

Smiths Falls Public Library Board Minutes

Date: January 27, 2026
Location: Library
Time: 6:35 p.m.
Adjournment: 7:43 p.m.

In attendance: S. McLean Knapp, C. Mariona, M. Gallagher, J. Miller, C. Cummings, A. Guerin, S. Martin, A. Foster, CEO/Chief Librarian

Regrets: M. Murphy, R. Cauley

Table with 2 columns: Agenda / Item / Issue and Discussion / Action. Contains 8 items including Call to order, Land Acknowledgement, Approval of the Agenda, Minutes of November 25, 2025, Disclosure of Monetary Interest, Business Arising from the Minutes, Correspondence, and Librarian's Report and Statistics.

hoopla is causing budgetary concerns; she feels we'll need to go further soon as popularity continues to grow. She also arranged to have hoopla's AI written or narrated title excluded from our collection. She also noted that we'll need to work on an AI policy (or policies) soon. She attended a number of webinars, including ones about AI. She recommended the conflict of interest session to board members from the virtual OLS conference. The library focused on emphasizing that library programs are free. We tried to obtain free ROM passes but they've put a pause on their program due to popularity. Our hydro metre was replaced. Dino-ember was not as popular as last year. Adult craft nights have been very popular. Story times programs had decent attendance. More children signed up for 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten. We'll have display cases from the Heritage House Museum in our basement soon. Library Loot bags have been more popular with children than with adults.

In December, wait time decreased for OverDrive/Libby while the number of holds increased. We began selling library totes bags; one woman bought five bags the first morning but sales did slow after that. Bill C-15 threatened the library book rate on which interlibrary loans are dependent. The media focused more on the potential loss of free shipping of books for the blind. The government has promised to provide funding for these services but the bill was not changed. Almost the entire staff was sick at once which has never happened before and resulted in the library being closed for two days. There was a longer staff meeting on the morning of Christmas Eve which allowed staff to have more in-depth discussions. Staff were told by a customer that another customer had fallen on the front steps. We've put a signage encouraging people to use the back door as it's usually less slippery. The board discussed snow removal challenges and the disconnect between our snow removal provider and the town. The escape room was had so-so bookings but a 75% solve rate. The Nerd Society will not continue due to lack of participants. Children enjoyed finding Norman the Gnome. The Christmas story time was not as well-attended as hoped; the first one would likely have been more popular but was cancelled due to illness. There were some interesting reference queries including one about a hockey team from Moscow, Russia playing a game here. Overall, the statistics were good but that's probably not that surprising given we're still comparing to the temporary location.

Motion: C. Cummings moved to the accept November and December's reports and statistics. Seconded by S. McLean Knapp. Carried.

9. Merrickville Public Library/
Montague

A. Foster was contacted by M. Laphen from Merrickville Public Library about where we stand regarding an agreement with the Township of Montague. Merrickville is committed to negotiating with Montague and was reluctant to proceed without us. S. Martin has a meeting scheduled with two Montague councilors (J. Abbass and T. Johnson) on March 2. The board agreed that conversation with Montague is positive but there was concern about agreeing to Montague's preference of negotiating an agreement apart from the broader negotiations that the Town of Smiths Falls is having with Montague. J. Miller noted that these negotiations are very far from being completed and that the library is not among the top priorities of the town. There was concern among some board members that agreeing to an agreement with Montague for a small amount could strain relations with the town. A. Foster will ask Carleton Place Public Library for a copy of their agreement with the Township of Beckwith as it is a local example of a clear agreement between a public library and a contracting municipality.

10. Committee Updates

Finance:

The 2024 Draft Financial Statements were presented. The \$70,000 owed was a result of the ongoing renovation.

Motion: A. Guerin moved to approve the 2024 Draft Financial Statements. Seconded by S. Martin. Carried.

Fundraising:

The book spines for the donor wall are complete. A. Foster noted that A. Rankie suggested going with a smaller board than originally planned. There were no concerns with this suggestion.

Policy and Governance:

The committee will meet in early March. A. Foster will send out possible meeting dates/times in February.

Property Committee:

The kitchen has had the plumbing work completed and is ready to be installed but the electrical work still needs to be completed. The electrical work is more complex than anticipated.

Motion: A. Guerin moved to approve the electrical quote from J&J Electric (Smiths Falls) Ltd. Of \$2,335 plus HST. Seconded by S. Martin. Carried.

The window replacement won't be in this year's budget. We will try again for 2027 and will need to consult the Municipal Heritage Committee, even for the wooden window option.

11. Municipal Report
J. Miller noted that town council is knee deep in budget discussions. The original budget would have meant a tax increase above 8%. Council reduced the budget to around 4% but then ask staff to add some items back into the budget. The back door replacement is anticipated to be approved.
12. Montague Report
S. Martin noted that the park is going well and the trails will be groomed for WinterFest.
13. New Business
None.
14. Date of Next Meeting
February 24, 2026 at 6:30 p.m.
15. Adjournment
A. Guerin adjourned the meeting at 7:43 pm.



A. Guerin, Chair



A. Foster, Secretary