

## Smiths Falls Public Library Board Minutes

**Date:** March 25, 2025  
**Location:** Temporary Library  
**Time:** 6:33 p.m.  
**Adjournment:** 8:01 p.m.

**In attendance:** C. Mariona S. Martin  
M. Gallagher S. McLean Knapp  
C. Cummings R. Cauley  
J. Miller A. Guerin (part-time via phone)  
A. Foster, CEO/Chief Librarian

**Regrets:** M. Murphy

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Agenda / Item / Issue	Discussion / Action
1. Call to order	S. McLean Knapp called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m.
2. Land Acknowledgement	The partial Land Acknowledgement Statement for the Town of Smiths Falls was read by S. McLean Knapp.
3. Approval of the Agenda	<b>Motion: C. Cummings moved the approval of the agenda as approved. Seconded by S. Martin. Carried.</b>
4. Minutes of February 25, 2025	<b>Motion: It was moved by C. Cummings and seconded by M. Gallagher that the minutes of February 25, 2025 be accepted as circulated. Carried.</b>
5. Disclosure of Monetary Interest	None.
6. Business Arising from the Minutes	<i>Township of Montague:</i> There was a lengthy discussion about the funding situation with the Township of Montague. S. Martin stated that from Montague's perspective there are options: 1) for the board to see the \$12,500 as a separation or 2) for the board to accept the payment and make a delegation to ask for a new agreement. A. Foster noted that Montague, despite supporting two libraries, spends much less (around 0.4%) of its operating budget than either Smiths Falls or Merrickville (which spend around 2% of their operating budgets on libraries). C. Cummings noted that low funding from Montague has been an issue for decades but he is of two minds on what to do about the issue. He said that there is a

viewpoint that Montague residents do support businesses in Smiths Falls (eg. grocery stores) and that brings in tax dollars for the town. He'd never support kicking out Montague residents from the library.

S. McLean Knapp said that the situation has to be seen as through a business lens not a personal one and said that if they can't afford to support the library that's unfortunate but that the board shouldn't continue access. She was concerned that they'd keep pushing how little they can get away with giving the library and setting a bad precedent.

J. Miller has discussed the situation with M. Morris at the town. She suggested having the library issue be part of the wider discussions the Town of Smiths Falls is having with the Township of Montague. She also wondered if allowing Montague residents to be cardholders for a lower fee (perhaps \$25 instead of \$55) than other non-residents might be an idea as they are paying something to the library but not a lot.

M. Gallagher said that he found the situation frustrating and was particularly bothered that they took unilateral action but as a retired educator he found it hard to just say tough luck.

A. Guerin noted that the library supports patrons and that she thought it was important to maintain a professional relationship with Montague despite frustrations.

R. Cauley asked about taxes for houses in Smiths Falls and Montague. A. Foster noted that houses of the small value pay about a third less in taxes in Montague.

A. Foster noted that the \$12,500 means that we'll have \$17,500 less in the budget than anticipated but that we should be able to absorb it as some hiring is happening later in the year than anticipated.

There was also a discussion about whether or not to send a letter to Montague.

**Motion: C. Cummings moved that the library board write a letter to the Township of Montague stating that library will be included in the Town of Smiths Falls' negotiation of agreements and that Montague residents maintain their current access to the Smiths Falls Public Library. Seconded by J. Miller. S. Martin abstained from voting. S. McLean Knapp voted in opposition. Passed.**

#### *2024: A Year in Review:*

The revised *2024: A Year in Review* was presented. It was agreed that it was better than the previous version.

#### *Cost of Digitizing Microfilm vs. Purchasing New Scanner:*

A. Foster noted the cost of digitization is an estimate as it is based on the number of images per reel which can vary so averages were used. The estimated cost came



to \$15,498 but could be somewhat lower or higher. It would cost more than a new microfilm reader but there was concern about the need to purchase new machines in the future and the potential degradation of the microfilm over time (though it appears to be in good shape currently). The current machine is not in good condition and could fully break but it hasn't been used much lately. The \$9,500 budgeted for a new machine would definitely help offset the \$17,500 shortfall. It was decided to defer making a decision for now.

