



## Minutes of the Regular Meeting February 26, 2025

*The County of Brant Public Library cultivates inclusivity  
and empowers lifelong learning.*

**Date:** February 26, 2025

**Place:** Paris Branch

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**Present:** Paula Chorpitta, Nathan Etherington, Fred Gladding, Amanda Henderson, Steve Howes, Jennifer Kyle, Kari Raymer Bishop, Marilyn Sewell

**Staff:** Kelly Bernstein, Steph Burchill

**Call to Order:** F. Gladding, in the Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

### Approval of the Agenda

Moved by: N. Etherington

Seconded by: J. Kyle

THAT the agenda be approved as amended.

**Carried**

### Declaration of Pecuniary Interest and General Nature of

None

### Guest: Alison Newton, County CAO

Ms. Newton told the Board that the County has been working on a land swap with local developer Wingbury for 28 Mechanic St, Paris (former OPP site), and that a development application will be presented to the Administration and Operations Committee on Tuesday March 18. The developer is offering to provide two floors totaling roughly 20,000 to 25,000 square feet on a long-term 20 -30-year lease to the Library. The Library CEO and Chair are invited to attend the In Camera session. A. Newton highlighted that the County plans to speak to various options for a new Library but this has come in first and contains the options to reject or adjust the plan but there is not much time before the build begins. This option as presented

is the only downtown location currently available. A. Newton highlighted that Council may decide this is the best option, but that going forward the Council and the Library would be better served by being in lockstep.

During discussion, a Board member suggested the option of asking the developer to delay to allow time to find common ground and prevent future push-pull. A. Newton stated she was not in attendance to convince the Board this is the right option. It is just one option on the table. The Board discussed potential concerns regarding free and open use of space, term of lease, flood plain limitation and a possible clause including first right of refusal if the developer was to sell the building.

F. Gladding thanked A. Newton for coming and shared hopes of working together towards completing the outstanding Memorandum of Understanding to guide the process moving forward.

### **Approval of the Minutes**

Moved by: M. Sewell

Seconded by: J. Kyle

THAT the minutes of the January 22, 2025, Regular Meeting and the Special Meeting February 6, 2025 be approved as presented.

**Carried**

### **Business Arising**

In response to questions raised at the February 6 Special Meeting, K. Bernstein recommended that the Board undertake a new site study and needs assessment for the Paris branch. This would allow the Board to assess if the priorities previously identified are still relevant. The Environics market study is underway which would help to inform a new needs assessment.

During discussion about possible sites, a Board member suggested that any option presented – from Council or otherwise - regarding a new Main Branch location will require at least 100 days consideration to allow time for studies to be completed and which then would inform Board decisions.

Moved by: M. Sewell

Seconded by: P. Chorpitta

THAT the CEO be directed to initiate an updated needs assessment and site study at the approximate cost of \$40,000 and the funding request be sent to Council. The motion was approved unanimously.

**Carried**

### **Consent Items to be Received – Communications**

Moved by: J. Kyle

Seconded by: N. Etherington

THAT the February Safety Talk, JHSC Minutes: January 2025, and Letter of thanks to former Board member M. Gatopoulos, Feb 5, 2025 and the Chair's letter to Library staff dated Feb 17, 2025 be received.

**Carried**

### **Deferred**

Moved by: M. Sewell

Seconded by: P. Chorpitta

THAT agenda items 8-10 be deferred due to time.

**Carried**

### **New Business**

Moved by: M. Sewell

Seconded by: P. Chorpitta

THAT the Library Board convene in camera to discuss confidential matters: Verbal Update S.239(2)(b) (b) personal matters about an identifiable individual, including municipal or local board employees: (Job Evaluation results)

On a motion by S. Howes and K. Raymer Bishop the Library Board rose from closed session and reconvened the regular meeting.

K. Bernstein and S. Burchill returned to the meeting.

J. Kyle and S. Howes left the meeting at 9:58.

F. Gladding shared his direction to CEO, K. Bernstein to connect with a legal firm regarding possible next steps for the Central Library at the Bawcutt Centre.

Moved by: N. Etherington

Seconded by: M. Sewell

THAT the Library Board convene in camera to discuss confidential matters: Verbal Update S.239(2)(e) (e) litigation or potential litigation, including matters before administrative tribunals, affecting the board: (New Central Branch)

On a motion by N. Etherington and K. Raymer Bishop the Library Board rose from closed session and reconvened the regular meeting.

Moved by: M. Sewell

Seconded by: P. Chorpitta

THAT the CEO be directed to initiate an ombudsman investigation regarding the Central Library at the Bawcutt Centre. The motion was approved unanimously.

**Carried**

**Council Updates**

None.

**Next Meeting**

Wednesday, March 26, 2025, 7pm at the Paris Branch.

**Adjournment**

M. Sewell moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:52pm.

**Meeting adjourned.**