-giving information more visible to the community.
- Provide clear information for community members interested in estate or legacy gifts.

Plan for Future Spaces

- Continue planning for the potential expansion of the Lakefield branch.
- Clarify the future facility priorities for the Ennismore branch.

To the Incoming Board

Board members are an important link between the Library and the community. Your experience, judgment, curiosity, and commitment will help shape responsive and responsible library service throughout Selwyn Township.

Take time to understand the issues, read the materials, participate in training, and ask questions. Support open discussion, listen to different perspectives, and keep the needs of the whole community at the centre of Board decisions.

We wish the incoming Board a rewarding term and every success as it builds on this work and considers the legacy it will leave for the next Board.

Attached Documents

- Appendix A: Strategic Plan with updates
- Appendix B: Selwyn Public Library Volunteers and Rural Community Sustainability Study Summary, May 2018
- Appendix C: Lakefield Branch Feasibility Study on Expansion, September 2016