*MOU:*

A. Foster noted that there are two major areas of concern with the draft MOU. The first is that draft states that by signing the MOU that the board would be adopting certain policies which is problematic and atypical for these types of MOUs. The board agreed that they should have to separately adopt policies as they could change without the board knowing and there may be rare cases where the board may wish to adopt policies with some amendments. The other area of concern is about I.T. Services. The town wants the library to completely follow their I.T. policies or be completely independent. The issue here is that they don't have public computers and thus don't have provisions for such computers which need to be treated differently from staff computers as they can't have filters on them as that can impede intellectual freedom. Town I.T. Services have not been good in the past but J. Miller feels that they will be improving with increased investment. The board supported A. Foster continuing to pushback on these issues.

*Plans for Donor Wall:*

Deferred to next meeting as A. Guerin was not present for this part of the meeting.

7. Correspondence

There was a letter from Rasmussen Starr Ruddy LLP notifying the library that they'd be going after the bond paid by the contractor for unpaid work.

8. Librarian's Report and Statistics

A. Foster noted that hoopla usage remained strong; she also had a discussion with a hoopla representative and it looks like the best way to reduce costs would be to limit the price amount of borrows as this likely wouldn't impact circulation; this hasn't been done yet but could be done at any time to limit costs. She was able to get the Friends of the Library to note provide books to Lombardy Public School. The library was closed for one day due to inclement weather. Brodart furniture arrived without notice and a public washroom had to be closed to accommodate storage. Visits to the library were high

during the DBA's Winter Carnival. Other programs had variable attendance. There were no new registrants for the 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten program but the two children that have completed the program have decided to start again and aim for 2,000 books total! The statistics were fairly similar to past months; hopefully, being back in the renovated building will boost numbers considerably.

## 9. Committee Updates

### *Finance:*

An update to the financial statements ending December 31, 2024 was provided. Hopefully, we'll have 2025 numbers soon.

### *Policy and Governance:*

M. Gallagher noted that the committee had polished language and eliminated unnecessary terms. The committee also talked about the need for fire drills and for documenting any reports of violence or harassment (there have been none). A. Foster noted that there is a plan to have a fire drill before reopening and that D. Kuehl has an almost completed fire plan that has received good feedback from the fire department.

**Motion: J. Miller moved that the following policies be amended as presented:**

- **HR-04: Health and Safety**
- **HR-05: Workplace Violence Prevention**
- **HR-06: Workplace Harassment and Discrimination**

**Seconded by S. Martin. Carried.**

### *Property Committee:*

C. Cummings noted that the move that been pushed back and that it's been decided that it would be safer for staff not to enter the library until it's no longer a construction zone though there may be minor items still unfinished. Staff are scheduled to have access to the building on April 7 and movers are scheduled for April 15. There was a carpet issue in the basement which means it is the colour of the top floor instead of the main floor; Premium Construction hasn't taken minutes (though they are supposed to) and it would set things back a month to replace so the unintended carpet colour will remain. The framing is in and glass is scheduled to be installed next week. The damaged wood floor on the main floor was been fixed and the floor near the fireplace was also repaired.

There was a discussion about grand reopening dates and it was agreed that the grand opening should happen before the summer. Friday, June 20 (for donors, politicians etc.) and Saturday, June 21 (for the general public) were the chosen dates.

10. Municipal Report

J. Miller noted that a backyard hen bylaw is being written and that a pilot project is expected to follow. She also noted that, contrary to rumours, the newer arena is staying as-is. There was a study about the youth arena which is much older (1980) and needs expensive equipment repairs. Staff were directed to bring back more detailed costing on options but no decision has been made and due to the cost (up to around \$50 million nothing is expected in the foreseeable future. She also noted that the new water tower is almost complete.

11. New Business

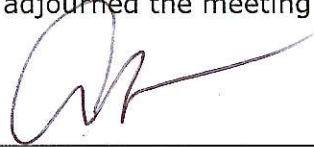
None.

12. Date of Next Meeting

April 29, 2025 at 6:30 p.m. (due to move)

13. Adjournment

S. McLean Knapp adjourned the meeting at 8:01pm.



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A. Guerin, Chair



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A. Foster, Secretary